

HAPPINESS.

BY BEDE.

It is a comely fashion to be glad,
Joy is the grace we say to God.

Happiness is a universal desire. With many, it is the great object of life. But to such it proves an *ignis fatuus*, ever seeming nigh, yet never within reach. No truth is more clearly exemplified in life than this: That happiness must be a result, and that to make it an object is to render its attainment impossible. It is in the latter case that it becomes true that "Man never is but always to be blest."

"If a man is unhappy, remember that his unhappiness is his own fault; for God has made all men to be happy," says the slave, Epictetus. This is a strong assertion, assuredly. Especially so in view of the fact that perfect felicity is a rare condition, if indeed it be attainable. Still acceptance of it becomes possible, when we reflect upon the countless sources of happiness all around us. Nature itself is a great reservoir, and sends up on every hand myriads of perpetual springs. All that is requisite is that we put in our cups and take what we want. Yet many thread their way carefully amid these, and foolishly die from thirst, heavy hearted and wretched. "To watch the corn grow, or the blossoms set, to draw hard breath over ploughshare or spade; to read, to think, to love, to pray," says Ruskin, "are the things that make men happy." Says another writer. "Every sort of beauty has been lavished on our allotted home, beauties to enrapture every sense, beauties to satisfy every taste; forms the noblest and the loveliest, colours the most gorgeous and the most delicate, odours the sweetest and subtlest, harmonies the most soothing and the most stirring. The sunny glories of the day, the pale Elysian grace of moonlight, the lake, the mountain, the primeval forest and the boundless ocean, 'silent pinnacles of aged snow' in one hemisphere, the marvels of tropical luxuriance in another, the serenity of sunset, the sublimity of storms, everything is bestowed in boundless profusion on the scene of our existence. We can conceive or desire nothing more exquisite or perfect than what is around us every hour, and our perceptions are so framed as to be conscientiously alive to all." Ample provision thus for all sensual delights. Then there are the raptures of imagination, the marvels of thought and reason, by which we obtain the incomparable pleasure of "standing upon the vantage ground of truth," and become acquainted with Divine philosophy, which, according to Milton, is:

Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

And when we add to these the inexpressible delights of human love and fellowship, what more, or what better could be afforded by divine beneficence for our entire felicity? Yet Emerson has said with truth: "The shows of day, the dewy morning, rainbows, mountains, orchards in bloom, stars, shadows, and still water, and the like, if too eagerly hunted, become shows merely, and mock us with their unreality. Go out of the house to see the moon, and it is mere tinsel; it will not please us as when its light shines on our necessary journey. The beauty that glimmers in the yellow afternoons of October, who ever could clutch it? Go forth to find it, and it is gone. It is only a mirage, as you look through the windows of the *diligence*." And thus is it with all else. How then can we secure the happiness all desire and which, being obtained, makes our earth an Eden? First, he who would be happy must exercise self-control. The appetites must be carefully restrained, evil must be resolutely resisted, and what is perhaps best of all, every good impulse must be strengthened and developed—cultivation of the good being an excellent method of exterminating the bad. Nor must his self-control desert him in the endurance of pain, anxiety, or other adversity, which are the common lot of all. For while it is true that these are to a certain extent the penalties of our ignorance, or wilful self-indulgence, yet, in many cases, the springs are beyond our influence, and hence the evils—if they be indeed evils—cannot be averted by us. Emphatically is this true of those which affect us by virtue of the golden bond of sympathy, which links life to life and makes it true that "He suffers most who loveth most." Yet, after all, it is not the great evils of life that wreck our happiness in the majority of cases. It is the "daily dyings," the kindly word unspoken; the word spoken in bitterness, the petty misunderstandings, the trivial neglects—these are "the little foxes that spoil the vines" bearing the grapes rich with the wine of joy. How many the homes thus despoiled! Nor is it possible always to escape them. But "come what come may" a man must still be "man and master of his fate." When anything vexatious occurs, he may apply Bacon's principle, "That this is not a misfortune, but to bear it nobly is good fortune." Misunderstandings may be met with better expression of feelings in word and act. Just fault finding should be received with thankfulness (is it not not a help upward?) and when unjust, be entirely ignored. What we do not deserve why should we regard?

