

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HAPPINESS.

This second paper, under the auspices of the Guild of Health, was prompted by the fine Editorial in our Journal some weeks ago, entitled "Radiating Happiness," so full of beautiful thoughts; and we shall take the liberty of quoting from it to illustrate the viewpoint this paper sets forth.

If we would seek a perfect object lesson in happiness, yonder little child, playing by the seashore holds the secret! Look at him building sand castles! filling his tiny bucket with water and pouring it into the trench which he has dug, laughing and chattering all the while in happy-hearted glee!

He is radiating happiness in its perfect simplicity, and simple perfection; because he cannot help it any more than the sun can help shining or the flowers scenting the air.

Oh, happy childhood! Thine attributes come direct from the Divine, unfettered, fresh, and free! In later life we hedge ourselves round by conditions which prove our undoing, and dam up the stream of pure fresh impulse by caution and conventionality.

How can we retain the freshness of that childlike happiness? By retaining that simplicity, which is in itself a great possession! 'Tis not enough to say: Try happiness! We have often tried it and failed miserably. Why? Because we were looking from without inwards; instead of from within outwards. Happiness is just the reflection of faith and love.

Your correspondent says: "How beautiful if the love of God would suddenly enter everyone's heart"? Is His love not our present possession? Though so often an unappropriated or only half-used blessing. It would help us in our constant contact with sick folks and with life in general if we grasped the *right end* of this fundamental fact. We have grown so used to think that the spiritual side of our nature is to be acquired and cultivated from without, rather than developed from within, and it needs a mental effort to change round.

In the language of to-day, we have been viewing life from the *negative* rather than from the *affirmative* aspect. Try the latter, friends in the profession, and you will soon have the assurance that the Life Power of the Eternal comes from within, and happiness is enshrined in the heart of every human being; and here, *en passant*, let us recommend the Guild of Health, whose offices are at 3, Bedford Square, W.C.1, as a centre for earnest seekers after Truth, where one finds "The fellowship of kindred minds." Not that any society or church can do for us what God intended we should do for ourselves, but the Guild, like the church, is a big brotherhood for mutual helpfulness. "The unhappiness of the world has its root in personal selfishness," are the Editor's trenchant words, and in that sentence she touches one of the fundamentals in the "Psychology of Happiness."

No individual, no family, no community, no

nation, can be really happy if self plays *any* part in its mental or moral fabric. That is a big assertion, but life bears us out. One hears a lot just now about the "Ideals of Rotary," the motto of which is "Service not Self," and one of the eminent leaders in the movement (Mr. A. F. Sheldon, of Chicago) said the other day: "Selfishness is the road to self-destruction, and service to others the road to self-construction."

Look at nature, that wonderful servant, who reveals her secrets to those who love her. The beauty of tree and flower, the glory of the sunshine, the ripple of the sea upon the shore, the magnificence of the storm, the wonder of seed-time and harvest! She gives all, asking for nothing in return, and thereby radiates happiness.

We nurses want to attain just that attitude of mind where happiness lives and grows, and at the centre of our consciousness dwells the "Motive Power" which we call God, ready *always* to work in and through the human mind and will, *whenever we desire and acknowledge It*. And our mental vision is so focussed that we see only *the best* in every circumstance of life, and never look for less than that.

WE GET OUT OF LIFE JUST WHAT EXACTLY WE PUT INTO IT.

We get out of life just what exactly we put into it. Neither more nor less! The old Book says: "What a man sows that shall he also reap," and by being true to the best we know, better and higher is revealed.

Happiness comes from within! No need to minimise the strenuous life and great responsibility of the trained nurse. These make us look grave, and sometimes feel old, but the hardest and most trying day in hospital or elsewhere can be bright in selfless happiness. No "flies in the ointment," though! Neither jealousy nor bitterness nor unkind criticism can hob-nob with happiness, nor can a dull, severe countenance.

Happiness sits enthroned within the citadel of your being, awaiting and longing for the opportunity of service. 'Tis a spiritual possession! Open the windows of that citadel and the sunshine of happiness will warm and help you!

This is to apply an Eternal Law which has been in operation since the beginning of time, but which somehow we have misinterpreted! Its application too, relieves us from the irksomeness of "trying to do" something which is difficult, instead of "being" what nature intended us to be.

The power to will and to be is already ours; therefore, we need no longer grumble "I want to be happy," but confidently assert "*I am happy*." The more we draw from that Citadel of Supply, the greater becomes our capacity for happiness and service.

Trials and sorrows come, but nothing but our deliberate act of rejection can rob us of our inheritance of the same happiness as that in which all Nature rejoices. Not the meagre reflection of a "little candle" may be ours then, but something of the warmth and healing power of the sun.

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