ANALYSIS OF HAPPINESS

by

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CHAPTER IX

LITTLE PLEASURES

A man’s happiness may be more a matter of trifles than of great joys and delights.

Count Fryderyk Skarbek, The Little Pleasures of Life.

I

Just as petty nuisances can upset happiness, so it may also be affected as much by the minor gratifications of life as by its greater pleasures. Some pleasures are indeed insignificant primarily in the sense that they are occasioned by insignificant events. By and large their intensiveness and extensiveness are also limited. Their effect is chiefly cumulative. Nevertheless, their scale is not proportional to the scale of their stimuli. Trivial happenings can be a source of greater pleasures than momentous experiences. Not infrequently our reaction to the latter is simply the thought that we ought to feel pleased, to the former an actual feeling of pleasure.

This was the inspiration of the book quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, written more than a hundred years ago. Reputation, honours, esteem, wealth, love: these, Skarbek wrote, are the aristocrats of happiness, “who visit our lives only by chance or after solicitation”. He describes, by way of contrast, in his old-fashioned manner, the “commoners who gladden our days if we can only hold on to them and make them our own”: the handclasp of a friend, the tears of gratitude of one poorer than us, the joyous smile of a loved one, or the stillness indoors when “wind and rain are raging”, a fire in the hearth which “disrupts our solitude but not the flow of our thoughts which can roam at will in front of it”, a shaft of sunlight in winter, the uninterrupted reverie of a quiet evening far from the noise and bustle of human habitation, the hour of twilight in a country house before the candles are lit, a lull which we would like to stretch to its utmost, putting off the moment when the lamplight brings back the normal round of activities, the traditional family celebrations at Easter and Christmas, travelling to strange countries, the beauties of nature and the treasures of art, the pleasures of a coach ride, the postilion blowing his bugle, unexpected meetings, the comforts of the inn, and

1 F. Skarbek, The Little Pleasures of Life, 1839.
then the homecoming, perhaps even more delectable than the journey itself, for “home is best”, or a supper in the company of friends, or a song that catches a particular mood, or simply a spell in the evening when the whole family is gathered in the lamplight, everyone preoccupied with his own concerns but each alive to the presence of the others, and finally the moment when something on which we have been working for a long time is at last completed.

These moments described by Skarbek, and others like them, have been enjoyed by everyone to some degree. Since Skarbek’s time customs have changed and so have the backgrounds to ‘the small pleasures of life’. Central heating has gradually supplanted the open fire and the half-light of dusk can easily be banished with a flick of the switch, but even so, the pleasures of reverie still remain. We no longer ride in stage coaches but the delights of travelling are the same, and a mountain chalet is as eagerly awaited today as was once the shelter of the inn. The forms of these ‘small pleasures’ are different but not their substance. Skarbek’s description is still relevant but requires amplification.

First, the value of these little pleasures consists in their accessibility. Lying to hand in our daily lives, they do not need to be specially courted. Nor are they necessarily small in terms of their intensity; it is the cost of their attainment that is small. They constitute the incidental and indirect dividend derived from other transactions.

On the other hand, these by-products can never be a staple of life. Our days are not a succession of fireside reveries and twilight contentments. We have first to exert ourselves before we can enjoy the repose of an armchair, and the pleasure of completing some labour has to be preceded by the labour itself.

To say, as Skarbek did, that “a man’s happiness may be more a matter of trifles than of great joys and delights” is to make too much of these trifles. Undoubtedly the pleasure they yield is often out of proportion to their significance, and life would be the poorer without them, but this does not mean that they are the foundation of happiness. If we prize life it is not usually on account of its traditional festivities alone. If we feel that life is worth living it is not because of the snugness of our homes in a storm. The mathematics of pleasure is different from that of happiness.

