

There is, however, one special department of woman's work demanding the earnest attention of all true female reformers, though it is one which has hitherto been unaccountably neglected. We mean the better economizing and preparation of human food, the waste of which at present, for want of the most ordinary culinary knowledge, is little short of scandalous. If that man is to be regarded as a benefactor of his species who makes two stalks of corn to grow where only one grew before, not less is she to be regarded as a public benefactor who economizes and turns to the best practical account the food-products of human skill and labor. The improved use of even our existing supply would be equivalent to an immediate extension of the cultivable acreage of our country—not to speak of the increase in health, economy, and domestic comfort. Were our female reformers only to turn their energies in this direction with effect, they would earn the gratitude of all households, and be esteemed as among the greatest of all practical philanthropists.

CHAPTER III.

COMPANIONSHIP AND EXAMPLE.

"Keep good company, and you shall be of the number."—GEORGE HERBERT.

'For mine own part,
I shall be glad to learn of noble men.'—SHAKSPEARE.

"Examples preach to th' eye—care, then, mine says,
Not how you end, but how you spend your days."

HENRY MARTYN, "*Last Thoughts.*"

"Dis moi qui t'admire, et je dirai qui tu es."—SAINTE-BEUVE.

"He that means to be a good limner will be sure to draw after the most excellent copies, and guide every stroke of his pencil by the better pattern that lays before him; so he that desires that the table of his life may be fair will be careful to propose the best examples, and will never be content till he equals or excels them."—OWEN FELTHAM.

THE natural education of the Home is prolonged far into life—indeed it never entirely ceases. But the time arrives, in the progress of years, when the home ceases to exercise an exclusive influence on the formation of character; and it is succeeded by the more artificial education of the school, and the companionship of friends and comrades, which continue to mould the character by the powerful influence of example.

Men, young and old—but the young more than the old—can not help imitating those with whom they associate.

It was a saying of George Herbert's mother, intended for the guidance of her sons, "that as our bodies take a nourishment suitable to the meat on which we feed, so do our souls as insensibly take in virtue or vice by the example or conversation of good or bad company."

Indeed, it is impossible that association with those about us should not produce a powerful influence in the formation of character. For men are by nature imitators, and all persons are more or less impressed by the speech, the manners, the gait, the gestures, and the very habits of thinking of their companions. "Is example nothing?" said Burke. "It is every thing. Example is the school of mankind, and they will learn at no other." Burke's grand motto, which he wrote for the tablet of the Marquis of Rockingham, is worth repeating; it was, "Remember—resemble—persevere."

Imitation is for the most part so unconscious that its effects are almost unheeded, but its influence is not the less permanent on that account. It is only when an impressive nature is placed in contact with an impressionable one that the alteration in the character becomes recognizable. Yet even the weakest natures exercise some influence upon those about them. The approximation of feeling, thought, and habit is constant, and the action of example unceasing.

Emerson has observed that even old couples, or persons who have been house-mates for a course of years, grow gradually like each other; so that, if they were to live long enough, we should scarcely be able to know them apart. But if this be true of the old, how much more true is it of the young, whose plastic natures are so much more soft and impressionable, and ready to take the stamp of the life and conversation of those about them!

"There has been," observed Sir Charles Bell in one of his letters, "a good deal said about education, but they appear to me to put out of sight *example*, which is all-in-all. My best education was the example set me by my brothers. There was, in all the members of the family, a reliance on self, a true independence, and by imitation I obtained it."*

It is in the nature of things that the circumstances which contribute to form the character should exercise their principal influence during the period of growth. As years advance, example and imitation become custom, and gradually consolidate into habit, which is of so much potency that, almost before we know it, we have in a measure yielded up to it our personal freedom.

It is related of Plato, that on one occasion he reproved a boy for playing at some foolish game. "Thou reprovest me," said the boy, "for a very little thing." "But custom," replied Plato, "is not a little thing." Bad custom, consolidated into habit, is such a tyrant that men sometimes cling to vices even while they curse them. They have become the slaves of habits whose power they are impotent to resist. Hence Locke has said that to create and maintain that vigor of mind which is able to contest the empire of habit may be regarded as one of the chief ends of moral discipline.

Though much of the education of character by example is spontaneous and unconscious the young need not necessarily be the passive followers or imitators of those about them. Their own conduct, far more than the conduct of their companions, tends to fix the purpose and form the principles of their life. Each possesses in himself a power of will and of free activity, which, if courageously exercised,

* "Letters of Sir Charles Bell," p. 10.

will enable him to make his own individual selection of friends and associates. It is only through weakness of purpose that young people, as well as old, become the slaves of their inclinations, or give themselves up to a servile imitation of others.

