

THE ANTIDOTE

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VIRTUE ITS OWN REWARD.

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We can all quote instances of virtue and honesty—chiefly where rare and auspicious incidents have caused some striking displays—becoming the direct causes of high fortunes. But, if as a rule virtue tends to success in life, and if as a rule honesty is the best policy, it can only be because detection of self-seeking, or mis-deeds, or fraud is as some do believe inevitable in the end, or at all events so frequent as practically to make a lasting success by ill means impossible.

If, without being found out, you can habitually make 20 per cent more by dishonesty than by honesty, it is difficult to admit that honesty is the best policy; and if you can keep the reputation of untainted integrity and serve your own interests by fair means and foul as occasion may offer, you cannot but be sure that you are getting wider chances for your advancement than if you use fair means only and forego the foul for virtue's sake. It is not a man's trustworthiness that is profitable to him in his career, but his reputation for trustworthiness, and if he can sacrifice the reality and keep a reputation the profitableness is manifestly all the greater. And thus all that comes of the grovelling system of encouraging moral worth as a good help through the world is logically an argument for keeping appearances securely blameless and acting how it serves the turn.

In minor matters even, our good qualities are serviceable—speaking from the profitable point of view—little or not at all to ourselves; their convenience is to those with whom we are brought in contact. Take unselfishness for instance, what more proper merit to possess, and what merit so un-

productive to its cultivator. You gain literally nothing by it, not even credit for possessing it. You live a life of taking no thought for yourself, and the sensible selfish people round about you accept your ideas as suitable to you, and your way of enjoying yourself, and take no thought for you either. What you give up they get; what you have got, unless unselfishness is its own pleasure, is demonstrably less than nothing.

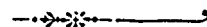
Then that mental mood which is so esteemed in youth that it is always spoken of with the complimentary adjective, the becoming diffidence, which in later years is described as unassumingness or in other negative fashions meaning absence of conceit—you possess, you are becomingly diffident, you are unassuming, and, in consequence, you are permanently snubbed in accordance with the value you ascribe to yourself, and when you try for an appointment to be given on the score of qualifications, you are beaten by any competitor of not half your fitness who is not diffident and not unassuming. You know, say, more than all the duties required, and he next to nothing; but he knows how to make more than the most of himself, your virtue has improved his chance, not yours. So with industry; nine times out of ten your industry will give those you live with or those you work with, more opportunity for airing their idleness. So with liberality, courtesy, punctuality, fidelity, frankness, gratitude; their profitable returns are not for their possessors, to whom, indeed, they may often occasion distinct loss, but for other people. As to good temper, its advantages are too obvious.

My dear little child
Be gentle and mild
For what can you get
By passion and pet?

says one of the pious and persuasive moral songs which instruct our infancy. The argument is strong, but every reasonable infant must see at once that it rests on a false premise; he can get something by passion and pet, he can get his own way. He would make a great mistake in life if he resolved

on being gentle and mild on the what-you-can-get-by-it principle, and he ought not to be so misled.

We ought to make out what we mean, and to teach definitely one system or the other; goodness for its own sake, or goodness for its extraneous rewards. Each system promotes respectability, especially the latter of the two; but in the latter the amount of goodness should be limited by practical considerations. The difference as to the minds of the respective disciples is much like that between the mind of the man who would marry the damsel because she is she, and the man who would marry her because she is so good, so pretty, so well connected, and with such a good fortune of her own to bring to her husband. Of the lovers the second is the wiser; but suppose him mistaken as to the connections and the fortune?



Personal.

Sir Francis Johnson, who has been battling with a severe cold for about a fortnight past, is convalescent. Capt. F. G. Johnson, late of the 11th Hussars, was one of the constant attendants at the bedside of his distinguished father during his illness.

Mr. E. A. Whitehead, our universally popular colonel, is expected every steamer from his trip to Europe, Egypt and Palestine. It is needless to remark that "Bob" visited Jerusalem, and that he does not want to buy it. There is as much "matter in the wrong place"—as somebody aptly defined "Dirt" once on a time—in and around the holy city as would frighten the Health Committee out of a year's growth.

Mr. Charles Cassils, who returned from a transatlantic trip a few days ago with his brother-in-law Mr. Duncan McIntyre, looks anything but the invalid described in a recent city item. Mr. Cassils is the very picture of health and looks as though he was satisfied with the good things of the world of which he certainly has a goodly share. Mr. McIntyre who has been confined to his castle on the mountain slope with a cold is again about among his many friends enjoying such weather as cannot be excelled in the most favored spots of Europe.