Secondly, and more important, these pleasures are emotionally variable and whether they gratify or not depends wholly on circumstances. Many of them, as Skarbek wrote, are no more than a respite in the life of an active man. For the unoccupied the quiet of twilight will not have so
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strong an appeal. The stillness of a room has no charms for someone
who is prevented from leaving it by age or disease. Holidays are no
entertainment for those in mourning or troubled by the misfortunes of
a loved one. On the contrary, they are more afflicting than working days
when the mind is absorbed by the task in hand and diverted from con-
templation of misfortunes. The same is true in less tragic contingencies.
Anyone who has lost his job, suffered a disappointment in love or is
troubled by some ill-considered act will find little relish in the dusk. Small
pleasures, it might be said, are no pleasure to the unhappy, for grief
saps their capacity for enjoyment. Indeed, if they are to gratify there
must be a positive predisposition towards them. Absence of a grief is
not enough to enjoy ‘pictures in the fire’; they become pleasurable only
if there is something pleasant to recall or anticipate. Otherwise our minds
remain blocked or even slip into distressing channels. We have to have
something important in our lives if we are to be cheered by trivialities,
and some continuing source of gratification to be gratified by the passing
moment. Our lives must contain a leaven of happiness. It is this which
sustains the current of pleasure that comes in the quiet of dusk or from
the glow of the hearth. Pleasures make for happiness but, vice versa,
happiness opens the door to pleasures which might not otherwise be
enjoyable. It is, in fact, the happy who enjoy ‘the little pleasures of
life’.

II

It is the unhappy man who needs
pleasures; they enable him to forget
his unhappiness for a while ... If
everybody in the world were completely
happy, such things as cinemas, theatres,
fox-hunts, golf courses ... would notice
an alarming drop in their finances.
M. Armstrong, What is Happiness?

Most of men's actions are directed towards some particular end. They
work in a factory or office to earn a living, they read in order to improve
their minds, they go to the doctor to get well, they fight to defend or
advance their interests. For many people these actions fill the whole of
their lives and leave no time for others. These people perform them even
when they are painful because the end is desirable or indispensable.
But there are also actions which we perform without any particular end
in mind. They are an end in themselves. This is the case when I go for
a walk, play Patience, have a game of tennis, or eat a cake. Although these actions also serve the purpose of relaxing the mind, strengthening the muscles and supplying the organism with sugar, we perform them without thought or even knowledge of their function. We go to a library because we want to read a book, but we play Patience solely because we want to play Patience. The object of the former is extrinsic, of the latter intrinsic. Thus I would be prepared to carry a heavy book despite possible discomfort, but if playing Patience were to cause discomfort I would not bother.

Actions of the first kind can be classed as work and those of the second as recreation or play. In this broad sense work means every action which is performed for some ulterior purpose, while play is every action which is performed solely for its own sake.

In play there is a natural sense of freedom and ease and also the feeling that our action is not a serious exercise. We are persuaded that we are doing something we like because it is not subordinated to other ends. And for this same reason, not being harnessed to any overriding purposes, it seems not to be part of the fundamental matter of our lives.

There are many varieties of play, of which two are most important. They have become so distinct that there are two different names for them in ordinary speech.

1. The first is made up of those forms of recreation in which two or more people form a temporary association to enjoy themselves together. Cards, chess, tennis and hide-and-seek all belong to this type of recreation. Since there are a number of parties to them there have to be certain rules enacted and observed by convention. There are rules in hide-and-seek no less than in bridge, chess or tennis. Most of these recreations also require special appurtenances such as cards, chessmen or rackets. These joint recreations with their own rules and usually their own equipment are called games. We talk of a game of bridge, a game of chess, a game of tennis, a game of hide-and-seek.

2. The other type of recreation depends on public facilities, specially provided for popular diversion, such as circuses and cinemas, theatres and cabarets, concert-halls and sports stadiums, night-clubs and casinos, exhibition galleries and museums. There is also a certain class of book whose sole raison d'être is simply to provide a vehicle of enjoyment. This kind of recreation, obtained from special installations but calling for no initiative on the part of the individual, who has only to watch or listen,
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is known as entertainment. However, the boundaries of what we call 'entertainment' are flexible because we are inclined to make use of objects for our recreation which were not necessarily intended for this purpose. Exhibitions, pictures and books, arranged, painted or written with quite a different end in view, tend to be resorted to solely for entertainment. The arts in particular are treated as entertainments, even though critics have been fighting a stubborn but losing battle to defend the border between art and entertainment.

3. Most recreations can be classified as games or entertainments but there are other forms. Most sports are both games and entertainments. Tennis, golf, polo, football or cricket are games for those who play them and entertainments for those who watch them. On the other hand, skiing, although a sport, is neither a game nor an entertainment. Riding for the cavalryman in time of war is work, as a drill in a riding school it is a kind of game, and for the spectator at a horse show it is an entertainment, while an ordinary cross-country gallop, though it is a recreation, is neither a game nor an entertainment.

