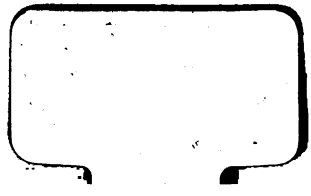

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EARLY INFLUENCES

Early Influences

"The Child is Father of the Man:
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety"

WORDSWORTH

NEW EDITION

WITH A PREFACE BY MRS. GLADSTONE

RIVINGTONS
WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON
MDCCCLXXXIII

Preface to New Edition.

In venturing to say a few words by way of preface upon the re-issue of this little work, I would say that I have been led to do so, chiefly from the fact of its having been unfortunately so long out of print and forgotten by the public; for indeed it only requires to be read, and it will speak for itself. Such at least was my own impression. I could but exclaim as I read, "How valuable would such a book have been to me in the happy years of the past!" The old memories awoke, and the thought

of a mother's responsibilities, from the moment of the baby's first cry to the riper years of her children's life. The subject of early training had ever been to me most interesting; it was only natural that my mind should be turned afresh in that direction by a careful perusal of this modest but really wise and valuable little book; so compact that it is within every one's reach.

Let us notice how carefully every little thing is considered. Our authoress has even something to say as to the training of babyhood at the outset of the journey of life, and proceeding carefully through all the stages of infancy, she gives salutary advice to guide the parent from the first in her holy work. Principle, in the strong

religious sense, Tact, Justice, Patience—all these points are wisely dwelt upon, with a touch that is both tender and strong to a striking and impressive degree. No work of the kind that I have seen enters into such minute details; they have generally been overlooked as too trifling; yet it is these very trifles, as they may appear to us, which form the first links in the chain that draws a child towards good or evil. It is the step by step training—the learning a child's disposition by means of hourly watchfulness—which is too often neglected.

And now let me turn aside for a moment and consider the way in which children are often over-noticed and over-petted, and considered in every

conceivable way; and again, the dangers attending the very advantages of charming by interesting books—all this, unless regulated and checked by proper Home Influence, may become an actual snare. So much the more is it necessary that, from very early childhood, the mother should guide and shape the Child's mind and heart.

One word as to religious teaching. How many parents neglect this, or leave it to others! Why are children of the rich often far worse instructed than the children of the poor?

Our authoress, I need hardly say, makes religion the keystone to the whole edifice; she would have Church teaching as the great basis of education, and would direct the child into

those holy ways which lead it from the font to the grave, and in which are to be found never-failing stores of guidance, of strength, of comfort, of hope; those paths which are "pleasantness and peace," and where the light of Heaven "shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

In my opinion this little work has not undeservedly been called "a book of gold," and I very earnestly recommend it.

CATHERINE GLADSTONE.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

Author's Preface.

It is not with any presumptuous intention of superseding the many invaluable works upon education now existing, that the following brief remarks are published. There is no attempt in this little volume to introduce a new system of instruction, or even to decide upon the respective merits of those already known. It is simply an endeavour to look upon the minute details of very early education in the highest light, and to point out the vital importance of those few years of childhood which it is especially the office of the mother and the governess to watch

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over. Other wiser and better writers have directed their attention to the great question of cultivating and expanding the mind of youth. This work only aspires to offer a few hints upon the first stage of moral culture, and to give a warning voice against the errors and omissions which entail the failure of subsequent and more important efforts of education. The author dares not hope it can contain anything of universal interest; but if among the inexperienced parents and teachers who may peruse this work, some few are thereby enabled better to control the years of early childhood, and so to pave the way for other and greater influences, it will afford the author no mean cause for rejoicing, and no inferior subject of gratitude that so humble an endeavour should have been so blest.

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CHAPTER I.

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Infancy.

It is not true that the infant mind is as a blank tablet upon which the philosopher and the moralist may inscribe what characters they please. If the simile hold good at all, it must yet be allowed that the tablet is carved into a form of its own, and that the hand of the writer must follow that form as he traces the letters on its surface.

Children differ as much in their dispositions and inclinations, as the grown men who seek to guide them. There is but this distinction; the influences of life have scarcely touched the former, while on the latter they have laid their

almost hopeless seal. And it is because that seal is almost hopeless, that the earliest influences, those extended over the mind by the mother and the teacher, are so all-important. They are the only ones which the experience of an older head, and the affection of a devoted heart, are likely to have much share in. When once we have left the fold of childhood, we can never know again such wise despotism, and such yearning love, as in those days when the mother's word was an unquestioned law.

Our whole existence here is indeed a God-directed, life-long education by circumstances; but the first in that vast chain, the first in importance as it is in time, is still that which flows from the system of education, be it good or bad, by which the parent trains the awakening intellect of the young child.

And yet when I say system of education, I am far from meaning those sets of rules and

immutable laws by which some system-loving pedagogue endeavours to torture each infant soul that comes under his care into the same form and the same model, and to reduce it simply to a well-organized machine, from which, under pretence of exterminating all passion, all feeling must equally be extracted. Perhaps if it were true that a child's mind is a blank tablet, we might in time succeed in discovering some cunning system by which to mould a series of equally good and useful men from any number of given subjects. I say we *might* perhaps lay down a system which should meet all the wants of the human mind, which should check all its evil tendencies, and nourish all its good impulses, supposing only we could be sure of finding in all alike the same tendencies, and the same impulses, in the same degree.

But, from the birth it is otherwise; and from after the first cry with which the little being struggles into existence, through all the

stages of infancy, childhood, and youth, one brother will differ from another, and each from all. And this it is which makes education, even the education of the nursery, a most difficult as well as a most important thing. The strongest good sense is not enough, the strictest principle, the most devoted affection, either of these taken alone, is not enough to meet all the exigencies of the case; but these all combined, and existing with equal strength, with equal activity, and in undeviating consistency, are required in every case, and at all times, to guide the education of even the youngest child.

To govern others we must govern ourselves, and to control the will of a child, we must be masters of our own. The injustice of an irritable temper is as great a crime towards the young mind that is injured by it, as an ill-administered legislature is to a community.

From the outset, then, it is better to begin

by acknowledging to ourselves that the paternal and maternal duties of education are not always pleasing, and never easy. And as the young mother folds in her arms that little soft yielding form, she must remember that to bend the will that animates that form, she must habitually deny herself; and with calm self-sacrifice, supported by that yearning tenderness which only a mother knows, enter on the wearying details and anxious solicitudes of real education.

Her first feeling will be, as she looks forward to its path through life, "Let me secure its happiness, let me but know that it enjoys existence, and is safe from suffering, and all that I can command to meet these ends it shall be the great object of my being to provide." The desire for the well-being of her offspring is as strong as instinct combined with all the wisdom of reason, and it is a merciful Providence that has made it thus

strong; first, because it supports her through what to any but a mother would be tedious and wearisome; and secondly, because, if rightly understood, if taken in the highest sense, the desire to secure its happiness combines every other object.

But in order to make this subject of practical utility, we must leave generalities and descend to the minuter details of home education.

There is one thing which cannot be thought of too soon, or watched and attended to too early, and that is temper. The temper of children, like that of older persons, has a great deal to do with health and nerves, and as these vary from their birth in different children, so do their tendencies to different tempers vary.

Any one accustomed to infants will be aware, that one infant of a few months old, that is before the fact can be the result of

habit induced by the way in which it is brought up, will, for instance, sleep soundly through any noise, while another is easily disturbed, wakes in agitation, and cries as if terrified. One child throws out its arms with a naturally nervous instinct of danger if moved suddenly, or with a jerk, whereas another is comparatively indifferent and hardy. What is a nervous instinct in the baby, becomes, unless watched and guarded, a fretful temper in the older child, and a fixed irritability in the grown man. Consequently, the greatest essentials in a nurse for infants, are a calm and placid temper; cheerful, and even gay, but not noisy; a gentle voice, and a light firm hand. Touch and sound are the only influences on the senses, and through the senses on the dormant mind of an infant. And the new-born babe is not insensible to a loud screaming voice, or a jerking irregular movement. If the young mother be bent

upon doing the best for her child from the first, and if she believe that no child is too young for these things to be of importance, she will endeavour to mould its temper by these gentle influences from the commencement.

As the child grows older the difficulties increase. Undeveloped reason is a harder thing to deal with than animal instinct. A blow and a bribe may train a puppy into performing any number of tricks; but when you want to teach a child, who cannot yet either speak or fully comprehend speech, that it is not to cry for all it wants, and that it is not to want all it sees, you find certain dim sensations in the child's mind which obstruct your progress. It is neither a machine nor an animal, you do not gain your end if you treat it as such, and yet the faint strugglings of a superior power than instinct are *so* faint, that you hardly know how to read them, or having read, how to answer them.

When the child is a little older, say a year and a half, you may govern it by one of two principles—either by making it comprehend that you are its master, and as such do not *will* that it should have what it asks, and that this is reason enough; or else you may stoop to its capacity and make it understand that the thing it asks would be injurious to its welfare. But while its intellect is too young to take in either of these principles, your conduct must be guided by untiring patience, and by a gentle and gradual effort to lead it on to the notion that you may forbid it some enjoyment, and that when you do, that enjoyment is pernicious. If you have to wrench from its tiny grasp some forbidden treasure, endeavour at the same moment to direct its attention to some other; or if you cannot thus avoid an outburst of disappointment, endeavour to soothe it by your cheerful manner, but never recompense the cry by

restoring *the* object. Substitute another, if possible, without provoking a remonstrance, and remember that to snatch a toy from the hand of a baby, and leave it without a compensation, before it *can* be old enough to know you have a right to do this, is only tyranny.

At the same time, always bear in mind that your great object must be to impress it as early as possible with the idea that it is to obey you for no other reason than because you, as its parent or elder, have a right to be obeyed, unless, as an exception to the rule, *it should please you* to explain why you enforce a thing. When once the child is old enough for this idea to dawn upon its mind, when once it knows the meaning of the words "you must not do that," it is your own fault if the child become wilful and disobedient.

A nurse who is irritated by the crying of

an infant is unfit to have the charge of one. Her irritation must betray itself to the sensitive nerves of the child, and so increase the evil; and a nurse who is indifferent to its cry is equally unfit. It is the child's only language, and it does not use it without a cause; and if that cause be only that it is uneasy, or that you have held it too long in one position, that is reason enough for complaint: in crying, it makes use of the only power of complaint that it possesses, and an intelligent, good-tempered nurse will always be ready to attempt a remedy if possible.

Some children at a very early age evince symptoms of a quick, passionate temper: while they are infants you must soothe them, as they grow intelligent you must control them. The mother's first endeavour should be to see and understand all these peculiarities in the dispositions of her children; she should be on the watch for evidences of their

character, and prepared to meet them, to profit by them, and to direct them.

How many grown men are there now struggling with the serious ills of life who look back upon incidents in childhood when they were unjustly accused, misunderstood, or unkindly repelled, as outweighing in agony many hours of maturer suffering! Is it not a mere poetic fiction that teaches us invariably to call childhood the happiest period of life? That it may be so is doubtless, but that the child is as capable of suffering as the grown man, and more incapable of resistance, is likewise true. One hour of childhood's keen remorse outweighs a month of regret in a more seared and hardened conscience. One harsh word from the voice we loved rankled deeper then, than when selfishness and self-esteem come more readily to our aid, and have long ago blunted the sensitiveness which in childhood was so fresh. The injustice or the errors of

those we looked up to was a more cruel blow in those days, when we believed in the perfection of human nature, than now, when we have learnt to see faults in our dearest friends, and still more, to be on our guard against them! The disappointment of a promised pleasure was a severer blight in days when we thought life might be all sunshine, than now, when we know that its best and brightest light is only the borrowed light of hope.

Oh, you mothers, in whose hands these young hearts are training, throw aside your selfishness, your ignorance, your blind indifference! Make your children happy by giving them the materials of happiness, by nursing within them the springs of happiness —affection, trust, confidence, religion. The nursery follies of dress, the school-room struggles of hard learning, what are these compared with the genuine nature of the human heart, elevated by principle and sub-

dued by tenderness? It is not graceful puppets or clever machines that we ask from you, but men and women. Make *yourself* the object of their affections, the sharer of their tiny joys, the comforter of their short-lived sorrows; and remember, that unless you *force* yourself into their confidence by the overwhelming influence of caressing tenderness and ever-ready sympathy, this duty will be less effectually performed by the nurse and the governess, and you will lose half the merit of being a mother, and all the reward.

CHAPTER II.

Watchfulness and Affection.

The rapid effect of bad influences—The parent must identify himself with the mind of the child by affectionate sympathy —The governess—The influence of affection the best and strongest—The parent has the first claim to the child's confidence — How to gain this confidence — The difficulties arising out of the parent's conduct—Ridicule—The child's passive endurance of unkindness—The ready affection of childhood—The teacher's authority must be supported by the parent.

Watchfulness and Affection.

THE work of time on the mind of a child is very rapid. A bad habit is contracted in a week, though it may not be eradicated for months. They are open to all impressions, and they are creatures of imitation, and the evil which to your mind seems but a slight one, or which you comfort yourself is only for a time, may be laying a foundation of fatal error in the flexible heart of the child, which life itself may not be long enough to break up. What to you is a brief time is a long space in their infant lives; and they have no fixed habits, no long substantiated principles, to ward off the effects of casual influences.

For this reason there is no safety unless the mother is herself for ever on the watch to detect every bent that is given to the thoughts or temper of her little one, and to step in between her child and the danger. But to do this she must identify herself with the mind of the child. She must lay aside her own forms of thought, divest herself of her long-established notions of persons and things, and endeavour to bring for a moment her ideas on the same level with those of the little being; and as she sometimes kneels on the ground by his side to bring her eyes on a line with his horizon, that she may see some object in the same aspect with him, and understand his way of describing it, so must she bring her understanding and her feelings to the standard of his emotions and his conceptions before she will be able to appreciate his feelings or to guide his judgment. She must not govern him from a height;

she must stoop to him in order to raise him up to herself; and this, not sometimes, but always.

It is true that our present mode of society throws great obstacles in the way of this duty. Nurses and governesses intervene to cut off the sympathy between mother and child. Her numerous other avocations, her share in her husband's pursuits and pleasures, divert her thoughts, and exclude her from constant attention and personal superintendence over all that passes in her nursery. But this renders it only the more essential that she should snatch every occasion and every opportunity of identifying herself with the interests of her children, that she should seize every moment for enjoying their society, and that she should establish herself as the acknowledged sharer, sympathizer, and friend, in all their amusements and in all their duties. Children should live with the constant feel-

ing and desire of letting their mother hear of every event, witness every pleasure, and remedy every evil which concerns their little life. And the mother who does not often take a part in the child's studies and the child's play, must expect that in childhood he will seek some other friend from among his teachers or the servants, and that in youth the most important secrets of his heart will be closed from her. How can she imagine that the stranger to whom she allots a yearly stipend for cultivating her child's mind can take that interest in its progress which she could do? And how can she expect that the child who meets with no encouragement save from the governess, and who finds that the history, and the geography, and the music, which is made so all-important in the school-room, never seems to have any interest for its parent, and is something quite apart from her, will make half the advance in intel-

lectual acquirements or graceful accomplishments which it would do if stimulated by her affectionate solicitude?

There are few mothers who grudge any expense of governesses and masters; but having done that, they think they have done enough, and they expect well-cultivated minds to spring up from the money they have sown. But no, to work upon the mind of a child you must have *moral influence*, as much as to work upon the mind of a grown man. And there is no moral influence like that of sympathy and affection; and there is no sympathy and affection like that of a mother.

