

Oct 1912

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan?

wisdom in arguing. Displaying them in controversy
in argument.

By two things I know, nowadays, that I am passing
out of youth. The first one is that I often
wake up in the night and think about my
friends. The other, that I ~~often~~ meditate
continually about ~~them~~ and ~~then~~ ^{always} lay a higher
value on, virtue. ~~By~~ ^{By} Virtue, or goodness
in most of its ~~senses~~, ~~then~~ didn't trouble us in
the old days. We were ~~then~~ occupied with
what was meant by good, - or what we meant
by good, - probably the same thing - and, ^{even} splendidly
propagandist about it. But "a good man",
we should have asserted, meant either a man
whose states of mind were liable apt to be
intrinsically good, or a man whose actions
tended to be right. It seemed enough
to be two hundred and forty eighth in a series
of "the wise and good" - or 247th if you
properly excluded ~~robby~~. "The wise and good" -
- one ~~could~~ ^{could} have thought that "and" exclusive, as
in ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~quins~~ ^{quins} and places where they sing"; + the
classes as external to each other as our brother
Shelley found the wise ~~and~~ and those who love. But
generally one was comforted by the
assumption that ~~then~~ goodness consists in
holding ^{having} ~~the~~ true opinions about ethics, and

wisdom in ~~arguing~~ displaying them incontrovertibly
in argument

There is possibly more.

I feel, at present, in that vague state of a creator
before creation is perfect, or a philosopher in
process of defining an idea. You know
there's something there, in that dark
corner: only your eyes can't yet pick
out the outlines — if it's a cat or a
burglar or the wind in the curtain or
the cook & the butler. So I, about virtue.

There's something more — a mere human
being isn't satisfied with the precise
knowledge of what good and right
mean in their strictest sense. One
might, in considering patriotism, be satisfied,
for a while, with the enquiry into what
precisely exactly ~~the~~ a nation is, and
even which so called nations are, and
which are not, really nations. But soon,
the world pressing on you, you begin to
wonder was patriotism, as it stands, a good
or bad thing, in what part of the
human heart did it reside, from what
need did it spring, could ~~we~~ we
do with-out it, and a thousand
other real questions. And good.

There is this insistent creature, the good man. There is moral worth, virtue, a thousand shapes that apparently sensible people have devoted their passionately lives given their hearts to. What are these phantoms?

"Mortals, who would follow me"
says our brother J. Milton

Love virtue, she alone is free:
She can teach ye how to climb,
Higher than the spheric chime,
- ev' if ~~virtue~~ feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her."

He was of that army.

My belief, rather dullfully, is that ~~we have~~ moral taste - the passion for goodness - is part of our character, and very important in it. The case is analogous to that of beauty. It is interesting, but, apparently, unimportant, whether Beauty exists, & in what sense, and where, and what it is. But it is very important to have, to train, and to clarify ~~our~~ ^a sense of Beauty. And the whole business is ^{one} part of the weightiest things ~~that~~ in our life. So the passion for goodness. It seems to me

the most important thing in man. It works in various ways, and by queer channels, like any other instinct. But it works - upward on the whole, and its possession is almost the only thing I care for - or should care for - in a man. Its absence ^{almost} the one thing I hate.

Observe, all this is independent of the question whether good exists or not, & what it is: just as I know, & recognize as connected, those instincts which fly to beautiful objects & good works of art, without ~~the~~ certainly knowing if beauty exists, or what it is.

The good man seems to me, on the whole, a definite class: and not the ^{definite} class of people who have good states of mind. At least, that's an inadequate description. His origin is that he has this love of good. It drives him, through life, to seek & love those things which he ~~calls~~ thinks good. It produces as definite a character as the acquisitive instinct, or the shy instinct, or the love of beauty, or the love of fucking, do. [It can, of course, be combined with any of these.] There are, with it, too, varieties & incomplete examples. The Puritan is a man who has a lust for good; & so is generally

unhappy. Then there is the ~~poor~~ eunuch, who has
desires as we have; but cannot enjoy good.

And, of course, - one's ideas of what are good
being largely determined by the tradition and
atmosphere around one - certain communities

twist the instinct - mostly by directing it to
bad things - to the point of seriously harming
the character.

But, on the whole,
good men tend to be healthy in character, and
happy.

Of course ~~and~~ ~~cate~~ ~~that~~ they
do also tend ^{strongly} to be good as ends - ~~for~~
~~about the~~ ~~same~~ a moderate but definite
amount of goodness is far the greatest aid to
having good states of mind. And, also, their
activities, certainly and obviously, tend to good - they
are, on the whole, good as means.

Besides goodness in people, there is also, I think,
evil. Many people have something of
the instinct to evil, and some are
actually bad men. All I have said

about good men applies, in its opposite, to bad
men - with the exception of the comparison
with the sense of beauty.

And in us is the moral passion for
goodness, that makes us ~~passionately~~ loyally

keen on ~~such~~ ^{good} men, and on good in general. It
 seems to me clear that one's ~~own~~ approval and
 disapproval take on, in certain cases, this
 moral tinge, which makes them much more
 violent. And I also think, now,
 that this passion for goodness and loathing
 of evil is ~~one of~~ the most valuable and
 important thing in us. And therefore
 it must not be in any way stifled, nor
 compelled to wait upon exact judgement. If, after
 ordering your life ^{& thoughts} as wisely as possible, you
 find yourself hating, as evil, some person
 or thing, ~~it is only necessary to one~~
 should count five, perhaps, but then, certainly,
 hit out. In laboring, I find, at
 something that I cannot make out whether
 it's a truism or a paradox. I want
 to say that goodness is frightfully good,
 & evil ^{frightfully} bad. Is that too dull? It
 at any rate affirms their existence, which
 can be forgotten, & their importance, which
 can be denied. I see the
 world as two armies in mortal combat,
 & inextricably confused. The word "He
 that is not with us is against us" has
 gone out. One cannot completely
 distinguish friend from foe. The only

