

The Pleasure of Memory.

WE spend many pleasant moments in thinking over the past. Those thoughts come unbidden and linger long in our minds. It has been well said that to thus enjoy one's earlier years is to live twice. Certain it is that at all times we find much pleasure in recalling those scenes that have legibly inscribed themselves in memory's pages.

All life is thus reviewed in one short space. Who cannot recall his past and gain pleasures therefrom? Who of us cannot pass again through childhood's happy days, its innocent and simple joys? What thoughts arise when we recall those dear to us in early life, when we reflect upon that time in which our whole mind was centred on that being who fashioned us to all that was true and good. We clearly recall the mother's hand was then our only guide, in our brighter hours it thrilled with joy and in our darker moments calmed the griefs of childhood. As each picture passes through the fancy we love to linger over it.

In memory we have passed the first stage of life, we have reached that period when, as many can recall, we looked forth into the world and saw there only alluring promise and sweet rewards for those who would but seek them. We feel again in all its power that restlessness which then took possession of us—that desire for something indefinite which the world outside would furnish, but which has ever eluded our grasp and for which, now, we look to another, a longer and brighter future.

Memory recalls that youth had not the wisdom of maturer years. It recalls our eagerness to leave the scenes of early life to seek a new field for labor and for triumph in the world of apparent opportunities beyond. The hesitation to cut ourselves apart from the past is remembered; but this was overcome and the day of

separation came at last. What regrets wrung the heart! How valiantly we strove to suppress those inner feelings that spoke our true selves. Each object with which in daily life we had been familiar, now had a new a greater charm, and often as we looked upon it a feeling of compunction arose that separation should come through our action.

How vividly that parting scene is imprinted in the mind. The lapse of years has not dimmed it from memory's sight. We hear again the parents' parting words. They are few; the world's way is known to them. Perchance they feel that we must learn through experience the truth of that bold maxim that declares that only in its school are we made wise. We see again the mother as when she offered up that parting prayer; perhaps now we would listen to that quiet voice that then suggested that all was not worth her tear.

What is this charm that brings the dead to life, that calls up those scenes from the distant past and makes us live through them each time they are recalled? That calm survey of our every action, though years may have added one to another since its performance, is made by memory. By its enchantment the past becomes the present, those distant are with us in all but reality, old age lives once more the years of youth, it acts through every circumstance, it defies all restrictions of time and space, it enables us to quietly breast the stream of life till it is lost among the sunny slopes of childhood.

The impressions that the mind received while the years fast spent themselves are the treasures which memory offers for our use. During our busy lives those stores have been heaped up that, as time passes, we may seek consolation for the present in those remembrances of the past or be moved to greater endeavors by recalling the works already accomplished.

The portrait of an absent friend brings back that friend to mind and causes us to ponder over our relations to him in the time gone by; so each memory links itself to another, each thought calls forth an answering thought and, as it is most natural to fly what

is gloomy, the sad memory vanishes to give place to that more pleasing.

When we return to some once familiar scene and miss those faces that formerly greeted us, a feeling of sorrow takes possession of us. Perhaps it is the home of our youthful days. Many years have passed since we last beheld it. We see around it the once well-known objects but those who were dear to our hearts are gone. As we look back a flood of memories sweep through the mind. Every object brings a thought of earlier life, round each we played our childhood games. Those who sported with us are gone—our oldest friends. The brother long since has ended life's journey: he too tasted the world's joys, its disappointments, and now rests after his earthly labors. Tears dim the eye, but memory ever active brings back the past that this grief may be assuaged. Again we are children together, once more we join in pastime with all youth's eagerness. The happy days live again in mind, years do not separate us! Our grief gives place to the guilelessness of tender years; the heart forgets its pain. We are as of old, memory has placed us in the past and life with all its early joys has but begun.

