

Thus the gentlest natures are enabled, by the power of affection and intelligence, to mould the characters of men destined to influence and elevate their race through all time.

Sir William Napier attributed the early direction of his character first to the impress made upon it by his mother, when a boy, and afterwards to the noble example of his commander, Sir John Moore, when a man. Moore early detected the qualities of the young officer; and he was one of those to whom the general addressed the encouragement, "Well done, my majors!" at Corunna. Writing home to his mother, and describing the little court by which Moore was surrounded, he wrote, "Where shall we find such a king?" It was to his personal affection for his chief that the world is mainly indebted to Sir William Napier for his great book, "The History of the Peninsular War." But he was stimulated to write the book by the advice of another friend, the late Lord Langdale, while one day walking with him across the fields on which Belgravia is now built. "It was Lord Langdale," he says, "who first kindled the fire within me." And of Sir William Napier himself, his biographer truly says, that "no thinking person could ever come in contact with him, without being strongly impressed with the genius of the man."

The career of the late Dr. Marshall Hall was a life-long illustration of the influence of character in forming character. Many eminent men still living trace their success in life to his suggestions and assistance, without which several valuable lines of study and investigation might not have been entered on, at least at so early a period. He would say to young men about him, "Take up a subject and pursue it well, and you can not fail to succeed." And often he would throw out a new idea to a young friend, saying, "I make

you a present of it; there is fortune in it, if you pursue it with energy."

Energy of character has always a power to evoke energy in others. It acts through sympathy, one of the most influential of human agencies. The zealous, energetic man unconsciously carries others along with him. His example is contagious, and compels imitation. He exercises a sort of electric power, which sends a thrill through every fibre, flows into the nature of those about him, and makes them give out sparks of fire.

Dr. Arnold's biographer, speaking of the power of this kind exercised by him over young men, says: "It was not so much an enthusiastic admiration for true genius, or learning, or eloquence, which stirred within them; it was a sympathetic thrill, caught from a spirit that was earnestly at work in the world—whose work was healthy, sustained, and constantly carried forward in the fear of God—a work that was founded on a deep sense of its duty and its value."*

Such a power, exercised by men of genius, evokes courage, enthusiasm, and devotion. It is this intense admiration for individuals—such as one can not conceive entertained for a multitude—which has in all times produced heroes and martyrs. It is thus that the mastery of character makes itself felt. It acts by inspiration, quickening and vivifying the natures subject to its influence.

Great minds are rich in radiating force, not only exerting power, but communicating and even creating it. Thus Dante raised and drew after him a host of great spirits—Petrarch, Boccaccio, Tasso, and many more. From him Milton learnt to bear the stings of evil tongues and the con-

* Stanley's "Life and Letters of Dr. Arnold," i. 33.

tumely of evil days; and long years after, Byron, thinking of Dante under the pine-trees of Ravenna, was incited to attune his harp to loftier strains than he had ever attempted before. Dante inspired the greatest painters of Italy—Giotto, Orcagna, Michael Angelo, and Raphael. So Ariosto and Titian mutually inspired one another, and lighted up each other's glory.

Great and good men draw others after them, exciting the spontaneous admiration of mankind. This admiration of noble character elevates the mind, and tends to redeem it from the bondage of self, one of the greatest stumbling-blocks to moral improvement. The recollection of men who have signalized themselves by great thoughts or great deeds seems as if to create for the time a purer atmosphere around us: and we feel as if our aims and purposes were unconsciously elevated.

"Tell me whom you admire," said Sainte-Beuve, "and I will tell you what you are, at least as regards your talents, tastes, and character." Do you admire mean men?—your own nature is mean. Do you admire rich men?—you are of the earth, earthy. Do you admire men of title?—you are a toad-eater, or a tuft-hunter.* Do you admire honest, brave, and manly men?—you are yourself of an honest, brave, and manly spirit.

* Philip de Comines gives a curious illustration of the subservient, though enforced, imitation of Philip, duke of Burgundy, by his courtiers. When that prince fell ill, and had his head shaved, he ordered that all his nobles, five hundred in number, should in like manner shave their heads; and one of them, Pierre de Hagenbach, to prove his devotion, no sooner caught sight of an unshaven nobleman, than he forthwith had him seized and carried off to the barber!—PHILIP DE COMINES (Bohn's ed.), p. 243.