It is a common saying that men are known by the company they keep. The sober do not naturally associate with the drunken, the refined with the coarse, the decent with the dissolute. To associate with depraved persons argues a low taste and vicious tendencies, and to frequent their society leads to inevitable degradation of character. "The conversation of such persons," says Seneca, "is very injurious; for even if it does no immediate harm, it leaves its seeds in the mind, and follows us when we have gone from the speakers—a plague sure to spring up in future resurrection."

If young men are wisely influenced and directed, and conscientiously exert their own free energies, they will seek the society of those better than themselves, and strive to imitate their example. In companionship with the good, growing natures will always find their best nourishment; while companionship with the bad will only be fruitful in mischief. There are persons whom to know is to love, honor and admire; and others whom to know is to shun and despise—"*dont le savoir n'est que beterie*," as says Rabelais when speaking of the education of Gargantua. Live with persons of elevated characters, and you will feel lifted and lightened up in them: "Live with wolves," says the Spanish proverb, "and you will learn to howl."

Intercourse with even commonplace, selfish persons, may prove most injurious, by inducing a dry, dull, reserved, and selfish condition of mind, more or less inimical to true manliness and breadth of character. The mind soon learns to

run in small grooves, the heart grows narrow and contracted, and the moral nature becomes weak, irresolute, and accommodating, which is fatal to all generous ambition or real excellence.

On the other hand, association with persons wiser, better, and more experienced than ourselves, is always more or less inspiring and invigorating. They enhance our own knowledge of life. We correct our estimates by theirs, and become partners in their wisdom. We enlarge our field of observation through their eyes, profit by their experience, and learn not only from what they have enjoyed, but—which is still more instructive—from what they have suffered. If they are stronger than ourselves, we become participators in their strength. Hence companionship with the wise and energetic never fails to have a most valuable influence on the formation of character—increasing our resources, strengthening our resolves, elevating our aims, and enabling us to exercise greater dexterity and ability in our own affairs, as well as more effective helpfulness of others.

"I have often deeply regretted in myself," says Mrs. Schimmelpenninck, "the great loss I have experienced from the solitude of my early habits. We need no worse companion than our unregenerate selves, and, by living alone, a person not only becomes wholly ignorant of the means of helping his fellow-creatures, but is without the perception of those wants which most need help. Association with others, when not on so large a scale as to make hours of retirement impossible, may be considered as furnishing to an individual a rich multiplied experience; and sympathy so drawn forth, though, unlike charity, it begins abroad, never fails to bring back rich treasures home. Association with others is useful also in strengthening the character, and in

enabling us, while we never lose sight of our main object, to thread our way wisely and well."*

An entirely new direction may be given to the life of a young man by a happy suggestion, a timely hint, or the kindly advice of an honest friend. Thus the life of Henry Martyn, the Indian missionary, seems to have been singularly influenced by a friendship which he formed, when a boy, at Truro Grammar School. Martyn himself was of feeble frame, and of a delicate, nervous temperament. Wanting in animal spirits, he took but little pleasure in school sports; and being of a somewhat petulant temper, the bigger boys took pleasure in provoking him, and some of them in bullying him. One of the bigger boys, however, conceiving a friendship for Martyn, took him under his protection, stood between him and his persecutors, and not only fought his battles for him, but helped him with his lessons. Though Martyn was rather a backward pupil, his father was desirous that he should have the advantage of a college education, and at the age of about fifteen he sent him to Oxford to try for a Corpus scholarship, in which he failed. He remained for two years more at the Truro Grammar School, and then went to Cambridge, where he was entered at St. John's College. Whom should he find already settled there as a student but his old champion of the Truro Grammar School? Their friendship was renewed; and the elder student from that time forward acted as the Mentor of the younger one. Martyn was fitful in his studies, excitable and petulant, and occasionally subject to fits of almost uncontrollable rage. His big friend, on the other hand, was a steady, patient, hard-working fellow; and

* "Autobiography of Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck," p. 179.

he never ceased to watch over, to guide, and to advise for good his irritable fellow-student. He kept Martyn out of the way of evil company, advised him to work hard, "not for the praise of men, but for the glory of God;" and so successfully assisted him in his studies, that at the following Christmas examination he was the first of his year. Yet Martyn's kind friend and Mentor never achieved any distinction himself; he passed away into obscurity, leading, most probably, a useful though an unknown career; his greatest wish in life having been to shape the character of his friend, to inspire his soul with the love of truth, and to prepare him for the noble work, on which he shortly after entered, of an Indian missionary.

