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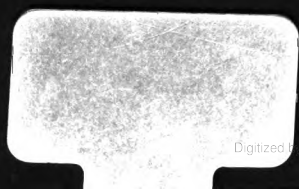
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HOME DUTIES
AND
HOME DIFFICULTIES

BY

REV. BERNARD FEENEY,
Priest of the Pious Society of Missions.

With Preface,

BY

HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL MANNING.

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IN the following pages Father Feeney has treated with great simplicity and force the vital principle of personal and public welfare. Even in the natural order the life and discipline of Home are the first conditions of human happiness. The authority of parents, the obedience of children, and the mutual love of brethren, are the three great primary laws not only of domestic order and goodness, but of the peace and stability of human society. All these laws of the natural order are elevated and sanctified in Christian homes and in the Christian Commonwealth. Father Feeney has, of course, confined himself, not indeed without some mention of social happiness, to Christian homes, and to the duties of husband and wife, father and mother, sons and daughters,—and with the minute knowledge which the Pastoral life alone can give, he has drawn up a succession of instructive chapters on parental love, the

education of children, the formation of character, the mutual duties of parents to children, and of children to parents, and on the multitude of dangers which surround the open and unprotected homes of our people.

This excellent book will be of great use to all readers, but above all to priests, who as Pastors are engaged in the cure of souls. I earnestly hope that it may be widely diffused, and I pray that the blessing of God may rest upon it.

✠ HENRY EDWARD,
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HOME DUTIES

AND

HOME DIFFICULTIES.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

I HAVE been for a long time convinced that most of the evils of our social life are traceable to the disorganized state of our homes, and to the almost universal neglect of home duties among us. The end for which divine Providence has grouped individuals in families is generally lost sight of or disregarded; and the means by which those families are to attain that end are perverted to other uses. The child is divinely constituted as the central object of the love and solicitude of its parents, that it may be trained and fitted by them for a place in God's own family in Heaven. Its first thoughts must be directed thither by the light of Faith, its hope must be fixed there as its last end and resting-place, and its love must be taught to find there the only object to satisfy its longings. From the first unfolding of its faculties, until its home-noviciate is completely finished, the parents must carefully

A

watch over it, and direct and safeguard it among the many dangers which it has to encounter. They must train it by instruction and by example in the knowledge and practice of Religion and of virtue ; they must shield it from every evil or dangerous influence ; they must teach it to restrain its passions ; they must inspire it with a love of duty and with a willing submission to the laws of order and discipline. In a word, their attention and care must be unceasing, until " Christ is formed " in it, and it is prepared to go out into the world and take its place and act its part there as a good Christian man or woman.

The strain of this unceasing attention and care being more than human nature could bear unaided, the sacrament of Christian marriage was instituted to give spiritual strength to parents in the discharge of their home duties, and perhaps chiefly, in the training of their children. But we all know what a mere, hollow, ceremonial form marriage is regarded generally in the world. We know that outside the Church it is little more than a joint-stock partnership, depending mainly for its continuance on mutual interest or expediency, and having little or no binding power on the conscience. Even with ourselves, its sacramental character is frequently ignored or made, at best, in most cases a secondary consideration. The grace it confers is put aside like the bridal dress, and is remembered much less in the after-life of the married parties. Who can wonder then, that disunion and unhappiness follow so many Catholic marriages, notwith-

standing the spiritual helps conferred by them? or who can wonder that so many Catholic children are brought up without any solid religious training, when the grace that would help their parents to bring them up properly is ignored or left unheeded?

