

becoming old and infirm, and the unhealthy atmosphere of the jail did much towards finally disabling her. While she lay on her death-bed, she resumed the exercise of a talent she had occasionally practised before in her moments of leisure—the composition of sacred poetry. As works of art, they may not excite admiration; yet never were verses written truer in spirit, or fuller of Christian love. But her own life was a nobler poem than any she ever wrote—full of true courage, perseverance, charity, and wisdom. It was indeed a commentary upon her own words:

“The high desire that others may be blest
Savors of Heaven.”

CHAPTER VI.

SELF-CONTROL.

“Honor and profit do not always lie in the same sack.”—GEORGE HERBERT.

“The government of one's self is the only true freedom for the individual.”—FREDERICK PERTHES.

“It is in length of patience, and endurance, and forbearance, that so much of what is good in mankind and womankind is shown.”—ARTHUR HELPS.

“Temperance, proof
Against all trials; industry severe
And constant as the motion of the day;
Stern self-denial round him spread, with shade
That might be deemed forbidding, did not there
All generous feelings flourish and rejoice;
Forbearance, charity in deed and thought,
And resolution competent to take
Out of the bosom of simplicity
All that her holy customs recommend.”—WORDSWORTH.

SELF-CONTROL is only courage under another form. It may almost be regarded as the primary essence of character. It is in virtue of this quality that Shakspeare defines man as a being “looking before and after.” It forms the chief distinction between man and the mere animal; and, indeed, there can be no true manhood without it.

Self-control is at the root of all the virtues. Let a man give the reins to his impulses and passions, and from that moment he yields up his moral freedom. He is carried along the current of life, and becomes the slave of his strongest desire for the time being.

To be morally free—to be more than an animal—man must be able to resist instinctive impulse, and this can only be done by the exercise of self-control. Thus it is this power which constitutes the real distinction between a physical and a moral life, and that forms the primary basis of individual character.

In the Bible praise is given, not to the strong man who "taketh a city," but to the stronger man who "ruleth his own spirit." This stronger man is he who, by discipline, exercises a constant control over his thoughts, his speech, and his acts. Nine-tenths of the vicious desires that degrade society, and which, when indulged, swell into the crimes that disgrace it, would shrink into insignificance before the advance of valiant self-discipline, self-respect, and self-control. By the watchful exercise of these virtues, purity of heart and mind become habitual, and the character is built up in chastity, virtue, and temperance.

The best support of character will always be found in habit, which, according as the will is directed rightly or wrongly, as the case may be, will prove either a benignant ruler or a cruel despot. We may be its willing subject on the one hand, or its servile slave on the other. It may help us on the road to good, or it may hurry us on the road to ruin.

Habit is formed by careful training. And it is astonishing how much can be accomplished by systematic discipline and drill. See how, for instance, out of the most unpromis-

ing materials—such as roughs picked up in the streets, or raw unkempt country lads taken from the plough—steady discipline and drill will bring out the unsuspected qualities of courage, endurance, and self-sacrifice; and how, in the field of battle, or even on the more trying occasions of perils by sea—such as the burning of the *Sarah Sands* or the wreck of the *Birkenhead*—such men, carefully disciplined, will exhibit the unmistakable characteristics of true bravery and heroism!

Nor is moral discipline and drill less influential in the formation of character. Without it, there will be no proper system and order in the regulation of the life. Upon it depends the cultivation of the sense of self-respect, the education of the habit of obedience, the development of the idea of duty. The most self-reliant, self-governing man is always under discipline; and the more perfect the discipline, the higher will be his moral condition. He has to drill his desires, and keep them in subjection to the higher powers of his nature. They must obey the word of command of the internal monitor, the conscience—otherwise they will be but the mere slaves of their inclinations, the sport of feeling and impulse.

"In the supremacy of self-control," says Herbert Spenser, "consists one of the perfections of the ideal man. Not to be impulsive—not to be spurred hither and thither by each desire that in turn comes uppermost—but to be self-restrained, self-balanced, governed by the joint decision of the feelings in council assembled, before whom every action shall have been fully debated and calmly determined—that it is which education, moral education at least, strives to produce."*

* "Social Statics," p. 185.

The first seminary of moral discipline, and the best, as we have already shown, is the home; next comes the school, and after that the world, the great school of practical life. Each is preparatory to the other, and what man or woman becomes, depends for the most part upon what has gone before. If they have enjoyed the advantage of neither the home nor the school, but have been allowed to grow up untrained, untaught, and undisciplined, then woe to themselves—woe to the society of which they form a part!

