

length of the subject; and the "double diminution" Canons lessen by relative ratio. Other kinds of Canon are the "strict," the "open," the "finite," and the "Canon polymorphus," but the reader need not be burdened with definitions of these.

The singing of Canons claims notice. Centuries back the Canon—more probably what we call a round—was the chosen vehicle for native musical expression. The art and science of music had not become the vast medium of culture nor the gigantic and profitable commercial enterprise it now is, but the innate love of singing led our ancestors to gather to the chimney corner, and give play to their natural capacity for harmonious weaving. The temper of the age afforded time for such pleasures; besides which music was not scattered into directions as it now is, nor exhausted in the wide field of instrumental art. All was restricted comparatively to the single sphere of vocal art, and singers, with no eye to professionalism, grew into learned and accomplished musicians, taking delight in the rendering and solution of the puzzles and enigmas in counterpoint which came in their way.

It has to be regretted that this favourable condition of things became affected by the march of sterner social and political conditions. Native art

found a refuge only among a few cathedral musicians and choristers, who it may justly be said preserved it until the advent of the Victorian era. This age has witnessed the genesis of a vast number of musical societies throughout the kingdom devoted to the cause of native art, among which the Round, Catch, and Canon Club is closely identified with our subject. This society is pledged to the cause of native art, and the present writer can bear testimony to the excellent work done in perpetuating those thoroughly native forms of art which, like the Canon, come within the province of the club. Constituted of professional and non-professional members, it duly appoints officers, such as "Librarian," "Chancellor of the Exchequer," "Clerk of the Records;" while the chairman is "Mr. Speaker." The institution dinner precedes the musical performance, and it is rare if some notabilities in society are not present. The sketches before the reader were taken upon the occasion of the last season's meeting at Willis's Rooms, London, when the leading singers of Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral, with the stock "boy," did justice to a few examples from a delightful phase of native art—a phase which we should do well to encourage in these days, given over as the age is to musical productions of a frivolous cast.

FREDERICK J. CROWEST.

A CHAT ON GOOD-NATURE.



CHILDREN and some grown-up people often express their dislike of an irascible or peevish individual by calling him a crab, a name too intimately associated with what is sour to require an explanation; or they may be heard to vent their disapprobation of such persons by applying to them the more remarkable epithet of cross-patch, concerning which the etymologist's explanation is rather interesting. A patch, he tells us, means a paltry fellow, the name having been originally applied to a fool, on account of the *patched* dress worn by licensed fools. Hence a cross-patch is one who is cross, rendered less tolerable on account of insignificance. So much for a crab and a cross-patch.

But these two words do not by any means exhaust the terms of dislike by which ill-temper, in its many shapes, is constantly greeted. Now, what are the names opposed to these? What do we call the good-natured—those who are remarkable for geniality and kind-heartedness? Alas! either my memory fails me, or else the world has shown less aptitude in signalling with honourable titles this virtue, than it has in applying censorious epithets to its opponent. Perhaps it is that we are familiar with good-temper, so never

think of exalting it with conspicuous titles. Perhaps, the more cynically disposed will suggest, men are quicker and more clever in framing their censure in apt expressions, than their praise.

However this may be, matters little. "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet;" and if good-nature had no name at all it would still be beautiful. Is it not beautiful? It gleams and sparkles in happy eyes like summer sunshine. It tints the heart with warm soft rays. People like to bask in good-nature; they like to sun themselves in it, and quiescently enjoy its charms. The effect of its beauty is not a studied effect; and people are delighted with it because they cannot help being delighted. Good-nature scatters happiness about as though it cost nothing; the kindness that flows from it comes as from an original source; not like a mere reflection, not like that kindness which has been compared to a cold mechanical echo, returning just what was given.

Good-nature is beautiful; and its beauty is not of that questionable kind which makes people wonder why they praise it. It takes colour from many things, and appeals for approval to many sources of admiration; but its essential loveliness rests on that grand foundation of beauty—utility.

The cheerfulness and kindly courtesy, which dis-

tinguish genuine good-nature in society, make it one of the most appreciated of guests. Society can make itself happy with a very limited degree of knowledge and but a spare amount of wit. Its happiness, indeed, is a thing difficult to understand: the elements which it includes appear to vary with its varying whims, and with the resorts which society frequents; but of all the compounds that can administer happiness to people in groups, I venture to affirm that good-nature is an indispensable ingredient.

Cheerful people are people whom we are usually glad to see. We may meet them without pleasure occasionally; some people when they are melancholy like it to rain, and few of us, when we are sombre and given to grave reflections, can fully appreciate an exuberant overflow of happiness in others. There is something of unsuitability in the matter that jars on us, and makes our gloom more gloomy by the contrast. But these are exceptional cases, and usually it is certainly more advantageous to meet a cheerful person, even if the chatter we must listen to is occasionally flippant and uninteresting, than to have one's arm secured by a gloomy companion, who considers one's ear a fit receptacle for the complaints and troubles of which his family and intimate friends are wearied out, and which the newspapers obstinately refuse to entertain.

Cheerful-tempered courtesy makes every path in life easier and pleasanter, not only for those who possess it but for everybody they meet. The contrast between this outcome of good-nature and the required civilities and ceremonies of society impresses us whenever we have the good fortune to meet the *débonnaires*, who are at heart polite. "Courtesies to noble minds," says a good writer, "are not only gifts but purchases that buy men out of their own liberty." The courtesy which springs from disinterested kindness, the courtesy of good-nature, is an "open sesame" to every heart; all men acknowledge it, and when they receive it, own themselves debtors to those who pay it them.

