

PRIZE ESSAY.

Cheerfulness.

AWARDED TO MISS ALICE MCNAIR, NELSON, ONT.

Cheerfulness is a trait of character which is the outcome of true goodness within. A cheerful spirit is of necessity a happy spirit, and true happiness is true unselfishness.

It is an unselfishness that will make us enter into the plans proposed by others as heartily as if they were our own. Cheerfulness is not a pleasant manner put on with our best clothes for company. It is daily practising the law of kindness—not doing unto others as they do unto us, but as we *would* they should do unto us. It is not recklessly throwing our cares aside for a brief spell of gaiety; but it is the hope that bears us up while we recognize those cares and estimate them at their proper value.

There is no life so closely guarded but what some trouble, vexation or annoyance creeps in. When this is the case, those who look for happiness in their own plans or in the gratification of their own selfish desires, fail to find it.

Habitual cheerfulness is unfortunately too rare. We are too anxious about the future, and we foolishly worry over the mistakes of the past, when not one anxious thought can make that future brighter, nor one lamentation undo the past.

We may have severe trials to face in the present, and perhaps we think that we are so harassed that to us cheerfulness is an impossibility. We may think that we are so tried that the character will become dwarfed and misshapen. There is no lot in life in which we have been providentially placed where we cannot develop a truly grand character.

Do we not know the fierce flame of affliction need not destroy the good in us? The pure gold of character will only be cleansed and softened into flexibility, to be more readily moulded by the Divine Hand. We make our very disappointments steps to higher things by meeting them cheerfully.

It is not on the smooth sea that a man learns to be a good sailor; but it is amid storm and darkness and danger that the skill, prudence and courage of the voyager are brought out.

Knowing this, believing and trusting in an all-wise God with whom our best interests are safe, is it right to give way to despondency?

Cheerfulness is a great help to our success in life. Worry weakens and unfits us for duty where cheerfulness would strengthen and build us up.

We cannot hold ourselves aloof from our fellow-beings, for every life must come in contact with other lives. Should we not try to help them? They too have their burden to bear. Your kindness may cost you nothing but an effort to be self-forgetful. Even a pleasant greeting will sometimes lighten the load of some weary one.

A cheerful Christian is the Bible-Christian, which the irreligious will believe; they will think a Christianity genuine that gives the possessors more than they have obtained.

This spirit has a great influence for good in the home life. It is an oil which makes the domestic machinery run smoothly. A belief in the beautiful and good is a great safe-guard to the young. A home where "mother always scolds," and "you can't please father no matter how you do,"

drives the young people elsewhere, and too often to their ruin.

The best way to keep constantly cheerful is to live for to-day, with hope for the future; it is in doing our very best to-day, without being discouraged at our failures, that we take a great step toward making this desirable thing our own. We are disheartened when we think that our life may be long years of just such difficulties as those with which we now contend; but surely we can be kind and patient just one day at a time. Like the bee, we should sip the sweets from life's flowers while we leave the poison alone.

Cheerfulness is the complement of a truly beautiful character. Beauty is as ever the chiefest of attractions; but beauty of character ranks high above physical beauty.

Gossip.

Oh! could there in this world be found
Some little spot of happy ground,
Where village pleasures might go round,
Without the village tattling,
How doubly blest the spot would be,
Where all might dwell at liberty,
Without the bitter misery
Of Gossip's endless prattling.

If such a spot were really known,
Dame Peace might claim it as her own,
And in it she might fix her throne,
Forever and forever.
There like a queen might reign and live,
While every one would soon forgive
The little slights they might receive,
And be offended never.

'Tis mischief makers that remove
Far from our hearts the warmth of love,
And lead us all to disapprove
What gives another pleasure.
They seem to take one's part—but when
They've heard our cares, unkindly then,
They soon retail them all again,
Mixed with their poisoned measure.

And then the've such a cunning way
Of telling ill meant tales—they say,
"Don't mention what I've said, I pray,
I would not tell it to another."
Straight to your neighbor's house they go,
Narrating everything they know,
And break the peace of high and low,
Wife, husband, friend and brother.

Oh! that the mischief making crew
Were all reduced to one or two,
And they were painted red or blue,
That every one might know them.
Then would our villagers forget
To rage and quarrel, fume and fret,
Or fall into an angry pet
With things so much below them.

