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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

"I would go home."

"Ich mochte Heim; mich zieht's dem Vaterhause," &c.

"I would go home! Fain to my Father's house,
Fain to my Father's heart!
Far from the world's uproar, and hollow vows,
To silent peace, apart.
With thousand hopes in life's gay dawn I rang'd,
Now homeward wend with chasten'd heart and chang'd:
Still to my soul one germ of hope is come,
I would go home!

"I would go home, vex'd with thy sharp annoy
Thou weary world and waste;
I would go home, disrelishing thy poor joy;
Let those that love Thee, taste!
Since my God wills it, I my cross would bear,
Would bravely all th' appointed 'hardness' share;
But still my bosom sighs, where'er I roam,
For home, sweet home.

"I would go home! My happiest dreams have been
Of that dear fatherland!
My lot be there; in heaven's all cloudless scene
Here, fits mirage, or sand!
Bright summer gone, the darting swallows spread
Their wings from all our vales revisited,
Soft twittering, as the fowler's wiles they flee,
Home, home for me!

"I would be home! They gave my infancy
Gay pastime, luscious feast;
One little hour I shar'd the childish glee,
But soon my mirth had ceas'd;
White still my playmates' eyes with pleasure shone
And but more sparkled as the sport went on;
Spite of sweet fruits and golden honey-comb,
I sigh'd for home!

"I would be home! To shelter steers the vessel;
The rivulet seeks the sea;
The nursing in its mother's arms will nestle;
Like them, I long to flee!
In joy, in grief, have I tun'd many a lay,
Griefs, joys, like harp-notes, have now died away,
One hope yet lives! To heaven's paternal dome,
Ah, take me home!"

—Translated from Karl Gerok,
in Sheppard's "Words of Life's Last Years."

Religious.

An Apology for disagreeable people.

BY THE REV. J. DREW, NEWBURY.

CHRISTIAN charity does not consist in admiring the beautiful and loving the lovely. Fine forms, sweet faces, and noble characters may always make sure of a full revenue of adulation and homage, only the jealous and the envious standing out persistently and sullenly against their claims. But to see the good points where they are confessedly few and obscure; to discover excellences where they are deeply overshadowed by failings; and to offer excuses for faults which are too patent either to be concealed or denied—demands an exuberance of goodness and a perspicacity of charity only to be met with here and there; but when met with, most precious, no doubt; in His eyes who has to regard the very best of his servants with infinite indulgence.

There is a class of persons who are for ever valuing themselves at the expense of their fellow creatures. To paint themselves white, it would seem as if they must paint everybody else black. All society is corrupt and foul, but they, by some wonderful luck, have escaped the infection. You can name nothing to the advantage of another, but they will hit on some neutralizing circumstance to place on the other side of the ledger. They cannot see May blossoms or roses, because of the blight which they find on the one and the thorn which they find near the other. Their views of mankind are not so much melancholy as ferocious. If I believed of men as they believe of them, I should feel society to be a nuisance and life intolerable.

And the most forbearing must admit that there is enough of evil in the world to supply abundant pabulum for this kind of malice. Nor is it the object of the present writer to offer any excuse for that evil when it is wilful. When men render themselves obnoxious, to the disgust and abhorrence of their contemporaries, by their vices, he, for his part, would give them over to the scavengers of society, after having strenuously attempted to reform them, to be gathered together and swept into any receptacle where rubbish might be shot, with as little delay as possible. What he desires, however, is to point out that a great deal of what is offensive in a large number of persons is purely involuntary—a misfortune, and not a delinquency—and that by an application of the most ordinary rules of Christian charity, they demand to be regarded with pity rather than censure. In the case of such persons we should endeavour by our sympathy to cheer them, and by our help to lift them up, instead of deteriorating them still further by our neglect, and allowing our contempt to lacerate and wound them.

For it should be considered that many of the things which render others disagreeable to us are attributable to nature. No man can help the shape of his face, the conformation of his features, or the peculiar structure of his body.

