

# THE ANTIDOTE

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## CONCEIT.

It would be difficult to name a vice so innocent towards others as conceit. Your impatience, your apathy, your fretfulness, your carelessness, your garrulity, your extravagance, all these—almost all faults and foibles in the catalogue of human imperfections, have it inevitable to them to inflict harms and vexations on people you have to do with; your conceit never leaves them a whit the worse. And yet there is nothing man resents so much as conceit in his fellow-man. The display of it arouses an aggressive desire for the reformation of the offender, which can only be satisfied by his miserable abashment, and to that end many will take, over a mere casual acquaintance, an amount of trouble which few would think worth while for the cure of downright depravity in any person in whom they had not the immediate interest of near kinship or responsible connection.

While there is a watchful delicacy about even alluding to any other mental or moral defect in the presence of a person known to be one of those possessing conceit, or rather possessed of it, not only pleasantness, but reasonable kindness is constantly set aside without compunction for the sake of giving the conceited one the "giffie" of seeing themselves as "ithers" see them—with their least softening spectacles on. One would think it need not matter much to any one of us if our friend has more admiration for himself than we have for him; yet his fault is one which it is scarcely in human nature to tolerate, and for him charity bears the correcting lash. It is every man's mission to inflict wholesome discipline for his good on the conceited man.

It might be supposed that the peculiar annoyance caused by other people's conceit arises from its bringing with it the sense of offense against our own. The sinner is, we might take it, by over-rating his own gifts, disavowing our superiority or

claiming a vexatious equality; or, if what he thinks much of in himself be something which we do not at all possess, his merit must, in his own mind, at all events, go to prove our deficiency. And probably some of the resentment against conceit does have its source in this feeling; and where the conceit has in it, beyond its own mere unalloyed self-gratulation the ill-flavors of arrogance and assumption, the resentment against it will consciously derive much from such a source. But a homeopathic conflict of conceit against conceit does not account for all. Else why are teachers and even parents so apt to use against this particular evil an asperity which might seem more fitly measured to larger faults which go overlooked? Why do they so commonly infuse a sort of spitefulness into their rebukes and their hints? Why do they feel in the culprit's mortification a pleasure akin to cruelty, which would be far enough from them if the mortification had been never so well deserved by naughtiness?

It is amusing to see the care with which parents, who never think of keeping watch for the young upshooting of other ill-weeds, guard against the tiniest growth of what might come to be conceit. Generally the plan taken is to snub the clever children, and to tell the pretty ones that they are plain and homely. Not much comes of it in any way; and good cannot come. When there is any result it is usually a morbid self-depreciation, which, though a less irritating phase of the malady to other people, is infinitely more harmful in lessening the usefulness, as well as the happiness of the sufferer.

But: oftentimes the clever and the pretty find themselves out betimes, and seeing through the improvingly meant dispraises practiced upon them, take them as compliments, and are the more able to appreciate their gifts and their graces. If their minds are actively employed, they will be none the worse for this knowledge. To be honestly aware of advantages, to feel a pleasure in their possession, even, need no more be conceit than is the swallow's confidence and pleasure in its power of flight.



She—Come around and call on me at any time.

He—Will you always be at home?

She—Not always; I sail for Europe to-morrow.

## SPRING.

"Come, gentle spring!  
Ethereal mildness, come!"

So sang the poet, and so sing we now. We are tired of the changeable March weather, soft and springlike one day and cold and blustering the next. Last Monday was a perfect spring day, and, with a sublime disregard for the old saw, "as goes Monday, so go all the days of the week," the sun set in a soft haze of pink and yellow, giving alluring promise of a fair to-morrow, and we anticipated a particularly enjoyable trip about town. Just now the shops are gorgeous in their display of spring novelties, so, as we watched the soft twilight come stealing in, chasing away the rosy sunset clouds, Monday evening, we resolved that the following morning should find us up bright and early. So it did, but alas for the deceitfulness of human hopes! Instead of the anticipated gloriously spring morning our eyes were greeted by a whirling snowstorm. The sky was of a leaden hue, the ground was covered by a snowy mantle, and the sidewalks were wet and slushy. Not an inviting prospect. It is too bad that Easter comes so early this year, in a way. We can scarcely feel bright and fresh and blooming, and wear the gay springy air that so properly accompanies the festive season, when, only a short time before, the snow fell fast and the wind blew keenly in our faces. We have not yet had time to accustom ourselves to the thought of soft, balmy breezes, bright sunshine, clean, beautiful streets, gay throngs of women clad in fresh, spotless attire, and flowers springing up and over in token of a changed season. We have held our dresses so long to protect them, that our arms have not yet lost the weary feeling that has arisen therefrom. But we shall be far ahead of nature this year. That young damsel has not yet clothed herself in her new garments, and she seems loth to prepare herself for them. Whereas we poor mortals have not her independence and must perforce, willy-nilly, don our smart attire at the appointed time. So begin to get ready, and let me give you a few words of advice before you begin. Make your hat or bonnet a go-between, not too decidedly springy, nor yet not a particle wintry. To accomplish this you must procure one of those dainty new straws, all fancifully twisted and worn so that they scarcely look like straw. Get a small one, and it will be all the more appropriate. Then again, you are permitted this spring to wear a perfectly plain, tight-fitting coat, if you so desire, that is relieved only by a velvet yoke or short cape, you may wear it over your winter's gown, that can be freshened with new trimming at the feet, and no one will be the wiser when you step forth on Easter with your new bonnet and gloves.