

human possibility; more than health can sustain or temper endure with equanimity. Her allotted and irrational task is, haply, to render the actually dull, idle, or perverse child equal in attainments with the talented and willing; the early and fatally spoiled, sweet-tempered and tractable.

It is lamentable thus to mark some members of the community wasting and flinging away the precious means of improvement, Time, as if it were a burden and torment, instead of a creative power for happiness, while others are condemned to use it for their own physical destruction; toiling, striving night and day; pining for a breath of the pure winds of heaven; for flowers, music, and leisure to realize the presence of happiness should its beams for an instant flash athwart their dreary and desolate path! In illustration, let us glance for a moment at the study of a literary man. The sun of Fame, which usually delays its longed-for dawn until in weary watches the healthful energies of its worshipper begin to expire, has not gilded with its brilliant, though fitful splendour, the leaves of his elaborate and grief-shaded productions. Age has not blanched his cheek, silvered his hair, or stolen the brightness of his eye; but unceasing toil and irrequiet disappointment have rendered hectic the once natural bloom on his countenance, and dimmed the flashing light of his proud glance. Hour after hour, energy after energy, hope after hope wanes in the deadly struggle for existence; for slight the sustaining fuel furnished for the spirit's consuming fire, and thus it feeds on the brain,—a self-immolation, perchance to be recognized by an evanescent coronal of posthumous renown.

In the meanwhile, the vain satellites of conventional greatness, as they revolve round their mock luminaries, wealth, hereditary honors, or worldly applause, often possess the liberty of enjoying all that earth can bestow, possess what they are yet unable to enjoy, because unformed by education to value; because the pure pleasures of life are attainable only by those who have pure, simple, and natural tastes. And lower in the lists of rank and wealth, others are seen selfishly and sinfully straining after mere effect, denying themselves, and all unfortunate enough to be under their iron jurisdiction, comforts and innocent relations, in order that they may be known to the world as possessing luxuries which they have not leisure, refinement, or even conscience to feel and estimate; that they may act the part of affluence on the stage of life, while they secretly bind themselves with the fetters of slavery; that their whole existences may be a brilliant but freezing falsehood, to be unmasked, haply, by the cold finger of relentless Death; would they but strive for a noble aim, for that alone which is truly noble, because alone hallowed by Divine wisdom. Would they but sacrifice for it what they daily sacrifice for ignoble purposes, health, credit, life, even, it would be a sight worthy of the age of improvement, and eventually they would infallibly reap an ineffable reward. But it is hard to strive for a mere animal existence, though even such a trial may be sanctified by religious patience and faith; while to see rational beings living alone in the opinions of others, slaves of a humour and creatures of a whim, is not only a despicable but a most melancholy sight. Oh! that the limited circumstances would but take an independent course, would dare to appear what they are, to relinquish what they cannot with virtue retain, and acquiesce in the decrees of Omnipotence; that heads of families would be just to their dependents, and the legislative heads of empires equally so to theirs, taking care that they eat not the bread of idleness, and luxuriate not upon the hard-earned tributes of other classes of the population—and that they would bestow honors and wealth where they alone are due: then might we hope for a more equitable balancing of the labors of the earth, and a more equal adjustment and appreciation of the pure blessings and unconventional enjoyments of our probationary state!

From the London People's Journal.

ON SENSIBILITY.

BY JEFFERY A. MARSTON.

Sensibility is that peculiar structure or habit of mind which disposes a man to be very easily moved or affected by the objects and events around him. There are some whose nervous system is so grossly formed, and whose spirits flow in so thick and sluggish a current, that they are incapable of any sensations save those of animal appetite. Such being literally out of flesh and blood, live for no other purpose than to consume the fruits of the earth; they doze away the days of their existence without partaking of any enjoyment superior to that felt by the herds in the field; and at the end of their days, provided they have enough and to spare, they lie themselves down, insensible to the high destinies of an immortal soul, to take their last uninterrupted sleep. On the contrary, there are some whose nature has framed in so delicate a mould that they are sensible of every impression, whether of joy or grief. To such persons not only is every actual occurrence a source of interest, but their vivid and fertile imagination is always busily employed in creating innumerable fictitious causes of vexation and delight.