Now that we possess a small amount of knowledge, it is a pleasure to reflect over our first ventures in its pursuit. That day on which we first sought other teachers than those who daily instruct the unlettered, barefoot boy, is often recalled. A new and wonderful vision of the world was then placed before our eyes. The hallow halo that surrounded our earlier years was gone. Since that day the world has opened its great volumes to us, but we think how we first took part in its struggles, its cares that end only with the vision of an endless day.

The scenes of schooldays are ever treasured memories for us. The master's voice would not now be disregarded; we would listen with rapt attention to his wise maxims; we would no longer shun the tasks imposed on us; even those verses on which we then looked with such disfavor would be a pleasure to memorize; eagerly would we strive to master them. Now though other thoughts fail to fill the brain with

pleasing fancies, those lines that long ago appealed to our boyish imaginations remain and to recall them puts us back in the grim old school-room. The friends of that happy period of our existence again surround us, their songs, across the years, come softly to the ear, the care-free voices waken the sweetest recollections of age.

The years come and go but where memory intervenes they are scarcely real. Though we have delved deep into the depths of the wisdom of the ancients, though we have oftentimes been disillusioned regarding the characters of the men and women whose lives and works make histories, we preserve those early pictures that fancy drew of the great of old. Often indeed was the text laid aside, our efforts to understand rules of Syntax and Etymology were abandoned that we might revel in the glories of war or be lost in the adventures of some great voyager, as we find them recorded in the pages of the historian. What youth has not pictured the great Corsican as master of the world and in his boyish enthusiasm did not wish to follow him to glory? We perhaps gave him our sympathy as he changed his high throne for that sea-girt isle where only the rude ocean waves did homage to his fallen greatness.

Such are some of the remembrances which time has not destroyed and which are our greatest joy when those who were our closest friends are far away, when the cares of life oppress us. When we lose faith in the world, when our fellow man is unsympathetic, when all appears dark and hopeless, these soothe, comfort and bear peace to the perplexed heart. Remembrance after remembrance flits across the mind, lessons are learned from the past, a feeling is aroused that every cloud in life dissolves before the sun of hope.

Musing on the years that are no more, yet other friends come to cheer us. Memory does not altogether depend upon the experiences of the past. Those who acted parts in life's dream only in the pages of fiction are now living beings. We often think of those made-to-order heroes and compare them with those friends of other days who ever shone before our eyes as the living presentation of all that was good and true. The friends of the past were indeed as noble, they followed

their ideals as unerringly, and the one and the other are alike treasured and are almost indistinguishable in memory.

Though the ocean separates, though deserts divide, though the mountain rears itself between the exile and his native land, in memory he sees the home of his fathers; by its aid he passes through each scene of his early life, and lives once more among those who, though dear to him, are far away. Perchance he see the day-star arise over that dear mother-land and then breathes a blessing on memory for preserving its beauties to delight his moments of recollection.

Thus in whatever circumstances fortune has placed us, whatever destiny we are carving out for ourselves, we draw on the rich stores memory has preserved for us. Poor indeed should we be if it were not for its treasures. We should be living only in the present. Well for us that we can fall back upon the alluring memories of the past, that we can forget present toils by recalling preceding triumphs, that even the greatest grief finds alleviation in the balm which memory applies.

In one brief retrospect it condenses life into one small volume, it forms an estimate of its value. This book contains all our actions in life, good and bad, each fall, each rise, each dark thought and each soaring aspiration. Page after page brings back the years, and bathed in the warm rays of memory each ill is softened, each grief is made bearable, each loss is compensated.

After years of separation the shades of departed friends linger around us—memory has imagined each form and in its niches preserves models truer to life than sculptor's chisel could ever fashion. They were our associates and we love to recall them. They acted their parts in life nobly and well. They live with us by memory's aid to be a guide to point the way that leads to that happy land where only pleasant memories light the hours.

Let us then live that only pleasant memories may be planted in the minds of those we leave behind, that we shall build for ourselves monuments that will endure longer than marble, that when life's day draws to a close we shall look over the past and calmly reflect on many recollections "That linger round the threshold of the heart."