

ON LAUGHTER

Laughing is such a common action that it seldom comes to our attention, but, when we do consider it, we can easily recognize what a great part good laughter plays in making life cheerful and enjoyable. Every day we see many people laughing, but I wonder how much of this is good laughter, laughter which does no harm to anyone else and provides a little amusement for themselves. Sometimes people laugh because they see someone else doing so, or because, while they half-listen, their minds are far away, and they laugh only because they think they should, although there is absolutely no amusement for them in such laughter. When a man is not in the spirit of it, his laughter cannot ring true. The chief reasons for laughing are that one is amused at something or has a feeling of derision towards someone, and, instead of making a sarcastic remark, he expresses his sarcasm by means of a laugh, which is worse than sarcasm and is anything but true laughter. This form of laughter is commonly called the "horse-laugh," and is one of the quickest known methods of losing friends and acquiring enemies.

Any person with a good sense of humor is bound to laugh a great deal, and such a person is a God-sent gift to any company, except one composed of those who have absolutely no such sense. He is a man who can see the humorous side of anything, "the silver lining in every black cloud." If he is ever in a tight corner with others, he will be the one to cheer them up and lead them out of it. A large number of men whose motto is "Never give up" belong to this class. On the other hand, we have the man entirely devoid of a sense of humor. He is to be pitied indeed. He is ever a pessimist. He will never have any peace on earth, and no one around him will ever have any either. What a difference between these two types of man. The optimist with his sense of humor is a jolly, carefree fellow, with a broad, good-humored face and mouth, and sparkling, joyful eyes. He is inclined more to stubbornness than to slenderness. A good example of the pessimist, the man without a sense of humor, is a tall man, long in every respect, with long legs, long arms, a long, stern, melancholy face, a high forehead, and dark, somber eyes. The optimist is much

the better type of man, and I would advise those who have no sense of humor to begin the cultivation of one immediately. However, each of these men is only one type of his class. We must not conclude from this that everyone in the world belongs either to one type or to the other, because many people may belong to the same class and be entirely different as to some of their characteristics.

The benefits derived from laughter are many. If a person is in the proper mood, it will mellow his soul, will give him a warm feeling towards his fellow men, and will make him a better companion. The sense of humor and other characteristics which inspire laughter will make his path through life easier. They will eliminate much worry throughout the course of a man's life and thus will tend to lengthen out his years; for, generally speaking, it is not the amount of work but the amount of worrying a person does which cuts short his life.

True laughter always has a good effect on others. If they are downcast, it will make them forget their troubles for the moment and will cheer them up a bit. Good laughter will also quickly attract friends to a man. Laughter of the wrong kind, however, has just the opposite effect. Derisive laughter wounds the pride of that person at whom it is directed. If we constantly indulge in it, it will sour our soul, fill us with bitterness, cause us to lose many friends and acquire many enemies.

Good laughter is an asset to anyone. From the reasons already given, we can see that it is a help both to the laugher and to others who hear him. He is bound to have numerous friends. He goes through life, taking things as they come, freed of many of the worries which consume so much of the energy of most men. He becomes happier, more contented with himself and with others, and he also becomes a worthy citizen of any community.

J. McC., '32



Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind,
As man's ingratitude.

—Shakespeare