This neglect accounts to a great extent for the many evils that attend the married state, and combine to develop so many children into pests of society. But there are other causes that help materially to produce these same results, as far as they relate to the education of children. One is the false, narrow, worldly object which parents have generally in view in making provisions for their future. They think that they have fully discharged their duties to them, if they have provided their sons with a respectable profession or a suitable situation, and if they have amassed a large dowry for their daughters; and they deem it only of secondary importance, that these same sons and daughters should be trained in habits of solid virtue and piety. "How is my son getting on in his studies? Will he be likely to pass his examination successfully? Does he seem ambitious of making his way in the world?" Or again: "Is my daughter progressing in her music? Does she develop a taste for drawing and painting? What about her French, her Italian, her German? Is she becoming more refined in her accent, more lady-like in her manner, more graceful in her deportment?" These are some of the usual questions put to teachers and principals of schools; and they show clearly the view that parents take of the kind

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of education they wish for their children. And very naturally the tone of our public schools is modified by this view. The forty or fifty guineas' pension is paid chiefly and primarily for a certain kind of intellectual and æsthetic as well as material food, and that kind must be supplied, whatever else is kept back.

I do not mean of course that Religion is ignored in our public education. On the contrary, it has its fixed times liberally appointed for it in all our Catholic schools. But I venture to say, that in complying with the demands of parents for a worldly education, we sometimes put into the background that solid religious training that ought to hold the first place in every Catholic institution. Catechism, Bible and Church history, everything, in a word, necessary or useful to be known about religion or morality is dinned into the young scholar's ear, until he is as familiar with it as with the first page of his geography or his first exercise in music, and is strongly tempted to hate it as much. It is taken for granted, that he has a natural love for religion ; so there is but little effort made to instil such love into his soul. The consequence is, that when he gets away from school supervision and influences, he very often throws off the yoke of practical religion, and does not resume it until he has learned in the world to form that estimate of it, and to conceive that love for it which should have been taught him at school.

Let our children by all means be thoroughly grounded in every branch of secular knowledge ;

let them be fitted to hold their own in the world around them, and to compete successfully for the highest prizes of life ; but let them be given to understand, at the same time, that they will not have attained the supreme end of their being when they will have won those prizes, and that some thing further will remain for them to do than to sit down and enjoy the fruits of their hard study. When the medical student has become a doctor, or the law student a barrister, or the ecclesiastical student a priest, the prize of life is not yet nearly won : the training for the contest is only finished, and the brunt of the fight is still to be encountered. This is a truth of primary importance which is not always worked, as much as it might be, into the minds of young people at school ; and hence we so often see them coming out into the world with crude ideas of religious duty, that are not always adapted to the wear and tear of daily life, and not always staunch enough to resist the strain of temptation. As long, however, as parents continue to form narrow, worldly views for their children, and insist on those views being carried out in our schools, so long will the most zealous efforts of teachers in grounding those under their charge in solid and abiding religious principles be practically frustrated.

Another cause of the evils prevalent in our home life is the relaxed authority of parents over their children. Young people in our day seem not to require nor indeed to brook any parental supervision or control whatsoever. Boys are men, and

girls women, before they have entered far into their teens ; and when they are twenty-one, old age seems to be already fast coming upon them. This premature and unnatural growth, if indeed it may not rather be called decay, is manifested most of all in their disobedience and contemptuous treatment of their parents. The father's ways and his views of things are antiquated and behind the age to the developed mind of the boy of thirteen ; and the girl of the same age, called away from her penny journal or her dog-eared novel, pouts and frowns at the homely duties in which she is asked to assist. Now, if the first symptoms of impertinence or disobedience were checked with firmness and due severity in the child, there would be little danger of any serious after-outbreak. But parents often look on such symptoms as so many marks of spirit and independence ; and some fathers and mothers are foolish enough to be proud of them and to encourage them. They learn, however, the folly of their indulgence when the child becomes older, and its disobedience has grown into a confirmed habit. And, oh ! what bitter fruits that confirmed habit bears ! bitter for the parents in their helpless old age ; bitter for the young man's or the young woman's self in an undisciplined life ; and bitter also for society on which that life preys like a cancer.

I shall not anticipate here the enumeration of the other evils that require to be corrected in our home life, as they will be pointed out in detail in the course of the following pages. What I have

written, however, will, I think, show sufficiently how necessary it is to attend more carefully than we are used to do, to the duties that our position in the home circle entails upon us. It is my purpose in the present work to explain those duties, their importance, their difficulty, and their bearing on the end of our being. The subject is one in which we are all interested; for we are all in one way or another mixed up in the discharge of home duties, and each of us forms an unit in some family group on which we can, if we will, exercise a beneficial influence. I think it will be admitted, that such influence is not now generally exercised, and that the want of it to the world is making itself painfully felt.