Yet it must be confessed that we often meet with something in each of these which renders the subject of it incurably unpleasant. To take an extreme example. The pig-faced lady, if such a monstrosity had ever existed, was no more responsible for her porcine peculiarity than I am for having brown hair and long fingers, although few would be of opinion that the person who could treat her with real respect and kindness had not drunk deep into the spirit of that Gospel which teaches us not to judge according to outward appearances, but to judge righteous judgment. The same may be said of peculiar tempers and temperaments. These are really as natural as our form or height. At the same time they often make their possessor more disagreeable than any degree of physical ugliness or deformity could do. They amount, in fact, to inward deformity; and all of us have met with instances of them which have most severely taxed our charity and patience. But if they are unpleasant to us, they are often a torment to their victim. The amiable and the gentle have no conception of the fierce and life-long struggle by which many others have to subdue and keep under tempers which, if left to themselves, would become absolutely unbearable. As you would pity a person born with a club-foot or a spinal curvature, so you should pity those unhappy brothers and sisters whose heads so quickly generate whirlwinds, and their hearts volcanoes. Or if it has been your misfortune to meet with one of the sulky sort, who will chew the cud of his resentment for days without speaking, and who looks at you as if his bowels were breeding thunder, don't suspect that forbearance will be thrown away even upon such a one. Poor fellow! he cannot help it. Think how miserable he is, like a toad dying of its own poison. If you can extract the venom by your address, or neutralize it by your gentleness, you have done more to merit the gratitude of your species than the surgeon who has cured a cancer, or the physician who has restored a maniac. But some people's manners, you will say, are extremely offensive. The bear and the monkey, the cur and the hedge-hog, the ass and the hog, the snake and the scorpion, as well as innumerable other disagreeable creatures, have all their representatives in human behaviour; and on what ground can you plead for indulgence to these? On the same ground as we have been pleading already. To use a very homely old proverb, "It is the nature of the beast." Possibly some of these, were they so disposed, might improve themselves greatly; but it is a part of their misfortune that they are not so disposed, because, for the most part, they do not perceive that they need improvement. Does the donkey think his own braying ugly? or try to sweeten it into the notes of the nightingale? or put gloves on his feet when he resolves to kick you? And yet you do not hate your donkey, but use him in your service, and try to mend his manners, after all taking care to keep clear of his heels. Elevated to a higher region of motives and efforts, you have only to act on similar principles in dealing with some of your fellow men.

There are others who owe what is disagreeable in their characters and manners to their training. When we reflect how many have had no cultivation, how many an exceedingly deficient cultivation, and how many a wrong cultivation; we shall cease to wonder that the fabric of society is built up of such incongruous materials. Spoiled children, as a rule, make very repulsive members of society. Selfish; pettish; capricious; self-willed, and obstinate, they run their heads against everybody, and are reckless as to whom they offend, so long as they please themselves. But are they chiefly to be blamed for this, or those who ought to have taken better care of their education? Born of folly, nurtured by indolence, and reared by weakness, are they not rather victims than criminals? And as such, do they not merit our compassion rather than our reprobation? And in most cases the influences which act upon human life during its earlier stages are those which impress it with its permanent character; and when it is considered in how many instances these are almost only unfavourable, it will not be viewed as surprising that the result is the production of so much that is repulsive, and even noxious, in the social body.

In other cases the repellent features which strike us in the persons with whom we have to do, may be the result of habit. It is true these may appear to us as more inexcusable than those which arise from either of the forementioned causes; and to a certain extent this must be admitted. Men ought to be masters of their own habits; and were they wise at those periods of life when the repetition of individual acts is fast hardening into settled custom, they would no doubt see to it that a conscientious vigilance should watch over the process. But how many are wise at that time? At any rate, a great many are very foolish and very thoughtless;

and the consequence is that their character gets fixed in forms and contortions anything but pleasant to others. This is, perhaps, the apology that can be offered for smoking tobacco, or taking snuff, or chewing opium; habits which, however delightful to their votaries, make many of their friends feel that they have to persist in liking them under great difficulties. But then, if we would not violate the rules of Christian forbearance, we must submit to the difficulties. It is far easier for us to do this than it would be to them to give up the habit.

Then how large a proportion of the qualities by which a no inconsiderable proportion of our fellow creatures have become anything but agreeable companions are directly traceable to unhappy circumstances! Poor souls! Beaten by the storm, battling with the billows scathed by the lightning, outcasts from the sympathies of those who ought to have loved and cherished them—how can you expect them to be clothed only with loveliness? Disappointments, sorrows, and affliction, leave their traces on their victims, not in lines of beauty or in the graces which attract admiration, but oftener in the bowed form and the wrinkled countenance, and not seldom infirmities of temper and defects of behaviour far more difficult to tolerate, not to say to love. Few things are so painful to contemplate as the wrongs which, willingly or unwillingly, men inflict on each other. How many have laid their hearts down for the inconsistent, the selfish, and the cruel to walk over. And they have walked over them; the only consolation left for the crushed one being the jest of the witling and the jibe of the world. You have seen small wits indulging their pleasantries at the expense of those whose history, were they but acquainted with it, and had they but hearts to understand it, would awaken their deepest sympathy and evoke all their gentlest efforts to soothe and heal. If, for example, the early life of many an amiable girl, who is now scornfully spoken of as an "old maid," were revealed to you in all its confiding love, disappointment, and bitterness, instead of uttering a word or giving way to a look calculated to add a grain to the weight of her great sorrow, you would exert yourself to the utmost to lighten her burden, and to fill the evening of her day with a radiance which was denied to its morning. While passing through society you meet with many disagreeable objects. Most true! But remember, O ye frivolous ones, the process by which so many of them have become disagreeable. They have been betrayed, neglected, wronged, spurred away from those they loved, kicked out into an unsympathizing world, and left to perish, for aught their injurers cared about them, in its streets or its highways. I wonder what you would have thought of Him whose visage was marred more than any man's and his form more than the sons of men. Sorrow left its deep impression on him, and he became as a root out of a dry-ground, having no form or comeliness that men should desire him. Beware, I entreat you, lest you despise his likeness in the scars of those who bear about in their bodies, the marks of the Lord Jesus. Those "marks" may not be beautiful to your carnal eye, but to his juster perception they may be more lovely than all the graces on which you pride yourself, and destined to be transfigured into heavenly beauties when all your charms shall be turned into corruption and dust.

