

have sealed forever the doom of republican and constitutional liberty in America."

Let this not be forgotten when the engraving on Edward Fordham Flower's tombstone comes to be written. May he yet see an end put to the tortures inflicted upon horses which he has so gallantly contended against during his lifetime.

CHAPTER XV.

RESPONSIBILITY.

So when a good man dies,
For years beyond his kin,
The light he leaves behind him lies
Upon the paths of men.

LONGFELLOW.

For his chaste muse employed her heaven-taught lyre,
None but the noblest passions to inspire,
Not one immoral, one corrupted thought,
One line which, dying, he would wish to blot.

LORD LITTLETON *on Thomson.*

I earn as if you were to live forever: live as if you were to die tomorrow.—ANSALUS DE INSULIS.

DUTY begins with life, and ends with death. It encompasses our whole being. It bids us do what is right, and forbids our doing what is wrong. It begins with the upbringing of children. It bids us nurture them, instruct them, educate them, and bring them, by our example, into the ways of well-doing.

Duty accompanies us through life. It goes out of our households to the help of others. The master owes duty to his servants, and the servants to their master. We owe our duty to our neighbor, to our country, to the state. The doing of our duty to all involves an immense responsibility. No one can lead a true life unless he feels this sense, and energetically acts up to it.

In human society, social rights necessitate their own observance. When the sense of responsibility is blunted, society goes to ruin. "The race of mankind," says Sir Wal-

ter Scott, "would perish did they cease to aid each other. From the time that the mother binds the child's head till the moment that some kind assistant wipes the damp from the brow of the dying, we cannot exist without mutual aid. All, therefore, that need aid have a right to ask it from their fellow-mortals. None who have the power of granting aid can refuse it without guilt.

In previous works we have endeavored to show forth the great virtues of a good example. It is among the most priceless of all things. To set the best example in our power is one of our highest responsibilities. Example teaches better than precept. It is the best modeller of the characters of men and women. To live well is the best preacher. To set a lofty example is the richest bequest a man can leave behind him; and to exemplify a noble character is the most valuable contribution a man can make for the benefit of posterity.

All this requires faith, courage, modesty, unselfishness. Temptations beset all men, but by faith and courage we are enabled to set them at defiance. Duty requires us to be chaste and loving. Justice repudiates all forms of selfishness, oppression, and cruelty. Faith in God contains within it the assurance that good must overcome evil universally. "The victory of good over evil," said Mr. Erskine, of Ellon, "is the conversion of all evil beings into good beings; it is making darkness light, and crooked things straight."

The best and bravest of men may have moments of doubt and weakness—they may feel the pillars of their faith shaking under them; but if they are the best and bravest, they rise again from their depression by recurring to first principles. We must believe that the universe is wisely ordered, and that every man must conform to the order which he cannot change; that whatever the Deity has done is good; that all mankind are our brethren; and that we must love and cherish them, and try to make them better, even those who would do us harm.

No one can really believe in the system of negation. Negation can do nothing for men. It may pull down, but

it cannot build up. It is death to the better part of us. It puts an end to faith and hope. Evil cannot be put down by uttering mere commonplace terms of condemnation; but by real, active, working goodness.

Even science has had its victories in faith. Negation never helped Newton to wrest from nature her secret of the laws of motion. It was in faith that Kepler toiled, and Dalton and Faraday labored. "Not in scepticism, but in faith," says Professor Pritchard, "the elder Herschel, hour after hour, walked his weary but observant rounds, fed by a sister's hand, and stopping not till he had finished his mirrors, not doubting they would in due time unfold to him the construction of the material heavens. And in a like spirit of a loving confidence his gifted son banished himself to the far south till he had finished the work which his father had begun, and for all ages wrote '*cælis exploratis*' upon the escutcheon of their fame."

Negation merely leaves us in discouragement and despair. Everything is doubted—faith in God, faith in man, faith in duty, faith in everything but ourselves and our enjoyments. "Outside this all is passion, confusion, selfishness, darkness, where the personality is abdicated, and the soul finds no guidance. The worth of our life is to be measured by its opportunities for activity in the path of the Divine laws and purposes; and in that path freedom is to be found—the freedom without which there is no real life for man."