It is in the season of youth, while the character is forming, that the impulse to admire is the greatest. As we advance in life we crystallize into habit; and "*Nil admirari*" too often becomes our motto. It is well to encourage the admiration of great characters while the nature is plastic and open to impressions; for if the good are not admired—as young men will have their heroes of some sort—most probably the great bad may be taken by them for models. Hence it always rejoiced Dr. Arnold to hear his pupils expressing admiration of great deeds, or full of enthusiasm for persons or even scenery. "I believe," said he, "that '*Nil admirari*' is the devil's favorite text; and he could not choose a better to introduce his pupils into the more esoteric parts of his doctrine. And therefore I have always looked upon a man infected with the disorder of anti-romance as one who has lost the finest part of his nature, and his best protection against every thing low and foolish."*

It was a fine trait in the character of Prince Albert that he was always so ready to express generous admiration of the good deeds of others. "He had the greatest delight," says the ablest delineator of his character, "in any body else saying a fine saying, or doing a great deed. He would rejoice over it, and talk about it for days; and whether it was a thing nobly said or done by a little child, or by a veteran statesman, it gave him equal pleasure. He delighted in humanity doing well on any occasion and in any manner."†

"No quality," said Dr. Johnson, "will get a man more friends than a sincere admiration of the qualities of others.

* "Life," i. 344.

† Introduction to "The Principal Speeches and Addresses of H. R. H. the Prince Consort," p. 33.

It indicates generosity of nature, frankness, cordiality, and cheerful recognition of merit." It was to the sincere—it might almost be said the reverential—admiration of Johnson by Boswell, that we owe one of the best biographies ever written. One is disposed to think that there must have been some genuine good qualities in Boswell to have been attracted by such a man as Johnson, and to have kept faithful to his worship in spite of rebuffs and snubbings innumerable. Macaulay speaks of Boswell as an altogether contemptible person—as a coxcomb and a bore—weak, vain, pushing, curious, garrulous; and without wit, humor, or eloquence. But Carlyle is doubtless more just in his characterization of the biographer, in whom—vain and foolish though he was in many respects—he sees a man penetrated by the old reverent feeling of discipleship, full of love and admiration for true wisdom and excellence. Without such qualities, Carlyle insists, the "Life of Johnson" never could have been written. "Boswell wrote a good book," he says, "because he had a heart and an eye to discern wisdom, and an utterance to render it forth; because of his free insight, his lively talent, and, above all, of his love and child-like open-mindedness."

Most young men of generous mind have their heroes, especially if they be book-readers. Thus Allan Cunningham, when a mason's apprentice in Nithsdale, walked all the way to Edinburgh for the sole purpose of seeing Sir Walter Scott as he passed along the street. We unconsciously admire the enthusiasm of the lad, and respect the impulse which impelled him to make the journey. It is related of Sir Joshua Reynolds, that, when a boy of ten, he thrust his hand through intervening rows of people to touch Pope, as if there were a sort of virtue in the contact. At

a much later period, the painter Haydon was proud to see and to touch Reynolds when on a visit to his native place. Rogers the poet used to tell of his ardent desire, when a boy, to see Dr. Johnson; but when his hand was on the knocker of the house in Bolt Court, his courage failed him, and he turned away. So the late Isaac Disraeli, when a youth, called at Bolt Court for the same purpose; and though he *had* the courage to knock, to his dismay he was informed by the servant that the great lexicographer had breathed his last only a few hours before.

On the contrary, small and ungenerous minds cannot admire heartily. To their own great misfortune, they cannot recognize, much less reverence, great men and great things. The mean nature admires meanly. The toad's highest idea of beauty is his toadess. The small snob's highest idea of manhood is the great snob. The slave-dealer values a man according to his muscles. When a Guinea trader was told by Sir Godfrey Kneller, in the presence of Pope, that he saw before him two of the greatest men in the world, he replied: "I don't know how great you may be, but I don't like your looks. I have often bought a man much better than both of you together, all bones and muscles, for ten guineas!"