Where then shall we go to study good-nature? Whom shall we take for our models? Good-nature is ubiquitous as the sunlight. It softens with warm cheerful touches the elaborate apartments of extravagant wealth; it tones down the sharp outlines which need leaves painfully exposed in the houses of the poor. Good-nature has nothing to do with caste, nothing with localities, nothing with nationalities. "If a man," says Lord Bacon, "be gracious and courteous to strangers it shows he is a citizen of the world." The good-natured and the sweet-tempered are a great and flourishing brotherhood, and the links that bind them together reach round the world. Their signs of recognition are not difficult to detect; they are exhibited in kindness, in geniality, in sociability. These people are a fraternity continually drawing men closer to men; while they are everywhere breaking down the barriers of wealth and pride, and forming amalgamations of the good for every description of advantage.

But how is good-nature to be acquired? We

cannot assume it; it is not a cloak we can put on for a particular occasion. Though we have occasionally seen people trying to imitate good-nature, the effect that follows such efforts is usually as deplorable as that which rewards the attempt to copy good manners without good feeling and education. People cannot be good-natured for the occasion; when they try there is usually something awkward and uncomfortable in the attempt, which impresses us unfalteringly with the idea that they want something from us. Their smile deepens into the distressing malformation of a smirk. Their geniality expands into a flare of unmeaning amiability. Their mirth is uncontrollable when you accidentally say something that introduces the possibility of a laugh, and then wish devoutly you had not said it; and when, in the climax of their hypocritical ebullition of sociability, they thump the table, or even slap you on the back, you begin to think that there is some truth in the saying that "Nothing so much resembles an honest man as a rogue."

No! good-nature is not to be imitated; but it is to be acquired, and as the acquisition of all the accomplishments and graces comes by instruction and observation, let us observe those who are singular for sweetness of temper, and let us instruct ourselves from their conduct. Let us mix in their society; and we shall be sure to catch something of their nature. "That man is not bad whose friends are good;" and they are not likely to grow peevish who are continually observing the advantages of a good temper.

Some people are full of good-nature—so much so as to remind us of the little boy who protested he was so full of happiness he could not be any happier until he had grown. They live upon things, somehow, that produce happiness, or at all events those qualities which make others happy. They absorb into their nature all the bright and sunny things of life, and give them out again in rays of warmth and comfort. In what exact manner they so nourish their good-nature it is not easy to say, unless the explanation of the little girl be received as satisfactory, who, when the sunlight fell upon her spoon at dinner and made it golden, put it quickly in her mouth and said triumphantly, "Oh, mamma, I've swallowed a whole spoonful of sunshine!"

What has been said of generosity might even more aptly be said of good-nature: "It is catching, and if so many escape it, it is in a small degree for the same reason that countrymen escape the small-pox—because they meet with no one to give it them." Good temper is certainly infectious; and if a man mixes in happy and cheerful society without showing any symptoms of good-humour, it must be because he has been inoculated with the germs of incurable dissatisfaction. Such people often eventually forsake the genial side of life altogether, and learn to be cynics. They walk on the shady side of the road in January, and comfort themselves perpetually with that reflection, which to the wise can only be beautiful in its season:—

"There's such a charm in melancholy,
I would not if I could be gay!"

But what good particularly is good-nature to those who possess it? This, after all, is the most important question. It is not always selfishness, as selfishness is usually understood, to think of one's own advantage. Our most unselfish impulses are associated in a subtle and wonderful way with our own interests; and when we deny ourselves a pleasure or give ourselves pain for the sake of others, we are satisfying some impulses within us with an ulterior view to happiness. What, then, is the good of good-nature to ourselves? Suppose we could be as good-natured as some people we know—what then? It is true we should gain the little advantages that society is bound to offer those who are habitually agreeable; but would there not be disadvantages connected with our success? Affability is a snare, is it not, that leads people into the unexpected depths of familiarity, from which they soon

wish to escape? Is not a little surliness or crustiness a necessary safeguard against impostors, and also against those attractable atoms of society, which, having no distinct proclivities or inclinations, and consequently little to make them interesting or useful, attach themselves with indissoluble tenacity to anybody who happens to be near them? No! no! Such suggestions are unworthy of us. Good-nature, being an essential element of Virtue, is its own reward; it increases our happiness and our aptitude for happiness; while, touching the drawbacks to which it is incident, good-nature will guard itself. "Pride, ill-nature, and want of sense," says Dean Swift, "are the three great sources of ill-manners;" and if people will learn wisdom with regard to these three particulars, their good-nature will not expose them to more inconveniences than the just responsibilities of life incur.

LIFE IN A NEW ZEALAND HOMESTEAD.



THE FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE HOMESTEAD.



ACROSS A SHINGLE ALP.

THE general plan of most homesteads on large runs, and the ordinary occupations of their owners, are so similar, that a description of one will give a fair notion of the many hundreds scattered throughout the country. The homestead furnishing our illustrations lies some hundred miles north-west of Christchurch, in the South Island, among the New Zealand

Alps, where the scenery is wild and beautiful. The first impression on reaching the cosy little one-storeyed house is of peace, and a conviction that the world is left behind. And this is a feeling not readily disturbed; for perhaps, if the family is small, there will only be some dozen souls on a run of a hundred thousand acres, with no news but that brought by a weekly mail, the latter involving a ride of forty miles.

It is not then wonderful that life remains pure and simple, and that one actually does escape from many of the worries of the outer world.

To assert that the domestic life of a New Zealand sheep farmer and his household in the backwoods has in it little of hardship or discomfort will, perhaps, astonish the generality of English people. But such is the fact. The rooms of the house are spacious and cheerful, with a wide verandah outside, covered with creepers, honeysuckle, and roses. By the way, the rose-trees in this part of the world grow so high that at Christmas, when the sitting-room is decorated with

Alps, where the scenery is wild and beautiful. The first impression on reaching the cosy little one-storeyed