He who would possess happiness must be without carefulness. "Consider the lilies of the field how they grow," said our Divine Teacher, and concludes with, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow." This does not mean that we are to make no provision for the morrow. The lilies do verily make all needful provision for the future every day. Shall we do less than they? The lesson we must learn from them is that we must do our best with each duty as it comes, and be careful for nothing else. There is to be absolutely no after-anxiety. If we have done our best, an angel could not have done more, and we may well be content if not satisfied, even

though our best be not first-rate. It is without doubt a grand thing to rank among the highest, but let us not forget that "to do one's best, knowing it can be but second-rate, is noble." The so-called victims of over-work are, with few exceptions, victims of anxiety. And much of this anxiety is for troubles that never happen. There is wisdom and health pent up in the old rhyme which runs thus:

Never trouble trouble,
Till trouble troubles you.

Work faithfully, cheerfully and intelligently performed is in itself a great promoter of happiness. But we must understand that our work is "better than what we work to get," and find our truest wage not in cash equivalent, but in itself. Ruskin gives as one of the two great and constant lessons to be learned of the mystery of life. "That whenever the arts and sciences of life are fulfilled in this spirit of striving against mistle and doing whatever we have to do, honourably and perfectly, they invariably bring happiness as much as seems possible to the nature of man." And Carlyle, who persevered in his work though it took "the obstinacy of ten mules" at times, sums up his experiences in these forceful terms. "Blessed is the man who has found his work, let him ask no other blessedness."

Contentment is a great aid to happiness and consists, we have been told, "not in great wealth but in few wants." For truly "it is not how much we have, but how much we enjoy that makes happiness." So discontent must be sternly quenched. Yet as Mrs. Poyser said. "There's folks as 'ud hold a sieve under a pump and expect to carry away the water." So there are many who take a murmuring fault finding spirit with them to their daily pursuits, expecting to extract therefrom enjoyment. Both attempts will be fruitless as they are foolish.

Further, let us remember that happiness is for the most part made up of small things rather than large, and let us despise nothing because it seems to us a trifle. As Michael Angelo remarked. "Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle;" so I would say, Trifles make happiness, and happiness is no trifle.

Let us also bear in mind as Jeremy Taylor has well said, that "it is the soul that perceives all the relishes of sensual and intellectual perceptions, and the more noble and excellent the soul is the greater and more savory are its perceptions.

Says Coleridge:

The game of life
Looks cheerful when one carries in one's heart
Th' inalienable treasure.

Indeed the truest and deepest happiness becomes possible only when—

The lovely world, and the over-world alike
Ring with a song eterne, a happy rede,
Thy Father loves thee.

The realization of this fact will brighten the shadiest life, and bring rest and joy to the most weary and heavy-laden heart.

Finally, be assured that happiness "cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof." But, if you will be king of self, if you will do each duty faithfully, yet without carefulness, with a cheerful heart and a willing hand; if you will not scorn the seeming trifles of daily life; if you will feed the soul with suitable nourishment; if you will accept the fact that God loves you and that He is love; if you will do these things, then shall your joy be full and abiding, and there will be given to you sweet songs even in the very midnight of sorrow. If there be any other way in which to obtain this so desirable condition of life I know not of it. But as surely as effect follows cause, so surely will you obtain by a fulfilment of the conditions. Then—

Inherit. Let thy day be to thy night
A teller of good tidings. Let thy praise
Go up as birds go up that, when they wake,
Shake off the dew and soar.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR.

MR. EDITOR,—Allow me to briefly add my voice in commendation of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour. So far as I know, the first organization in Canada was in connection with the German Street Baptist Church of this city, and was started by a Portland, Maine, gentleman, who is superintendent of its Sabbath school. The second was in my own Church, St. John Presbyterian, and was organized June 1, 1885. The third was in St. John's Church, Yarmouth, N. S., of which the Rev. Anderson Rogers is pastor. There are nearly thirty societies now in the Maritime Provinces. The meetings of the society have proved an inestimable blessing to many young people in my congregation.

T. F. FOTHERINGHAM.

St. John, N. B., December, 1888.

WINNIPEG HOME MISSIONS.

MR. EDITOR, I write to present the needs of our Presbytery of Winnipeg to the younger ministers of the Church. Our mission stations are chiefly supplied by students of Manitoba College. We have, however, four vacancies, which should have settled pastors. Of these allow me to give a few particulars.

STONEWALL.