When a child plays with a stick pretending that it is a horse, this is not really a game or an entertainment since the child is alone and not using any special appliances. The same is also true of some adult recreations. For one, it may consist in strolling through the streets and looking at the window displays. Such a man will maintain that this amuses him more than going to a concert or a museum. Another's pastime may be to study statistical yearbooks or encyclopaedias. Yet another may be diverted simply by looking out of the window and watching the world outside. This is not a game, since no arrangements have to be made with others nor any rules observed. Nor is it an entertainment, since traffic is not a special facility designed to provide recreation for the spectator.

Games and entertainments are a particular category of recreation because they are of a social nature and employ special installations. As a result the number of variations of which they are capable is limited. The variety of forms which games and entertainments have assumed without changing their substance is, however, extensive. The chariot races of antiquity are formally different from the horse, cycling or motor races of today, but the basis of these entertainments is identical. Ruff gave way to whist which in turn gave way to bridge, but the essence of these games has remained the same. Which form has become current in a particular age or environment has depended on convention and fashion.
Today chariot races are held nowhere and it would be impossible to find partners for a hand of ruff. Games and entertainments have always and everywhere been standardized. It could not be otherwise since games require partners and entertainments public facilities. Casinos, spectacles and matches are organized not for individuals but for whole social groups. The humour of the majority also makes for the uniformity of games and entertainments. If someone is seen enjoying a certain kind of recreation, others want to follow suit. Suggestion, snobbery, curiosity, envy are the operative factors. Moreover, games and entertainments eventually become habitual and traditional and people cling to them out of habit and custom even though they have ceased to amuse. This natural conventionalism, traditionalism and uniformity has an important bearing on the pleasure value of games and entertainments.

In the general view every kind of play is unqualifiedly regarded as pleasurable. Indeed there is a tendency to think that only recreations are pleasurable, and that among them, games and entertainments, being specially devised and engaged in for pleasure, are the most pleasurable.

Nevertheless, the correlation between them and pleasure is not as simple as it seems. As Mme de Girardin said: "Toujours s'amuser n'est pas toujours amusant". It is not rare to see people who derive no pleasure from games and entertainments and seem to take part in them mechanically. For them these amusements provide no amusement. Particularly in times when prosperity brings a glut of entertainments, people can be heard to complain that there is nothing more jading than play, nothing more depressing than amusement. "Pleasure is more tiring than business", Queen Christine of Sweden is reported to have remarked.

The reason for this lies precisely in the conventionalism and standardization of games and entertainments. Since they have no practical purpose and are ostensibly voluntary, it would seem that the choice is wholly a question of individual tastes. In reality, however, because of their social character and the conformism attendant upon this, the freedom of choice is restricted or even at times quite illusory. People have to comply with tradition and custom, with the taste of the masses or the majority, even though this taste has no savour for them. And it is obvious that the pleasures of all are not the pleasures of each.

Furthermore, nothing has ever been so badly distributed in society as facilities for entertainment. Not only have some had too few, but others have had too many. For centuries the underprivileged in this respect were consoled by moralists with the anodyne that "happiness does not
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lie in entertainment", while for others amusements become a daily and
irksome obligation; and their surfeit only aggravates the weariness and
boredom. The entertainments of high society, wrote Balzac, are “amus­
ments without pleasure, gaiety without mirth, festivities without joys,
raptures without delights”.
Worse, while the want of amusements is not
f elt in the same degree by everyone, the structure of society is such that
more of them are available to those who need them less. The journalist
or politician, whose life is continually spiced with new experiences and
contacts, requires less diversion and amusement than the clerk or work­
man, whose days are spent behind a desk or machine, yet it is the jour­
nalist and politician who find amusements easier to come by.
The amount of recreation that each man needs depends not only on his
occupation and way of life but also on his temperament and condition.
The people most in need seem to be those who are unhappy. Just as
the little pleasures of life’ are the resort of the happy, so amusements
are mainly that of the unhappy. They act as a distraction, diverting
a man from thoughts that are distressing, burdensome or boring. The
happy man needs no such diversion because it is simply in his thoughts
that he finds contentment, whereas the unhappy man is enabled thereby
to forget his cares, if only for a moment. In his ‘sceptical catechism’
Aldous Huxley asks what the function of magazines, the cinema, the
radio, motor-cycles, jazz, etc. is. The answer is that they prevent thought
and kill time.
That amusements provide compensation for unhappiness is not a new
idea. It was proposed by Pascal, and not in the facetious terms of Huxley.
He considers that, if a man is happy, his contentment is greater the less
his mind is distracted. “But is the man who enjoys entertainments not
happy? No, for their source is in the outside world, and through them
a man becomes dependent on a thousand contingencies which inevitably
expose him to grief.”
Despite this, Pascal thought entertainments necessary because men are,
must be and always will be unhappy. They are needed to distract men
from thoughts of the uncertainty of fortune and of the dangers of exist­
ence. “If we are not thinking of the pains which trouble us, we are think­
ing of those which threaten us. And even if we could feel safe from all
pains, then again boredom would unfailingly issue out of the depths
of our hearts where it has its natural roots and fill our mind with its

