

this habit of cheerfulness may not detract from earnestness and true depth of character, let me support what I have said by extracts from two writers, neither of whom, I think; could be accused of undue levity. The first is from the great Dutch philosopher of the 17th century, Spinoza, who in the Forty-second Proposition of the Fourth Part of his *Ethics*, says: "Cheerfulness, contentment (*hilaritas*) can have nothing of excess about it, but is always good; melancholy, discontent (*melancholia*) on the other hand, is always evil." And in his Second Scholium to the Forty-fifth Proposition, "Hatred can never be good," he explains himself thus: "I acknowledge a great difference between mockery, which I have just characterized as bad, and laughter or jest. For laughter and jest also are a kind of gladness; and so, if they have nothing of excess about them, are good. . . . Why should it be held more seemly to satisfy the cravings of hunger and thirst than to drive away melancholy? . . . To use the good things of life, therefore, and to enjoy ourselves in so far as this may be done short of satiety and disgust—for here excess were not enjoyment—is true wisdom."

And Herbert Spencer, the philosopher of our own century, seeking to impress upon his readers the importance of paying a due regard to health, because (among other reasons) of the good spirits that so often accompany good health, writes thus* :—

Data of Ethics," pp. 193, 194.

In estimating conduct we must remember that there are those who by their joyousness beget joy in others, and that there are those who by their melancholy cast a gloom on every circle they enter. And we must remember that by display of overflowing happiness a man of the one kind may add to the happiness of others more

than by positive efforts to benefit them; and that a man of the other kind may decrease their happiness more by his presence than he increases it by his actions. Full of vivacity, the one is ever welcome. For his wife he has smiles and jocose speeches; for his children stores of fun and play; for his friends pleasant talk interspersed with the sallies of wit that come from buoyancy. Contrariwise the other is shunned. The irritability resulting now from failures caused by feebleness, his family has daily to bear. Lacking adequate energy for joining in them, he has at best but a tepid interest in the amusements of his children; and he is called a wet blanket by his friends. Little account as our ethical reasonings take note of it, yet is the fact obvious that since happiness and misery are infectious, such regard for self as conduces to health and high spirits is a benefaction to others, and such disregard of self as brings on suffering, bodily or mental, is a malefaction to others.

Possibly some of my readers may remember an article that appeared a short while ago in the *Nineteenth Century*, called, I think, "Microbes and Sunlight," in which the writer impressed upon his readers the necessity of admitting ample sunlight through the windows; since the microbes or germs of many fevers and other diseases were destroyed by coming into contact with certain rays of the sun. It seems to me that there are certain low forms of moral disease, such as envy, spite, hatred that become torpid, even if they do not actually die, in an atmosphere of habitual cheerfulness, while they flourish most abundantly in gloom and discontent, which act upon the moral nature as blight and fog upon animal and vegetable life, arresting all healthy growth, promoting only that which is pernicious and unwholesome.—*Constance E. Plumpton, Indian Magazine.*