The natural thing would be for the mother to nurse and to teach her own offspring. Our state of society prevents this being entirely the case. But the great object in education should be to act upon the *grand principles* of human nature, and not upon any mere con-

ventional laws; to cultivate the child's nature, to train them *as they are*, and not to send them forth into the world merely the living impressions of form and custom. Alas! that it is so difficult to do this thoroughly; alas! that so many mothers have gone on for years and years, little knowing the silent mischief and the silent misery that may be inclosed within the four walls of their school-room, and of which the children of their own heart's blood are the ruined victims.

This is a true picture of many mothers. She wishes to do her duty by her children, she is anxious to give them every advantage for acquiring knowledge, and of course she is anxious that they should be happy. After a world of trouble, and from among some fifty persons, all supposed by others or supposing themselves to be qualified for the most difficult duty in life, that of governing others, she selects one to whose care she will

confide her dearest treasures; and after many injunctions on her part she closes the school-room door on her children and their stranger-friend.

Let us first reflect upon the mutual relations and individual positions of the parties: the mother and the governess, the governess and the children. The governess is some well-educated person from what we are accustomed to call the middle ranks of life. Her father had a small office, was a clerk, or a solicitor, a retired tradesman; or perhaps she is the orphan of a poor clergyman. At any rate there is a gulf, just that gulf which society imposes, between the children's governess and the high-born or wealthy lady, their mother. She is to be the mother's friend, and yet not her equal; she is to be the children's governess, and yet she is to educate them for a sphere different from any in which she has lived herself. Her lot is poor and

dependent, but her mind is cultivated; consequently she is one mass of sensitiveness about the contrast between her position and her feelings. Do not blame her for it; it is but natural: though she has extraordinary merit if great good sense and great strength of mind have at length enabled her to be perfectly easy in her incongruous position, still the position is incongruous, and no effort on the parent's part can ever make it perfectly natural or perfectly happy. The first step then involves a difficulty, and makes the intercourse between the parent and teacher doubtful and generally unsatisfactory. It is useless to blame the fact, or even the state of society that produces the fact; it is inevitable, and the only remaining question is how to meet it. The children are aware of the position of the stranger, but nevertheless that will make very little difference to them (unless they have been very ill

brought up), for, happily, the distinctions of society have as yet little claim over their minds, and they value persons for what they are morally, and not for what they are by position. If they see their parents treat the governess with kindness and consideration, it will never enter their heads to do otherwise; if they see that anything is thought good enough for the poor creature into whose hands so much of their future well-being is confided, it is not to be wondered at that they should adopt the same opinion, and act upon it.

But time wears on, and the mother's troubles grow with it. She finds she has to combat the evil of human nature, not only in her children, but in her children's instructor. Perhaps she has a child of very sensitive and nervous temperament; and day after day, when the lesson-hour is over, she watches a flushed cheek and an over-bril-

liant eye, which in the hours of recreation is succeeded by paleness, languor, and inactivity. All is not right; yet the child's health is good, and she cannot trace that idleness or misconduct has given rise to any altercation between the teacher and the pupil. Nine times out of ten the case is this: your child is sensitive; the life of a governess has made yours nervous and sensitive too; the child is the governess's only companion, the only thing she has to work her morbid mind upon; her mind affects her temper; she means no harm, but she is nervous, irritable, easily offended, she is wounded by trifles, she is suspicious of neglect; and your poor child is thus constantly under the influence of a diseased mind, and the victim of the uncertainties of temper produced by such. If your child is high-spirited, thoughtless, and full of animal vigour, it will throw off the influence and pass by unscathed. But if it is of that

finer mould that the world's softer and more loving natures are made of, it will catch the infection and become morbid and sensitive, like the mind it associates with, and its strength and vigour of soul and body will be diminished.

The poor governess deserves rather pity than blame. She is comparatively alone in the world. She lives apart from her family and her friends. *Your* domestic joys can be little joy to her; *you* are not her intimate companion; and all that she most loves is far away, and is totally different from all that is around her. Alas! for human nature, there are few minds that are brave enough and upright enough to bear such a position, and yet be contented, cheerful, and vigorous in their duty. But the mother must face this evil as it stands, with all her energy. She must not stand by and see the child's mind cramped and warped by the unhealthy influence of morbidness

and irritability. She must either correct or remove it, for the effect will be like that of putting a plant in a dark room. The petals may unfold, but they are colourless, and the attenuated branches hang disordered and listless. If you want to keep the mind which is to guide your child's mind in a healthy condition, you must give the governess all that is in your power to promote healthy nerves and healthy spirits,—air, exercise, and as much indemnification for the loss of home and the loss of society as is possible. And as you value your child's future happiness, never stand by to see a young, tender, susceptible mind worn and warped by the mournful influence of another.

Yet, on the other hand, it would be a fatal mistake to endeavour to prevent friendly and intimate intercourse between the child and the teacher, or, from any over-fear of consequences, to exclude mutual confidence and

affection. Without these the teacher cannot successfully perform her duties, and without these she is deprived of the only reward the performance of them can offer her. She will have but small influence over her pupils unless she has won their hearts, and she will have very little control over their moral progress unless she becomes in a great measure their companion as well as their teacher. Nor is it desirable that the child should live under any influence independent of affectionate intimacy.

It is a fearful mistake to suppose, that by discouraging good and natural feeling you may prevent the evils which grow out of every feeling in our human nature. Those feelings *must* exist, and they must have food; you cannot make them lie fallow till you think fit to call them forth again. And if you attempt it, the only result will be, that they will burst forth beyond your control, like an interrupted

torrent, and, sweeping down every defence and every principle, hurry on to destruction. You cannot forbid the human heart to love; you cannot say, even to a child, "So far you may give your confidence and your affection to that person, your constant companion, but no further." And woe be to you if you attempt it. You are seeking to lay the chains of your will upon what God has made as free as air. It is in vain, it will mock all your efforts, and the force you waste in the attempt will recoil back upon yourself.

This being the case, it being certain that your children and their teacher will either be friends or enemies, and never indifferent to each other, it becomes an important question whither this intimacy may lead. The only safety consists in the mother making *herself* the child's first, closest, and most intimate friend. Unless she identifies herself with their studies and their pleasures, of course

the governess, the one who *does* identify herself, will have the larger share of the children's affectionate confidence. Not that the children will *love* the governess more than the mother, for nature is stronger than habit; but that the governess will know more of the child's thoughts and the child's heart, and so the mother will be deprived of some of those links by which the Creator has bound parent and offspring together, and they will remain in the hands of a person whose claim is inferior in merit and transient in time; and thus nature will be subverted, and the first step taken in the alienation of natural feeling from its natural object.

There is not one governess in a hundred who will not tell the eldest girl her own love-stories, and the youngest boy her brother's tricks. And no very great harm either, if the mother may know them too. But if there is any idea of an intimacy between the children

and the governess which the mother is not to share, then comes that fatal division in our homes which everything in our present state of society tends to increase.

Before we close this subject I would intreat any teachers before whose notice these remarks may come, not to misunderstand my meaning. I trust nothing here said could for a moment be interpreted into a wish to exclude the governess from the love and confidence of her pupils, or to conclude that as a rule she is unfit to share it. Far from this: I know without gaining their affection she will be utterly incapable of governing them; nor ought she to be deprived of enjoying the confidence and the sympathy of the little beings with whom she spends her quiet monotonous life. All that is urged is this (and it should be urged as much to the teacher as the parent), it is *natural*, and therefore *right*, that the parent should be more

loved than the teacher. She should, therefore, encourage this; she should herself repose no confidences in the child with any idea expressed or unexpressed that they are to be between her and the child, exclusive of the parent. She should abstain from any remarks respecting the child's parents which have in the slightest degree the appearance of being some opinion which she and the children may hold in common, but which it would be wrong or imprudent to repeat to the object of it. Her whole endeavour in this, as in everything else, should be to follow the ordinance of God, and thus set the parent first in the affection and confidence of the child, and take a secondary place herself. Many are the difficulties that must attend her path. It may be no arrogance in her to see how much more capable of winning the child's love and calculated to retain it she may be than the giddy woman of pleasure, or the cold hard-

hearted woman of business, or the indolent unobservant person who bears the sacred name of parent. And if in the house she is neglected and overlooked, it will be no easy matter for her to abstain from pouring her complaints to the warm-hearted, caressing little creatures who are so ready to hear her, and so easily made to see things exactly in the light she does. All this will be difficult; it will require self-denial and self-restraint; but it is pre-eminently her duty, and fearful indeed will be her error if she enter any family without a steady purpose of so acting. For the sake of the children's real welfare she may have to bear much in silence, to put the best interpretation upon many a little trait or passing act of her employers; all this, and much more, must she do unless she would bring disunion and distrust exactly between the two parties where they are most dangerous—between children and parents. Her

life, like that of every life that is well lived, must be one of self-denial; and her reward is less here than with her God hereafter.

At the same time it must be owned, that if any dangerous confidences spring up between the governess and children unknown to the mother, it is generally far more the mother's fault than that of anybody else. Nothing is so easy as to gain the confidence of a child. Ready sympathy will always succeed. If the mother is on the watch for every happy feeling, and prepared to join with a smile; if she is always ready to sift the ground of any complaint, and either to remedy the evil or show that it must be borne with patience and fortitude, there will soon be no secrets between her child and herself. She must meet his confidence as his equal, and having obtained it she must act as his superior.

But in addition to the difficulties cast in the way by external circumstances, there are

always difficulties resulting from our own conduct. Parents are so apt to treat their children while they are young as mere play-things: they are so apt to forget that the feelings of human nature exist as certainly in the mere child as in the grown man; that the "boy is father of the man;" and that though some of those feelings are partially undeveloped, yet many are even stronger in childhood than after time has hardened the heart or matured the judgment. The consequence is, many parents throw back the confidence of their children, by not treating them as reasonable beings but as amusing toys. Children are especially sensitive of ridicule; and though it is one of the great lessons of life to learn to be laughed at, yet it does not do to *commence* the instruction with a full amount of ridicule. There is a wide difference between folly and childishness. Folly is not the lawful or allowable attribute of any age or any

circumstances, but a child who has lost all childishness (if that be possible) is a perfect monster. If every time the child opens his lips he is received with a rude shout of laughter, the probability is, that he will either shut up in a timid or sullen silence, or else become so confused in his ideas that he will cease to discern when he has said what is natural in a child, or extremely foolish in anybody. The necessary consequence is, that there will be little openness between the child and those who make a perpetual jest of him.

There are some people who never treat children with any seriousness. If they ask a question, they are answered with a joke; if they do anything wrong, the subject is treated with the height of merriment. Everything connected with the child is made the object of eternal ridicule, till you would hardly know whether it is an ape or a reasonable, thinking, feeling, immortal being who is alluded to.

There is a great difference between this and a little good-humoured and affectionate raillery which may be extremely useful in forming the character, and giving decision and self-possession. A child may be laughed out of a bad habit, which scarcely deserves severer reprehension, and a child may learn to be rather glad than sorry if anything he has said causes amusement; and so long as all this is done with perfect good humour, and the child is not made to feel as if he had sunk in the estimation and regard of those around him, it will be advantageous thus to bring him up without too great sensitiveness about being laughed at.

It has been said, that ridicule is the test of truth, and certainly it is of principle; and the young cannot too soon be armed against the danger of being laughed out of their good feelings or their good practices. It will be the first and the strongest of the temptations they will meet with at school, and their pro-

gress through life will not show them that men are more tender than school-boys of the feelings of others: but it is a weapon that must be used very judiciously at home, or it will have the effect of making a sensitive child either very reserved, or touchy and snappish. It is perfectly safe and right, so long as it does not destroy confidence and affection.

The parents' difficulties in every way will be diminished if this desirable facility of confidence exist between them and their children. But at the same time a distinction must be made between this and a tendency to tale-bearing and complaining. A child's account of an injury done should be received with caution, though never with disregard. It is wonderful how much children will endure and not complain. Many parents have discovered with horror a system of years of petty tyranny or gross misgovern-

ment going on in the school-room or nursery, of which, with all their watchfulness, they have had no suspicion till some accident revealed the whole. It is so natural to man to be governed, that he will endure even bad government. And children are too helplessly dependent to assist themselves, and have too blind a submission to the powers that be to make a formal complaint. They know that they are unhappy, but they do not exactly know why or how; they have an indistinct idea that the nurse or the teacher is unjust or unkind, but it requires more discernment than they possess to identify the exact fault, and to express it in words to one who might aid them; and thus helped on by their own thoughtlessness and want of experience, the little eyes that are closed upon a pillow wet with tears to-night, wake up to smiles and sunshine by the earliest dawn.

When children, therefore, do complain, it is not often unjustly; and when children acknowledge (not that they dislike learning, for that is usual enough, but) that they are unkindly treated, it is seldom without a cause. If there be no unkindness on the part of the superior, there is, at all events, some misunderstanding on the part of the child, which gives him the feeling of being injured. Children are so ready to love and to be loved! They so guilelessly trust themselves to all around them, they are so easily won by a little kindness, that their *positive dislikes* are rarely without foundation, because it is against their nature to be prejudiced. Alas! how sad it is to watch this fade away as life goes on! We cannot wear our hearts on our sleeves "for daws to peck at" when a little more knowledge of the world has taught us the value of most human friendships. We hold back our willing affections lest we

should find them wasted, and we look cautiously around us if any seem too willing to offer theirs! We cease to look upon love as a free gift, and rather than see our own unwisely bestowed, we smother it in our hearts; unless, indeed, worse than this, cold selfishness and unholy suffering have long ago wrung out the last remaining drop of tenderness, and even when we would be generous the claim upon our better feelings is answered with a hollow sound!

At the same time, children may be encouraged into a bad habit of always expecting their part to be taken, and their cause to be espoused, and at once considered the right one, without any investigation, whenever they please to make a complaint. But if the parent expects any discipline or any decorum in the school-room, it is absolutely essential that she should invariably support the authority of the governess *to the children.*

Even should the teacher be in error, the children should be the last to hear of it, if they are to continue under her guidance. The teacher is but a delegated authority, and it will be impossible for her to maintain any influence unless fully countenanced by the parents.

A family is the miniature of a state, and the laws by which thrones and kingdoms stand must equally support the welfare of the domestic circle. A law of affinity runs from end to end in every form of social life, and one form is but the stepping-stone to another. They differ in magnitude, but they are the same in principle. The father is the type of the king, and the king is the type of God; respect is akin to loyalty, and loyalty is akin to faith.

CHAPTER III.

The Faults of Childhood, and the Influence of Religious Instruction.

No disposition in childhood hopeless—Religion as a source of consolation, and as a restraining principle—The first steps in religious knowledge—Religious books for children—The Church the great guide and basis of true education—The means of conveying religious instruction—Reverence—Diversity of creeds—The services of the Church—Importance of the subject.

The Faults of Childhood, and the Influence of Religious Instruction.

AND now, having endeavoured to establish the fact that mutual confidence must be the basis of all effectual attempts to educate the human mind, we must investigate the other difficulties which are in our path, and consider their nature and their remedies. We have one great encouragement to commence with. No evil in childhood is a hopeless one; no fault is incurable; no disposition is irreclaimable. While there is youth there is hope; and if only we find the right weapons, and rightly employ them, the little delinquent of eight years may be an amiable youth of eighteen, and a high-principled, virtuous man of eight-and-twenty.