Between these extremes there are, of course, many shades of temper and character, diversified by nature or education. That education, as well as nature, is concerned in the formation of this trait of character, is palpable from fact and experience. Though some of the seeds of sensibility are sown in every mind by nature, favorable circumstances are, nevertheless, requisite to bring the tender plant to its full maturity. Children whose natural dis-

positions in this respect are nearly alike, will discover more or less of this quality according to the influences by which they are surrounded, and according to the degree of culture which has been bestowed upon them; and at a maturer age it is most generally found that certain employments and professions are more favorable to sensibility than others, and that they who are daily called upon to exercise the affections commonly discover a greater degree of sensibility and tenderness than they who give themselves up to the inactivity of a retired and solitary life.

Sensibility being, then, not merely the gift of nature, but capable of voluntary diminution or improvement, the due regulation of the heart in this particular must form an essential branch of self-government; and it becomes an important question whether we should restrain and, as much as possible, repress our tender feelings; or whether wisdom and virtue require us to cultivate and strengthen them with diligence.

It has always been observed that the most elevated and exalted characters have been those who, together with strength of intellect and power of capacity, have possessed an ardour of spirit and glowing sentiment which has led them on to great and glorious deeds: and it must be perfectly obvious to every one who contemplates human nature with impartiality, that man is a being who necessarily depends in a very great measure upon external objects, and that the human species must be capable of enjoyment and exertion in proportion to the power of the impression these are enabled to make on the feelings. What is, in fact, the very essence of enjoyment but an agreeable perception of impressions made upon the senses, bodily or mental? Thus it were easy to refute the sophistry of those who, having absorbed their feelings in abstruse speculations or benumbed them by solitude and inactivity, have been desirous of depreciating enjoyments which they are no longer capable of relishing, and denouncing pleasures which their pursuits have rendered unattainable: but false philosophy is not the only enemy to pure pleasures; they meet with still more powerful opposition from that tyrant to which all the world is disposed to pay such implicit obedience,—Fashion. From an affectation of superior wisdom, or perhaps through envy of pleasures which their souls, debased by criminal indulgence, could no longer enjoy; some have pronounced it a proof of ill-breeding to melt in sympathy at a tale of distress, to shed a tear for the misery of others, or give way at all to any of the natural expressions of tenderness. The crowd, to save themselves the trouble of thinking, and to avoid the discredit of being singular, take up their opinions with the customs of the day, and easily pass from the extreme of false and absurd delicacy to that of affected insensibility; and now it seems to be the fashion to assume an air of indifference upon the most interesting occasions; every appearance of tenderness and sympathy is ridiculed; those natural expressions of sensibility which give the first charm to beauty and the highest polish to youth are disguised, and nature is abolished to introduce a kind of stoicism of which the father of the sect might be ashamed.

Sensibility is not only enjoyment but an aid to virtue. We invariably regard the appearance of this temper in children as the dawning of an honest and excellent character. Where the parent observes his child discovering a tender heart, not in weak fears and alarms at imaginary dangers, but by dropping an involuntary tear at hearing a tale of sorrow, by entering with ardour into the feelings and interests of his companions, by giving unprompted and unsolicited alms to the poor and afflicted, and by treating the brute creation with humanity; these indications of generosity and kindness are viewed with inexpressible delight. From these indications the fond imagination frames the most pleasing hopes and brightest prospects. However the gay and dissipated may affect to treat this quality with contempt, its value is known and estimated by all who have retired from the public walks of pleasure to the tranquil abodes of domestic happiness. In the cottage and the desert the precious gem of sensibility is found, affording the poor and unlettered peasant delights which many a prince and philosopher might envy. A portion of this treasure, it has been said, is sometimes given to the roughest peasant who traverses the bleakest mountains; and happy is the cottage where the charm of it resides. Without sensibility the satirist and novelist would write in vain. The poet would sweep his lyre, and its tones would find no echo in our hearts; for the halo of delight which is thrown round literature is imparted by sensibility.