Once, a man lying on his sick-bed asked himself, "Has any good come out of my life? Whose heart have I made lighter? Whose sorrow have I relieved? Whose home have I blessed? What good have I done? Is the world any better for my living in it?" The answers given to these self-questionings were hollow. The man rose up from his sick couch a wiser and a better man. From that time he employed himself and his means in doing good. He found abundant opportunities for well-doing. He only wanted the will and the determination. He found them in the law of God. Religion is but the bond of eternal love. Love, greater than hope, greater than faith, is the only thing which

God requires of us, and in the possession of which lies the fulfilment of all our duties.

The sense of Duty smooths our path through life. It helps us to know, to learn, and to obey. It gives us the power of overcoming difficulties, of resisting temptations, of doing that for which we strive; of becoming honest, kind, and true. All experience teaches us that we become that which we make ourselves. We strive against inclinations to do wrong, we strive for the inclination to do right, and little by little we become that for which we strive. Every day's effort makes the struggle easier. We reap as we have sown.

The true way to excel in any effort is to propose the brightest and most perfect example for imitation. We improve by the attempt, even though we fall short of the full perfection. Character will always operate. There may be little culture, slender abilities, no property, no position in "Society"; yet, if there be a character of sterling excellence, it will command influence and secure respect. The edge of our faculties is seldom worn out by use, but it is very often rusted away by sloth. It is fervor and industry alone which give the beauty and the brightness to human life.

"I know," said Perthes, "that a quick imagination is the salt of earthly life, without which nature is but a skeleton; but the higher the gift the greater the responsibility." To a young man he said, "Go forward with hope and confidence; this is the advice given thee by an old man, who has had a full share of the burden and heat of life's day. We must ever stand upright, happen what may; and for this end we must cheerfully resign ourselves to the varied influences of this many-colored life. . . . The consciousness of this mortal life being but the way to a higher goal by no means precludes our using it cheerfully; and, indeed, we must do so, otherwise our energy in action will entirely fail us."

Youth is the time of growth and motion. It is the spring of man. The young man goes into the world, and puts out his life in manifold forms. Where he has been duly cared

for by his parents, and imbibed a high conception of personal dignity and human worth, he must uphold their honor, and do nothing that they would blush to see. He should cherish profound gratitude to those honest people who had transmitted to him an undefiled character, and represented centuries of labor and good conduct. "Prove yourself worthy of your parents," was a saying of Periander, one of the seven sages of Greece. The virtues of their generous labors are an image of the dead; with families as with men, it is steadfast perseverance which keeps their honor bright. But if the mind and heart of the youth have not been cultivated, and no blossoms of hope appear, we look forward to his manhood with dismay, if not with despair.

Words and examples always come back to the young and influence them for good as well as for evil. For nothing—not even a word or example—is ever forgotten or lost. We cannot commit a wrong without a punishment following closely at its heels. When we break a law of eternal justice it echoes throughout the world. Words and deeds may be considered slight things; yet they are not temporary, they are eternal. An idle or a bad word never dies. It may come up against us in the future—twenty years, a hundred years hence—long after we are dead. "Every idle word," says St. Matthew, "that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Evil deeds and evil examples have the same resurrection. They never die, but influence all time. They descend like an inheritance. The memory of a life does not perish with the life itself. What is done remains, and can never be undone. Thomas of Malmesbury said, "There is no action of man in this life which is not the beginning of so long a chain of consequences as that no human providence is high enough to give us a prospect to the end." "Every atom," says Babbage, "impressed with good or ill," retains at once the motions which philosophers and sages have imparted to it, mixed and combined in ten thousand ways with all that is worthless and base. The air itself is one vast library, on

whose pages are written *forever* all that man has ever said, or whispered, or done."

Thus every word, thought, and deed, has its influence upon the destiny of man. Every life, well spent or ill spent, bears with it a long train of consequences, extending through generations yet unborn. All this is calculated to impress man with a deep sense of the responsibility involved in his every thought, word, and deed. "I have read a tract," said Dr. Chalmers, "entitled 'The Last Moments of the Earl of Rochester,' and I was struck powerfully, when reading it, with the conviction how much evil a pernicious pamphlet may be the means of disseminating."