2 H. de Balzac, Peau de Chagrin, 1832.
3 A. Huxley, Those Barren Leaves.
Entertainments are the most effective defence against painful thoughts and boredom.\(^4\) Pascal took a similar view of work. “There is nothing more intolerable for a man than to remain in absolute peace, without passion, without concerns, without entertainments, without exertions. He then feels his nothingness, his loneliness, the inadequacy of his powers, his dependence, his weakness, his emptiness. Immediately from the depths of his spirit spills boredom, darkness, grief, care, discontent, despair.” If someone complains of the burden of his work, it is best to charge him not to work at all, and he will realize that even the heaviest work is preferable. From childhood man is laden with thousands of tasks, occupations and duties which absorb and weary him from morning to night. We might think this would make him unhappy, but without it he would be even more miserable.

There is a deeper insight here than in the popular view which sees in entertainments the height of pleasurable existence. But certain reservations are prompted by Pascal’s thinking.

1. It is not only to alleviate unhappiness that men seek distractions. The happy are equally willing to embellish their happiness with them. The light-hearted, as well as the careworn, go to the theatre and dance or drink, to prolong their amusement. Entertainments not only console the depressed, but also exhilarate the cheerful. “Ces plaisirs légers qui font aimer la vie”, as de Musset wrote.

2. Amusements are, in fact, not a remedy for unhappiness, but only a temporary palliative. Similarly they do not create happiness but are only a pleasant accompaniment to it. They are like flowers on a dinner table, enhancing the pleasure of the meal, but otiose if the table is empty or the food uneatable. Distractions, as Stendhal wrote, “are a luxury; if we are to enjoy them, we must not feel the necessities of life threatened”.\(^5\) In this respect they are similar to the “little pleasures of life”. They are agreeable but their connection with happiness is a remote one. They provide momentary pleasure but not lasting contentment.


\(^5\) Stendhal: “Le plaisir est un luxe; pour en jouir il faut que le nécessaire ne court aucun risque”.
They may be intensive, but never extensive. They are pleasures but only pleasures. It is thus easy to sympathize with the elderly man who complained: “What is there left to me in life? Nothing, only pleasures”.

3. Even in the relegation of cares the power of amusements is limited. Paradoxically, petty annoyances may be a more effective weapon against unhappiness than minor pleasures. Statistics show there are no fewer suicides among the wealthy who can amuse themselves at will than among the indigent.

III

The division of our actions into work and play might seem absolute: what is not work is play, and what is not play is work. Either what I am doing has an end outside itself and so is work, or it has an end in itself and so is play. In fact, this is not so. Work and play do not account for all our actions. If they have some underlying purpose then, indeed, they are either work or play. But if our actions have no purpose whatsoever, they are something else, which is neither work nor play.

For instance, I wake up in the morning and lie in bed, waiting to get up. When I do so I will occupy or amuse myself with something. But at this precise moment I am neither working nor playing and my lying has no purpose, intrinsic or extrinsic. I am not lying in order to achieve something but simply because I have woken and cannot yet decide to get up. Lying in itself is not an action but a state. But, as I lie, I begin to think and look around, and these are already actions, actions which have no object but only a cause.

Or perhaps I return home and sit down in an armchair. When I have had enough of sitting, I start walking around the room. Then I stand by the window and look at the passers-by in the street. As I walk and stand I am thinking: ideas run through my mind. I remember a tune and begin to hum. When someone enters the room I begin to talk. Now, all these actions - sitting, walking around the room, looking through the window, thinking, humming, talking - are neither work nor play. They serve no purpose and are not a purpose in themselves. They have a cause but no motive. I sat down, because I was tired. I started walking around the room because I had had enough of sitting. I looked through the window because the traffic caught my eye. I hummed because I remembered a tune. I started talking with the person who came into the room although I do not really want anything from him.
There are a number of synonyms for work — occupation, labour, employment — and also for play — games, entertainments, amusements. But there is no word for this third broad group, which covers not only actions but also conditions; we might call it the *third state* of activity.