The Church recognizes this want also with that divine instinct which comes from the Holy Spirit within her, and hence, we see her manifesting in these latter times a special and marked interest in the sanctification of home life. She not only sanctions and promotes, by her exhortations and indulgences, many particular devotions that have for their central object the hidden family life of our divine Lord at Nazareth; but she has also established confraternities and congregations to commemorate and honour His Infancy and Childhood. "The Holy Family," too, has given its name, within our own time, to one of our most popular and wide spreading special devotions. But perhaps this interest of the Church is best shown by the extraordinary development of devotion to Saint Joseph, which has taken place within the present genera-

tion. All the beauty and sanctity of his life came from his fidelity to home duties. He is therefore in a particular manner the patron of home life, and as such he has been appointed the guardian and protector of the universal Church, and placed with special prominence before the minds of the faithful for their study and imitation. These and many other circumstances in modern ecclesiastical history point to this one conclusion, that the Church, seeing the gradual disorganization of home life, would recall the attention of her children to its proper, Christian regulation, by holding up before them the home and family at Nazareth, as the purest and highest and most perfect type on earth of what our present home life ought to be. She would thus train them for that future life in store for them in their Father's home in heaven.

CHAPTER II.

PLACE OF HOME IN THE DIVINE PLAN OF CREATION.

HAS it ever seemed to you, dear reader, that when the good God was taking back from man the forfeited gift of human happiness, He left a remnant of it clinging to our homes, to brighten our firesides and make them pleasant and attractive to us? I myself have often thought so: for it has been my good fortune, during a varied life, to be brought into contact with many a happy family circle; and I have found in each that peace and love, and that simple, unaffected piety and holiness that must have been characteristics of the home of Eden before the fall of man. Our heavenly Father knew the dangerous allurements the world would have for the young and innocent: He knew the mazes of sin into which they would be led, in quest of a happiness with which they would at first associate no idea of evil: He knew the wasted affections, the dried-up, withered hearts, the loss of faith and hope in all that is good and holy, the premature decay, that would be the consequence of this vain pursuit: and knowing all this, He provided an antidote for it, by filling and surrounding our homes with a bright halo of happiness, more pure and holy and lasting than the world can ever offer. Heaven alone knows the number of young

souls that have been saved from ruin by the influence or the remembrance of a happy home. Strong passions have been subdued by it ; violent temptations have been driven to flight by it ; children who had turned their faces and steps downwards and had been rushing with ever quickening pace to the depths of misery and shame, have been stopped in their course by it and led back and moulded into useful, respectable members of society. Parents also have found in home, in the love of wife and children, in the bright, comfortable, cheerful fireside, in the prattle of the little ones and their innocent joys, a powerful help to avoid the allurements of drink and gambling and other social vices. And yet, how careless men seem about this domestic happiness ! how lightly and thoughtlessly it is often driven away, never again to return ! Parents in particular, to whose keeping it is specially intrusted, seem not to know its value or the blessings it confers. A slight misunderstanding between husband and wife or a trivial fault or mistake of either of them often leads to angry words. These lead to others more excited and violent. Fierce passions are thus enkindled on both sides ; accusation leads to accusation ; the ashes of the past are raked up and thrown in each other's face ; and the end, in many cases, is that never-forgotten blow that leaves its mark indelibly on the heart of the wife, however soon its traces may fade from her cheek.

Now see the consequences of this breach to the children who witness it in tears and anguish of

heart. The charm of home is broken for them. They are estranged from their father whom they consider cruel and unjust ; they have no longer that loving confidence in him which they had before ; his return home in the evening is not looked for with joy as it used to be ; his presence among them is like the presence of a stranger ; and they breathe more freely when he rises to go away. This estrangement between father and child generally tempts both to look outside the circle of home for that social happiness which they no longer find within it. The theatre, the club, the public-house, these and other resorts supply a welcome refuge from the cheerless fireside ; and to one who looks beneath the surface of society it can scarcely be surprising that they are so largely frequented.