Charge of three stations, very compact. Three good churches built. Three good Sabbath schools. Excellent agricultural district. Stonewall village being convenient market. Twenty-one miles from Winnipeg. Railway connection. Salary

raised by people \$850, paid promptly. Supplement \$100. Very soon self-sustaining. Vacant a few months. Former minister called to Emerson. Very desirable charge.

FORT WILLIAM.

Railway town—end of section. Two points on Canadian Pacific Railway main line, East and West Fort William. New church just finished and opened. Large mining district near it opening up. People pay \$700 and house rent. Supplement \$200. This likely to be reduced by increase of local contributions next year. Former minister just left to go as foreign missionary to China. Good opportunity for earnest work.

SPRINGFIELD.

Agricultural settlement ten miles from Winnipeg. One of best municipalities in Manitoba. Two good churches and manse, a third preaching station in a commodious school-house. Very compact charge. Salary paid by people \$760. Supplement \$140. Minister just left for Colorado on account of failing health.

DOMINION CITY.

Station on Canadian Pacific Railway branch ten miles from Emerson. Two main stations. Two good churches. People, if satisfied, will raise \$600 per annum. Home Mission grant \$200. The making of a good congregation. Never been settled. Mostly farmers.

Now here are four excellent charges. In any one of them a man will find a comfortable home. They are all intelligent communities. All are near railway facilities and have good schools, and may be counted on to pay their ministers who may be settled over them promptly. If there are young, energetic ministers of the Church who read this, and would think of giving the North-West a trial, I shall be glad to correspond with them. It will be useless for any but young and hopeful men to come to any of these western communities. The changes among North-West ministers are frequent, but our city and town charges are filling up with men; and were never better manned than they are now, or have the prospect of being. Manitoba as an agricultural country has, I shall say, now gained successful recognition. The bonds of monopoly are broken. The present winter is delightful. The sky to-day is like that of Italy. Hoping to hear from some of the suitable men of the Church.

GEORGE BRUCE, Home Mission Convener.

Winnipeg, December 29, 1888.

THE CROFTERS AND GAELIC-SPEAKING MINISTERS.

MR. EDITOR,—The Presbyteries of the North-West have been most anxious to provide for the spiritual welfare of all the Crofters. During this summer the Rev. M. Mackenzie, of Morden, was asked to visit this same colony. He did so on two occasions, spending some time among them, preaching in Gaelic and dispensing ordinances. The Presbytery of Rock Lake applied for a grant to support a missionary among them and the Assembly's Home Mission Committee immediately acquiesced. Successful efforts were made to secure a Gaelic speaking missionary, and he has begun his labours. The colony south of Wapella have a Gaelic speaking missionary, and had from the outset. The Home Mission Committee made a grant of \$700 the first year towards his support, and \$600 the second year.

Two churches were erected for the settlers at a cost of \$1,500 to the Church and Manse Fund. The colony north of Regina have the services of Mr. Matheson, a Gaelic speaking catechist of marked ability, and the Rev. A. Urquhart, of Regina, dispenses ordinances among them. Finding that Gaelic Shorter Catechism, and tracts, could not be had in Toronto, we sent an order to Scotland. From Dr. Williamson, Convener of the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland, I had a letter, recently, saying that some person gave through him £100 for this work, and asking to whom he was to send the money. The above statements are made to remove misapprehension. The Crofters are welcome to Manitoba—they are proving good settlers, and we will do our best to provide them with Gospel ordinances. We certainly have been, so far, more careful about them than about Canadians, because they are strangers in this big home of ours. The churches in Scotland ought, however, to help us more generously with mission work, and it is their privilege much more than their duty to do so.

JAMES ROBERTSON.

THAT large-hearted Aberdonian, the late Colonel Duncan, the Conservative member for Holborn, says the *Christian Leader*, had a fervour of intense conviction and sympathy in him, not too common in military members of Parliament. Some sentences from the striking speech in which he seconded the Address have been aptly brought to mind during the last week—beautiful in language, touching in feeling, and significant of how an open-minded Conservative saw that sound politics must flow beyond hard legal and economical considerations. "Let us bare our heads," he said, "and bow before the majesty of the uncomplaining poor. It is terrible to think that there are children by thousands who, from the day they open their eyes on this world till the day they close them in death, see nothing but misery and tears and pain. Is this our boasted civilization? Personally we express sympathy for them, but is it not our duty to make the world a little brighter and happier than it is now? Words cannot express the misery that is in our midst. Government means more than administration and law and order; it means also sympathy, and it must be a sympathy which blossoms into fruitful action."