It is indeed wonderful how many ill-

educated children nevertheless become wise and good in after years; and how often natural good feeling and good sense overcome the disadvantages of imperfect early discipline. But this is a fearful risk to run, and a very uncertain tenure to trust to. It is never safe to say, "While they are so young it does not matter; and when they are older they will know better:" it is nothing but gross selfishness and indolence which ever leads us to build upon such an uncertain foundation. Besides which, it is a cowardly shirking of responsibility, and will make but a poor reply to the upbraidings of conscience, if time should produce a result different from our expectations. The only security for the work of training the heart being well done, is to commence that work while the heart is soft and yielding. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

The promise is attached to the performance of the duty, and all must strenuously fulfil the one who dare to hope for the other.

The natural faults of childhood are the dawnings of self-will, and the results of idleness. Childhood is the great holiday time of life, but education must set limits to this, and curb in the wild spirit of youth, if the child is to become anything better or nobler than chance experience or accidental influence may produce. But in order to do this well and effectually, the mind of the teacher and parent must be imbued with that one principle, which is the only sure foundation of every other.

Besides the important work of bringing up the child as a useful member of society, a good citizen, a good subject, and a good man in private life, there is the yet higher work of bringing him up as a good Christian; and this involves all others.

It would far exceed the limits of this work to make any attempt to impress this subject on the minds of those to whom it is especially addressed. The author can only hope it may, in many instances, be taken for granted that the love of truth in its highest degree is the ruling principle of those into whose hands this book may fall, and that the only question in their minds is, not whether or no this subject is important, but, being acknowledged *all*-important, how it may best be conveyed to the younger minds under their care.

I shall imagine, therefore, that there is nothing you so earnestly desire as the moment when you may first commence the task of opening before the mind of your child the rich treasures of Divine truth. I shall imagine that again and again, as that infant form slumbered on your bosom, you have prayed that it might live to know God and to serve Him; and that when you have

anxiously watched tears in those childish eyes, and seen the strugglings of sorrow in those quivering lips, you have longed for the time when the weapons of spiritual consolation shall be put into those hands to wield against the fearful encroachments of tyrant suffering, which already makes some transient efforts to mark the infant as its own. Nature has given us tears from our earliest life, because she knows how sadly we shall need them. Laughter comes later, and goes sooner. But tears are ours from first to last; and we who know that, we who have made some progress through the vale of tears, must long to tell our little ones of the rainbow light beyond.

Nor is this all. It is not only to comfort us in life's sorrows that we need the strong arm of religion. We know what as yet they little dream of; we know that the first symptoms of wayward will are the dawn-

ings of that mighty power of evil, which unchecked by holy discipline, will stalk on through a ruined life to a hopeless eternity. We tremble when we see the pouting lip and sullen face of naughty childhood, because we know that these are the first stirrings of those fatal passions which will mould that little being into the vicious man. And as one bad habit after another develops itself with every year of childhood, we see the germs of ruined prospects, blighted expectations, a useless life, and an unregretted grave. It is now only that *we* can do anything to check the fatal growth of sin. It is now only that it at all rests with *us* to impress that awful truth, that the torture of remorse will one day break that heart which will not bend to the law of God. The hour must come, when the little ones who now gather round our hearth, and make our roof echo with their merry laughter, shall be grown into the

thoughtful men and women who are to work either good or evil in the wide world beyond; and who, passing from under the shadow of that roof, will look back in after years on what they learnt while they sojourned there, and either bless our wise exertions, or lay to us the blame of half the idle follies and uncurbed passions which have made the present a burning shame, and the future an awful dread.

But God be praised, it is not often to the ears of childhood that we need speak in such fearful language as this. To the sin-hardened conscience of maturer age the terrors of judgment may be thundered, but less of fear and more of love is a better theme for the susceptible minds of children.

So soon as a child can understand the words in which the idea is clothed, so soon is it safe and advisable to convey some notion of the existence of a Divine Being. The

knowledge must be very limited at first, and the great object should be to inspire a reverential love for this great Being of whom you are speaking. Commence the subject by saying to the child that you are going to tell him Who made everything—the trees, the hills, the clouds, and human beings. Lower your voice as you speak the holy Name; let your whole manner be tender and gentle, but subdued and grave. Tell him that this great Being loves him and protects him and you. Make him understand that *you*, in return, feel gratitude and love, and that he must do so also, when he reflects upon how much this merciful Creator has done for him. Then explain to him how he may show his love, and endeavour to please God by doing all that is required of him, and by correcting his bad tempers.

It will take several conversations before all this is duly impressed on his understanding.

When this is well established in his mind, you may carry it further; and if he has displeased you, you may convey to him the idea that doing wrong is displeasing to the Almighty; that He loves good and hates evil; you may then teach him a short prayer, not above two or three lines, in the simplest words, imploring protection, and to be led to do right. You may then suggest that the Almighty will withdraw His protection if the child displeases Him by *constant* error; and thus by degrees you may evolve the idea of eternal punishment, and eternal reward.

But throughout your religious instruction to a young mind, you must be anxious that love and reverence should hold a higher place than fear or terror. The terrors of judgment are incommensurate with any sense of sin, which at the early age we are supposing (say three years) it is possible for any child to entertain. And if you dwell upon the awful-

ness of the Divine Being above his beneficence, you will reduce religion to a mere bugbear in their minds. The emotions of the human mind are all infectious, and by speaking in a manner to show the child that *you* love God, that you are impressed with deep veneration and awe, that you entirely trust Him, and that you are anxious to obey Him, you will readily produce the reflection of these feelings in the mind of the child. And here you are secure from all hard-hearted and cavilling opposition. You may have misapprehension, or a volatile disposition to contend with, but there is no "contempt of His holy will and commandment" yet, to baffle all your efforts.

Having advanced thus far, you may soon enter on some of the elementary doctrines of revealed religion,—the three persons of the Trinity, confining yourself simply to the statement that they are, and avoiding all

attempt at any argument or any definition; the mission upon earth of our blessed Lord will follow this, and the Holy Spirit working in our heart and thoughts.

By degrees you will explain and develop their privileges as children of the Church. You will tell them of the fall of man, of original sin, and of their adoption by God in the regenerating waters of baptism. You should make them familiar with all the incidents in the life of our blessed Lord, conveying the knowledge by conversation, and reading to them portions of Scripture, from time to time, simplifying the words to bring it within their comprehension.

And here it may be as well to remark upon the character of some of the books so much used in the religious instruction of children, and to warn parents against a hasty adoption of all those which profess to be simply Bible stories. It is a bold measure at any time

to change and tamper with the words of Scripture, and from the idea that they are mere words to substitute one phrase for another. The attempt is hazardous, and the result generally most unsatisfactory. Instead of the simple earnest statement of a fact which Scripture gives you, you find a bald pointless *anecdote*, or a highly garnished tale, in which the patriarchs and saints of old are made to express in words the thoughts or the motives, which the commentator imagines, that, under the circumstances, they probably entertained; and so, when the child grows a little older, and begins to look out in the Holy Scriptures for the originals of those stories which delighted his infancy, he either finds that Abraham, and Moses, and Samuel, are never asserted to have said or thought what he was led to suppose, or that if they did, it was at all events in a far less circumstantial and satisfactorily familiar conversa-

tion than what he had previously heard. He will take up the Bible merely as a book of entertainment, and as such, he will like it much less than the well-adorned and amplified story-book that he has known before.

There is another danger in the greater portion of these books. Even where they avoid the evil of exaggerating and expanding the words of Scripture, and endeavour to confine themselves exactly within the given bounds, they fall into the error of substituting words of such extreme familiarity as deprive the fact of all sacred grandeur, and seem to reduce it to an every-day homely occurrence. For instance, it is quite a mistake to suppose that a child cannot be made to understand the word "arise," without substituting the familiar term of "get up;" and yet there are books in which all the sober dignity of Holy Scripture is lost by such absurd attempts as these to simplify it for the capacity of

children; and the result is, that reverence and sacredness are forgotten, and the whole standard of thought and feeling lowered.

We will now suppose the child to have received the first impressions of the objects of faith, to be familiar with the holy names, and to repeat the simplest possible night and morning prayers, than which habit none can be more important. There is probably none which has brought more souls safe into port at last.

Then comes instruction in the catechism, never an easy task, and the proper learning of which depends almost entirely on the teacher, and on the running commentary which should accompany it; it not being in itself adapted to the unaided comprehension of any child. To learn it and to understand it will afford endless occasions of conveying distinct, well-defined notions respecting the moral and religious obligations of man; the bearing of the

sacraments upon the course of life, from the moment when the Church first claimed the infant at the font until through sorrow and joy, through sin unto repentance she again and again puts in God's merciful rights over the soul, mingling with its life and attending upon its exit from this world; ever asserting herself as the Church of God to be the mother, the teacher, and the guide, from the cradle to the grave. In the divine system of the Church the parent will find the ground-plan of his own. For the parent is the first delegate of God to carry on the work of the Church and to educate the child to receive her ever expanding and inestimable gifts. And if parents would keep this well in view they could not greatly err in the direction they give to their anxious endeavours.

We have not been sent into a shadowless desert, where there are no landmarks and no resting-places. Born of Christian parents, in

a Christian land, the first event of our life is one which opens every prospect, and confers every blessing, for the security of the future. The stain of original sin is washed away, and the gift of regeneration conferred, before the child has power to commit actual sin; and at the time that, through the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, the infant is thus richly endowed, our Church reminds the parents of a future day, when she shall again call the little one to her embrace; and as now in God's name innocence is conferred, so then at Confirmation strength will be given.

Let the parent then keep this well in mind, and build his instructions upon that foundation-stone which Baptism has laid. Be it your part to nurture and cultivate the seed then sown, and to rear it up to receive the admonition and instruction of the Church, before the next great gift is bestowed—the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, with all the

solemn yet happy preparation for receiving it worthily. Teach them to read and understand these landmarks, and to look forward with a holy impatience to these great resting-places; and thus, making the Church your guide and your monitress in the instructions you endeavour to convey, you will at once make your path plainer and your efforts easier: you will be following the course of education for which God gave you a parent's authority, and therefore you may confidently look for His blessing in the end. The Church educates her souls for God; and parents must labour under her command and in conformity to her injunctions, "till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." [1]

Supported by this hope, you will bravely encounter all the weary disappointments that

[1] Ephesians iv. 13.

may seem to arrest your progress. You labour not alone; you are working for God and for eternity; you are fulfilling the great behest of Providence, who has sanctified the ties of nature as the great links which bind us to each other, and all to God; and if with this end in view you patiently and perseveringly endeavour to bring up your little ones "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," you have His own promise that these efforts shall not be unblest.

The means adopted for conveying religious instruction to children of all ages should be few and simple. A portion of Scripture read and explained daily, conversation on the subject, and a few well-chosen books, are safer methods than putting into their hands a great variety of religious works written expressly for children. It is unadvisable to encourage a craving for books which are intended to make religion *amusing*. Very few children

would care to read books upon the subject which are as grave as the conversations which they delight to listen to. If in addition to the gravity of the subject there is the fixed attention, the *study* required for perusing a book, they will not often be able to give their minds to it, unless it is enlivened by a story; and if a great variety of these religious stories be put into their hands, they will soon learn to skip all the grave parts and look out only for the amusement; and this, as a habit, is a bad one.

The best kind of religious books for children, then, are not those in which there is a great deal of theology with a little anecdote to make it palatable, but those in which the religion is woven into the story as the motive and foundation, and made to bear that relation to the incidents in the book which it ought to bear in the events of real life. They will then assist the parent in what should be

the great object of education, namely, in making all spring from the highest principle, all tend to the highest aim, and all move under the never-ending consciousness of the presence of the Omniscient Creator.

Children have less difficulty in realizing to themselves the idea that the Almighty Being sees them, and that angels are ministering spirits, than those round whom the world has closed with its dry cold materialism.

> "Heaven lies about us in our infancy;
> Shades of the prison-house begin to close
> Upon the growing boy,
> But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
> He sees it in his joy:
> The youth who daily farther from the east
> Must travel, still is nature's priest,
> And by the vision splendid,
> Is on his way attended:
> At length the man perceives it die away,
> And fade into the light of common day."
>
> WORDSWORTH.

There is, however, one danger attending all religious instruction, which is at once most

difficult to avoid, and most fatal in its consequences; and that is, the danger of making the subject too common, and too familiar, and thereby of diminishing the awe and reverence with which it should be invariably thought and spoken of. Children are naturally volatile, naturally averse to anything grave and solemn, naturally independent of all respect of things or persons. It has, therefore, to be taught and inculcated with the greatest care and the strictest authority, that so what is sacred may be protected from idle frivolity and giddy irreverence. Too much stress can hardly be laid upon this subject, because, if children are made very intimate with religious subjects, and not at the same time protected from this false familiarity, it is a great chance against their ever in after-life acquiring that spirit of deep veneration which is the ground-work of all true worship. The parent must imbue his

own mind and manner with the deepest respect and solemnity whenever religion is in any way alluded to: no moral feeling is so infectious as awe, and therefore, example will be by far the most effectual mode of inculcating it.

And for this reason, though religion must be made the great spring of action, and the great rule of life, still this must be done in such a way that it shall never appear to be brought forward in a frivolous or trifling manner; in a manner to derogate from its deep sacredness. It must be always thought of and often inculcated; its mysteries must be unfolded, its privileges rejoiced in, and yet the whole subject never talked of lightly, and no allusion to it ever brought in as part of an unreverential remark. It must always be treated as the high and holy mystery, which we speak of in lowered though loving tones, and approach with quiet reserve.

The feeling of veneration is a great lesson learnt, even independent of religion. We shall never aim at what is very great or very good, unless we learn veneration. We may be ambitious, but it will be sordid ambition; we may make great efforts for advancement, but we shall be content with lower aims and poorer attainments unless we have learnt to venerate the noble struggles of lofty spirits. Unless we have learnt to *look up*, we shall do nothing great, and attain nothing good. At the same time veneration must not exclude a sweet familiarity, for "perfect love casteth out fear." And none have the right to be so happily familiar as little children in their unconscious innocence.

Many a heart hardened by time, and the neglect of religious duties, has been touched at hearing the holy names lisped by an infant. And the grown man will not forget the time when on his mother's knees he learnt to utter

them from her lips. Terror and fear, and apprehension engendering doubt, should not be allowed to approach the mind of a child, unless it be that fear which "is the beginning of wisdom," the fear of offending the good God. Let the child be well grounded in the doctrines of the Church, and early learn to be amenable to her holy discipline so far as comports with his tender years. But perfect trust and clinging love must be the characteristics of the young child's religion. The awful dread of punishment, the horror of diabolical influence will overweight the young soul in whom the sense of sin has but small practical foundation; and such amount of fear as may with infinite caution be imparted must be so overlaid by the tender and watchful love of God that the child may be left in no danger of fearing that the latter is powerless to protect him against the former. It is false theology to state that "God does not

love naughty children." Where should we all be if God did not care for sinners?