In the most interesting concerns and the most trying situations of life, the man who possesses a tender heart is the one in whom we repose our confidence, and to him we look up for comfort. We do not wish to connect ourselves in business with a man whose insensibility would allow him to pursue the straight road of selfishness without regard to the calls of generosity, but rather with him whose feelings prompt him to consult his neighbour's interests as well as his own. In the hour of misfortune, when cast down in the vale of poverty, we wish not as a friend one who, through insensibility or an affectation of wisdom, would bid us laugh at the caprices of fortune or despise her frowns; but one with tender sympathy, who can make our care his own, and by acts of delicacy, which true sensibility dictates, to assist in relieving our burden. And when disease or decay shall bring us to the verge of the grave, what is so encouraging as the presence of a friend, whose tender heart will instruct him to listen with interested attention to our tale of life; whose gentle hand will soothe the bed of death, and

whose calming accents will whisper repose to our departing spirit.

If such be the value of tenderness, surely it ought to be our constant care, in the pursuit of pleasure, to cultivate sensibility; for it we keep our heart to this end, it will prevent the intrusion of selfishness and its train of sordid passions: why should we blunt our native feelings or damp their ardour at the shrine of avarice or ambition? for there can be no room for tender feelings when the avenues of the heart are corrupted by unlawful desires, or the genial current of the soul frozen by self-indulgence. We shall never repent doing good. Generosity brings its own reward, if not in this world, at least in that to come—for the great summary of the Christian precepts is to love our neighbor as ourselves, and how can we do this without sympathy and sensibility?

From the Halifax Guardian.

SMILES AND TEARS.

There are jewels in this world of ours,
And language calls them smiles,
Each like a star of magnitude,
Some mortal care beguiles,—
They dwell upon the human face,
They shine on every lip,
They are bright things of mystic power,
The sunbeam's light they sip;
Oh! desolate indeed were earth,
Did they not linger here,
Upon each storm cloud of the soul,
Beside each wave of fear.

There are dew-drops in this world of ours,
Chastening life's onward years,—
They shed a softening, hallowed balm,
We gently call them—tears.
They linger on the pale, sad face,
Their fountain is the soul,
And few are found, who may not yield
Unto their sad control.

This earth hath more of smiles than tears,
And it, indeed, is well,
For tears proclaim a troubled heart,
While smiles, of gladness tell.
And whose the breast that would not joy,
To hear such truthful tale,
That earth hath more of happiness
Than sorrow to assail?

We love to see those priceless smiles
Upon the youthful face,
For they impart to every form
A beauty and a grace,
They speak of hope and merriment,
Of all glad things and pure:
We gaze, admire, and vainly wish
Their lustre may endure.

We love to see them when our hearts,
Beat light and gay the while,
Then we turn with fresh and bounding pulse
To meet a kindred smile.

But there are moments when the soul
Is wrung by sorrow's grasp;
When all the dear, best things of life,
Are taken from our clasp;
When earth is dim, when hope has flown,
And sick we turn away,
From sparkling eyes and smiling lips,
That melt our glance to day.

Oh! in these moments there is balm
To soothe the spirit's fear;
A sympathy, a power and love,
In friendship's holy tear.

'Twere better far that earth should have
Bright smiles alone to wear,
But here below, grief waxes by joy,
And hope beside despair.
We love the light of human smiles,
In life's glad, hopeful years,
But when the heart is crush'd and wrung,
We find relief in tears. M.J.K.

THE HABIT OF THE FUR SEALS.

In the month of May, with something like the regularity of an almanac, the Fur Seals make their appearance on the island of Saint Paul, one of the Aleutian group. Each old male brings a herd of females under his protection, varying in number according to his size and strength; the weaker brethren are obliged to content themselves with half a dozen wives, while some of the sturdier and fiercer fellows preside over harems that are two hundred strong. From the date of their arrival in May to that of their departure in October, the whole of them are principally ashore on the beach. The females go down to the sea once or twice a day, while the male male morning, noon, and night, watching his charge with the utmost jealousy, postponing even the pleasures of eating and drinking and sleeping, to the duty of keeping his favourites together. If any young gallant venture by stealth to approach, any senior chief's bray of beauties, he generally atones for his impudence with his life, being torn to pieces by the old fellow, and such of the fair ones as may have given the intruder any encouragement, are pretty sure to catch it in the shape of some secondary punishment. The ladies are in the straw about a fortnight after they arrive at Saint Paul's;

