

Meditations.

By a Seeker.

I

Should we despair ?

Moments of gloom visit the lives of most of us. There are times when we do not know what to do. All seems to go wrong. And, what is worse, we are prone to let our own selves go wrong. That is the great moment of trial for us.

If we have filled our hearts with light while it lasted, we can produce some of it to combat the gloom. The English poet, Matthew Arnold, has put his advice in these beautiful lines:

*“The thoughts in hours of insight
willed,
May be through hours of gloom
fulfilled.”*

The fight between the Light and the Gloom is symbolical. It is going on on all sides. The great thing is to have confidence that it is Light which shall conquer and prevail. We should not enlist ourselves in the army of Gloom.

Yet gloom has its place in the economy of things. It is gloom which provides the dark background to pictures, which otherwise would lose all perspective.

And the Gloom is also inevitable. The state of mind worthy of attaining Light is one when the existence of the Gloom does not disturb us: when we live in confidence that Light has the power to dispel Gloom, and that Gloom is powerless before Light.

II

In the lives of all of us strugglers inertia asserts itself with greater or less persistence. Happy those who recognise the fact and, recognising it, escape from its grapple. For, it has most insidious ways of appearing in our lives.

Sometimes it would assume the form of fatigue. We have to be watchful. We know that when mind or body is fatigued it needs rest, it cannot be forced. The kind of rest the mind needs is a matter for contemplation. Only let us not mistake mere disinclination to work for fatigue.

More subtle are the ways of inertia still. It would now come clothed in philosophy. Is not life to be enjoyed? Certainly. And in such circumstances, let us hearken to the inner voice in the matter of what true enjoyment is.

In a third form inertia might invite one to hasten its own destruction by surfeit. One does not know if it is not the most dangerous garb inertia chooses to appear in.

The struggle is eternal. Let us realize that we are in it. Let us in moments of calm self-communion elect our side and be loyal to it to the last. Let us not dally.

If we allow ourselves to be tempted to-day, to-morrow our strength to resist the temptation will be less.

III

Each one of us has, for the time being, a special problem to solve. This is a thing to remember. It is *his* problem. No one else can solve it. No one else can even help in his solving it. He has to help himself.

If it takes time, he must be patient. If it costs pain, it must be undergone. It is imperative, he alone should do it. There is no progress for him unless he has solved this problem. He must do it with good grace. If he does it with good grace, the chances are that he will solve it the sooner. All futurity is waiting for the performance of this little feat by him. The matter cannot be shirked. If he flies from it, it will overtake him with double speed.

Let him just change his attitude towards the task. Let him just accept it in a spirit of pleasure. A miracle happens. He will find joy even while he is sweating to unravel it. Each difficulty in the process will call forth a fresh venture. Each step towards the solution will fill his soul with happiness. And so on until the problem is solved.

And then? Just another problem. Another prospect of adventure.

IV

At times we are staggered by the stupendousness of the task awaiting our attention. We cannot simply understand how with our small capacities for work can we ever be able to cope with it. The result is that we become faint-hearted. We do not put our hands to work at all. Despair seizes us. We are beginning to be crushed by it.

Let Faith come to our help. We are not required to do more than our might can accomplish. But we must make up our minds to accomplish all our might can. Let us not turn either to the right or to the left while we are engaged in our task. And surely this honesty will bring its own reward. We would have accomplished more than we had ever hoped.

Let us just recollect our feelings after a day's work well done, and let us compare this with the other feeling, of having fretted or fiddled with the idea of doing a thing without actually getting on to it.

It is better far to plunge into the work instead of fretting over doing it. The one state will keep you happy even while the work remains unfinished: the other will never find you in peace of mind.

And is not happiness what we want most of all?

V

Have we not sometimes been told that a particular thing was final? And have we not felt distressed by the statement? A philosophy which accepts finality in human affairs is a very depressing philosophy indeed.

Nothing in this world is final. Injustice certainly is not. It must alter. And what about justice and goodness? Even they must alter. Has not Tennyson beautifully put it thus:—

*"The old order changeth, yielding
place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many
ways,
Lest one good custom should
corrupt the world."*

If we chance upon a discovery, we are inclined to assert it with vehemence. The realization of the law of change should make us humble. It behoves the best minds to present their conclusions tentatively.

If our conclusions are upset, we are disturbed. There is something wrong with our attitude. Should we not rather

rejoice that a new facet of truth has been brought to light ?

We are every day outgrowing our past knowledge. The faith that it is kept moving towards perfection should hearten us.

Nothing is final. All things are changing for the better.