In all early religious instruction, avoid allusion to other sects and creeds; bring up your children to know "one Lord, one faith, one baptism;" let them be well grounded in the doctrines of the Church and in her holy discipline, and keep them away from religious controversy until they are old enough to "give a reason for the faith that is in them." Keep their minds calmly and steadily fixed upon the truth, before you teach them the prevalence of error, and remember how dangerous it is to shake the confidence of a mind not yet matured into conviction. For this reason, let those around your children profess the same creed with yourselves. Let them be of the same faith, not from any spirit of bigoted intolerance, but because it is so much wiser and safer to leave the question of differences of opinion on religion perfectly

at rest, so long as it is possible to do so. You never can be sure of the effect that may be produced by a contrary course; you never can rely upon your own religious instructions not being counterbalanced by some opposite influence, if you admit a variety of creeds in those who live with your children.

And if you do it under the protection of forbidding all allusion to religious subjects, remember that you are thereby falling into the error of pointedly and intentionally excluding the highest principle as a motive in those to whom you entrust a portion of your children's education. The more a child learns the holy truths of religion from the lips of his own parent the better. The more it is made a pleasure to hear of it, and not a task, the more likely is the parent to lead his child to love the subject. But at the same time it is unwise and unsafe to forbid all reference to these holy things to sanctify the hours of

study and the child's intercourse with his teacher, and consequently, you must admit no one to this position whom you dare not trust with the power of guiding your children from the influence of religion blended with all other instruction. At the same time reserve for yourself alone the task and the pleasure of unfolding religious truths to the minds of your little ones. Let that be a great bond of union between you, and be careful how you give up into the hands of any other this great duty and unutterable privilege. It is only by doing this that you can watch your child's progress in Divine truth, or that you will have a right to share in his inmost thoughts and most sacred feelings.

Above all, encourage your child to pray to the great Author of all good; store his mind with portions of the Liturgy and of the Holy Scriptures. In after years, in sickness or in sorrow, they will return to him, and he will

thus possess a fund of material for holy thought and quiet meditation; besides the additional benefit arising from the important fact that in the prayers of the Church the doctrines of Christianity are at once clearly stated, and rightly applied. We find in them a summary of the great truths of Holy Scripture as the Church interprets them. They are expositions of that primary rule of faith—the Creed; they embody the doctrines of Christianity as the universal voice of tradition has preserved them to us in the safe keeping of the holy Catholic Church.

As it is not the object of this work to do more than urge parents to the fulfilment of known and acknowledged duties, it is impossible to enter more minutely into the details of religious instruction. It is upon the presumption that the parent knows the truth and obeys it, that these instructions are given. Of course, where this is not the case,

this chapter will either be unintelligible or only a subject of dispute. But at least I would entreat all those to whom this question of religion has hitherto been one of indifference or of scorn, to secure to their children a happier fate than their own. Whatever they may think of the importance of religion, they will probably acknowledge that to those who believe, faith is an invaluable possession. To possess through life one great all-absorbing object of existence, one great spring for action; to live under the unfailing conviction of the presence of an Almighty Protector and Benefactor, and in the constant hope of an eternity of peace and purity, is at all events, to put it on the lowest grounds, a better, a safer, and a happier lot than the cold, dark, limited hopes and aims of those who live without God in the world.

If you fling from you the dear hope of heaven, the all-consecrating idea of a God in

human form; if you are content with no prospect beyond earthly prosperity, no Deity but riches, no aim but that of a step higher among your fellow mortals; if you are satisfied to be the victims of evil and sin so long as you may but in this life enjoy its sugared poison, at least permit your children a higher and a safer lot! Let them believe and be happy. And as you grovel on in the paths of cold apathetic worldliness, or stand on the fatal height of successful sin, let them at least be sheltered by the hopes you despise, and the terrors you scoff at. If you are bent upon your own ruin by the careless neglect of all religion, at least do not rob yourselves of the prayers which may be breathed from the purer hearts of your own offspring.

CHAPTER IV.

Good Impulses and Moral Influence.

The office of education is to cultivate natural good feeling as well as to restrain evil—The consequences of crushing such feelings—Girls' schools—Unity and family affection—Mutual dependence—Impartiality—Relationship the strongest tie—Conduct to inferiors—Benevolence—Good impulses—Good sense—How to cultivate it in children—The love of the beautiful—The charm of childishness—Selfishness—The sternness of duty—Punishment—Perpetual fault-finding—Lying.

Good Impulses and Moral Influence.

If there are many things in human nature which it is the office of education to repel and conquer, there are happily also many which it is equally the privilege of education to encourage and cultivate. There are good natural feelings, amiable instincts, and favourable impulses, which, if well directed, grow into virtues, and if neglected, either degenerate into weaknesses, expand into passions, or become choked up by selfishness and worldliness. It is far more the province of education to bestow wise and seasonable culture upon the natural produce of the soil, than to uproot all we find there,

and substitute artificial beauty. And it is from the neglect of this great truth that half the errors of our various educational systems arise.

There is one great and melancholy truth which we must first take into our calculation before we shall clearly see where we are to bend natural feelings into a right direction, and where, on the contrary, it becomes our duty at once to crush and exterminate them. And this truth is, that the circumstances of our condition in this world *more generally* lay us under the necessity of choosing between a lesser or a greater amount of evil, than give us the distinct choice between a real good and an unquestioned wrong. There is more or less of evil and of failure in everything. It is not in this life that we can ever realize our ideal of perfection; and, therefore, the more difficult task is appointed us of deciding which is the better path, which offers the greater hope of

attaining the greater portion of good, and avoiding the more serious evil.

This is especially true with respect to the degree in which it is safe to check naturally warm feelings, and affectionate but quick and high-spirited dispositions. To a temper like this there is often more harm done by an over-repelling and restraining system, than could have been the result of too much liberty.

To illustrate what is meant, it will be well to bring forward an instance of this system. Imagine, therefore, a school for girls, where it was an established rule that no intimacies and no friendships were to exist between any two of the scholars. Home is the proper sphere of the child's strongest ties; its own parents, its own brothers and sisters, are the natural objects for a child's friendships, especially with a girl, whose sphere through life will always be chiefly within the walls of her father's or her husband's home.

In a school consisting of twelve or fourteen pupils, of course there will be a great variety of dispositions and tempers, and amongst so many the history of the homes from whence they come, the habits, the tone of feeling, and the opinions which there they have heard and witnessed, must also greatly vary; consequently, the whole, when brought together, must produce a large amount of evil and danger, if it be permitted to the scholars to hold much communication with each other; for if but one come from an unprincipled, an irregular, or a vulgar home she may succeed in corrupting all the others; therefore the object should be to prevent intercourse as much as possible between the different children, who, nevertheless, live under one roof, study at one table, and learn from the same masters. For the nine months out of every twelve which the children spend at school, the only safety consists in a constant attempt to watch and to

crush any dawning symptoms of more intimate or more affectionate feeling than common springing up between any two of the young community.

During the whole of this long period of their lives, their feelings (at least with respect to any fellow being immediately their companion and equal) are expected to lie dormant, to remain inactive, or only pining after the loved ones from whom they are so long separated. They are not to form any friendships at school, because, in all probability, those friendships will be dangerous and ill-judged. The teacher is always on the watch to detect the first signs of a growing sympathy between two of her scholars. If two girls are seen twice to select each other as companions in the dull, weary promenade of two and two, the next day those two are forbidden to walk together, and the very youngest or the very dullest is in consequence imposed upon them. The

same system is pursued throughout the day, in every circumstance where the two who seem likely to prefer each other could possibly meet to encourage anything like a kinder or more affectionate feeling than what each is supposed to entertain for all.[1]

And what are the consequences of this system? You *cannot* crush these natural longings for affectionate sympathy and intimate intercourse in even the youngest child. The heart is not a curious piece of mechanism which you can open and shut at your pleasure; and by some means or other it does baffle, and will baffle, all your circumspection and all your restrictions. The only result of thus attempting to lay your commands on natural feelings will be, that those over whom you exert your power, will be reduced to deceit and stratagem to illude a tyranny which it is

[1] This is no imaginary picture, but a true and unexaggerated account of facts that have come under the author's notice.

not possible to endure or obey. The poor little scholars who are thus forbidden the natural use of their own feelings will all the more nourish strange romantic attachments for each other; hurried words will be whispered in secret, and a system of concealment will become unavoidable if that be treated as a crime, and made a subject of severe reprehension and a cause for deep shame, which is only natural, and which, under any other system, would be considered as laudable.

The whole thing is argument enough against so baneful an invention as girls' schools, because it is perfectly true that nothing can be a greater risk than to place girls, whose chief merit is innocence, where they may learn so much harm, and form such prejudicial intimacies. But that evil once risked, the unnatural restraints which would attempt to protect them by robbing them of all free-will, can only have the effect of either making them

resort to deceit in order to find opportunity to be natural, or else the good feelings which are to be thus pent up lest they should fall upon an unlucky object, will burst forth into evil passions and violent tempers.

It is not here intended to enter further on the question of schools for the education of girls; the object of this work is solely to treat of home education, and to be an assistance to mothers in their own schoolroom and nursery. But this illustration has been given as an extreme instance of an evil which, in a lesser degree, may be carried on even in the very home where affection, confidence, and sympathy should be born and nourished.

We have already spoken of the necessity of the parent endeavouring to make himself or herself the first object of the child's affection and confidence; and next in importance to this comes the necessity of encouraging love, forbearance, and tenderness among brothers

and sisters. Unless quarrelling is made a thing not to be for one moment tolerated, dissensions and jealousies will soon take entire possession of the nursery and school-room.

For this reason it is scarcely possible to admit emulation as an auxiliary principle in home education. Children must be encouraged to do right because it is right, and to acquire knowledge because it is a valuable possession, and not from the motive of one sister being a better child than another, or one brother more clever than the rest. This necessarily entails a certain degree of contempt for the inferior, and jealousy of the superior, and in all probability the feeling will be carried on beyond the hours of study, and will embitter their amusements with dissension. The great object of domestic life should be that all should be friends, that each should cling to the rest, and that all distinc-

tions of age and superiority should be *merged*, though not lost, in the universal feeling of mutual affection and the desire for mutual support.

It is certain, that the ties of blood are stronger than any others; and that unless we keep the friends that relationship gives us, unless those who have shared one cradle, and been nurtured under one roof, remain through life indissolubly bound together, we are not likely to form any other bonds that will prove more durable or more intimate. The friendships that nature has given us are doubtless the strongest and the best, and it should be with this great truth in view that parents should educate the children of one home to cling together with the utmost possible devotion and affection. When their children shall be robbed of paternal protection and support by the hand of death, or when the little ones who now share alike the pleasures and com-

forts of one home, shall be scattered through the world on their various missions of duty, and their various destinies of joy and suffering, then the natural friends, those whom an all-merciful Creator destined to be the surest and the safest, are unquestionably the brothers and sisters of one household.

It is impossible for parents to inculcate or to encourage too strongly the duty of brotherly love. If the eldest boy is allowed to be the tyrant of the nursery, doubtless in after years he will become the tyrant of his own fireside; if the prettiest girl is made the spoilt favourite, no wonder that her plainer sister grows to fear and dislike her. If one is seen to enjoy the larger share of the parents' favour, of course the others will try to humble and oppress that one by every means in their power. There must be perfect love and perfect justice extended over all; and besides this, the children must be encouraged to cling

together, to protect and to aid each other, if while children the home is to be a happy one, and if in after-life the ties of relationship are to remain what they were ever intended to be, the great supports and comforts of life.

It is the greatest error to attempt to make the children of one family independent of each other. It is the greatest mistake to try and bring them up as separate individuals, instead of as members of an indissoluble community. And in a family where wealth and luxury, by supplying unasked every want and every convenience, make each member almost entirely independent of the others for either comfort or pleasure, it becomes doubly incumbent on the parent to endeavour to counteract this evil by making the children, as much as possible, companions and sharers in the same advantages and the same amusements. It is an *actual evil* when this dependence upon each other is rendered

unnecessary by the abundance of everything which is put into the hands of each; for experience proves that those who in youth were compelled to cling together for mutual comfort and support, in after-life evince more family affection and less selfishness than is generally found where dependence upon each other was rendered impossible or unnecessary by the lavish comfort of their early years.

There is no such promoter of selfishness as independence; and there is no way to inculcate forbearance, affection, and self-denial more effectual than that of letting children have all things in common. Do not let one stand apart in anything; let the distinctions that difference of age necessarily imposes be the only ones, and even here admit those distinctions as little as possible with reference to any actual pleasure or enjoyment, though they must always afford a reason in all questions of precedence. As the principle

of primogeniture is one that will influence all their future lot, it is not possible or desirable entirely to lose sight of it in childhood. For instance, the eldest is served first because he is the eldest; but here his privileges cease, and he is not on that account to rule his younger brothers and sisters, or to assume any other superiority over them than such as he can show in assisting and protecting them. He is not to value himself above the others because he is the eldest; and he is to look upon the rights of a first-born as chiefly desirable because they increase his opportunities in childhood of giving up to his younger brothers and sisters, and in after-life of befriending and protecting them.

The great religious principle, that all we possess we only hold in trust, and that we have to render up our account to Him who has divided His gifts amongst us according

to His own will, cannot be too early explained and enforced. But, alas! one of the first lessons children learn in the nursery is, that power and position are loved for themselves, and desired as an end, and not as a means only. And the natural selfishness of our human nature is fostered and encouraged by the indulgences and the petting which is extended to one member of the little community above another. The eldest, because he is the eldest; the youngest, because he is the last among so many treasures; or because, having rigidly done their duty by several children, the parents are weary of acting upon principle, and so now give way to impulse; or the prettiest, or the cleverest, is generally the spoilt child of the house, and thus the harmony and affection of the whole family is unhinged and subverted for want of the reins of domestic government being held with an even hand.

The whole tendency of modern education and of modern custom and feeling is far too much that of bidding a man stand by himself, think his own thoughts, keep his own opinions, maintain his own rights, and be, in short, a great unit; great in his own eyes, separate from the commonalty, independent, selfish, and reserved. But this is as unhappy a system as it is false and unchristian. There is no happiness in isolation; there is no pure enjoyment to be found in a proud, cold seclusion from all sympathy. We were born to live in tribes, in communities, and in families. We were born to coalesce with our equals, and not to be independent and solitary. All the laws of God are framed to support a social system, and all good human laws are but the echo and development of this principle. And, as we have said before, "the great object of education should be to act upon the grand principles of human

nature," so it should be the object of the parent to make the brothers and sisters of one family mutually dependent upon each other in childhood, that so they may cling together in after-life.

With all the pride and selfishness inherent in our nature, children are only too ready to catch at the idea of asserting superiority over others ; and nothing is more painful to witness, or betrays a worse feeling throughout the house, than when the children of it are heard to speak with arrogance and contempt of the servants and dependents. It must always be the result of some gross error in the education they receive from the hands of their parents, and from the example they set them. Of course, if they hear the servants severely spoken to, their comforts forgotten, or their feelings treated with disregard ; if they see them dealt with as mere machines, and no thanks given for their services, the little tyrants of a few

years will adopt the same course, will scold, and ridicule, and say injurious things to those whom they are allowed to consider as in every way beneath them. Can anything be more fatal to good feeling than such a practice as this? can anything more entirely obliterate the gentle, compassionate, grateful impulses of a child's heart than the habit of oppressing those beneath him?

Children are not naturally inclined to discover the distinctions of rank and wealth. Kindness and assistance are of the same value to them from whatever hand they come; and it is cruel to teach them the difference by at the same time robbing them of the best charm of childhood, their loving gratitude, and their tender feelings. They should be encouraged to think that kindness is due to all; that every man, however poor and low may be his lot, has an equal claim to a certain consideration for his feelings, and that no one has a right to

trample upon another. Gratitude is due for the service of the meanest; and Christianity which teaches us "to do as we would be done by," thereby inculcates a truer and more valuable courtesy than any mere conventional laws can do: the kindness of the heart is the best civility, and an unwillingness to wound or offend another the surest propriety and good manners.