The happiness then that divine Providence has given to be the angel guardian of the family, ought to be carefully watched over by husband and wife and child. It is easily scared away ; and when once gone, it is indeed hard to win it back.

But even when the brightness and happiness of our homes is gone, our hearts cling to them still with a bravely patient tenacity. Here again the hand of God is distinctly visible, giving to our nature that home-bias or instinct that keeps the members of the family together, in sickness and poverty, in troubles and disappointments, in jealousies and dissensions. I have met on my mission in London instances of this attachment, more heroic in their constancy and quiet endurance

than many of the deeds recorded in history for the admiration of the world. I have known a father, himself a member of the Total Abstinence League of the Cross, to support for years a drunken wife and a fallen daughter, and to receive from both in return only abuse of the vilest kind. Yet every evening, he turned his steps to that wretched home of his, and put aside with quiet determination the many thoughts of desertion or revenge, or the still unholier thought of self-destruction which his unhappy position suggested. Cases of woman's heroism under similar circumstances are too commonly known to need here any record of mine. Well, the secret of all such noble self-sacrifice may be traced to its foundation in the instinctive love of home, which the Hand of our Creator has stamped on every human heart. Blessed for ever be His loving care of us! He has not intrusted our fulfilment of home duties solely to the revealed expression of His divine Will, He has Himself moulded us in such a form, that the observance of those duties, so essential to the welfare and happiness, if not to the very existence of our race, is felt to be one of the purest pleasures, as well as one of the highest distinctions of our nature. It satisfies a craving and fills a void in the soul that the fulfilment of no other duty can accomplish.

If then, we had no revelation regarding the home and the family, the instinct that binds us to them would sufficiently prove their divine institution.

But Sacred Scripture, so far from being silent

regarding the divine institution of home, alludes to it frequently in clear and emphatic words. I shall cite here only one passage, recorded in the second chapter of Genesis: "It is not good for man to be alone: let us make him a help like unto himself."—(Gen. ii. 18.) These significant words, spoken by our Creator Himself, evidently point to a moral want in man for society; and they show that the society by which that want is to be filled up, is the society of home, the society of husband with wife, and of husband and wife with their children. The word, "help," implying co-operation and mutual dependence, expresses the formal idea of home. Husband and wife were created to cleave to each other, and were made two in one flesh, in order that they might supply each the other's wants; that the woman's gentleness might be entwined round the man's strength, while her enduring love would encourage him in the battle of life, and repay him fully for his fidelity and protection. They were thus intended to form a complete society in themselves, the work of each blending and harmonizing with that of the other, influenced by the same spirit, directed to the same purpose, and co-operating in the attainment of the one common end.

To this society of husband and wife, a sublime mission in the two-fold order of nature and grace was given by its divine Founder. Young human lives were to be committed to its keeping, and to be left absolutely dependent on its gentle, fostering care. Not only were their bodies to be fed,

and sheltered, and clothed by it; but their souls were to be hedged round by it with every safeguard of innocence, and to be trained in all holiness and virtue, until with fully matured, physical and spiritual natures, they would be able to go out into the world, and take their stand wherever God appointed them.

This divine mission of husband and wife has in it a dignity and a grandeur that cannot be too deeply impressed on them. They have an immense, mysterious power entrusted to them to prepare human souls for heaven, or to let them drift, and even give them a strong downward impulse, to eternal destruction. Their constant intimate intercourse with their children, as well as the instinctive tendency of the latter to shape their characters and lives after the model set by them, increases this power very much. We may teach a child at Sunday-school all that a child should know, but the influence of a father's or mother's daily life is in one respect superior to all our teaching. It can root up and destroy during the week the seedlings of virtue and of religious ideas that we, only on one day out of the seven, and then, only for an hour or two, have the opportunity of sowing in that young child's soul. It can, on the other hand, by seconding our teaching, and by supplementing it, become the most powerful auxiliary means the Church possesses for the proper training and education of the young. When parents will have become convinced of these truths, Christianity will have little to fear from the efforts of infidel educationists to root it from the

hearts of the people. Misrepresentations and sophisms that pass now for sound reasoning will then be swept aside like so many spider-webs ; parental control will reassert itself in the home ; and the Church will be reinstated in its rightful place over the school.