Bad books are worse than bad words. Like evil deeds, they mould the thought and will of future generations. The printed book lives, while the author is dust and ashes. The bad author lives forever in his race. His book continues to disseminate vice, immorality, and atheism. "The art of printing," says Frederick Schlegel, "in itself one of the most glorious and useful, has become prostituted to the speedy and universal circulation of poisonous tracts and libels. It has occasioned a dangerous influx of paltry and superficial compositions, alike hostile to soundness of judgment and purity of taste—a sea of frothy conceits and noisy dulness, upon which the spirit of the age is tossed hither and thither, not without great and frequent danger of entirely losing sight of the compass of meditation and the polar star of truth."*

And again: "Insulated already by opinions, these men are separated from each other still more by interests. Covetousness is their soul. Who among them has a family, a country? Each has himself, and nothing more. Generous sentiments, honor, fidelity, devotion, all that used to make beat high the heart of our forefathers, seem to them like empty sounds. . . . To calculate is the sole business of these men. Conscience is an astonishment and a scandal."

Thus Schlegel argues about the responsibility of authors.

* "History of Literature," ii. 39.

They are responsible for the good they do, as well as for the evil that they inculcate. The leprous book gets into our libraries; it gets into our homes. The books may be very clever. Their style draws the reader on, yet they may be full of vicious thoughts. It was said by Sterne that "vice loses half its evil when it loses its grossness." But this is a mischievous idea. Grossness may revolt us, but covert abominations, clothed in sprightly words, may sink deeper into our minds. Look, for instance, at the scrofulous novel read by young ladies. It is written in a brilliant style, though it is full of unchastity, impurity, and moral poison. It often begins with a murder, and ends with unchasteness and adultery; as if the objects of these writers were to display the cancerous rottenness of life. The worst of these unbelieving novel writers are English women.

Then there is the book that keep one in a state of constant giggling—a sure sign of a shallow mind. Ill-natured chaff, sarcasm of the good, praise of the bad, is a frightful sight. How different from the good book, or the good novel! Not the "goody, goody" book; but the book that inspires health and purity and courage. Lockhart said of his father-in-law Scott, "We may picture to ourselves in some measure the debt we owe to a perpetual succession of books, through thirty years of publication, unapproached in charm, and all instilling a high and healthy code; a bracing and invigorating spirit; a contempt of mean passions, whether vindictive or voluptuous; humane charity, as distinct from moral laxity or from unsympathizing austerity; sagacity too deep for cynicism, and tenderness never degenerating into sentimentality; animated throughout in thought, opinion, feeling, and style, by one and the same pure energetic principle—a path and savor of manhood; appealing to whatever is good and loyal in our natures, and rebuking whatever is low and selfish."

The praise is great, but it is deserved. When Sir Walter Scott, toward the close of his life, was congratulated by Dr. Cheney on the purity of his works of fiction, he answered, "I am drawing near to the close of my career. I am fast shuffling off the stage. I have been, perhaps, the most

voluminous author of the day; and it is a comfort to me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man's faith, to corrupt no man's principles, and that I have written nothing which on my death-bed I should wish blotted."

The same might be said of Charles Dickens. He was the Apostle of the People. "I have read," said the Bishop of Manchester, "most of Mr. Dickens' works, and, so far as I can remember, there is not one single page, or one single sentence tainted with any impurity or anything that would suggest a vile or vicious thought. I believe that the literature of which he was the author has been pregnant with consequences of incalculable benefit to our people. It has made us see truly simple virtues under rugged exteriors. It has taught us the great lessons of Christian sympathy; and though in all things, Charles Dickens is not what we might have desired, or what he might have been, yet we are not his judges. We do not know the circumstances of trial through which his life was passed. But I feel that England owes a debt of gratitude to her great novelist for what he has done to elevate and purify the human life where it most needs elevation and purification."

The good book, like the bad book, will live long after the author is dead. A book written two thousand years ago may fix the purpose of a life. The remembered sentiment of the speechless dead may arrest the attention and transform the character. On the other hand, vicious books still lift their voices and urge the young to deeds of shame and crime. The authors speak from their graves, and spread pollution and infamy throughout the world.

