

Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. "Life is Sweet," in *Sartain's Union Magazine*, edited by Caroline M. Kirkland, August 1848, p. 94.

"LIFE IS SWEET."

BY MISS CATHARINE M. SEDGWICK.

It was a summer's morning. I was awakened by the rushing of a distant engine, bearing along a tide of men to their busy day in a great city. Cool sea-breezes stole through the pine-trees embowering my dwelling; the aromatic pines breathed out their reedy music; the humming-bird was fluttering over the honeysuckle at my window; the grass glittered with dew-drops. A maiden was coming from the dairy across the lawn, with a silver mug of new milk in her hand; by the other hand she led a child. The young woman was in the full beauty of ripened and perfect womanhood. Her step was elastic and vigorous; moderate labor had developed without impairing her fine person. Her face beamed with intelligent life, conscious power, calm dignity, and sweet temper. "How sweet is life to this girl!" I thought, as, respected and respecting, she sustains her place in domestic life, distilling her pure influences into the little creature she holds by the hand! And how sweet then was life to that child! Her little form was so erect and strong — so firmly knit to outward life — her step so free and joyous! — her fair, bright hair, so bright, that it seemed as if a sunbeam came from it. It lay parted on that brow, where an infinite capacity had set its seal. And that spiritual eye — so quickly perceiving — so eagerly exploring! and those sweet red lips — love and laughter, and beauty are there. Now she snatches a tuft of flowers from the grass — now she springs to meet her playmate, the young, frisky dog — and now she is shouting playfully: he has knocked her over, and they are rolling on the turf together!

Before three months passed away, she had laid down the beautiful garments of her mortality; she had entered the gates of immortal life: and those who followed her to its threshold, felt that, to the end, her ministry had been most sweet. "Life is sweet" to the young, with their unfathomable hopes — their unlimited imaginings. It is sweeter still with the varied realization. Heaven has provided the ever-changing loveliness and mysterious process of the outward world in the inspirations of art — in the excitement of magnanimous deeds — in the close knitting of affections — in the joys of the mother

— the toils and harvest of the father — in the countless blessings of hallowed domestic life.

"Life is sweet" to the seeker of wisdom, and to the lover of science; and all progress and each discovery is a joy to them.

"Life is sweet" to the true lovers of their race; and the unknown and unpraised good they do by word, or look, or deed, is joy ineffable.

But not alone to the wise, to the learned, to the young, to the healthful, to the gifted, to the happy, to the vigorous doer of good — is life sweet: for the patient sufferer it has a divine sweetness.

"What," I asked a friend, who had been on a delicious country excursion, "did you see that best pleased you. My friend has cultivated her love of moral, more than her perception of physical beauty, and I was not surprised when, after replying, with a smile, that she would tell me honestly, she went on to say: " My cousin took me to see a man who had been a clergyman in the Methodist connection. He had suffered from a nervous rheumatism, and from a complication of diseases, aggravated by ignorant drugging. Every muscle in his body, excepting those which move his eyes and tongue, is paralyzed. His body has become as rigid as iron. His limbs have lost the human form. He has not been lain on a bed for seven years. He suffers acute pain. He has invented a chair which affords him some alleviation. His feelings are fresh and kindly, and his mind is unimpaired. He reads constantly. His book is fixed in a frame before him, and he manages to turn the leaves by an instrument which he moves with his tongue. He has an income of thirty dollars! This pittance, by the vigilant economy of his wife, and some aid from kind rustic neighbors, brings the year round. His wife is the most gentle, patient, and devoted of loving nurses. She never has too much to do, to do all well; no wish or thought goes beyond the unvarying circle of her conjugal duty. Her love is as abounding as his wants — her cheerfulness as sure as the rising of the sun. She has not for years slept two hours consecutively.

"I did not know which most to reverence, his patience or hers and so I said to them.

And surely life is sweet to her, who feels every hour of the day the truth of this gracious acknowledgment.

Oh ye, who live amidst alternate sunshine and showers of plenty, to whom night brings sleep, and daylight freshness – ye murmurers and complainers who fret in the harness of life till it gall you to the bone – who recoil at the lightest burden, and shrink from a passing cloud, – consider the magnanimous sufferer my friend described, and learn the divine art that can distil sweetness from the bitterest cup!

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