I have now given you, dear reader, an idea of the place that the home has been intended to hold in the divine plan of creation. It may be allowed me, however, before I pass on to the subject of the next chapter, to say a few words in reply to a very trite objection brought against the discipline of our Church on the nature of home ties. It is urged that the celibacy of our priesthood and of our religious communities is opposed to the natural instincts given to us by our Creator ; that it is subversive of the family life of which I have been speaking ; that it is a direct violation of the divine command : " increase and multiply," given to man in the beginning ; and, in fine, that it is the cause or occasion of much immorality and scandal.

Some Catholics find a difficulty in understanding how objections like these can be made seriously. They are so accustomed to consider, as the highest form of human life, the entire consecration of oneself to God, implied in a vow of chastity, that they expect everyone to have the same settled ideas on the subject as they have themselves. Yet, I believe many Protestants to be thoroughly in earnest in urging these antiquated notions against us ; and therefore I think it necessary to reply to them here.

Well, with regard to the instinct alleged to be opposed to celibacy, I do not think that any individual has ever felt himself bound in conscience to follow it. Surely the common sense of the world has never believed that the gates of heaven should be closed against all those who do not choose to marry. If then celibacy, when practised in the world, be considered no violation of natural laws or instincts, why should it be condemned as such in the Church, where it is practised, not for selfish or worldly reasons, but to obey a divine call, to follow the aspirations of the soul to the most perfect form of life, and to make the most entire sacrifice of oneself, in imitation and in recognition of God's own most perfect sacrifice for us on the Cross. The Catholic Church has the teaching of her divine Master impressed on her mind with a never-fading freshness; and by the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit within her, she knows the full significance of the words: "In the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married; but shall be as the angels of God in heaven." (Matt. xxii. 30.) This revealed glimpse of angelic life shows her that the state of virginity is the higher and more perfect state; and hence, without forcing any one into it, but rather in guarding its entrance with severe and crucial conditions, she has never ceased to proclaim to the world its priceless blessings in this life, and its special reward in eternity. St. John tells us what this latter is; and his words, carefully considered, ought to be sufficient to bring home the conviction to every candid mind, that the practice of celibacy is

divinely sanctioned. "And I beheld: and lo a Lamb stood upon Mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty-four thousand having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder: and the voice which I heard, was as the voice of harpers, harping on their harps. And they sung as it were a new canticle, before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the ancients; and no man could say the canticle, but those hundred forty-four thousand, who were purchased from the earth. These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb." (Apoc. xiv. 1-4.)

The instinct, then, that would lead men and women into the married state, although implanted in them by God, is not generally accompanied by any feeling of personal obligation that would make it sinful to oppose it. But even though it were, a distinct call from God to make to Him the sacrifice of family ties, and to live for Him on earth with an undivided heart would be not only a sufficient justification to us, but would also entail on us a manifest duty to do so. That this call is given to the ministers of the Gospel and to others seems to me clear from the words of our divine Lord in reply to St. Peter, asking Him: "Behold we have left all things, and have followed Thee: what therefore shall we have?" And Jesus said to them:

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“ Amen I say to you, that you, who have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of His majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My name’s sake: shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting.” (Matt. xix. 27-30.)

If these words do not clearly signify the divine approval of a life of celibacy for the sake of Christ, such as is practised in our Church, then it must be held that the words of our divine Lord were uttered without meaning, and calculated to lead those who heard them into serious error.

The reply I have already given answers equally the third of the objections already stated: namely, that celibacy is opposed to the divine command: “increase and multiply.” This command, if it be one, has never been taken to apply individually to each human being; but if it did, it would be superseded by a direct and unmistakable call from God, such as the Catholic Church requires and does her utmost to ascertain before admitting anyone to the sacerdotal or religious state.

