

SOCIAL LIFE.

BY A. H. ST. GERMAIN.

God created His beings with capacities for social intercourse. He did not intend that life should consist merely in three score years and ten—to eat, drink, and sleep—with habits, wealth and trade—these blessings alone, will not give vitality to the mechanism of existence. Unconscious humanity requires to be awakened. Knowledge, Truth, Love, Goodness, and Faith, must be possessed by man before he begins to live the life that his Creator designed him to.

The good of society demands Education. A sound mind in a sound body may be a great blessing; but, soundness of mind without mental acquirements gives a man no fair pretensions to merit.

There are various kinds of knowledge; however, man is not expected to learn every kind, but he must not allow his mind to remain a barren desert, or a forest overgrown with weeds and brambles. Not an hour that passes but calls for an exercise of our judgment upon some one thing or other relative to our family, neighborhood or government. It is necessary, then, that we improve our understanding, inform our judgment, and treasure up useful knowledge, and acquire the necessary qualifications to make us useful and honorable members of society, and thereby escape the danger of plunging into folly and guilt.

In early times the youth were trained up to be useful to their country, and were taught to do all they could to promote its welfare. This course of instruction produced characters and actions creditable to reflect upon, and has killed in the breasts of thousands a laudable ambition to imitate those virtues that have appeared admirable in others. Very many people are restrained from associating together to do good owing to conventional forms.—They do not wish to become identified with any society lest they may subject themselves to the frown of some sect, or the anathema of some synod, or the fashion of some clique, or the laugh of some club. Under these influences have many noble impulses and high thoughts been suppressed—neighbors have been afraid of each other, their hands have been bound and their feet fettered. Would that there were more joyful freedom in the social intercourse of communities and individuals.

Selfishness destroys many of the sources of happiness to be derived from social

life, and makes slaves of its subjects, who feel it a relief to part company. It is human nature to be happy and miserable by times; but, it is to be regretted that too many of Adam's erring mortals prefer the privilege of always being miserable. Again, there are those in the world who imagine themselves so exalted in intellect and influence as to cause them to behave with arrogance towards others. This class of persons, however, does not always triumph—their schemes are often nipped in the bud—and sociality and good feeling allowed to take the place of discord and confusion.

Life has no charms without friendship. Virtue, purity of manners, and elevated soul, and a perfect integrity of heart, render friendship true and lasting. To be safe and sure in the means of promoting our social happiness, we should select our companions from the society of the good and virtuous.

Courtesy and politeness towards those among whom we mingle promotes social happiness. We should, in our intercourse with one another in life, avoid giving offence. Bluntness and Gothic freedom are not always agreeable companions in society. Some people say there is a pleasure in what they call "speaking their minds." But what may be an artificial pleasure to them is often a pain to those whose feelings they intended to wound. There are those who aiming at honor and reputation, try these means, but they often reap contempt and derision. Ill-nature has ever been hated; while civility is always courted and esteemed. Narrowness of mind often incapacitates men from taking a correct view of all the complicated influences that cause inconsistencies in their actions; thence it is that a want of prudence and decency are practiced among the bulk of mankind. Thence arise bickerings and dissensions instead of generous and hearty good-will.

Men are too apt, while engaged in disputations, to heap nonsense and reproach on the heads of their opponents, when reason and truth could be as handily employed. We ought to keep our minds free from passion and prejudice, as they give a wrong turn to our observations, both on persons and things. When we desire to make proper observations, let self, with all its influences, stand aside, as far as possible. A great deal of social happiness is destroyed through the thoughtlessness of many who seem never to be done speaking evil of their fellows. It is an old rule, but nevertheless a good

one, that our conversation should rather be laid out on things than on persons.

Impertinencies of discourse, and reproaches of the tongue, should not be tolerated in the social circle. It is a misfortune that mankind act more from habit than reflection. Man is a bundle of habits. If he habituates himself to be abrupt and disagreeable in his manners, he becomes a nuisance in the social gathering, and his absence would always be preferred to his presence. On the contrary, if he be a man of good principles, information and social qualities, his acquaintance is sought after by the good and wise, and he is at once placed in a position to benefit his neighbors intellectually and morally.

How necessary it is, then—in order to fulfil the designs of Providence—that we, in common with others, become possessed of those social qualities and right principles, which will render our days pleasant here, and ensure us a peaceful departure from this transient state.—*Home Journal.*

GENIUS FOR SUCCESS.

I have great confidence (says "Elsie Venner,") in young men who believe in themselves, and are accustomed to rely on their own resources from an early period. When a resolute young fellow steps up to the great bully—the World—and takes him boldly by the beard, he is often surprised to find it come off in his hand, and that it was only tied on to scare away timid adventurers. I have seen young men more than once, who came to a great city without a single friend, support themselves and pay for their education, lay up money in a few years, grow rich enough to travel, and establish themselves in life, without ever asking a dollar of any person which they had not earned. But these are exceptional cases. There are horse-tamers born so, we all know; there are women-tamers who bewitch the sex as the pied piper bedeviled the children of Masada; and there are world-tamers, who can make any community—even a Yankee one—get down and let them jump on its back as easily as Mr. Rarey saddled Cruiser.

"Now, gentlemen," said Shevidan to his guests, as the ladies left the room, "let us understand each other. Are we to drink like men or like beasts?" Somewhat indignant, the guests exclaimed, "Like men of course." "Then," he replied, "we are going to get jolly drunk, for the brutes never drink more than they want."