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## WOULD YOU BE HAPPY?

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"Who would not?" Happiness is the desire and aim of all men. The desire is instinctive. Every man, every child is conscious of its existence and its influence. It moves every mind, sways the emotions of every heart, governs and controls the actions of every life. We are formed for happiness. The creatures around us are so, and whether they soar in the air, or browse in the meadow, or swim in the lake, the river and the ocean—all, in their several spheres, and to the full measure of their several capacities, realize the enjoyment of which they are susceptible, and which has been designed and provided for them by the beneficent and bountiful Creator.

But are *men* thus happy? History, experience, conscience, all concur in testifying to the contrast which, in this respect, exists betwixt them and the creatures that surround them. *Your conscience*, my reader, confirms the sad and melancholy truth. *You are not happy.* *Healthy* you may be—you have food to eat and raiment to put on—you are not a stranger to the comfort of a home, the sympathy and solace of friendship, the endearments of domestic life, the multiplied advantages of social intercourse, and the manifold benefits resulting from educational attainments. To you, history unfolds her ample page, poetry pours forth her melodious numbers, science reveals her exuberant resources, and art exhibits, in endless variety of forms, her fascinating mimicry of nature.

Still you are not happy—no, and if these sources of enjoyment were multiplied a thousand fold, and each a thousand times more copious, they could not secure to you that inestimable boon. The eye could not be satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing, nor the heart with enjoying all that earth can offer or bestow. Why? Because all could not fill the capacities, allay the anxieties, or meet the anticipated

destiny of the human mind. Must you, then, my reader, ought you to forego the hope, to relinquish the pursuit of happiness? Assuredly not. This were to resist the first law of nature—to do violence to all the instincts of your constitution—to counteract the purpose and the will of God. He has made you to be happy. He has provided the means, prescribed the method, furnished all the requisite facilities for attaining and securing all the enjoyment which your most enlarged capacities, your most expanded desires can demand.

More than twenty years since, the writer became acquainted, in the capital of Russia, with a man who had devoted all the energies of a great mind, and all the sensibilities of a benevolent heart, to the mitigation of human misery. He had been a merchant in extensive business, but dissolved his secular connections, and gave himself to the hallowed work of personally ministering to the temporal and spiritual necessities of the most wretched of his race. He sought and obtained the countenance and confidence of the emperor, and under his auspices, gained access to the prisons both of the ancient and the modern capital—introduced many improvements into the discipline of those receptacles of crime—and was soon hailed as the friend and benefactor of the worst outcasts of society.

At this period, the writer first knew him, and enjoyed many precious seasons of free, fraternal fellowship. "We took sweet counsel together," and often did we kneel at a throne of mercy and plead the promise, "If any two of you agree on earth as concerning any thing ye shall ask of my Father, it shall be done unto you." He had once sought happiness in the business and pleasures of the world. But light had broke in upon his mind. He was convinced of sin. The earnest, contrite, importunate petition of the publican became his own—"God be merciful to me, a sinner!"—and the prayer was answered. He heard and believed that faithful saying, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." He found "peace and joy in believing," and the calm serenity which ever sat upon his noble countenance, was but the reflection of that "peace of God which passeth all understanding," and which "ruled" supremely "in his heart." O, how eloquently, how energetically would he expatiate on the sublime real-

Time War was going on  
in year 1863 by W.

ities of the Christian faith! With what intense thankfulness and unfeigned humility would he adore the riches of redeeming and adopting grace! Had you seen him, my reader, had you heard him, you would have said: "This is happiness. How nobly does religion here assert and vindicate her claims to my homage and esteem! What but her enlightning, sanctifying, soul-enriching influence could have given such vigor of thought, such vividness of conception, such sublimity of sentiment, such sacredness of feeling, such sweetness of disposition, such suavity of address, such exuberant and inexhaustible benevolence of heart."

His heart yearned over the selected objects of his philanthropic efforts. He daily visited their gloomy cells, read and expounded to them "the word of God, the gospel of salvation;" and often was he gladdened by the sight of the penitential tear bursting from the eye and falling on the manacles and chains of the awakened malefactor. It was during one of these visits of mercy, whilst inhaling the polluted atmosphere of a wretched prison house, that he was seized with a malignant fever, which in a few weeks terminated his Christian course. He died as he lived—believing in Him who is "the death of death," and meekly rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. His memory will long survive: it is inscribed indelibly on many a grateful heart; and the casual visiter of the English and American burial ground in the *Vasili Ostrov* will turn aside and view, with peculiar emotion, the simple monument which Imperial gratitude and admiration have erected over all that was mortal of the second Howard." (W.— V.—, Esq.)

But "his record is on high"—his name, his character, his holy and heavenly conversation are inseparably blended with the recollections and the spiritual history of surviving friends. He had a *brother*, for whose spiritual interests, with those of his lady, he was intensely anxious. This brother was wealthy, and lived in the full enjoyment of all that wealth could purchase. Princes and nobles were his frequent guests, and even *Alexander* occasionally sat at his elegant and hospitable board. But he was never *happy*—never, until, won by the meekness and gentleness and placid tranquility of his brother, he began to inquire into the causes of effects like these. He soon

found the explanation which he sought. He heard, believed, and obeyed the Gospel of the grace of God. He chose "the kingdom of God and his righteousness, as his spiritual portion. Confiding in the merits of Christ's propitiation, he asked and obtained the forgiveness of his sins, acceptance with God, the spirit of adoption; the blessed hope of a glorious immortality. With all that ardor and intensity of zeal which an enlightened perception of divine truth and the indulgence of sanctified love only could produce, he now sought that his beloved partner might be a partaker of the happiness he enjoyed—the hope he entertained. She was accomplished, amiable, warmly attached to her husband, yet absorbed in the gay amusements of the world, and scorned the humiliating, self-sacrificing doctrine of the cross. These brief pages do not allow us to narrate the changes wrought in her mind; but she evidently became *a christian indeed*—meekly sitting at the feet of Jesus—her heart filled with the love of God—her eye beaming with the ineffable delight of conscious freedom from the bondage of corruption, of assured victory over the world, of habitual communion with her God and Saviour. They have returned to their native country, where they have delightfully exemplified the religion of Christ in a life of active piety and consecration to Him.

The writer could recount many such illustrations of the peace-giving, joy-inspiring influences of true religion. He has traversed seas and continents, mingled with the inhabitants of many a clime, held communion with the honorable and the abject, the savage and the sage—and this is the sum of all his experience—that *he alone* is truly happy, who mourns for sin, relies on the grace and power of Christ, and, in the full light of inspired truth, can "read his title clear to mansions in the skies."

Reader, the retrospections of a death-bed—of a judgment-day, will confirm this conclusion. Anticipate that confirmation, and BE WISE, THAT YOU MAY BE HAPPY.

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