In seeking to win tolerance and consideration for the disagreeable, it is very important to point out the fact that we are all disagreeable to some. There is no accounting for taste. "What is one man's meat is another man's poison." Our likes and dislikes are determined by certain affinities and idiosyncrasies over which we have very little power. The most amiable qualities are disagreeable to some. Even my gentle and most beautiful reader can remember, perhaps, more than one who very cordially dislikes her, and thinks her one of the most disagreeable persons in the world. If, then, others can make such an egregious mistake about you, try just to admit the possibility that you may make slight mistakes about them.

There is also this other consideration to be borne in mind, that the most disagreeable person of whom you can think is amiable in the eyes of a few, and perhaps those few are the very persons who know him best. Somehow or other they see him on a different side from you; and it is not for you to pity their blindness so much as to rectify your own one-sidedness and partiality. Could you see him from the same point of view as they, you too would reverse your verdict respecting him.

Nor should it be forgotten that we ourselves might have been amongst the most disagreeable of mortals. Why not? Nature, and training, and habit, and circumstances might have all combined to make us a species of monster rather than men. You cannot regard exemption from such a calamity as one of the provisions of your birthright. When you meet the most frightful human object in the street, you may say with strict truthfulness to yourself, I might have been like that. Or, I might, if possible, have been still more hideous than that.

And there is yet this other thing to be recol-

lected, that there are really more disagreeable qualities in us all than we are apt to suspect. No estimate is so delusive as that of vanity; and we are all more or less vain. If we had the gift for which poor Burns sighed, "to see ourselves as others see us," it might have the effect of taking us down a little in our own esteem; and while we were thus declining, others might, through the very same process, be rising in our regards. Self-knowledge is always helpful when we would make due allowance for the defects we meet with in our fellow men.

But the grand consideration is, that we have all rendered ourselves very offensive in the sight of God. If He should mark our iniquities, and loath our pollutions, and recoil from our deformities, what would become of the best of us? Yet this is the true point of view from which to consider the matter. The surest way to know men is to know the Lord of men; and this is the only sure way of knowing ourselves. In that light the eye is not apt to be deceived. It helps us to understand human character in two ways—by showing us what it ought to be, and how far it comes short of what it ought to be. The moral elements of the Divine character constitute the archetype of human character. As we approximate to these we are good and beautiful; as we recede from these we are deformed and evil. Love and righteousness, beneficence and holiness, veracity and faithfulness—what are these, but the very basis of Divine excellence and the model after which he has constructed the moral universe? They are, then, the basis of all human excellence and the pattern to which the life of every one of us is bound to conform. Possessed of them, we are amiable; destitute of them, we are hateful. And which of us is not obliged to plead guilty to this destitution? "We have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God." O wonderful patience, that has borne with such degeneracy as ours! After this shall we think it hard to bear with the infirmities of any? Can any one be so obnoxious in our sight as we all are in the sight of the infinitely pure and perfect One? And what has his love devised to hide our nakedness, to conceal our deformity, and to heal our corruption? It places us in a cleft of the everlasting Rock, lays upon us the sheltering hand of incarnate Deity accepts us in the Beloved, imbues us with renewing grace, and puts upon us all the beauties of the Redeemer. And shall we learn nothing from goodness like this? Let love like his plead for the faults of our fellows. Let that love invest them with its own mantle. Let it lend them help to rise if they are fallen; encouragement to hope if they are desponding; assistance to wash if they are polluted. And then we can look away with them to the society in which none will be disagreeable, to the state where all will be beautiful, and to the place where that beauty will be mirrored in every object, and admired by every companion—perfectly loved and perfectly loving for ever.

Flowers in Churches.

Flowers are not of man. They are Divine. Man can, by culture, develop all that God has hidden in them; but can add nothing to them, nor can he invent or build them. It is scarcely possible to pervert them to bad uses. Flowers and music may be used by bad men. But, unlike painting or sculpture, they cannot themselves be made to represent any evil thing. A very simple and plain room is made elegant by the presence of a few flowers. The interest of the money spent in ridiculous architecture would furnish many churches with an offering of simple flowers for every Sabbath of the year. For God has made flowers for everybody.

They are next in abundance to the great elements—air, light, water. The poorest man has a roadside flower garden. No mission church is so poor that it cannot afford wild flowers upon the altar, and a few assorted leaves in the windows. How strangely would woman's hand light up the dreary plaster wall and frigid seats of many a church room, if permitted to garnish them with those field-thoughts of God.

At first many will shrink from seeing flowers on the speaker's desk or on the pulpit. But why? Let any man attempt to give a reason. Why shall woven flowers in the carpet be proper, and flowers in your children's hand—but improper on the desk? Is the place too holy? But is it holier than God, and are not flowers his peculiar workmanship? If God deemed it suitable to his dignity and glory to occupy his mind with making and preserving such innumerable flowers, are we wise in disdaining them, or considering the place too sacred for God's favorites? Do men reflect that God has been pleased to name