There is something too horrible in hearing the innocent lips of childhood giving utterance to the hard, cold, repulsive feelings which belong so entirely to years of selfishness and worldly calculation. Time, alas! must give something of it; but if it must be learnt, let stern necessity teach it, and not those who should be most anxious to nourish all the better impulses of their hearts, and to keep at a distance the contamination of evil. For this reason, compassion to the poor and a desire to relieve them should be encouraged

and inculcated. Do not teach children that poverty and dishonesty go often hand in hand; do not open their eyes to the ingratitude of those whom you have assisted; do not teach them to look upon a beggar as an impostor, or a ruined man as probably a scoundrel. Remember how sacred poverty has been made by being the chosen lot of Him who "had not where to lay His head." And remember, that though experience teaches us to be very wary and somewhat suspicious, the Scriptures only teach that "he who giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord," and that He will consider that "inasmuch as we did it unto one of the least of those, we did it unto Him." It is better to give twice where it was undeserved, than to deny once where it was. The kindness conferred on the unworthy arose from the same motive as that which was more deserved; and it is the motive that He who searcheth the heart looks to. The moral

effect upon our minds in each is the same, and therefore in each we derive the same advantage to ourselves; the sin rests with another; and though we have been told "not to do evil that good may come," yet it is dangerous to teach not to do good *lest* evil should come.

Of course there are limits to this; of course there is the undeniable danger of encouraging vice; and thoughtless liberality and indiscriminate generosity will do harm, and therefore be wrong. But this is so easy a cloak for hard-heartedness, it is so satisfactory a way of answering to our better feelings for refusing assistance, that we had need begin to doubt the strength of those better feelings when they seldom triumph over our prudent apprehensions. The sun shines on the evil and the good; the rain falls on the just and the unjust. We have no word of assurance given us that all those upon whom our great Master

conferred miraculous benefits were men of holy lives; that none of them were suffering solely from the effects of sin, or that they all had repented of their fatal errors. We only know that His gifts were conferred on multitudes; that He gave food to thousands, of whom the solitary thing we hear of in their favour was, that they came to Him, and not even always that. The impotent man by the Pool of Bethesda had the gift of healing extended to him while vainly seeking aid through other means. We must at least acknowledge that this is a great example, against which we shall hardly dare to quote our worldly wisdom or our unfortunate experience of undeserving poverty, and men's ingratitude.

At all events let us leave our little ones in their enviable simplicity, and not close up their warm believing hearts by the too fatal results of a sad experience. Let them enjoy the luxury of assisting others, and do not

be the first to tell them to be on their guard against their own good impulses. Good impulses are not so strong or so durable as we may find occasion to wish, and it is sad to crush them too soon, or to stifle them before education and religion can have linked them with principle, and hedged them in with years of steady perseverance in well-doing. Caution and prudence are invaluable qualities when combined with warmth and earnestness; but without these, they only form the groundwork of a cold and selfish character. The two former qualities can only be the result of time and experience, and if you endeavour to engraft too large a share of them upon the quick feelings of childhood, you may succeed in damping the natural enthusiasm of youth, but it will be at the expense of the promise of a noble mind and high attainments.

At the same time it is quite possible to

combine this respect for youthful zeal and energy of feeling, with the cultivation of calm good sense. It is of the utmost importance that this last quality should be developed in childhood; and nothing is so dangerous as to allow a young mind to entertain wild and dreamy notions about the things of actual life: teach them to value what is real, and teach them to take just and close views of things, and not to be satisfied with general ideas, or vague exaggerated feelings. For this reason you should early appeal to the good sense of the child; *prove* to him the folly of his childish fears and terrors, convince him of the impossibility of his strange notions of things, and educate him with a great value for *fact*, and a clear insight into truth and reality. If you see him going off with a false notion upon some subject, and proceeding to act upon it, explain to him the *untruth* of his perception

of the thing, and the *fatal* or *ridiculous* consequences that would necessarily result from his directing his conduct upon erroneous views; without this precaution, he will grow up with the habit of imbibing crude notions, unreal sentiments, and false feelings.

Sound good sense, and a quick imagination, are far from being incompatible; there is no poetry like the poetry of real life, and it is by cultivating the perception of the beautiful in reality, instead of substituting exaggeration and fiction, that good taste is formed, and that the mind is protected from gaudy extravagance or maudlin sentimentality.

It is impossible to begin too early to form the good sense of a child. For instance, if he be afraid of some dim form in the dark and shrinks from it, *convince his senses* that his fears are needless; take him by the hand, and under your protection induce him to touch it, to examine it, and thus reduce his

idea of it down to the reality, the black cloak, the furniture, or whatever it may be that his imagination has conjured up into an object of terror. By all means avoid scenes and stories which are calculated to rouse groundless fears, or to work upon weak nerves; and so far as these fears come by nature (which they often do in children), combat them by the use of plain sound reasoning, and by appeals to their experience and their senses.

No good is ever gained by allowing them to hear of ghost-stories and horrors. If the child is timid the amount of agony which you provide for his sleepless hours and his dark room can only be known by those who remember their own childish sufferings. And if they are not thus naturally timid, the result will be a morbid love of horror and excitement, which leads to coarseness of taste, and the deterioration of real and refined

feeling: there is a strong link between evil and horror, and if you encourage a love of the latter you do something towards injuring the pure sensitiveness of mind which shrinks from the former.

Another powerful means of encouraging and cultivating good sense, and a strong practical character, is by leading the child's curiosity to question into the nature and causes of things; how objects are made, whence they come, and in what way they are rendered serviceable, and contribute to our comfort and support. These questions are all connected with the realities of life, with external and actual objects, and the study of them precludes a vague, undefined way of viewing objects, and also provides food for thought and investigation. It is a sad error to go upon the principle that romance is untruth, and that poetry is fiction, though it is little wonder we should have so generally imbibed it, when we have

had in our day such men as Byron and Moore, besides a host of brilliant successors in this land and in others, to create such bewitching beings as animate their poems, and then deceive us by calling them men and women.

But save your children from a like deception; teach them the *use* of a steam-engine; and teach them, also, to love flowers and forests, the sunsets, and the ocean; teach them that beauty speaks to them of God, and that the sea and the heavens are types of His infinity and power; that all in nature reflects His mysterious attributes; and then show them how man may take of the crude materials in this vast creation and mould them to serve himself. Teach them to admire and to love the quiet industry of the humble peasant's life, and to respect and reverence the grandeur of royalty; teach them to feel the mighty pulsations of the human heart in every sta-

tion, and to trace the infinite and the eternal in all that exists. You will thus make true sentiment and sound good sense go hand in hand, and you will mould the child's mind to see that there is no beauty like truth, no enthusiasm like that which realities inspire, and that every page of daily life contains a deeper interest, and a source for more elevated poetry than the most tangled chapter of unnatural catastrophe and startling incident that poet or novelist ever concocted.

But in the attempt to make children sensible, nothing should be done which has the least tendency to rob them of the charm of childish gaiety and enjoyment. There is no gift so invaluable as that of buoyant spirits; even the gift of good health only comes second to that of good spirits. And childhood is especially the period in life, indeed the only one, when joy springs out of everything, when mere existence is a boundless

cause of happiness, and when frolic and laughter seem absolutely necessary to unburden the heart of its superfluous and overflowing merriment. There is an irresistible charm in this; and since it has no necessary tendency to make the character unfeeling or regardless of others, it is too cruel to damp it for the few short years that we may dare hope it will last. Do not impose the gravity and the composure that become the years of manhood, upon the bright and thoughtless head of childhood. So far as amusement is innocent, let them blow those glittering bubbles while they can; and so far as fun and frolic does not infringe upon duty, and does not make sport with the feelings or infirmities of another, there can be no doubt that to give them fair play is more likely to allow room for a healthy mind and good feelings to grow up, than if you, as it were, cramp the free, supple limbs of childhood into the dignified or solemn gait of its elders.

The effect of too much restraint in early years will always show itself somewhere. Either in childhood it will produce morbidness and unnatural gloom, or conceit and affectation. Or in youth, when the restraints of home and education are necessarily diminished, the mind, long wearied of its shackles and its prison, will burst forth into excess and error; and having been in the habit of connecting principle with dulness and stupidity, will throw it all away, and give itself up to a delirious and headlong course of folly and pleasure. Be content with making children good as children, and do not cramp them into dwarfish representations of men and women.

At the same time, by encouraging a constant and unselfish consideration for the feelings of others, and thereby a due regard for all the proprieties of life, it will be quite possible to keep their spirits within due bounds, and to prevent the joyous little

creatures, whose laughter echoes through the house, from becoming a set of wild tormentors whom it is not safe to approach, and whose presence entails a perfect storm of noise and uproar, to the exclusion of all comfort and all sensible conversation. They should be made to understand that no amusement is innocent which is a source of annoyance to others, and that even their merriment and their play must not be indulged selfishly. The same principles which direct their more serious hours must influence their pleasures; and obedience, and consideration for the comfort of others, must at no time be lost sight of. But be careful how you meet the frolic of youth with pompous gravity, how you make the exuberance of a warm and joyous heart appear a sin and a shame, lest the flame which would have exhausted itself in a few harmless flashes, should smoulder on in gloom and silence, till the restraints

being withdrawn, it break forth in after years, and destroy all that education has laboured to erect.

The fault of childhood, the sin of youth, and the crime of manhood, in one word, the great error of human nature, is selfishness. It grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength; it chills every good resolution, baffles every good endeavour, and prompts and animates half the bad actions of a man's life. The whole code of Christian morality is aimed against this fatal and universal evil. "To do as we would be done by," "to love our neighbour as ourselves," and to "forgive our enemies," all alike strike at the root of this great origin of sins, this great destroyer of unity, and love, and social laws.

And it is against this, therefore, that early education should direct its strongest efforts: teach the child to think of others, to feel for them, to pity them, and to yield to them;

teach him to find pleasure in sharing anything he possesses with his brothers and sisters; discourage too strong a desire to have things apart for himself alone, to have exclusive possession or enjoyment of anything; prove to him how useless things are when hoarded together, and how they are only valuable when circulated and made to contribute to the comfort and welfare of others. Do not deny the rights of property; explain the force of the law of mine and thine, but make a distinction between *possessing* and *hoarding;* expose to him both the meanness of miserly saving, and the selfishness of solitary enjoyment. It is sad to find that there is nothing in which selfishness cannot hold a large share, and that even affection and love may be the result as much of selfishness as of devotion.

Begin, therefore, early to teach children to make a sacrifice for those they love; show

that you expect it, and do not imagine that any child, after mere infancy, is too young to learn to deny itself for the sake of another, and to find a pleasure in doing so. For instance, you are occupied, and the child's play disturbs you: you may desire him to leave you, or to remain quiet. By this course, you claim the obedience which you have a right to expect. But, on the other hand, you may explain to the child that what is at that moment a pleasure to him is an annoyance to you; you may represent to him that by giving it up he does you a kindness; and thus you may teach him to benefit others by denying himself, and inculcate the first principles of self-denial.

At the same time, it is not wise to make an appeal to the feelings a too frequent mode of getting a duty performed. It is no question of liking to do what is right or not liking; it is not a matter of mere feeling, it is a stern in-

flexible law; and as such, it must be presented to the child. The affections and the feelings may come to our aid in the fulfilment of that law, but the law itself stands irrespective of them, independent and unbending; and it is thus that the infant mind must be taught to look upon duty, for mere good feeling will never stand the shocks and seducements of life's temptations.

It is upon this principle, viz. that duty is a thing of necessity and not of mere inclination, that coercion becomes a part of education; and that course is a very fatal one which goes upon the system of mere persuasion, of *getting the child* to do what is right, instead of *making* him do it, and instead of convincing him by experience of that great law upon which a holy God has founded all things, viz. that *suffering follows sin.* Even if a child might be kept in tolerable order by a mere persuasion and entreaty, by appeals to his feelings

and by proffered rewards, it is very far from desirable that this mode only should be adopted. The principle is a false one, and consequently an ineffectual and unsafe one. The heaven and hell of Christian faith convey the great principle of reward and punishment upon which all government must be founded. And a child cannot too early learn the solemn fact, that if he does wrong, evil must come of it; and though forgiveness and mercy may step in to rescue him, yet that these are mere interruptions in what forms an endless chain of cause and consequence.

The child who is always being implored and entreated to do right, knows nothing of this; he looks upon duty as a matter of choice or a matter of convenience; he either at last gives way to the clamour of persuasion which surrounds him, or he is seduced by some good that is offered to him as an equivalent for what he relinquishes; but he knows nothing of the

immutability of the law of duty, and nothing of the justice and vengeance which pursues the offender against that law. In childhood he gives up some little temptation for the greater prize of a caress or a sugar-plum, but in after-life, when no such benefits are appended to every separate act of duty, he will simply follow his inclinations. He has been guided by feeling and interest, but not by principle, and therefore in after years his feelings and impulses will still remain his cause of action; and the dignity, solemnity, and fearfulness of duty will be unknown to his wild and fatal freedom.

It is so much easier to persuade than to punish; it is so much pleasanter to shut our eyes to distant results, and just let things go smoothly now, hoping that some accident of the future may set all right; it is so much more agreeable to act upon our kind, affectionate, or indolent feelings, instead of bracing ourselves up to a calm resolved obedience to

higher motives; and thus the spoilt and petted child knows no more fatal consequences of his disobedience and his faults than an imploring remonstrance or a careless laugh. And is this the way we prepare souls for the fearful conflict of passion and temptation, with an eternity at stake? and is it these soft creatures of wayward impulse and inconsistent feeling that we expect will struggle with the world, the flesh, and the devil, and come off conquerors of themselves, and triumphant over the sweet allurements and bewildering circumstances of a whole life of trial and danger?

Nothing can be more fatal to the temper of a child than a system of perpetual fault-finding, constantly reminding them of their delinquencies, and recurring to the past at all times, and before all people. The effect must either be, that the child grows callous to reproof, or else that he becomes painfully sensitive, depressed, and awkward, and will,

at last, have recourse to deceit and stratagem to shelter himself from these repeated attacks. It is not often that parents fall into this error, they are saved from it by the tender instinct of affection; but governesses and tutors, who have all the trouble without the same interest and the same love, are apt to vent their own ill-humour or ennui by making the children the objects of incessant rebuke and reprimand. This is a most ungenerous way of punishing an offence. When a child has done wrong, make him suffer for it, but when that is past, let it be really past, and do not be for ever awakening painful recollections, and constantly tormenting and humbling the child by referring to his faults. You should make the child feel that you do not punish him for your pleasure, but from a stern necessity, and that, when it is over, the recollection of it is as painful to you as it can be to him. The whole system of education must be generous, open,

and above-board. There must be no lurking motives, no byway, underhand exercise of power. The child must be left in no doubt of your true meaning; he must not have to scrutinize your feeling with regard to himself. He must know when you are really angry or really pleased, and there must be no dim, indefinite, and uncertain state hanging between the one and the other to make him miserable and suspicious. Do not tell him that though you may forgive, you cannot forget; do not be always threatening him with the loss of your confidence; and do not make out that his faults are *personal offences to yourself*, and that you are constantly in an injured, aggrieved state about them. You will ruin the child's temper, and ruin his heart by all these low petty annoyances to his feelings. You must trust him that he may trust you. It must be all candour, decision, and openness; otherwise your punishments will be acts of petty

tyranny, your rewards will produce no joyous consciousness of having deserved them, and your whole system will become inquisitorial, undefined, and deceitful; and while the child fears you, he will equally learn to despise and suspect you.

