

CHEERFULNESS.

Cheerfulness is a Christian duty ; moroseness, dullness, gloominess are as false and wrong and cruel as they are unchristian. Cheerfulness arises from various causes ; from health but it is not dependent upon health ; from good fortune, but it does not arise solely from that ; from honor and position and a tickled pride and vanity, out it is quite independent of these. The truth is it is a brave habit of the mind—a prime proof of wisdom—capable of being acquired, and of the very greatest value. A cheerful man is pre-eminently a useful man. He does not “cramp his mind, nor take half views of men and things.” He knows that there is much misery but that misery is not the rule of life. He sees that in every state people may be cheerful ; the lambs skip, the birds sing and fly joyously, puppies play, kittens are full of joyance, the whole air full of careering and rejoicing insects, that everywhere the good outbalances the bad, and that every evil that there is has its compensating balm. Then the brave man, as our German cousins say, possess the world, whereas the melancholy man does not even possess his own share of it. Exercise, or continued employment of some kind, will make a man cheerful ; but sitting at home brooding and thinking, or doing little will bring gloom. The reaction of this feeling is wonderful. It arises from a sense of duty done, and it also enables us to do our

duty. Cheerful people live long in our memory. We remember joy more readily than sorrow, and always look back with tenderness upon the brave and cheerful. We can all cultivate our tempers, and one of the employments of some poor mortals is to cultivate, cherish, and bring to perfection a thoroughly bad one ; but we may be certain that to do so is a very gross error and sin, which, like all others, brings its own punishment, though unfortunately it does not punish itself only. If he “to whom God is pleasant is pleasant to God,” the reverse also holds good ; and certainly the major proposition is true with regard to man. “Wonderous is the strength of cheerfulness ! altogether past calculation the powers of its endurance ! Efforts to be permanently useful must be uniformly joyous, a spiritual sunshine, graceful from very gladness, beautiful because bright.” Such a spirit is within everybody’s reach. Let us get but out into the light of things. The morbid man cries out that there is always enough wrong in the world to make a man miserable. Conceded ; but wrong is ever being righted ; there is always enough that is good and right to make us joyful. There is even sunshine somewhere, and the brave men will go on their way rejoicing, content to look forward, if under a cloud, not bating one jot of heart or hope, if for a moment cast down ; honoring its occupation, whatever it may be ; rendering even rags respectable by the way he wears them ; and not only being happy himself, but causing the happiness of others.—*From the “Gentle Life.”*