A book is a living voice. It is a spirit walking on the face of the earth. It continues to be the living thought of a person separated from us by space and time. Men pass away; monuments crumble into dust. What remains and survives is human thought. What is Plato? He has long been resolved into dust, but his thoughts and his actions still survive.

Bad books are moral poison which continue to disseminate evil. *Litera scripta manet*. Mischievous authors, even when in their graves, murder the souls of their survivors,

from generation to generation. The good book is a life treasure, while the bad book is a tormenting spirit. The good book teaches rectitude, truth, and goodness; while the bad book teaches vice, selfishness, and unbelief. The authors die, while their works live on. Such a thought ought to give authors a deep impression as to the undying responsibilities of literature.

An intimate friend of Wordsworth has thus recorded his recollections of the poet: "The last time I saw him he was in deep domestic sorrow, and beginning to bend under the infirmities of old age. 'Whatever,' he said, 'the world may think of me and my poetry is now of little consequence: but one thing is a comfort to my old age—that none of my works, written since the days of my early youth, contains a line I would wish to blot out, because of pandering to the baser passions of our nature. This,' said he, 'is a comfort to me; I can do no mischief by my works when I am gone.'"

Before we conclude this chapter let us give a Fable of Krilof the Russian, which has proved of use to writers of books in more cases than one. It is entitled "The Author and the Robber."

"In the gloomy realm of shadows two sinners appeared before the judges for sentence at the same time. The one was a robber, who used to exact tribute on the highway, and had at last come to the gallows; the other an author covered with glory, who had infused a subtle poison into his his works, had promoted atheism, and preached immorality, being, like the siren, sweet-voiced, and, like the siren, dangerous. In Hades judicial ceremonies are brief; there are no useless delays. Sentence was pronounced immediately. Two huge iron cauldrons were suspended in the air by two tremendous iron chains; in each of these one of the sinners was placed. Under the robber a great pile of wood was heaped up, and then one of the Furies herself set it on fire, kindling such a terrible flame that the very stones in the roof of the imperial halls began to crack. The author's sentence did not seem to be a severe one. Under him, at first, a little

fire scarcely glowed; but the longer it burned the larger it became.

“Centuries had now gone by, but the fire has not gone out. Beneath the robber the flame has long ago been extinguished; beneath the author it grows hourly worse and worse. Seeing that there is **no mitigation of his** torments, the writer at last cries out amid them that there is no justice among the gods; that he had filled the world with his renown, and that if he had written too freely, he had been punished too much for it; and that he did not think he had sinned more than the robber. Then, before him, in all her ornaments, with snakes hissing amid her hair, and with bloody scourges in her hands, appeared one of the infernal sisters.

“‘Wretch!’ she exclaimed, ‘dost thou upbraid Providence? Dost thou compare thyself with the robber? His crime is as nothing compared with thine. Only as long as he lived did his cruelty and lawlessness render him hurtful. But thou!—long ago had thy bones crumbled to dust, yet the sun never rises without bringing to light fresh evils of which thou art the cause. The poison of thy writings not only does not weaken, but, spreading abroad, it becomes more malignant as years roll by. Look there,’ and for a moment she enabled him to look upon the world; ‘behold the crimes, the misery, of which thou art the cause. Look at these children who have brought shame upon their families, who have reduced their parents to despair. By whom were their heads and hearts corrupted? By thee. Who strove to rend asunder the bonds of society, ridiculing as childish follies all ideas of the sanctity of marriage and the right of authority and law, and rendering them responsible for all human misfortunes? Thou art the man! Didst thou not dignify unbelief with the name of enlightenment? Didst thou not place vice and passion in the most charming and alluring of lights? And now look!—a whole country, perverted by thy teaching, is full of murder and robbery, of strife and rebellion, and is being led onward by thee to ruin. For every drop of that country’s tears and blood thou art to blame. And now dost thou dare to hurl thy blasphemies

against the gods? How much evil have thy books yet to bring upon the world? Continue, then, to suffer, for here the measure of thy punishment shall be according to thy deserts.’ Thus spoke the angry Fury, and slammed down the cover on the cauldron.”*

* “Krilof and his Fables.” By W. R. S. Ralston, M.A.