A somewhat similar incident is said to have occurred in the college career of Dr. Paley. When a student at Christ's College, Cambridge, he was distinguished for his shrewdness as well as his clumsiness, and he was at the same time the favorite and the butt of his companions. Though his natural abilities were great, he was thoughtless, idle, and a spendthrift; and at the commencement of his third year he had made comparatively little progress. After one of his usual night-dissipations, a friend stood by his bedside on the following morning. "Paley," said he, "I have not been able to sleep for thinking about you. I have been thinking what a fool you are! I have the means of dissipation, and can afford to be idle; *you* are poor, and cannot afford it. I could do nothing, probably, even were I to try; *you* are capable of doing anything. I have lain awake all night thinking about your folly, and I have now come solemnly to warn you, indeed, if you persist in your indolence, and go on in this way, I must renounce your society altogether."

It is said that Paley was so powerfully affected by this ad-

monition, that from that moment he became an altered man. He formed an entirely new plan of life, and diligently persevered in it. He became one of the most industrious of students. One by one he distanced his competitors, and at the end of the year he came out senior wrangler. What he afterwards accomplished as an author and a divine is sufficiently well known.

No one recognized more fully the influence of personal example on the young than did Dr. Arnold. It was the great lever with which he worked in striving to elevate the character of his school. He made it his principal object, first to put a right spirit into the leading boys by attracting their good and noble feelings; and then to make them instrumental in propagating the same spirit among the rest, by the influence of imitation, example, and admiration. He endeavored to make all feel that they were fellow-workers with himself, and sharers with him in the moral responsibility for the good government of the place. One of the first effects of this high-minded system of management was, that it inspired the boys with strength and self-respect. They felt that they were trusted. There were, of course, *mauvais sujets* at Rugby, as there are at all schools; and these it was the master's duty to watch, to prevent their bad example contaminating others. On one occasion he said to an assistant-master: "Do you see those two boys walking together? I never saw them together before. You should make an especial point of observing the company they keep; nothing so tells the changes in a boy's character."

Dr. Arnold's own example was an inspiration, as is that of every great teacher. In his presence, young men learned to respect themselves, and out of the root of self-respect there grew up the manly virtues. "His very presence," says

his biographer, "seemed to create a new spring of health and vigor within them, and to give to life an interest and elevation which remained with them long after they had left him; and dwelt so habitually in their thoughts as a living image, that, when death had taken him away, the bond appeared to be still unbroken, and the sense of separation almost lost in the still deeper sense of a life and a union indestructible."* And thus it was that Dr. Arnold trained a host of manly and noble characters, who spread the influence of his example in all parts of the world.

So also was it said of Dugald Stewart, that he breathed the love of virtue into whole generations of pupils. "To me," says the late Lord Cockburn, "his lectures were like the opening of the heavens. I felt that I had a soul. His noble views, unfolded in glorious sentences, elevated me into a higher world. . . . They changed my whole nature."†

Character tells in all conditions of life. The man of good character in a workshop will give the tone to his fellows, and elevate their entire aspirations. Thus Franklin, while a workman in London, is said to have reformed the manners of an entire workshop. So the man of bad character and debased energy will unconsciously lower and degrade his fellows. Captain John Brown—the "marching-on Brown"—once said to Emerson, that "for a settler in a new country, one good believing man is worth a hundred, nay, worth a thousand men without character." His example is so contagious, that all other men are directly and beneficially influenced by him, and he insensibly elevates

* Dean Stanley's "Life of Dr. Arnold," i., 151 (ed. 1858).

† Lord Cockburn's "Memorials," pp. 25, 26.

and lifts them up to his own standard of energetic activity.

Communication with the good is invariably productive of good. The good character is diffusive in his influence. "I was common clay till roses were planted in me," says some aromatic earth in the Eastern fable. Like begets like, and good makes good. "It is astonishing," says Canon Moseley, "how much good goodness makes. Nothing that is good is alone, nor anything bad: it makes others good or others bad—and that other, and so on: like a stone thrown into a pond, which makes circles that make other wider ones, and then others, till the last reaches the shore. . . . Almost all the good that is in the world has, I suppose, thus come down to us traditionally from remote times, and often unknown centres of good."* So Mr. Ruskin says, "That which is born of evil begets evil; and that which is born of valor and honor teaches valor and honor."

