

ness—absence of reflection. But who does not see the absurdity of such a mode of reasoning? It is exactly the reverse of rational. It is a way by which we may proceed swift and sure to the supreme felicity of Buddhism—*nirvána*, extinction, annihilation, nothingness, *non-happiness* if you like, but never shall we reach by it a state of positive enjoyment. Not by *abstracting* from the inborn energies and capacities of our nature shall we ever increase the sum of human happiness, but by *adding* new powers and capacities and supposing them in free and harmonious exercise. The more numerous the points at which we come in contact with the things material and spiritual by which we are surrounded, the greater is the amount of our *potential* happiness, to use a philosophic term, and if we exert our energies aright, as a general rule the greater will be the sum of our actual happiness. As our power of thought develops, things multiply to us, and the ocean of being in which we float extends. Through thought, by which we can grasp the universe, we may reach the very height of ecstasy; without it, we could at best experience only the momentary thrill of a nerve.

But an increased number of relations (not particularly men and women related to us by blood, remember, but relations in the widest sense of the word) involves, on the other hand, the possibility of an intense degree of misery. None of the lower animals can experience one tithe of the afflictions that assail humanity, but neither can they know one tenth of all our joy. And so we shall find that man is at once the happiest and the most miserable of all the things which “breathe and crawl on earth.” In his happiness he is the most blessed of earthly creatures, in his misery he is the most wretched. Through that spirit which is in us, we may reach the bliss of those who gaze on God unveiled, and shout hosanna, or we may endure the unutterable agonies of such as gnash their teeth in outer darkness.

The last and only other reason, we think, that can justly be assigned for the belief which we are combating is, that any little thing—the veriest trifle, may please a child, and that he sees the world in a more brilliant light than that in which a man can see it. As to the first of these avowals—that little things please children, we think it altogether useless. If little things please, little things annoy. A mind that is satisfied with trifles can't be otherwise than shallow. The latter idea, however, is more worthy