The best-regulated home is always that in which the discipline is the most perfect, and yet where it is the least felt. Moral discipline acts with the force of a law of nature. Those subject to it yield themselves to it unconsciously; and though it shapes and forms the whole character, until the life becomes crystallized in habit, the influence thus exercised is for the most part unseen and almost unfelt.

The importance of strict domestic discipline is curiously illustrated by a fact mentioned in Mrs. Schimmelpenninck's *Memoirs*, to the following effect: that a lady, who, with her husband, had inspected most of the lunatic asylums of England and the Continent, found the most numerous class of patients was almost always composed of those who had been only children, and whose wills had, therefore, rarely been thwarted or disciplined in early life; while those who were members of large families, and who had been trained in self-discipline, were far less frequent victims to the malady.

Although the moral character depends in a great degree on temperament and on physical health, as well as on domestic and early training and the example of companions, it is also in the power of each individual to regulate, to restrain, and to discipline it by watchful and persevering self-

control. A competent teacher has said of the propensities and habits, that they are as teachable as Latin and Greek, while they are much more essential to happiness.

Dr. Johnson, though himself constitutionally prone to melancholy, and afflicted by it as few have been from his earliest years, said that "a man's being in a good or bad humor very much depends upon his will." We may train ourselves in a habit of patience and contentment on the one hand, or of grumbling and discontent on the other. We may accustom ourselves to exaggerate small evils, and to underestimate great blessings. We may even become the victim of petty miseries by giving way to them. Thus, we may educate ourselves in a happy disposition, as well as in a morbid one. Indeed, the habit of viewing things cheerfully, and of thinking about life hopefully, may be made to grow up in us like any other habit.* It was not an exaggerated estimate of Dr. Johnson to say, that the habit of looking at the best side of any event is worth far more than a thousand pounds a year.

The religious man's life is pervaded by rigid self-discipline

* "In all cases," says Jeremy Bentham, "when the power of the will can be exercised over the thoughts, let those thoughts be directed towards happiness. Look out for the bright, for the brightest side of things, and keep your face constantly turned to it. . . . A large part of existence is necessarily passed in inaction. By day (to take an instance from the thousand in constant occurrence), when in attendance on others, and time is lost by being kept waiting; by night, when sleep is unwilling to close the eyelids, the economy of happiness recommends the occupation of pleasurable thought. In walking abroad, or in resting at home, the mind cannot be vacant; its thoughts may be useful, useless, or pernicious to happiness. Direct them aright; the habit of happy thought will spring up like any other habit."—*Deontology*, ii., 105, 106.

and self-restraint. He is to be sober and vigilant, to eschew evil and do good, to walk in the spirit, to be obedient unto death, to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand; to wrestle against spiritual wickedness, and against the rulers of the darkness of this world; to be rooted and built up in faith, and not to be weary of well-doing; for in due season he shall reap, if he faint not.

The man of business, also, must needs be subject to strict rule and system. Business, like life, is managed by moral leverage; success in both depending in no small degree upon that regulation of temper and careful self-discipline, which give a wise man not only a command over himself, but over others. Forbearance and self-control smooth the road of life, and open many ways which would otherwise remain closed. And so does self-respect; for as men respect themselves, so will they usually respect the personality of others.

It is the same in politics as in business. Success in that sphere of life is achieved less by talent than by temper, less by genius than by character. If a man have not self-control, he will lack patience, be wanting in tact, and have neither the power of governing himself nor of managing others. When the quality most needed in a prime minister was the subject of conversation in the presence of Mr. Pitt, one of the speakers said it was "eloquence;" another said it was "knowledge;" and a third said it was "toil." "No," said Pitt, "it is patience!" And patience means self-control, a quality in which he himself was superb. His friend George Rose has said of him that he never once saw Pitt out of temper.* Yet, although patience is usually regarded

* The following extract from a letter of M. Boyd, Esq., is given by Earl Stanhope in his "Miscellanies:" "There was a circumstance told me by the late Mr. Christmas, who for many years held an im-

as a "slow" virtue, Pitt combined with it the most extraordinary readiness, vigor, and rapidity of thought as well as action.