Let the child perceive that when you punish him you do it solely in obedience to a higher law—the law of right and wrong, which attaches reward to the one and suffering to the other. Let him feel that you are as much under the dominion of this law as he is, and that it is through you that the law reaches him, and not that at your own despotic will, or from the promptings of your own good or bad temper, you exercise over him the power of discipline.

Of course, different tempers and different faults call for various modes of treatment: if you argue with impertinence, you increase the temptation to answer again; if you send

a sulky child into solitary confinement, you give him time to brood over his ill humour, and to increase it. Some faults call for quick, prompt rebuke, others for slow and systematic discipline: sometimes you may send a child to reflect upon his error, at others you must startle him into a conviction of it; and above all things remember, that if you are one day over-severe, and another day over-indulgent, the child will soon lose his sense of the sinfulness of sin, and will look upon your administration of justice as a mere thing of chance, and therefore of course will often risk the chance of doing wrong with impunity.

There is one fault which seems born in the nature of every child, and the reverse of which is solely the result of education, and that is lying. Children have little or no natural perception of the intrinsic value of truth; on the contrary, they are disposed to stratagem and contrivance: for instance, a child has

done wrong, and finds himself in danger of being rebuked for it; the natural instinct of self-preservation prompts him to devise some mode of escaping this danger; he therefore denies the fact, or prevaricates; he has told a lie, but unless you teach him that a lie is in itself and for its own sake a heinous and unpardonable fault, he will only look upon the habit of telling falsehoods as a weapon of defence, and he will attach to it no sense of shame or disgrace.

Again, with regard to exaggeration and embellishment, unless you teach him that truth is too sacred to be tampered with, and that what is *true* is of infinitely higher value than what is amusing, or curious, or entertaining, he will know no reason why he should not tell a good story, or get the credit of having performed a wonderful feat by means of the resources of his own imagination.

Children begin to tell falsehoods as soon as

they begin to speak, and if you wait till they are old enough to understand an argument on the value of truth, and the remote fatal consequences of falsehood, they will have already acquired the habit of getting themselves out of difficulty, or increasing an advantage at the sacrifice of fact. The importance of truth must be taught as a first principle, not left to be established by experience and proof; it must admit of no palliation, it is capable of no excuse, it is wrong in itself; though successful, its success only increases its guilt, if that be possible, and it is in this light that the child must be *made to see* it, without waiting till he can understand it. As the child grows older, you must cultivate great sensitiveness about truth, great respect for the smallest details of a fact; and he must not be allowed to talk loosely and carelessly of any event or transaction, however trivial; he must learn to state things precisely as they

are, and to avoid the danger of leaving a false impression on the minds of his hearers. This is of immense and vital importance, for it is an undoubted fact that if not taught in early childhood it is seldom if ever learnt in after-life; and all leniency upon this subject is weak and misplaced.

CHAPTER V.

Manner and Accomplishments.

Tact—Courteousness and sincerity—The importance of a good address—Accomplishments—Their value—Taste.

Manner and Accomplishments.

CHILDREN are essentially creatures of imitation. They catch the tone of feeling that they see around; they adopt the same expressions and the same sentiments, and consequently the same manners. Example is the best method of inculcating a good manner, beyond that cultivation of good feeling, and the motive of religious charity, which ensures the only real courteousness by making the outward demonstration of civility spring from a kindly consideration for another.

Tact consists in a quick apprehension of the minute feelings of other people, and an immediate, instantaneous deference to them. The reason why women have generally finer tact

than men is simply because they have gentler and more sympathizing minds. Tact is, in short, unexpressed sympathy. A subject is avoided because an intuitive feeling tells us it might be painful; and on the other hand, some little expression is used from a like feeling that it may soothe, or please, or gratify some sentiment which we know to exist in the hidden thoughts of the person to whom we are speaking. It is only in childhood that this can be *taught*, and it must be done without the sacrifice of truth and sincerity.

Children in their thoughtlessness and ignorance frequently say awkward things to strangers; the more awkward because they are true. You will destroy their ingenuousness and confound their ideas of truth and falsehood, if upon such occasions you rebuke them for being rude, without, at the same time, making them understand *why* it is rude. You must explain to them that certain things,

though true, should not be uttered, because they give pain; and that it *is because they give pain* that they *are* rude. You must give children a *good motive* even for the commonest rule of social life, otherwise you make them artificial and insincere, and prepare them but too well for the shallowness and hypocrisy of modern society. If a child is asked a question which may admit of an answer that, if true, may also be disagreeable, you must never teach him to sacrifice truth to civility; either do not ask him such dangerous questions, or be content with his speaking the truth. Do not insist upon his saying he is glad to see the stranger visitor when in all probability he is either totally indifferent, or only vexed at the interruption. No good can be gained by thus making parrots of children, and great risk is run of teaching them affectation and even deceit.

Teach them to be considerate, unselfish,

and warm-hearted; this is the foundation of all good manners; and beyond that, the polish and grace that they may see in the manners of their parents and associates will complete the little that is wanted to make up the requisites of politeness: for good manners come from the heart, and mere politeness is a thing of imitation, and purely conventional.

Education embraces so many subjects, so many and such various questions of interest, that for a parent to do his duty by the little being of only a few years old requires deep thought, constant attention, and untiring patience. It is in the power of the parent to confer upon his child, in a greater or less degree, the chief requisites for success in after-life; or by neglect to deprive him of the means of ameliorating his own position, of being useful to others, and of becoming a valuable and agreeable member of the society in which he is to live. None of these ques-

tions are beneath notice. If we are born for eternity we also belong to time. A good manner, a good address, and a good external appearance, are all valuable; not only because it is well to make the best of our natural powers for their own sake, but also because these things are an all-prevailing passport in our intercourse with our fellow-men. First impressions are of great moment and of great weight, and as they are mainly produced by appearance and manner these two qualities must be allowed a due share among the anxieties of education; and the fact that there are other things yet more important, is no reason that in a well-balanced mind objects of inferior, but yet actual value, should not find their lawful place.

A parent will naturally be anxious to give his child every chance of success in life; and there is no birth so high, and no fortune so considerable, as to make a good address or

appearance of little moment. On the contrary, the more conspicuous may be the station of the individual the more power he will have of causing annoyance to others by the want of these requisites; and though we may have polished the sacred jewels of thought and feeling to the utmost, that is no reason we should enclose them in a rude and ungainly casket.

The danger does not consist so much in paying attention to these things as in placing them above all others in importance. Acknowledge their importance, and then allow them that share of time and trouble that their real ascertained value demands. Do not send your children into life's crowded path with the shy and awkward gait which will make them timidly shrink through the busy throng, and leave them the victims of every jostle, and the jest of every self-possessed and bolder passer-by. How painful it is to see a great

and noble mind fettered by that miserable shyness which in early days might have been combated, but which has now become a fixed disease, and which makes the giant of moral strength silent and abashed before the empty-headed fool who happens to be blessed with the mere advantages of self-possession! How many a pure and gentle spirit has suffered a silent martyrdom from the want of that quiet ease which the accident of mixing in society, or the precautions of early education, has given to hundreds of inferior minds; and how many rich talents and noble efforts for good have remained abortive, or perished, from the same apparently trivial cause! It is a clog upon every step, an impediment in every undertaking; it lessons influence, annihilates moral power in personal intercourse with our fellow-men, and makes all our social existence a cruel failure and a living martyrdom. No strength of mind will overcome it, no reso-

lution, no bravery is great enough to make us indifferent to it. It haunts us through every hour in society; and more than that, it pursues the poor victim to his solitude with its vague horrors of recollection, and its remorse-like reminiscences of agonizing trifles. The monster of Frankenstein is no exaggerated likeness of the spectral dread that follows the shy man, and dogs his steps at every turn.

Early habit is the only cure; and as the cure must therefore precede the disease, parents must provide against this cruel suffering by habituating their children to ease without forwardness, by encouraging them to be natural though not obtrusive; and by making them ready to offer their small addition to the amusement or pleasure of others when asked to do so, without timidity, and without that fatal consciousness which either takes the form of great shyness or of conceit. Teach them to forget themselves, and give

them the habit of exercising the powers that are given them for the entertainment of others, at an early age, without thinking that they are doing any great thing, but merely as a matter of course.

There is a medium between making puppets of them as children, and leaving them victims to bashfulness when the time comes that they ought to take their place in the society they belong to, and to contribute their share to the pleasure of others. If the exercise of their juvenile accomplishments is made a matter of display, you make them vain and affected; but if they are simply taught to do it as a matter of obedience, and to give pleasure, they will act naturally, without consciousness, and without the suffering of bashfulness.

The same argument holds good with regard to all circumstances of personal appearance which admit of improvement by early care

and attention. It is but fair to give our children every advantage for that success in life which is the result of being able to fill their place in society with pleasure to others, and ease to themselves. In short, the great object of the parent, from day to day, and from year to year, should be in every way, and in every minute detail, to prepare their children for their position in life, *both* with regard to their highest interests and to the common events of daily existence. Whatever accomplishments may enable them to be agreeable to others are so far valuable, especially as the exercise of them must also procure an innocent recreation to themselves. And though life is full of more important considerations, yet that also is of great moment which conduces to the refinement, the grace, and the interests of everyday life. Refinement and grace are the handmaids of purity and innocence; and all those arts

which in education are termed accomplishments have tendencies of a far higher character than that of mere pleasure or amusement; they contribute to the cheerfulness of domestic life; they save it from becoming monotonous and dull; they supply recreation, and while they occupy the mind, they do not fatigue it; they link the thoughts to the beautiful in art, and thereby they diffuse a charm over everything, and bring reflections of the most exalted efforts of genius around the quiet fireside.

Everything is valuable which tends to elevate the tone of our habitual intercourse with each other: everything is valuable which supplies a source of quiet thought, and soothes and refreshes the mind from the inevitable disquietudes and disappointments which at one time or other, if not at most times, form so large a portion of every earthly lot. The gentle girl that weaves a

tedious piece of tapestry may thereby be cheating her thoughts of some vain subject of regret, or while copying the beauties of scenery, or of the human face, may be substituting calm and peaceful contemplations for the restlessness of anxiety or suspense. It is the same with music; and this has the additional merit of giving equal pleasure to others. Of course, when carried to great perfection, and the result of natural talent, these acquisitions may be of undoubted value; but a moderate possession of such accomplishments, as *mere* accomplishments, is very useful and very desirable. Not that it is wise to waste time, trouble, and expense in trying to teach music to a child who is destitute of all ear, or painting to one who cannot distinguish colours; but every child has more turn for one art than another, even without possessing any genius, and having found which that is, it will be adding to

their innocent pleasures to give them the opportunity of cultivating it.

The whole of this subject relates chiefly to girls, though neither drawing nor music need be denied to the stronger sex; but they have other resources to fill their leisure moments or divert their thoughts. Manly sport and exercise renders them less dependent upon the efforts of their own head or hands for the soothing influences which the woman needs in the monotony of her sphere of action; a monotony which may either be the quiet enjoyment of life's best blessings, or the dreary blank which nothing but her own exertions can animate, and nothing but religion can exalt into interest.

Some personal knowledge also of the arts opens the mind to the appreciation of the works of genius, and the love of the beautiful; it facilitates our power of following the gifted hand of the world's great artists, stroke by

stroke, in their master-pieces; it forms the taste, and thereby enables the mind to value justly the wonderful results that great genius only could produce. An ignorant person might prefer a pretty miniature to the Raphael frescoes of the Vatican; an ear unaccustomed to melody might discover no greater merit in the intricate modulations of a symphony by Beethoven, than in an Irish jig or a Scotch hornpipe. It is quite an error to suppose that the language of genius can invariably make itself understood to the uninitiated; corresponding genius will hear and answer to the mystic sounds; but this is rare, and nothing but education and instruction can reveal the secrets of the deeper beauties in art to minds inferior in natural gifts.

We have before said, that "there is a strong link between evil and horror, and that encouraging a taste for the latter does something

towards injuring the pure sensitiveness of mind which shrinks from the former." And, in like manner, there is a close affinity between refined, graceful occupation and purity of mind. The cultivation of taste goes hand in hand with the abhorrence of coarseness. The mind that is occupied in the admiration of the beautiful in art and nature, that has learnt to look upon the graceful side of things, is more likely to retain that purity of sentiment which shrinks from the most distant allusion to vulgarity and grossness; and as all that is virtuous is refined and beautiful, so coarseness is only a few steps short of vice; it is the child of depravity: and though some may have learnt the consequence who have not known the cause, yet the affinity is a dangerous one. There is nothing we should be so chary with in our children as their purity of thought and conversation. Once gone it is gone for ever; and as a child's delicacy is

sensitive in proportion to his ignorance of vice, a thousand allusions that to the more initiated, or the more hardened, pass for nothing, are to him full of undefined horror and disgust. It is easily destroyed; one breath may ruin it; and remember that when delicacy is gone, innocence of thought gone, there is nothing left between the soul and the temptations of vice but such dry stern principle as may have survived the disgust and loathing that belong to native purity.

CHAPTER VI.

The Mental Powers of Childhood—Instruction in General.

The power of application—Memory—Instruction conveyed by conversation—Amusements—Books—Works of imagination and of passion—Good habits—Punctuality and order—Their value in after-life.

The Mental Powers of Childhood—Instruction in General.

THE powers of mind may be said in childhood to be in a chrysalis state. They are all there, but undeveloped, and requiring strength and solidity. They are much more influenced by the child's health and by external circumstances, than when we come to man's estate. If they are strained, they become infirm; if they are neglected, they remain imperfect. With regard to very little children, it should be known and remembered that their intellects are almost entirely under the influence of their bodily health and strength; and that it frequently happens that the power of application and retention in even a quick child occasionally appears for

a period almost paralyzed by some physical cause which seems scarcely important enough to produce such a result. Slight bodily discomfort, the mere effects upon the frame of a heavy sky and a damp atmosphere, will often render the usually easy task an almost insupportable burden to a delicate child. The teacher should be aware of a child's liability to these occurrences; and though children may be taught to struggle against dulness and inertion, yet a due allowance must be made by the teacher for the actual incapacity that in children very frequently accompanies some slight change or process in the physical constitution.