1. These three kinds of activity differ in that they represent different internal *attitudes* though not necessarily in outward appearances. When I am talking with a pupil in the course of a lesson, it is work; when I am talking to a guest at a party, it is, at least sometimes, a pleasure; when I am talking with my family and saying only what comes into my head, it is this third state.

2. These three categories constantly *run into one another*. It is common for an action which began as work or play to end in the third state. While reading a textbook I am working; if I put it down for a minute to consider what I have just read, my mind continues working; but my thoughts may gradually creep away from the matter of the book, slipping from subject to subject, until my concentration is dispelled and ideas begin milling in my mind. Work has thus passed into the third state. Eventually the process may be reversed. As I muse I may remember a verse I read somewhere and try to recall how it went. My mind is now returning to work; I get up and go to the bookcase, taking out the volume to look up the forgotten fragment. These are now actions with a purpose — in other words, work.

3. The third state is the *bedrock* of our lives, and work and play are its occasional outgrowths. This is true of even the hardest-working individuals and the most fun-loving children, whom we think do nothing else but play. However much they enjoy themselves they do not do so all the time. When they are running, jumping, shouting, it is usually no more play for them than walking round a room and humming is for an adult.

4. These states are *not trivial* in comparison with work and play. They are not confined to lying in bed or gazing out of the window. Among them are to be found our most important experiences in love, in prayer and in artistic creation. *Love* as work is prostitution, as play philandering. Real love is neither work nor play but something else as far removed from work as from play.
action, labour, employments. But there is not only actions but activity.

They represent different appearances. When on, it is work; when off, a pleasure; what comes into my mind is work and play are its hardest-working inhabitants. But we think do nothing anything, it is usually no

work and play. They are in love, in prayer. Real love is neither from work as from

Prayer can be work when it is entreaty, when we ask for grace or love. St. Francis de Sales thought of it as work when he wrote that he prays best who prays to exhaustion. But it is not work when it is a cry from the heart, when it springs from the need to turn to God that is felt in moments of joy or suffering.

The arts are to a large extent work. The moulding of words is often as laborious as the hewing of marble. For Michelangelo painting was an agony, as was novel-writing for Flaubert. Other artists find it an entertainment. They write and paint for the sheer pleasure of writing and painting. But the critical moment of the birth of ideas is neither work nor play. For some writers and composers whose creativity is essentially an extempore registering of the ideas coursing through their minds it is from beginning to end neither work nor play.

The appreciation of art can have the nature of work, and not only for students, historians and critics. Many people, after reading a book or seeing a picture want to ponder over it, understand it, or learn from it. Leaving the theatre after a difficult play they may feel inclined to read the written version so as to unravel the full meaning of the play. At other times they reach for a book or a gramophone record in the same way that they might take hold of a pack of patience cards or a football. They want to hear some music so they go to a concert. Listening to music serves no purpose except its own: it is simply recreation. But after the concert is over the melody or at least the rhythm of what we have heard still echoes in our ears and pervades our minds. This is no longer recreation. The music has faded but its after-echoes have shifted our mood and altered the course of our thoughts. We enter that third state which is neither work nor recreation. The same effect is produced by a poem, a novel or a picture, whose atmosphere clings about the reader or viewer, modulating his imagination.

5. There is one particular respect in which this third state differs from both work and play. Every kind of work involves physical or mental tension or a combination of the two; so, too, does recreation. Both our muscles and our attention are stretched when we play football, our nerves during a game of cards. We concentrate, absorbed by every object of our actions, studying what interests us, doing what needs to be done, looking at what pleases us. We concentrate when we work, but also when we play. This state of affairs ends when our attention and interest slacken. If recreation is a rest from work it is only so because it diverts tension into channels of our own choosing. But relaxation only comes
in the third state. All the exhortations ‘to relax’ that are made nowadays are a warning not only against continual work but also against continual play.

Leisure is not invariably a matter of amusements. It should be an antidote to our daily expenditure of strain and effort, which is incurred by recreation as well as by work. Rest can be derived not only from recreation but also from work. The fatigue of one kind of work may be dispelled through another. Gardening may provide refreshment for the writer, writing for the gardener. Leisure is a state of partial rest, an activity for which we happen to have the inclination at a particular moment and which does not tire us. This may be either some light job of work or some undemanding diversion. But it is above all in ‘the third states’ that we relax and recuperate.