Although Rochefoucauld, in one of his maxims, says that there is something that is not altogether disagreeable to us in the misfortunes of even our best friends, it is only the small and essentially mean nature that finds pleasure in the disappointment, and annoyance at the success, of others. There are, unhappily for themselves, persons so constituted that they have not the heart to be generous. The most disagreeable of all people are those who "sit in the seat of the scorner." Persons of this sort often come to regard the

success of others, even in a good work, as a kind of personal offense. They cannot bear to hear another praised, especially if he belong to their own art, or calling, or profession. They will pardon a man's failures, but cannot forgive his doing a thing better than they can do. And where they have themselves failed, they are found to be the most merciless of detractors. The sour critic thinks of his rival:

"When Heaven with such parts has blest him,
Have I not reason to detest him?"

The mean mind occupies itself with sneering, carping, and fault-finding, and is ready to scoff at every thing but impudent effrontery or successful vice. The greatest consolation of such persons are the defects of men of character. "If the wise erred not," says George Herbert, "it would go hard with fools." Yet, though wise men may learn of fools by avoiding their errors, fools rarely profit by the example which wise men set them. A German writer has said that it is a miserable temper that cares only to discover the blemishes in the character of great men or great periods. Let us rather judge them with the charity of Bolingbroke, who, when reminded of one of the alleged weaknesses of Marlborough, observed, "He was so great a man that I forgot he had that defect."

Admiration of great men, living or dead, naturally evokes imitation of them in a greater or less degree. While a mere youth, the mind of Themistocles was fired by the great deeds of his contemporaries, and he longed to distinguish himself in the service of his country. When the battle of Marathon had been fought, he fell into a state of melancholy; and when asked by his friends as to the cause, he replied "that the trophies of Miltiades would not suffer

him to sleep." A few years later, we find him at the head of the Athenian army, defeating the Persian fleet of Xerxes in the battles of Artemisium and Salamis—his country gratefully acknowledging that it had been saved through his wisdom and valor.

It is related of Thucydides that, when a boy, he burst into tears on hearing Herodotus read his history, and the impression made upon his mind was such as to determine the bent of his own genius. And Demosthenes was so fired on one occasion by the eloquence of Callistratus, that the ambition was roused within him of becoming an orator himself. Yet Demosthenes was physically weak, had a feeble voice, indistinct articulation, and shortness of breath—defects which he was only enabled to overcome by diligent study and invincible determination. But with all his practice, he never became a ready speaker; all his orations, especially the most famous of them, exhibiting indications of careful elaboration—the art and industry of the orator being visible in almost every sentence.

Similar illustrations of character imitating character, and moulding itself by the style and manner and genius of great men, are to be found pervading all history. Warriors, statesmen, orators, patriots, poets, and artists—all have been, more or less unconsciously, nurtured by the lives and actions of others living before them or presented for their imitation,

Great men have evoked the admiration of kings, popes, and emperors. Francis de Medicis never spoke to Michael Angelo without uncovering, and Julius III. made him sit by his side while a dozen cardinals were standing. Charles V. made way for Titian; and one day, when the brush dropped from the painter's hand, Charles stooped and picked it up, saying, "You deserve to be served by an emperor."

Leo X. threatened with excommunication whoever should print and sell the poems of Ariosto without the author's consent. The same pope attended the death-bed of Raphael, as Francis I. did that of Leonardo da Vinci.

Though Haydn once archly observed that he was loved and esteemed by every body except professors of music, yet all the greatest musicians were unusually ready to recognize each other's greatness. Haydn himself seems to have been entirely free from petty jealousy. His admiration of the famous Porpora was such, that he resolved to gain admission to his house and serve him as a valet. Having made the acquaintance of the family with whom Porpora lived, he was allowed to officiate in that capacity. Early each morning he took care to brush the veteran's coat, polish his shoes, and put his rusty wig in order. At first Porpora growled at the intruder, but his asperity soon softened, and eventually melted into affection. He quickly discovered his valet's genius, and, by his instructions, directed it into the line in which Haydn eventually acquired so much distinction.

Hayden himself was enthusiastic in his admiration of Handel. "He is the father of us all," he said on one occasion. Scarlatti followed Handel in admiration all over Italy, and, when his name was mentioned, he crossed himself in token of veneration. Mozart's recognition of the great composer was not less hearty. "When he chooses," he said, "Handel strikes like the thunderbolt." Beethoven hailed him as "the monarch of the musical kingdom." When Beethoven was dying, one of his friends sent him a present of Handel's works, in forty volumes. They were brought into his chamber, and, gazing on them with reanimated eye, he exclaimed, pointing at them with his finger, "There—there is the truth!"