The power of fixing the attention is hardly ever obtained to any extent after youth, and it is therefore of the greatest importance to insist upon this very early in life. The greatest talents fail of half their value without it, and the most brilliant genius may be

lost to mankind unless it be accompanied with application. And as application is almost entirely a thing of habit education can confer it upon any amount of intellectual capacity. Learning by heart is perhaps the best exercise of it, since that compels the child to make an independent effort of the will before he can accomplish his task. The memory also is strengthened by exercise. But whatever is committed to memory should be well worth the trouble of acquiring. It is waste of time and of mental strength to make a child learn by heart a voluminous list of dates, or a long string of names of places. There is scarcely any lesson-book that may not with advantage be greatly abridged. There is nothing gained by teaching a child a great deal, in hopes of his remembering a small portion. Let that which it is absolutely essential he should remember be thoroughly and indelibly committed to memory, without

encumbering the child's memory with the lesser shades of information which will be better acquired, because then only remembered, by the reading and study which come later in life. Build up in childhood the foundation for a good superstructure in after years, when the mind has come to its full powers. Fix the great outlines of universal history on the memory by means of dates, but *only* the outlines, and pursue the same course with respect to the cities and natural features of countries; but let minuter details be acquired by general reading and conversation, for if they too are taught in the same dry manner either they will be forgotten, or the mind will become a mere vocabulary, a great storehouse of crude materials without the knowledge of how to apply and communicate. It is a superior exercise of memory to learn passages from our great writers in prose and poetry than simply a catalogue of dates

and names, because in the former case the understanding is called into use and the taste is improved. But as both are a totally different kind of memory, they should each receive a due share of attention according to their degree of value. The old-fashioned error of education was in teaching everything only by hard study; and the modern error is to convert all study into mere amusement. The result of the latter is to produce minds incapable of strenuous effort and close application; and it is only by a medium between the two systems that we are likely to attain that combination of strength and pliancy which are necessary to acquire solid knowledge, and, when acquired, to employ and disseminate it. It is with a view to the latter power that conversation as a means of imparting knowledge is of such value. It brings a difficult subject within the child's grasp and makes it familiar, thereby fixing

it upon the mind with greater clearness. It also prevents *talking* from being all idle and desultory; and though it may be a strain upon the patience of the parent and teacher, and a great exertion to bring down their language to the simple and distinct words which are necessary to convey clear notions to the mind of the child, the result fully compensates for the effort. In the first place the child is more likely really to understand the subject, and in the next it gives him the invaluable power of expressing himself with fluency and precision; because by encouraging him to ask questions, and express his own ideas upon the subject in point, it makes him search for new words, and ascertain their real meaning; and at the same time it enables the teacher to judge accurately of the child's powers of understanding, and of the progress he makes. It is very unfair upon children to check their inquisitiveness upon lawful subjects by turning

it off with a jest, or by giving them an incorrect answer. Youth is the only time when a love of acquiring information may be given, and it can only be done by making the acquisition pleasant, and by encouraging laudable curiosity. It is of great value when instruction can be conveyed through the means of their amusements; not that the knowledge so acquired can ever be very deep or very considerable, but that it at least elevates the character of their amusements, and teaches them to be rational even in their play. Nevertheless a child who is always tutored, and who never is allowed to stray beyond the limits of spelling-book pedantry, will make an odious child and a narrow-minded man. You must neither be for ever teaching them, nor yet leave their minds fallow. You must neither make all study play, nor convert all their play into a serious matter of rule and wisdom.

It is not the object of this work to enter on the vast subject of the value of various kinds of study, or the means of acquiring them. That has been so often treated of by abler writers that all reference to it in so humble an attempt as this would be unnecessary and misplaced. The object of this work is rather to treat of the mode in which instruction should be conveyed, and of the moral effect produced, than of the nature of that instruction itself. It will be needless, therefore, to detain the reader with questions as to the respective merits of various books of study for children. The best mode of judging of them is for the parent to bear in mind while selecting them what effect they are likely to produce on the intellect and heart of the child, and whether that effect will be of the same nature as what he is endeavouring to produce by his own conversation and discipline. For instance, a history which opens his eyes to the depravity

of human nature, or a story-book which combines vulgarity with entertainment, or contains false moral or religious views, though very clever and full of valuable information, may be also very injurious.

It is of great importance to encourage a taste for reading; and to do this, children should be supplied liberally with books upon various subjects, so that they may find sufficient material for improving the natural turn of their mind, whatever that may be. One child may be particularly fond of books on natural history, another is most pleased with explanations of mechanism, a third delights in travels. Each of these tastes should be allowed plenty of food, in order that it may be turned to good account and the child be induced to gain information upon the subject which he happens to prefer and to show a talent for. But it is a mistake to forbid children any books but those especially

written for them. On the contrary, the effort that a child makes willingly in the attempt to understand a book he has selected from his father's library, conduces more than anything to strengthen and enlarge his mind. He will gain more by this one effort than he would do by reading twice as much of a book expressly adapted to his capacity. A parent wishing to give his child every chance of improving his powers by his own efforts, will do well to place a large portion of his library at the child's disposal, to allow him the liberty of reading various works of history and biography, philosophy and travels, if he has the inclination to do so. If he brings you a book to ask your permission to read it, do not forbid it if your only apprehension is that he will not understand it. Of course, if it is in any way of an immoral tendency, likely to affect his ideas of right and wrong, take it from him; but if it is only that you

believe he is not likely to comprehend it, let him try. The attempt, if it fails, will have done no harm; and if it succeed he has gained a great victory, and made important progress in mental power. For instance, do not forbid the child of seven or ten to read Shakespeare if he wishes it, only because he cannot, you think, appreciate it, and that therefore it is a pity to forestall the time when he will be able fully to comprehend its beauties. If he care to read it at all, it is a proof that, to a certain degree, he does appreciate it: and the amount of pleasure which he derives from it now will not deduct from the fuller enjoyment of his more advanced years.

It is a great mistake to suppose it advisable to exclude children from works of imagination, or to seek in every way to crush and destroy that noble power, that link to things unseen, that faculty by which we embrace truths we

cannot understand, and by which we live in a spiritual and higher world. Faith is the exalted, the sanctified, the religious form of imagination, and it is surely unwise, and to say the least unnecessary, to treat with such disregard and contempt the power by which we grasp the invisible realities of a spiritual existence. If you cultivate the good sense of a child's mind, if you give him by habit the power of close application and steady investigation, you need not fear to add to these the indulgence and even the culture of the imagination. The danger is in confounding works of imagination with works of passion. You might give your little girls most of the plays of Shakespeare to read with impunity, but you would incur great risk by making them intimate with Lalla Rookh and Byron. Nothing is gained by disturbing the serenity of their childishness with glimpses of woman's life-dream of love; and novels

and poems of romance are better left alone till the character is quite formed, till childhood and extreme youth are past, and the realities of existence have given stability to the character, and strength to the judgment. But so far as you can cultivate the imagination, and improve the taste and the sense of the beautiful, without filling their heads and hearts with idle dreams of unattainable happiness, so far it is safe and advisable to do so, and by doing so you educate a finer and a nobler mind. Only be careful lest the pleasure of this kind of reading and conversation with your child do not tempt you one step further, and lead you to histories and descriptions of romance which at once destroy the happy unconsciousness of girlhood, and wake up that fatal tumult of excited feeling which makes the common innocent monotony of daily life worse than the labour of the poor mill-horse working the eternal revolutions of

the wheel. You can never close again the door of that magic chamber of the imagination when once the spring has flown open. You can never restore the pangless enjoyment of the beautiful, when once you have betrayed the secret of that to which it is the key. The secret is learnt with greater safety if it reveal itself, and dawn upon a mind that has not already been taught its language, and heard of its sorrows; and when learnt, it is safer as an untold and speechless mystery, locked within the pure unconsciousness of girlish thought, than when the knowledge of others has given words and expression to the dim and doubtful feeling.

The healthy exercise of *all* the powers of the mind is the surest way to procure well-developed intellectual powers, well-balanced feeling, and regularity of life and habits; and forms the safest precaution against dreamy inactivity, the listlessness of indolence, and

that consequent depression of the spirits which leads to the indulgence of idle fancies and empty feelings. The cultivation of domestic affection must fill the heart; the exercise of charity and the offices of kindness must employ the thirst for activity, and the energy of benevolence; and steady application, punctual habits, grave study, and innocent amusement, must all combine to keep the mind active, but yet peaceful; the imagination free, but yet unimpassioned.

While children are young it rests with others to guide and govern their thoughts and feelings; and as they grow in years the restraint that has been imposed by another hand becomes a power of our own, and the habits which were taught become the natural habits, which we continue to practise and observe by inclination. The rule of "bring up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," is all but

unfailing, and it is especially so with regard to good habits of mental control and of daily practice. The child who is early taught the value of time, and made to observe exact hours for the duties of the day, will grow up with a habit of punctuality, and will find no difficulty in the exercise of this habit. In the same way the child who has been taught order, *tidiness*, and method, will never lose his sense of their importance, and will acquire the power of making and of following such a systematic arrangement of his time and occupations as is most likely to ensure success in whatever pursuit engages him. Nothing but dazzling genius can afford to work without punctuality and order; and even that is impeded and subverted by the perpetual clogs that irregularity and want of method must throw across the most brilliant path. If man were a being of abstract thought and feeling; if we lived in a fairy world where to wish and

to will were all that we needed; if, in short, life were not made up of petty circumstances, of a shower of rain, and an appetite for dinner, of suffering a fit of sleepiness, or of taking a wrong turning down a street, *then* would the smaller qualities of punctuality and order be more beneath the notice of great talents, and be less indispensable for success in life. But where there is no extraordinary genius, where the mind is on a par with the generality, the *only* security for tolerable success and moderate usefulness consists in the regular application and the due value of time, which the early inculcation of order and punctuality alone can give. Some men, from a strong conviction of the importance of such habits, and from a keen sense of failure for the want of them, have succeeded in acquiring them late in life. But then that has become a severe struggle and a great victory which in childhood is absolutely none at all; and a great deal of resolution

and effort goes to the attainment of a simple virtue which might earlier have been learnt with perfect ease.

There are few things that men in after-life are more frequently heard to lament than the neglect of those who had the early care of them in not giving them those habits which are so essential to a life of usefulness in every sphere. And there is no feeling of such bitter, such ignoble humiliation, as that of having failed in any design or attempt, solely from the want of being more masters of ourselves in the little details of common life—early rising, punctuality, system, and order, the power of fixing our attention, and the faculty of remembering trifles.

Nor does the importance of these things consist only in the power they confer of following a pursuit with success, and preserving us from the cruel remorse of knowing that failure is our own fault. They have the yet

greater merit of possessing a strong moral influence. They do more than all else towards enabling us to keep our thoughts, and even our feelings, in subjection. They are the restraint we can give ourselves against idle discontent and vain wishes. They foster a healthy, active energy of mind, and a clearness and elasticity of feeling. The mind is less likely to become unhinged and depressed. And if we thus direct our course in small things by *principle*, it affords an answer to and a support of high moral principle. Our whole life, outwardly and inwardly, becomes subject to *law*, and therefore less exposed to chance temptations. And the man who thus lives is active, diligent, and vigorous. He has leisure at his command, because he knows the full value of each minute, and gets the full amount of time out of every hour. All this may be taught in childhood; and who will deny that the acquisition is invaluable? And

who that has witnessed the listless despondency that assails those who are conscious of having come short of success for the want of these qualities, will not be desirous of saving their children from the low, mean, gnawing remorse that follows such failure?

CHAPTER VII.

Home—The Influence of Domestic Life upon the Country in General.

Home—As it might be—The necessity of strong hope for the attainment of great aims—The alienation between rich and poor—The Church acting through the ties of domestic life—The remedy for our present disunions—The duties of the powerful and wealthy—Religion the great bond of all natural affection.

Home—The Influence of Domestic Life upon the Country in General.

THE peculiarities of a man's character are generally the lights and shadows cast upon his mind by the influences and impressions of his early home. It is there that the statesman first learns a rude sense of law and justice; that the diplomatist first acquires some faint portions of the science of mediating between alien powers; and that the first impulse of all the great aims and efforts of after-life is given to the heart and mind. Most men can trace their choice of a profession, or their acquirement of the one particular art to which their life has been devoted, or in which their energies have been engrossed, to some apparently trivial accident in the cha-

racter of the home where they passed their childhood, or the bias given to them by the objects around them there. The neighbourhood of a barrack-yard, or the vicinity of a seaport, has stamped the fate of most of us; and as there are no impressions so powerful as those received in the passive days of childhood, it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of those impressions, or to press too strongly the necessity that exists for the guidance of a wiser and older head in the effect that the incidents of home-life may have upon the young mind. But no parent is likely to feel deeply the importance of this subject, whose mind is not fully imbued by a sense of the deep meaning and celestial beauty that lies in our condition as social and domestic beings.

The wayward accidents of life do much, alas! to divest these holy symbols of their glory and their power. The reality falls short

of the theory; the whole world is out of course: the good which our symbolic life shadows forth exists but partially; and the evil, the negative of all that good, is rife and vigorous. But if we would actualize some faint portion of the great truths for which we are intended to live we must first take to our inmost heart and soul the entire and perfect reality to which God destined mankind when he divided them into families. We must wear in our heart's core the full picture of what home might be and ought to be, if we would ever even imperfectly perform the duties of that home towards the little ones that are fostered there. We must cherish in our thoughts an image of home such as in our own earlier days we had believed it might be; we must exaggerate the reality, and aspire to the happy fiction, if we would endeavour to work out in the hearts of our children any feelings and thoughts of home which may in

after-life enable them in their turn to become the founders of other, better, and happier families.

It is only by the force, the overwhelming force, of strong hope that we can ever do good in this world. If we allow ourselves to imbibe a sure anticipation of failure, we shall attempt nothing. A strong will and a hopeful heart are the two certain weapons of success; it is upon such that heaven smiles. The cheerful labourer in the task of life is one step less removed from the invincible energies of those who are heaven's own ministering spirits. For once let us forget the perhaps sterner realities of our own homes, and call that sacred word back to our hearts, invested with all the hopes and happiness that it *ought* to convey. It takes a long time to root up our natural intense clinging to home affections and homely happiness. And every time that accident calls us away from the one loved spot, and

apart from the dear sharers of that sacred hearth, do we not in distance and in absence fancy that the next time when again we are where all our heart's best treasures dwell, we *shall* realize the fond idea of what home ought to be? That next time the imperfect sympathy shall ripen into absolute confidence, the irritable temper be soothed by unwearied kindness, the wayward will conciliated by absolute devotion, and a whole halo of truth, purity, love, and heaven fall around every member of that small circle; and home become, what God intended, the protection of every good feeling, the defence against every bad one, and the centre of all our earthly joys.

It cannot be; the cankerworm is there; and our rest is not in this world.

Still it is only by nourishing this idea of home, and living in the patient endeavour to cut off and cast out, or tame down and subdue the opposing energies which make the

divisions and the sorrows of our homes, that we can ever approach nearer to the perfect ideal of home which lives in our hopes and in our anticipations. If we do this; if we remember what we thought of home, and wished it to be; if we keep before our eyes a vivid representation of calm, quiet domestic happiness, and then look round upon the group of young heads who have come to make their home with us on their passage to eternity, we shall at least resolve and endeavour to secure to them as much perfection of this holy ideal as self-control and pious effort can, with the blessing of God, produce. It is very seldom that a really happy home sends forth into the world a bad and a vicious man. It is very seldom that such as have grown up in the exercise and enjoyment of all home affections become cold-hearted and low-minded in after years. And those who have come from the pure

joys and willing subjection of domestic life into the great and giddy world beyond, however for a while their eyes may be dazzled by the meretricious charms of folly and pleasure, generally cherish recollections of purity and peace which in after-life reclaim their influence over the repentant heart.

Alas, that we find it so hard a task to hold to our bosoms this dear image of our social life! Alas, that we should be so cowardly, and that such passing trivial events should go so far to mar higher and nobler resolutions of duty and of happiness! We are not blest, because we will not be. We want the calm, stern vigour of mind which resolves itself into happiness, which casts aside the mean, earthly obstructions that threaten us, and with bold step and firm hand, content to lay aside the poor paltriness of *comfort* and *enjoyment*, grasps at the spiritual boon of real mental happiness, and secures it by believing in it!