6. ‘Third states’ are the most personal form of a man’s existence. In them he behaves just as his nature dictates. At work, however much it may suit him, he has to adjust to its requirements. Schiller has written that a man is only himself when he is playing. But if he is playing a game, he has to accommodate himself to his partners and comply with the rules, while if he wants entertainment he has to content himself with the facilities available. The whole point of play is to take our minds off ourselves, to divert our thoughts and emotions. But in the ‘third states’ we are not inhibited by any overriding purposes or rules: we can be entirely ourselves.

7. What is the hedonistic value of ‘third states’? The common view is that all the pleasures of life come from play, above all from games and entertainment, since work is a curse and the ‘third states’ are neutral. In keeping with this idea, the only way of sweetening the life of the average man was thought to lie in devising games and providing entertainments with which to distract him. This notion is based on a number of misconceptions. Games and entertainments do not amuse everyone and work can be a pleasure as well as a burden.

The ‘third states’ may also be either agreeable or disagreeable. Indeed, they do most to make the tenor of our lives demonstrably gratifying or demonstrably distressing. For the crucial factor – a sense of the value or worthlessness of the world and of life – works less on the mind when we are occupied with work or play. Admittedly, there are people, adults as well as children, who are bored if they are not working or playing. For them the third states are obviously a liability. But for others they are
little pleasures are made nowadays also against continual
work. It should be an anti-
tune heard in the distance, a lamplit
evening with one's family - these are all pleasures which do not have
their source in play and still less in work.

8. The 'third states' cannot be called up at will in the way that games
and entertainments can be arranged. But it is possible to enhance our inward
capacity for enjoying them. This is a talent which has been most highly
developed by the peoples of the East who have learned to find more
enjoyment in leisure than in planned activity. But external conditions
which make it easier for pleasurable third states to arise can also be
contrived. Again, the peoples of the West have been prominent in the
cultivation of amenities to make life more agreeable. Furniture which is
comfortable to sit on, beds which are comfortable to sleep on, carpets
which muffle sounds, rooms which are neither so small as to be cramped,
nor so big as to be cold and bare, good heating and lighting, drains and
refrigerators, comfortable and quick transport, lifts and sleeping com-
partments are the little things which make life easier. A well-heated and
well-lit room, a comfortable suit of clothes, are no less pleasant at work
or at play, but when we are doing an interesting job or enjoying a good
game, it is easy to forget about them. A comfortable chair comes in
handy in business or pleasure, but it is most appreciated by someone
who is resting. The same is true of other amenities. It is the third states
which they serve best. These modern conveniences, which make our mental
'third states' more agreeable, are products of the social group known as
the 'third estate', which was less concerned than the aristocracy with
luxury and ostentation and more with comfort.

The pleasures of comfort belong to the 'little pleasures of life', like those
of which Skarbek wrote. And like games, recreations and pastimes, they
are small primarily in the sense that we owe them to little things and
occurrences, but also because their intensity and, even more, their ex-
tensiveness is small.

Where are the great pleasures? In a certain sense it might be said that
there are none. For a 'great pleasure', like all great things, is a terminal
concept, an ideal construct, of which reality always falls short. So it is
that, not only after little pleasures, but sometimes even after the greatest,
we are apt to say: "is that all there is?"

Yet there are pleasures which in intensity and extensiveness surpass
others and seem to come close to this ideal target, and which we tend to
regard as 'great'. These are the pleasures in which physical and mental energy undergo violent release, moments of rapture experienced in mystical states, at work, in love. Entertainments, leisure, comforts do not produce this explosion and that is why they will always remain 'small' pleasures.

Apart from these, there are some pleasures which we consider 'great' even though they are neither more intensive nor more extensive than others. This we do as a result of regarding a number of similar pleasures as one. We tend to think of all the pleasures associated with a single source as one and the same pleasure. We do this, in particular, when the pleasures follow each other in uninterrupted succession, as when we are travelling, or when they have a single background, as with family happiness or work. But games, entertainments, recreations are not connected either with each other or with the main current of life and so in our stocktaking they seem to be even smaller than they really are.

The effect of all this is singular. On the one hand, people consider amusements and comfort to be, in contrast to work, pleasures of life, while, on the other hand, if it brings a man general satisfaction, work may be a great pleasure and one to which, in comparison, games, amusements, leisure and comfort seem trivial.