It is by patience and self-control that the truly heroic character is perfected. These were among the most prominent characteristics of the great Hampden, whose noble qualities were generously acknowledged even by his political enemies. Thus Clarendon described him as a man of rare temper and modesty, naturally cheerful and vivacious, and above all, of a flowing courtesy. He was kind and intrepid, yet gentle, of unblamable conversation, and his heart glowed with love to all men. He was not a man of many words, but, being of unimpeachable character, every word he uttered carried weight. "No man had ever a greater power over himself. . . . He was very temperate in diet, and a supreme governor over all his passions and affections; and he had thereby great power over other men's." Sir Philip Warwick, another of his political opponents, incidentally describes his great influence in a certain debate:

portant official situation in the Bank of England. He was, I believe, in early life a clerk in the treasury, or one of the Government offices, and for some time acted for Mr. Pitt, as his confidential clerk, or temporary private secretary. Christmas was one of the most obliging men I ever knew; and, from the position he occupied, was constantly exposed to interruptions, yet I never saw his temper in the least ruffled. One day I found him more than usually engaged, having a mass of accounts to prepare for one of the law-courts—still the same equanimity, and I could not resist the opportunity of asking the old gentleman the secret. 'Well, Mr. Boyd, you shall know it. Mr. Pitt gave it to me: *Not to lose my temper, if possible, at any time, and never during the hours of business.* * My labors here (Bank of England) commence at nine and end at three; and, acting on the advice of the illustrious statesman, *I never lose my temper during those hours.*' "

"We had caught at each other's locks, and sheathed our swords in each other's bowels, had not the sagacity and great calmness of Mr. Hampden, by a short speech, prevented it, and led us to defer our angry debate until the next morning."

A strong temper is not necessarily a bad temper. But the stronger the temper, the greater is the need of self-discipline and self-control. Dr. Johnson says men grow better as they grow older, and improve with experience; but this depends upon the width and depth and generousness of their nature. It is not men's faults that ruin them so much as the manner in which they conduct themselves after the faults have been committed. The wise will profit by the suffering they cause, and eschew them for the future; but there are those on whom experience exerts no ripening influence, and who only grow narrower and bitterer, and more vicious with time.

What is called strong temper in a young man, often indicates a large amount of unripe energy, which will expend itself in useful work if the road be fairly opened to it. It is said of Stephen Girard, a Frenchman, who pursued a remarkably successful career in the United States, that when he heard of a clerk with a strong temper, he would readily take him into his employment, and set him to work in a room by himself; Girard being of opinion that such persons were the best workers, and that their energy would expend itself in work if removed from the temptation to quarrel.

Strong temper may only mean a strong and excitable will. Uncontrolled, it displays itself in fitful outbreaks of passion; but controlled and held in subjection—like steam pent up within the organized mechanism of a steam-engine, the use of which is regulated and controlled by slide-valves

and governors and levers—it may become a source of energetic power and usefulness. Hence some of the greatest characters in history have been men of strong temper, but of equally strong determination to hold their motive-power under strict regulation and control.

The famous Earl of Strafford was of an extremely choleric and passionate nature, and had great struggles with himself in his endeavors to control his temper. Referring to the advice of one of his friends, old Secretary Cooke, who was honest enough to tell him of his weakness, and to caution him against indulging it, he wrote: "You gave me a good lesson to be patient; and, indeed, my years and natural inclinations give me heat more than enough, which, however, I trust more experience shall cool, and a watch over myself in time altogether overcome; in the mean time, in this at least it will set forth itself more pardonable, because my earnestness shall ever be for the honor, justice, and profit of my master; and it is not always anger, but the misapplying of it, that is the vice so blamable, and of disadvantage to those that let themselves loose thereunto."*

Cromwell, also, is described as having been of a wayward and violent temper in his youth—cross, untractable, and masterless—with a vast quantity of youthful energy, which exploded in a variety of youthful mischiefs. He even obtained the reputation of a roysterer in his native town, and seemed to be rapidly going to the bad, when religion, in one of its most rigid forms, laid hold upon his strong nature, and subjected it to the iron discipline of Calvinism. An entirely new direction was thus given to his energy of temperament, which forced an outlet for itself into public life, and eventu-

*"Strafford Papers," i., 87.

ally became the dominating influence in England for a period of nearly twenty years.

The heroic princes of the house of Nassau, were all distinguished for the same qualities of self-control, self-denial, and determination of purpose. William the Silent, was so called, not because he was a taciturn man—for he was an eloquent and powerful speaker where eloquence was necessary—but because he was a man who could hold his tongue when it was wisdom not to speak, and because he carefully kept his own counsel when to have revealed it might have been dangerous to the liberties of his country. He was so gentle and conciliatory in his manner, that his enemies even described him as timid and pusillanimous. Yet, when the time for action came, his courage was heroic, his determination unconquerable. “The rock in the ocean,” says Mr. Motley, the historian of the Netherlands, “tranquil amid raging billows, was the favorite emblem by which his friends expressed their sense of his firmness.”