Instead of this we look round upon the sphere where our exertions are centred, and think it too mean, too embarrassed, or too narrow to admit of our making ourselves, and those belonging to us, what our consciences tell us they and we ought to be. And thus, as our hearts yearn with sickening anxiety towards the dear childish dependents upon our care and our wisdom, we think that had we another home, or could we remodel this, we might then perform unblemished our paternal duties, and make our little ones happy in childhood and virtuous in after-life. In short, if there were no difficulties and no obstacles, no self-denial and no labour, we might hope to realize our good intentions! I cannot, and I dare not, waits upon I will not; and time slips by; years leave their deposits of evil on the minds and hearts of our children, and the work of real education, the strenuous and indomitable resolution to subdue, to elevate,

to instruct, and to direct, has not yet come.

And why is this? It is because we want hope: hope in well-doing. And hope can only live in an unselfish and upright mind. A cowardly shrinking from duty involves despair; and self-deception, which argues that the difficulties are insurmountable, involves an indolent acquiescence in the present state of things. And so life flies past, and too late we find that its great works of duty have been neglected, and in after years, the little ones, that with all our weakness and our folly we still love with such devotion, learn to blame the circumstances of their early homes for the misfortunes of their after-lives.

But these are not days in which we value ourselves upon the purity and happiness of our domestic life. We consider ourselves great and happy in proportion as we are independent of others. The sacred ties of relationship

are more and more disregarded and neglected. They have ceased to be connected in our minds with certain unquestionable duties and necessary affections. They are looked upon as inconveniences; as things to be forgotten and slurred over in the hurry of pleasure and the engagements of self-elected friendships. God forbid it should be always so, or that there should not be many great and beautiful exceptions to the state of feeling that has been thus increasing amongst us. Still it can hardly be denied that the spirit and the practice of the present day is to break off from the natural affections and quiet duties of domestic life and to herd together in crowds that have no God-ordained and holy connection; to forget the self-denying and loving intercourse of brother with brother, parent with child, and diverging into a thousand different spheres to aim at a selfish isolation from all ties but those which contribute solely

to profit or pleasure. We have neglected the symbol; and we have forgotten the reality. The children of one family are broken apart, and the children of one Church have shaken off her holy control, and are losing their faith. And yet it is with a reference to all family ties that the Church speaks to us. And it is through the links of family life that she seeks to govern us. And if ever the blessed day should come when we shall learn to appreciate the privileges we may possess as members of the true Church; and if that Church extend amongst us the influence and command over the hearts of her children which she is empowered to hold; then, and not till then, shall we see domestic love, the duties of relationship, and the life of home, becoming to us as a nation the sacred and unbroken happy system which God had made it. But it is a fearful sight to watch the ever-widening distance between one station of life

and another; between rich and poor, of which the disunion of family life is the first step. The faithful servants in the homes of our forefathers have but few successors amongst ourselves. The modern facilities of locomotion have engendered a restless desire for change. This has diminished the old feeling of mutual dependence; for where formerly servants lived in a family for twenty years and more they now rarely remain two. And thus in each home there is found some portion of that sad spirit of disconnection and alienation between the rich and poor which has spread itself over our miscalled "Merry England," and which thunders its voice of warning so hoarsely in our ears with the obscene language of Socialism, and the lawless efforts of Communism.

It is no vain exaggeration of the subject of this volume to say that the remedy for these great and fearful evils lies chiefly in the

narrow circle of childhood's home; and that it must come, if it come at all, distilled drop by drop from the thousand and thousand homes of the richer and higher classes amongst us. If in the education of our little ones each parent were to work honestly and truly in the strenuous endeavour to make the children of that one individual home devoted friends to each other, and kind, liberal benefactors to those around them, it must follow that the statesmen, the men of learning, the men of wealth, and the landed proprietors of future days, will have juster views, and a deeper sense of all the many and various links which bind man to man through every possible difference of external circumstances. If the schemes of ambition, the trivial jealousies, and the niggardly selfishness which disunites our families were laid aside and forgotten in mutual support and affection throughout all the changes and

chances of our mortal life, we might hope that the same spirit would run through every modification down all the channels of human existence; and that so all our false attempts at union and fraternity, Communism, Socialism, and every other vile perversion of man's best feelings into the worst practices, would cease, and those feelings find their safe channel and lawful development in the system of our homes, and the control of the Church. To the few among us who have some thoughts beyond the enjoyment of selfish pleasure in the childhood of their offspring, and some object beyond that of handing down to idle and luxurious successors the noble gifts of high birth, and lofty parentage, with all the refinements of a careful education and the advantages of an independent position; to these few, these very few, the question of how we may best prepare our children for the fearful state of

things existing around us must appear one of the greatest moment. The question of how to bring them up, secluded from all collision with the coarseness, the rudeness, and the evil of the great world without the walls of their palace homes, and yet not isolated from sympathy with all that busy mass of humanity; how to give the last refinement of manner, and yet leave uninjured the genuine feelings of the heart; how to supply every want before expressed, and yet avoid the overplus of luxury and its consequent indifference to the privations which are endured by the majority; these questions must be most anxious and difficult ones to all parents who desire before God to make their children what their very titles denote, the Lords and Leaders of the people. The duties of education to the sturdy peasant, who teaches his son to hold the plough, to relieve his mother's cares by a brief attention

to the safety of a baby sister, and to do as he is bid, and safely leaves the rest to the efforts of the village schoolmaster, are plain and easy enough. But when we come to all the complications of learning and refinement, of position and wealth, of responsibility and independence, then with every step the difficulties increase upon us. And as the sufferings, the destitution, and the fearful darkness and irreligion of the lower classes in our great towns, and, shame be to us, even amongst the rich fields of our highly cultivated country, shock our ears with their tales of crime and misery, we *must* feel that to educate men and women who are to labour for the healing of this festering mass of disease, is indeed no light or easy task. And it is not until we shall have resolved to teach our children to live for others and not for themselves, it is not until we shall by example and by precept have educated

them in the constant and patient exercise of self-denial and liberality, that we shall have moved one step towards the remedy which ought to be the great desire of us all. It is not until we shall have made those who hold a high place among the noble, the wealthy, and the learned of our land, true, humble, obedient servants and children of the Church, regular in attendance upon her sacraments, and strenuous in defence of her privileges, that we can ever hope to see that Church once again the great teacher and benefactor of the poor. It is when these shall have diminished their selfish pleasures in order that they may spread their charities; when these devote more time to God in order that they may give less to the world, and when by *personal* intercourse with the poor, *personal* effort, and *personal* example they show their sense of being stewards unto God, then shall we see the alarming disunion

between rich and poor ever lessening, and each again clinging to each in mutual sympathy; the poor in faithful allegiance, the rich in Christian benevolence.

The first step towards this great work begins at home. Ay! even in the nurseries of our little ones. The affection, the self-restraint and the exercise and encouragement of warm-hearted genuine emotions, elevated by the severe discipline of religious practice, will be the seeds of those high qualities which may make the next generation among rich and poor a better and a happier one. And as it is only by taking high aims and by nourishing lofty thoughts that we shall ever attain even a little good, we have no hesitation in saying that it is with such objects in view, and with such feelings, that each parent among us should contemplate the labours of early education.

It is only from principles like these that we

shall care to countervene the selfish wishes of indulgent affection; and that, firm in the recollection of the great ends for which the Almighty has committed to our care the immortal souls of our children, we shall propose to ourselves something nobler and more enduring than the mere pleasure of amusing ourselves with their childhood, and building schemes of ambition upon their youth; or that we shall reap a better harvest from our endeavours than that of seeing them in after-life fall off from their affectionate gratitude to us in the enjoyment of those schemes, if successful; or, alas, our own hearts seceding from them in the disappointment of their failure!

Even natural affection will not stand the changes of time and the chances of life, unless it has been ennobled by some connection with eternity and with God. What began with self will end there; and man, noble as he is

and magnificent in the powers to which he may attain, does, in proportion as he lives without God in the world, deteriorate in his very soul and affections, and more and more become "like unto the beasts that perish."

CHAPTER VIII.

The Difficulty and the Reward.

The child becomes a companion and a friend—Confidence and sympathy—The grown man's recollection of his early home—The parent's affection not alone enough to ward off the coming ills of life—Safety and support in religion—Conclusion.

The Difficulty and the Reward.

WE have now surveyed the general outlines of early education, and traced the results of early influences. We have investigated the difficulties that attend the parent's duties to his child from the birth to the age of twelve or fourteen. The difficulties are chiefly such as require patience and decision to meet, and the duties such as call for judgment and affection to fulfil: but they bring their own reward. They refer to a period when our children are all our own; when no other tie has stepped in to break the entireness of confidence and love that links the little child to his parent; when they have adopted no opinions but those they learnt from our lips, and loved no spot but that which gave them

birth. But this cannot last. The character which we have for so long been moulding and watching has grown up beneath our very hands into a resolved and independent mind. Thoughts are springing up there which we never planted, feelings are developing themselves of which the origin is unknown to us, and that which for so long we looked upon as our own property, stands before us with a will, inclinations, objects and purposes with which we seem to be unconnected.

But the work of education is not completed. Far otherwise; its most serious, its most interesting, and its most important period has arrived. The little child to whom we dictated every action, has become the companion with whom we must walk step by step if we would direct his path. The mind which we *governed* we must now *influence;* and the heart which we claimed as our property we must now keep by reciprocal affection. The groundwork of

knowledge is laid, and the various stores of information must be commenced. It is no longer the dry detail of mechanical instruction, but the formation of the taste, the expansion of the mind, and the direction of the judgment, which absorbs our attention. It is now that the results of early discipline begin to show themselves. It is now that we watch the gradual unfolding of a well-ordered mind, and a well-principled heart, from the early influences of childhood's years. Temptation is beginning; the will is becoming firm, the passions are dawning, the child is fast becoming the thoughtful, resolute, ambitious man; and we now perceive whether self-control, self-denial, and truthfulness have been taught with the first dawnings of reason, or whether at the moment we most want them to come to our aid, they have then to be heard of for the first time. Alas! they will then come too late. It is no longer the parent that

can teach such lessons to the mind that has already grown without them. The next master that claims dominion of the rebel heart is a sterner one, and, but too often, a less successful one. Sorrow, which most needs the patience, the humility, and the self-control which childhood might have learnt, is a slow as well as a severe teacher of their value. And failure, which most betrays the want of industry, application, and good habits, also most surely confirms their fatal and lasting absence. The past is irretrievable. The present is the result of the past. And how little hope does this give for the future!

It is now that every act and every word of yours becomes of double importance to the welfare of your child. Their apprehension is sufficient to take in the value of everything that passes, and their instinctive perception quick enough to detect every slight inconsistency. *You* have taught them to distinguish

right from wrong, and *you* become the first person to whom they will apply those rules. Unused to the sophistries we learn in later years, the child's mind flies straight to the mark; and accustomed to think as you have taught them to think, and to judge as you have taught them to judge, their quick sense is the first unintentionally to discover the flaws in the conduct of those from whom they learnt the perfect law; and whom, therefore, they believe to be living examples of that law. In after-life the stern integrity of conscience learns to listen with complacency to doctrines of expediency and policy; but in childhood these are all undreamt of, and strange, dark, and fearful is the moment when it first dawns upon the simple truthfulness of childhood, that those we love are frail and faulty. Alas! that moment must come. We must live to see our little ones detecting evil, and detecting it in ourselves. The irregularities of temper,

the weaknesses of resolution, the secret worldliness, and the petty motives, all lie bare and open to the pure discrimination of a child. It is sad to think that we shall become the first examples of error to those whom we have educated in truth. But let the blow that must fall, fall as light as may be. Spare them from detecting *untruth;* spare them from feeling that there are double motives and two-sided intentions in all that passes between you and them. Let the tenderness with which in infancy you won their confidence, expand into the frankness with which alone you will be able to retain it. Receive them as friends and as companions, and remember that when once the character of the child is become fixed in its own individuality, you can maintain the influence you extended over their days of infancy solely by intimate, affectionate, and equal intercourse. To understand the feelings of youth you must

become young again: and if you would follow your child's mind through the wishes, the temptations, and the pleasures of early life, you must, by the force of sympathy, make yourself one with him. Man's greatest, noblest want is sympathy, and it is only by a full, liberal, warm-hearted supply of this great good that we can hope to retain to ourselves the unhesitating confidence of those whom nature has, indeed, given us a right to control, but whom no law can bind like the law of love. Where there is perfect trustfulness, and no concealment, it is impossible that any great error can be at work. But the trustfulness must be mutual, and the confidence must be offered with no fear of a cold, dry, unwilling reception, otherwise it will not be given. And the young mind that is afraid of a misunderstanding, or of not having its thoughts and feelings entered into and appreciated, will either close up in a dangerous unnatural

reserve, or waste its confidence upon some as young and as inexperienced as itself.

There is no respect, no veneration, so valuable as that which the parent will ensure to himself by thus binding in one the offices of a friend and a superior. He will follow the sentiments of hope, ambition, and joy that fill the young heart that trusts and loves him, and thus he will be able to insinuate his own experience, and his clearer discernment of evil and danger by the unreserved intercourse that exists between them. And when that child has come to man's estate, and struggles alone with the tide of human affairs, there will be no thought he will cling to with such pious love, no remembrance he will cherish with such sacred respect as the lessons of truth and holiness which he learnt amidst the pure affections and the innocent joyousness of his childhood. And it is with this great reward in view that the parent will invariably

meet and master the many difficulties and sorrows of his path. Tedious and disheartening indeed must that path too often be! The mother who watches with rapture the dimpled cheek of childhood, and who listens to the first thrilling sound of laughter from the innocent lips of her little one, and perchance in a few brief moments sees that merry face suffused with childish tears, and catches the mournful tone of distress or fear that has so suddenly perverted its thoughtless bliss, feels with the pang which shoots through her heart at those sounds, that "these are but the beginning of sorrows." No: let her love that little being as she may, let her watch day and night over its defenceless head, and throw herself in the path of every danger in order to protect her child, and ward off the blow by receiving it herself, still, when she has done all, when her whole life and every energy has been expended in this

cause, she *cannot* save it from all suffering, she cannot shelter it from all evil. The world and time must encroach upon the dominion of her affection, and steal away some of the treasures of happiness and purity over which she now is watching. And the thought would be madness if being true it were all the truth. But no; God be praised, there is much beyond. The sorrows and temptations of life which her child must meet are indeed many, but it is in them that "the good fight of faith" consists. It is true she cannot save him from the dangers of the battle, but she can educate him for "that crown of glory which fadeth not away," and which he will receive when he comes from that bloody field "more than conqueror." And it is only with this hope in view, it is only with this consolation in difficulty, that parents can be saved from one of two evils: either despondency in repeated failure, or the worldliness and selfishness which makes

them think of their children and treat them as mere objects of amusement or of vanity: so that in childhood they are spoilt playthings; in youth they present good speculations for erecting new schemes of pride and grandeur, and when these are past, the ties of nature's most dear and tender relationship are loosened. Parents and children are less to each other than other less real, less intimate, less sacred connections; and the cold worldliness which was allowed to interfere with their most important interests in childhood, is paid back a thousandfold in the want of sterling love and reverential respect which those children feel for the parents under whose roof they no longer need protection. It is true here, as it is in every other circumstance of life—if we work for time, our work will crumble beneath our hands; if we work for eternity, we shall have the foretaste of success here, and the full fruition hereafter.

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