Haydn not only recognized the genius of the great men who had passed away, but of his young contemporaries, Mozart and Beethoven. Small men may be envious of their fellows, but really great men seek out and love each other. Of Mozart Haydn wrote: "I only wish I could impress on every friend of music, and on great men in particular, the same depth of musical sympathy, and profound appreciation of Mozart's inimitable music, that I myself feel and enjoy; then nations would vie with each other to possess such a jewel within their frontiers. Prague ought not only to strive to retain this precious man, but also to remunerate him; for without this the history of a great genius is sad indeed. . . . It enrages me to think that the unparalleled Mozart is not yet engaged in some imperial or royal court. Forgive my excitement; but I love the man so dearly!"

Mozart was equally generous in his recognition of the merits of Haydn. "Sir," said he to a critic, speaking of the latter, "if you and I were both melted down together, we should not furnish materials for one Haydn." And when Mozart first heard Beethoven, he observed: "Listen to that young man; be assured that he will yet make a great name in the world."

Buffon set Newton above all other philosophers, and admired him so highly that he had always his portrait before him while he sat at work. So Schiller looked up to Shakspeare, whom he studied reverently and zealously for years, until he became capable of comprehending nature at first hand, and then his admiration became even more ardent than before.

Pitt was Canning's master and hero, whom he followed and admired with attachment and devotion. "To

one man, while he lived," said Canning, "I was devoted with all my heart and all my soul. Since the death of Mr. Pitt, I acknowledge no leader; my political allegiance lies buried in his grave."*

A French physiologist, M. Roux, was occupied one day in lecturing to his pupils, when Sir Charles Bell, whose discoveries were even better known and more highly appreciated abroad than at home, strolled into his class-room. The professor, recognizing his visitor, at once stopped his exposition, saying: "*Messieurs, c'est assez pour aujourd'hui, vous avez vu Sir Charles Bell!*"

The first acquaintance with a great work of art has usually proved an important event in every young artist's life. When Correggio first gazed on Raphael's "Saint Cecilia," he felt within himself an awakened power, and exclaimed, "And I too am a painter!" So Constable used to look back on his first sight of Claude's picture of "Hagar," as forming an epoch in his career. Sir George Beaumont's admiration of the same picture was such that he always took it with him in his carriage when he travelled from home.

The examples set by the great and good do not die; they continue to live and speak to all the generations that succeed them. It was very impressively observed by Mr. Disraeli, in the House of Commons, shortly after the death of Mr. Cobden:

"There is this consolation remaining to us, when we remember our unequalled and irreparable losses, that those great men are not altogether lost to us—that their words will often be quoted in this House—that their examples will often be referred to and appealed to, and that even their expressions will form part of our discussions and debates.

* Speech at Liverpool, 1812.

There are now, I may say, some members of Parliament who, though they may not be present, are still members of this House—who are independent of dissolutions, of the caprices of constituencies, and even of the course of time. I think that Mr. Cobden was one of those men."

It is the great lesson of biography to teach what man can be, and can do at his best. It may thus give each man renewed strength and confidence. The humblest, in sight of even the greatest, may admire, and hope, and take courage. These great brothers of ours in blood and lineage, who live a universal life, still speak to us from their graves and beckon us on in the paths which they have trod. Their example is still with us, to guide, to influence and to direct us. For nobility of character is a perpetual bequest, living from age to age, and constantly tending to reproduce its like.

"The sage," say the Chinese, "is the instructor of a hundred ages. When the manners of Loo are heard of, the stupid become intelligent, and the wavering determined." Thus the acted life of a good man continues to be a gospel of freedom and emancipation to all who succeed him.

"To live in hearts we leave behind,
Is not to die."

The golden words that good men have uttered, the examples they have set, live through all time: they pass into the thoughts and hearts of their successors, help them on the road of life, and often console them in the hour of death. "And the most miserable or most painful of deaths," said Henry Marten, the Commonwealth man, who died in prison, "is as nothing compared with the memory of a well spent life; and great alone is he who has earned the glorious privilege of bequeathing such a lesson and example to his successors!"