

this thought is not always associated with charity, but to us this ever appears as one of its ripest fruits. "Of all words," says Christopher North, "ever syllabled by human lips, the most blessed is charity?" Very true, but if this charity is lacking in our judgment of our brethren, does it not resemble sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal? Sir Philip Sidney reminds us that there is no dearth of charity in the world in giving, but there is comparatively little exercised in thinking and speaking. Why should this be so? Methinks it is more necessary for all of us to receive this from the hands of our brethren than to receive gifts of gold and flowers. We have also to think to realise how much man lives and rejoices in the favorable opinions of those he calls his friends. Without this, man really dies in his heart, sickens as if struck by some chilling blight, and hopelessly struggles through a valley of humiliation that has over it the sombre shadow of death. Oh, what a meaning is in that line of Shakspeare's—"Charity, gently to hear, kindly to judge." Is this advice always followed? Is it even attempted to be carried out? I trow not. I know that many shut up their bowels of compassion, close the hand and steel the heart against the entrance of charitable influences, because, possibly, they see this fault and that fault in the brother who appeals by look and voice for the administration of the offices of charity. Many heap hard words and hard thoughts upon helpless lives and with these damn them to brutal neglect. Many there are walking this earth like solitary ghosts, spiritless and cheerless because man has forgotten to hear gently and judge kindly through gossip which rumor has sown abroad. Is this charity? Might we not say with Coleridge:

"Frail creatures are we all; to be the best,
Is but the fewest faults to have;
Look thou then to thyself, and leave the rest
To God, thy conscience, and the grave?"

If that be true, and true it is, that frail creatures are we all, where then is there room for censoriousness in thought and word? Can that

man have the true heart of charity which comes from heaven when he withholds from his brother what is his due? And can he be an example to the baser world of that which it sadly lacks? The longer I live, brethren, the more do I see the need for this branch of charity; the more do I feel that the charity which would manifest itself in gifts, while withholding this, is rotten at the roots. Charity, says the Apostle Paul, "thinketh no evil," and never was it more necessary to show this than to-day. Far more prone are we to think evil than we are to think good of our fellow-men. We have many different methods for classifying mankind, but the most ingenious is that suggested by Max Muller who suggests that mankind should be classified by bright eyes and dark eyes. He means by bright eyes, people who see all that is bright and good; by dark eyes, those who see nothing but what is dark and bad. He holds that we are all born with bright eyes and that as we get spoiled by worldly experience they grow dim and dark. Of this a writer adds: "A kindly view of persons, if sometimes deceived to its loss, repays itself a thousand times for all it suffers before the journey of life is finished," and I believe it. No man suffers in the end for kindly judging, for harboring the best thoughts he can think about another, and for speaking the best words he can speak of a brother. It was this thought that made Shakespeare declare "I will chide no breather in the world but myself, against whom I know most faults." That is charity in its purest essence. I call you then, members of this great Order of the Knights of Pythias, to be an example of this. When Pythias lay in that dark dungeon, awaiting the return of his friend, Damon, say, was he not tempted to judge uncharitably, harshly, yes, almost wickedly, his friend, when he delayed in coming back? Say, was he not tempted to engender base thoughts of the man whose place he occupied, and who had given him his solemn pledge that he would return? Was he not tempted to misjudge and to abjure his friend as unworthy of his sacrifice when he was led forth to the place of death? Yes he was, but Pythias

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