about two or three weeks afterward they lay the single foundation, being all that is necessary of next season's proceedings; and the remainder of their sojourn they devote exclusively to their young. At last the whole band departs, no one knows whither. The mode of capture is this.—At the proper time, the whole are driven like a flock of sheep, to the establishment, which is about a mile distant from the sea; and there the males of four years, with the exception of a few that are left to keep up the breed, are separated from the rest and killed. In the days of promiscuous massacre, such of the mothers as had lost their pups would ever and anon return to the establishment, absolutely harrowing up the hunter, accustomed as they were to such scenes, with their doleful lamentations.

From Stuart's Expedition into Central Australia.

HEAT IN AUSTRALIA.

The ground was thoroughly heated to the depth of three or four feet, and the tremendous heat that prevailed had parched vegetation, and drawn moisture from everything. In an air so rarified, and an atmosphere so dry, it was hardly to be expected that any experiment upon it would be attended with its usual results, or that the particles of moisture, so far separated, could be condensed by ordinary methods. The mean of the thermometer for the months of December, January and February, had been 101, 104, and 101 deg. respectively in the shade. Under its effects, every screw in our boxes had been drawn, and the horn handles of our instruments, as well as our combs, were split into fine laminæ. The lead dropped out of our pencils; our signal rockets were entirely spoiled, our hair, as well as the wool on the sheep ceased to grow, and our nails had become as brittle as glass. The flour lost more than eight per cent of its original weight, and the other provisions in a still greater proportion. The bran in which our bacon had been packed was perfectly saturated, and weighed almost as heavy as the meat; we were obliged to bury our wax candles; a bottle of citric acid, in Mr Brown's box became fluid, and escaping, burned a quantity of his linen; and we found it difficult to write or draw, so rapidly did the fluid dry in our pens and brushes. It was happy for us that a cooler season set in; otherwise I do not think that many of us could have much longer survived. But although it might be said that the intense heat of the summer had passed, there were intervals of most oppressive weather.

From Marsden's History.

WOMEN OF SUMATRA.

The rites of marriage among the Sumatrans consist simply in joining the hands of the parties, and pronouncing them man and wife, without much ceremony, excepting the entertainment which is given upon the occasion. But little apparent courtship precedes their marriages. Their manners do not admit of it; the young people of each sex being carefully kept asunder, and the girls being seldom trusted from under the wings of their mothers. With us courtship includes the idea of humble entreaty on the part of the woman who bestows person and property for love. The Sumatran, on the contrary, when he fixes his choice, and pays all that he is worth, for the object of it, may naturally consider the obligation on his side, but still they are not without gallantry; they preserve a degree of delicacy towards the sex which might justify their retorting on many of the polished nations of antiquity, the epithet of the barbarians. The opportunities which the young people have of seeing and conversing with each other are at the public festivals. On these occasions the persons who are unmarried meet together and dance and sing in company. It may be supposed that the young ladies cannot be long without their particular admirers. The men, when determined in their regards, generally employ an old woman as their agent, by whom they make known their sentiments, and send presents to the female of their choice. The parents then interfere, and the preliminaries being settled, a feast takes place. At these festivals, a goat, a buffalo, or several, according to the rank of the parties, are killed, to entertain not only the relations and invited guests, but all the inhabitants of the neighbouring country, who chose to repair to them. The greater the concourse, the more is the credit of the host, who is generally on these occasions, the father of the girl. The custom of the Sumatrans permit their having as many wives as they can compass the purchase of, or afford to maintain; but it is extremely rare, that an instance occurs of their having more than one, and that only among their chiefs. This continence, they in some measure, owe to their poverty. The dictates of frugality are more powerful with them than the irregular calls of appetite, and make them decline an indulgence from which their law does not restrain them.

From Gear's Notes of a Two Year's Residence in Italy.

ROME.

What a tide of reflections occupy the mind—what emotion stir the heart, on first beholding Rome. There is not only grandeur in the sight but in the thought that we behold her; we feel as if ennobled by the destiny which has brought us higher to ponder amidst scenes so renowned and sacred. Rome still seated on her seven hills stretched away before us; the city—the vicinities of whose fortresses