

III -The memoir of Fleeming Jenkin

Fleeming Jenkin, described as an uncompromising taskmaster, demanded the utmost effort and quality in any endeavor, whether from himself or others, including his own wife. This strict approach was initially challenging, especially for those coming from the more lenient environment of a girls' school, but ultimately was found to be exhilarating and beneficial, leading to warm relationships and respect from many around him.

Jenkin's dedication was not limited by the nature of his pursuits. Whether it was a pastime like Greek tailoring or a community service like sanitary engineering to improve public health, Jenkin approached all tasks with equal zeal. His work in sanitary engineering, detailed in a letter by Colonel Fergusson, aimed to protect against construction pitfalls and the malpractices of plumbers, primarily for the affluent initially, with aspirations to benefit the impoverished. Despite its limited success in extending to poorer communities, the initiative thrived in other aspects, leading to the creation of numerous Sanitary Associations that proved to be incredibly beneficial wherever implemented.

This work, spurred by the tragic loss of a family of children which deeply affected Jenkin, was approached with a jovial spirit, contrasting the underlying sadness. Jenkin's ability to imbue his projects with joy, regardless of their inspiration, is highlighted as a unique trait. His optimism was so boundless that he believed all good endeavors would be universally embraced if made accessible, a belief that sometimes led to disappointment.

Jenkin's worldview was notably positive, refusing to acknowledge the existence of purely malicious intentions in people. His discussions on human nature shined a light on his refusal to believe in inherent badness, attributing negative actions more to weakness and a lack of imagination in understanding others. However, a conversation

with a friend forces him to grudgingly acknowledge the presence of genuinely bad individuals, albeit reluctantly. This conversation illustrates Jenkin's inherently optimistic perspective on human nature and his discomfort with the idea that some individuals fundamentally embody malice or malevolence.

