

THINGS IN COMMON.

BY MRS. CAMERON.

I WAS travelling the other day along our solitary turnpike-road, in my own little quiet carriage, and I met with a very gay equipage, upon which I just raised my eyes to gaze; presently we overtook a market-cart, filled with some of my poor neighbours, coming home comfortably and sociably together; and this small occurrence brought into my mind some such thoughts as I shall here put down. Now, here are three different sorts of carriages passing along the road together, and, for all I can see, the people in the gay carriage are no better pleased with their fine equipage than I am with my plain one; nor am I better pleased with mine than the poorer party are with their rough carriage. The fact is, that we are all moving about in the way we have been used to, and we think nothing at all about the matter. The

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things of this world, when they are quite *new* to us, have a charm, as we see by little children, who enjoy almost everything ; but when we are used to them they go for little or nothing. Now, it is in matters of this sort that the chief difference lies between the rich and the poor. As for the substantial things which make human beings really happy, I do not see that there is any very great difference, if any at all, between rich and poor. I will not say that there never is a case, in which the rich are not better off than the poor ; but there are not so many as people would think, and to make this plain, I have been drawing out two tables, in one of which I show wherein the poor and rich are quite equal, or at least may be so, if it be not their own fault ; and the other shows wherein they are not and cannot be equal, as long as it be the will of God, that the poor should continue in the land ; and I think if any one will take the trouble of looking diligently at these two tables, they will be satisfied of the truth of what I have said, that the *equality* between rich and poor is in much more important points than their *inequality*,—yes, even in this world.

And it would be well for us all, whether rich or poor, to form the habit of looking more at our blessings than our troubles. Praise is a pleasant work ; but one would think that people thought grumbling a

much pleasanter, by their aptness to grumble rather than to praise. One thing I have noticed through life, whether amongst rich or poor, and that is, that the industrious are the most thankful and cheerful, and the idle the most disposed to grumble and be discontented. Let the grumblers consider that the birds rise up early and sing in the trees, and often fly far after their food ; while the frogs croak in their murky pools, and come abroad when the birds are gone to roost.

My tables are drawn out for England, but perhaps they might do for other lands ; and I have further to say, that there are cases of distress, to which some of the poor may be exposed, and there are temptations to which some of the rich are exposed, which cannot be well brought in, in such tables as these ; but we must take the world as it commonly is, and then viewing the matter aright, we shall, I think, all agree in saying that the inequalities among us, which cannot be avoided, are not greater than is needed, to teach us all to live in the exercise of charity, and kind offices to one another. If all were equally rich, equally young, equally strong, equally healthy, we should not be called to the exercise of those acts of love and charity which are the cement of society, binding one man to another, as mortar binds brick to brick in a house. Love is the great equalizer ; love brought Christ to

earth ; love binds man's heart to God and his fellow-man. We learn love by habits of helping one another, praying for one another, and forget self in the pleasure of doing good ; and the poor man's prayer may be more helpful for the rich, than the rich man's money may be for the poor. Love in exercise then makes the true *equality* ; and moreover this is the true *fraternity*. What many call equality is only selfishness. Selfishness is the mother of pride, and the Devil is its father ; and what some call *fraternity* is but the hug—the bear's embrace of selfishness. “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil : for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” (1 John iii. 10, 8, 14.) I have one thing more to say. You will see that in one of my tables I make the fruits of industry equal and common to rich and poor ; and therefore, though it is the will of God, that there should be rich and poor in the land, it does not follow that the same family or the same man will always continue rich or poor. One of our Dukes was descended from an industrious nailor ; one of our late Archbishops was the son of a butcher ; and many

descendants of the great men of former days, are living in cottages amongst the poor of the land ; and to come lower, there are in a parish which I know well, two men who seem quite to have changed places, because one has been idle, and drunken, and good for nothing ; and though he was born to a pretty house, and fields, and garden, of right coming to him, he is now obliged to live in as poor and mean a house as any in the place, and goes about with his hands in his pockets ; while the other, who was born of parents possessing nothing, has by his industry earned enough to buy the house which the other man lost.

Then as to the matter of education, in the other table, the son of the rich man has certainly in general better advantages, for gaining human learning than the poor ; yet there are schools in many towns founded by our good king Edward, and others, where the son of the poorest mechanic may gain for a little money, or none, as much learning as his rich neighbour's son ; and many a poor boy, as I can testify, has been raised by this means to fill high offices in the world ; and so the field of this world lies open to you who are poor, as well as to the rich ; and instead of meeting, and talking, and grumbling, or wishing to take from the children what the fathers have earned, go home and work, or if you are out of work, pray to God to show

you how you may earn your bread with honest, cheerful industry ; and though you may now be poor, it is not sure, as I wish to show you, that you always shall be so, and the rich may not always continue rich ; for God setteth up one and putteth down another ; but it must be God's doing when it is done to any purpose. But whether it be God's will that you should be rich or not, you will see, if you study my table, that you are not so very great a loser as might appear by continuing a poor man. You do not lose so much as you may think by your poverty ; and if you are but rich in faith, you shall find contentment and peace in this world, and when you die, you shall have a crown on your head in heaven, and the Queen of this land can desire and obtain nothing better for herself, when her time shall come to depart. May you, and I, and she, too, wear that crown, when all difference between rich and poor, high and low, shall have passed away for ever !

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Sometimes much	LEISURE . . .	Rarely much.