Hence it is that the life of every man is a daily inculcation of good or bad example to others. The life of a good man is at the same time the most eloquent lesson of virtue and the most severe reproof of vice. Dr. Hooker described the life of a pious clergyman of his acquaintance as "visible rhetoric," convincing even the most godless of the beauty of goodness. And so the good George Herbert said, on entering upon the duties of his parish: "Above all, I will be sure to live well, because the virtuous life of a clergyman is the most powerful eloquence, to persuade all who see it to reverence and love, and at least to desire to live like him. And this I will do," he added, "because I know we live in an age that hath more need of good ex-

* From a letter of Canon Moseley, read at a Memorial Meeting held shortly after the death of the late Lord Herbert, of Lea.

amples than precepts." It was a fine saying of the same good priest, when reproached with doing an act of kindness to a poor man considered beneath the dignity of his office—that the thought of such actions "would prove music to him at midnight."* Izaak Walton speaks of a letter written by George Herbert to Bishop Andrewes about a holy life, which the latter "put into his bosom," and, after showing it to his scholars, "did always return it to the place where he first lodged it, and continued it so, near his heart, till the last day of his life."

Great is the power of goodness to charm and to command. The man inspired by it is the true king of men, drawing all hearts after him. When General Nicholson lay wounded on his death-bed before Delhi, he dictated this last message to his equally noble and gallant friend, Sir Herbert Edwardes: "Tell him," said he, "I should have been a better man if I had continued to live with him, and our heavy public duties had not prevented my seeing more of him privately. I was always the better for a residence with him and his wife, however short. Give my love to them both."

There are men in whose presence we feel as if we breathed a spiritual ozone, refreshing and invigorating, like inhaling mountain air, or enjoying a bath of sunshine. The power of Sir Thomas More's gentle nature was so great that it subdued the bad at the same time that it inspired the good. Lord Brooke said of his deceased friend, Sir Philip Sidney, that "his wit and understanding beat upon his heart, to make himself and others, not in word or opinion, but in life and action, good and great."

* Izaak Walton's "Life of George Herbert."

The very sight of a great and good man is often an inspiration to the young, who can not help admiring and loving the gentle, the brave, the truthful, the magnanimous! Chateaubriand saw Washington only once, but it inspired him for life. After describing the interview, he says: "Washington sank into the tomb before any little celebrity had attached to my name. I passed before him as the most unknown of beings. He was in all his glory—I in the depth of my obscurity. My name probably dwelt not a whole day in his memory. Happy; however, was I that his looks were cast upon me. I have felt warmed for it all the rest of my life. There is a virtue even in the looks of a great man."

When Niebuhr died, his friend, Frederick Perthes, said of him: "What a contemporary! The terror of all bad and base men, the stay of all the sterling and honest, the friend and helper of youth." Perthes said on another occasion: "It does a wrestling man good to be constantly surrounded by tried wrestlers; evil thoughts are put to flight when the eye falls on the portrait of one in whose living presence one would have blushed to own them." A Catholic money-lender, when about to cheat, was wont to draw a veil over the picture of his favorite saint. So Hazlitt has said of the portrait of a beautiful female, that it seemed as if an unhandsome action would be impossible in its presence. "It does one good to look upon his manly, honest face," said a poor German woman, pointing to a portrait of the great Reformer hung upon the wall of her humble dwelling.

Even the portrait of a noble or a good man, hung up in a room, is companionship after a sort. It gives us a closer personal interest in him. Looking at the features, we feel as if we knew him better, and were more nearly related to

him. It is a link which connects us with a higher and better nature than our own. And though we may be far from reaching the standard of our hero, we are, to a certain extent, sustained and fortified by his depicted presence constantly before us.

Fox was proud to acknowledge how much he owed to the example and conversation of Burke. On one occasion he said of him, that "if he was to put all the political information he had gained from books, all that he had learned from science, or that the knowledge of the world and its affairs taught him, into one scale, and the improvement he had derived from Mr. Burke's conversation and instruction into the other, the latter would preponderate."

Professor Tyndall speaks of Faraday's friendship as "energy and inspiration." After spending an evening with him, he wrote: "His work excites admiration, but contact with him warms and elevates the heart. Here, surely, is a strong man. I love strength, but let me not forget the example of its union with modesty, tenderness, and sweetness, in the character of Faraday."

Even the gentlest natures are powerful to influence the character of others for good. Thus Wordsworth seems to have been especially impressed by the character of his sister Dorothy, who exercised upon his mind and heart a lasting influence. He describes her as the blessing of his boyhood as well as of his manhood. Though two years younger than himself, her tenderness and sweetness contributed greatly to mould his nature, and open his mind to the influences of poetry:

"She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
And humble cares, and delicate fears;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears,
And love, and thought, and joy."