Mr. Motley compares William the Silent to Washington, whom he in many respects resembled. The American, like the Dutch patriot, stands out in history as the very impersonation of dignity, bravery, purity, and personal excellence. His command over his feelings, even in moments of great difficulty and danger, was such as to convey the impression, to those who did not know him intimately, that he was a man of inborn calmness and almost impassiveness of disposition. Yet Washington was by nature ardent and impetuous; his mildness, gentleness, politeness, and consideration for others, were the result of rigid self-control and unwearied self-discipline, which he diligently practised even from his boyhood. His biographer says of him, that “his temperament was ardent, his passions strong, and, amidst

the multiplied scenes of temptation and excitement through which he passed, it was his constant effort, and ultimate triumph, to check the one and subdue the other.” And again: “His passions were strong, and sometimes they broke out with vehemence, but he had the power of checking them in an instant. Perhaps self-control was the most remarkable trait of his character. It was in part the effect of discipline; yet he seems by nature to have possessed this power in a degree which has been denied to other men.”*

The Duke of Wellington’s natural temper, like that of Napoleon, was irritable in the extreme, and it was only by watchful self-control that he was enabled to restrain it. He studied calmness and coolness in the midst of danger, like any Indian chief. At Waterloo, and elsewhere, he gave his orders in the most critical moments without the slightest excitement, and in a tone of voice almost more than usually subdued.†

Wordsworth the poet was, in his childhood, “of a stiff, moody, and violent temper,” and “perverse and obstinate in defying chastisement.” When experience of life had disciplined his temper, he learnt to exercise greater self-control; but, at the same time, the qualities which distinguished him as a child were afterwards useful in enabling him to defy the criticism of his enemies. Nothing was more marked than Wordsworth’s self-respect and self-determination, as well as his self-consciousness of power, at all periods of his history.

Henry Martyn, the missionary, was another instance of a man in whom strength of temper was only so much pent-

* Jared Sparks’s “Life of Washington,” pp. 7, 534.

† Brialmont’s “Life of Wellington.”

up, unripe energy. As a boy he was impatient, petulant, and perverse; but by constant wrestling against his tendency to wrongheadedness, he gradually gained the requisite strength, so as to entirely overcome it, and to acquire what he so greatly coveted—the gift of patience.

A man may be feeble in organization, but, blessed with a happy temperament, his soul may be great, active, noble, and sovereign. Professor Tyndall has given us a fine picture of the character of Faraday, and of his self-denying labors in the cause of science—exhibiting him as a man of strong, original, and even fiery nature, and yet of extreme tenderness and sensibility. “Underneath his sweetness and gentleness,” he says, “was the heat of a volcano. He was a man of excitable and fiery nature; but, through high self-discipline, he had converted the fire into a central glow and motive-power of life, instead of permitting it to waste itself in useless passion.”

There was one fine feature in Faraday’s character which is worthy of notice—one closely akin to self-control: it was his self-denial. By devoting himself to analytical chemistry, he might have speedily realized a large fortune; but he nobly resisted the temptation, and preferred to follow the path of pure science. “Taking the duration of his life into account,” says Mr. Tyndall, “this son of a blacksmith and apprentice to a bookbinder had to decide between a fortune of £150,000 on the one side, and his undowered science on the other. He chose the latter, and died a poor man. But his was the glory of holding aloft among the nations the scientific name of England for a period of forty years.”*

Take a like instance of the self-denial of a Frenchman.

* Professor Tyndall, on “Faraday as a Discoverer,” p. 156.

The historian Anquetil was one of the small number of literary men in France who refused to bow to the Napoleonic yoke. He sank into great poverty, living on bread-and-milk, and limiting his expenditure to only three sous a day. “I have still two sous a day left,” said he, “for the conqueror of Marengo and Austerlitz.” “But if you fall sick,” said a friend to him, “you will need the help of a pension. Why not do as others do? Pay court to the emperor—you have need of him to live.” “I do not need him to die,” was the historian’s reply. But Anquetil did not die of poverty; he lived to the age of ninety-four, saying to a friend, on the eve of his death, “Come, see a man who dies still full of life!”

Sir James Outram exhibited the same characteristic of noble self-denial, though in an altogether different sphere of life. Like the great King Arthur, he was emphatically a man who “forbore his own advantage.” He was characterized throughout his whole career by his noble unselfishness. Though he might personally disapprove of the policy he was occasionally ordered to carry out, he never once faltered in the path of duty. Thus, he did not approve of the policy of invading Scinde; yet his services throughout the campaign were acknowledged by General Sir C. Napier to have been of the most brilliant character. But when the war was over, and the rich spoils of Scinde lay at the conqueror’s feet, Outram said: “I disapprove of the policy of this war—I will accept no share of the prize-money!”

Not less marked was his generous self-denial when dispatched with a strong force to aid Havelock in fighting his way to Lucknow. As superior officer, he was entitled to take upon himself the chief command; but, recognizing what Havelock had already done, with rare disinterested-