For 'tis a sad, degrading part
To make another's bosom smart,
And plant a dagger in the heart
We ought to love and cherish.
Then let us evermore be found
In quietness with all around,
While friendship, joy and peace abound,
And angry feelings perish.

Life's Longings.

A child ran laughing on the beach,
The sun shone warm and bright
Upon her waving golden hair,
Her tiny form so slight.
"I wonder why the world's so fair,
So full of sun and song;
I wonder why big folks don't laugh
And play the whole day long."

A maid was walking on the strand,
She gazed far out to sea;
Where o'er the sunlit waters rode
A bark so gallantly.
"My love is coming over the waves,
Is coming soon to me,
I wonder how, in this sweet world,
Old folks such shadows see."

A woman stood upon the shore,
Her eyes with weeping red,
Looked sadly on the cruel sea
That ne'er gives up its dead.
"I wonder why the world was made
So dark and full of care,
No wonder that life's burden seems
Too great for one to bear."

Near by the window's ledge they saw
A grandame, old and gray—
The window looking out to sea
Where ships at anchor lay.
"I wonder when my eyes shall see
Life's ship at anchor lie,
Within God's harbor peacefully
For all eternity."

A Simple Baby-Basket.

Among the mysteries of preparation for a little new-comer, nothing is daintier than the baby-basket, with its contents, ready for the first toilette. Very little expense will serve to dress a common willow, reed or Shaker basket, so that it will be as beautiful as need be. The material of the basket is of very little, indeed, no importance, as it is entirely covered by a cambric of pale pink or blue, over which a sheer white muslin, dotted or plain, is drawn in folds or puffs on the inside, and let fall in a full ruffle on the outside, the upper edge of the basket being finished by a quilling of ribbon in color to match the cambric lining. Young mothers usually have their fancies about color, "blue for a girl" and "pink for a boy," and carry it into all this preparatory wardrobe. A basket lined with blue would have a small blue pincushion, a blue and white powder box, though a pretty white one is *babyish*. The basket being covered, and furnished with two inside pockets, should then be filled with all the articles necessary for the first dressing. A piece of narrow bobbin, a small bottle or box of vaseline, a number of small squares of soft linen, for the mouth cleansing, a piece of very soft sponge, a square of pure castile soap. These articles will all be required before the clothes, and should have a prominent place in the basket.

For the dressing on top is found a strip of soft flannel, torn from a piece, and turned over only on the edges, for the band; the little shirt of hand-knit wool, two diapers of old soft linen, the pinning blanket, flannel petticoat and the slip, and a square of flannel or a knit blanket to wrap around the little one when it is carried about.

The baby-basket will be found every morning with baby's toilette articles all ready, and there will not arise confusion in the search for baby's own soap, sponge, etc. For a baby powder, the scented rice powder is not as good as cornstarch to which a small quantity of pulverized orris root is added; this is the purest and best. In addition we should also suggest that a cotton flannel apron, furry side out, is a valuable possession for nurse and mother, as the little one can be taken from the bath on to the lap and rolled up in the apron, which answers at the same time the purpose of a soft towel. For wiping of head and face, an old white silk handkerchief is a good thing to use at the bath. A dainty wrapper, which is very inexpensive, can be made princess in shape, of cheese cloth and cotton wadding. A layer of wadding should be tacked between two of cheese cloth, and fastened at intervals of a few inches by knots of worsted, as in a comfortable, the worsted pale blue or pink. The princess pattern is then laid on and the wrapper cut out, the seams felled on the inside and the edges finished by a button-hole stitch of blue or pink worsted. These little wrappers can be worn after the bath during the morning, and add warmth as well as save the freshness of the slip for afternoon.

M. S. H.

George had proposed, and been accepted. "Well," she said, "I can sing, play on the piano and harp, can paint, and at the seminary I was up in the fine arts and political economy and logic: and I can crochet beautifully, and play lawn tennis, and, and—that's about all, I think. Now tell me what are some of *your* accomplishments, George?" "I haven't got any." "Not a single one?" "Well," he said with a sigh, "if the worst should come to the worst, I think I might be able to cook."