The last objection charges celibacy with occasioning much immorality and scandal. I answer this charge by simply saying that it is not true. The history of our Church, now nearly nineteen centuries before the eyes of men, gives the clearest and highest testimony, from its first page to its last, to the unmixed good produced on society and the

world by the ecclesiastical system that has celibacy for its most essential condition. Only men untrammelled by home-ties could have evangelized the nations of the earth, as the Apostles and their successors have done: only women without husband or family could band together in daily and nightly prayer for an erring world that they could not otherwise assist: only such as they could tend the sick and dying in our hospitals, could visit the poor and outcast in the slums and by-courts of our towns, could open orphanages for the abandoned young and Homes for the helpless old, and become mothers to the one while they supplied the place of daughters to the other. These and other equally important works of charity and mercy are being done in the Church daily from the first Pentecost down to the present,—they are being done gratuitously, by willing hands and devoted hearts, solely because those engaged in them have left all things to follow their divine Master.

I trust that these remarks will assist candid Protestant readers to remove from their minds those traditional notions about "Priests and Nuns," which form one of the bulwarks of the creed they profess. But I intend them to serve another end: namely to counteract the injurious effect of un-Catholic reading on our own people. The literature of our day is not Catholic; and yet we live in a reading age. The consequence is, that many of us have acquired the deplorable habit of reading indiscriminately every book and paper and magazine that comes in our way; and from the many foul misrepresenta-

tions made against us, a feeling of uneasiness gains gradually upon us, which it is most important to remove. Now there is no institution in the Catholic Church that is more misrepresented, and ridiculed, and hated, than this very practice of celibacy of which I have been speaking. We require, therefore, in the interests of our people to keep clear ideas before them concerning this practice, its object, its heroism, and the manifold blessings it has conferred on the world.

To sum up, then, in a few words the subject of this chapter : we have unmistakeable proofs of the divine institution of home ; first, in the happiness with which God has left it invested, even after the fall of man ; secondly, in the instinct that draws the heart to it, whatever be its condition or surroundings ; and thirdly, from the revelation of its object made by the Creator Himself, in the foundation of the first home. This object is twofold. It regards, first of all, the husband and wife, who by their mutual society help each other, in the attainment of the common end of their creation. It regards secondly the children, whom God may commit to them, for whose material well-being and development they are bound to consult, but whose spiritual growth is to be their paramount and unremitting care.

CHAPTER III.

RECOGNITION OF HOME BY JESUS CHRIST.

THE Incarnate Word was born in the bosom of a human family ; He lived in it wholly and exclusively during thirty years of His life ; He commenced His public ministry by blessing a newly formed home at Cana ; the thought of His bereaved Mother, and of her desolate home-life without Him, engaged His attention during part of His agony on the Cross. These circumstances all point to one conclusion : that He wished by His example to teach us the cultivation of the virtues and affections that sanctify home, and make it a reflexion on earth of our eternal home in Heaven. He might have flashed on the world, as some expected Him, in all the perfection of manhood. He might have surrounded Himself with a court and body-guard of incarnate angels. He might have commenced His mission on earth by putting Himself in relations with the Kings and rulers of the day, and asserting His place among them as their absolute Lord and Master. No one would have felt surprised if He had done any of these things or all of them ; but then the moral decay of humanity would have been left unchecked ; the poor would remain as unbefriended as before ; woman would still be a slave in the realm of home, where she had

been destined to reign as queen ; and wealth would continue as effectually as ever, to usurp the homage and divide the hearts of men. Hence, He pre-arranged to be born in a human family, as His first incarnate manifestation of Himself to the world, in order to bless all family relations, and to strike at the root of their abuse. Hence also, He chose to live in poverty, to show mankind that in His eyes it was no crime to be poor ; but that, on the contrary, of all the grades of human society on which His Father looks down from heaven, the patient, uncomplaining poor find greatest favour before Him. Hence, finally, to show man the merit of home-duties faithfully discharged, He led that commonplace, unnoted life I have already mentioned, for thirty years, in an obscure village of Galilee ; a life over which the Holy Spirit has drawn a veil, inscribed with these few, simple words : “ He went down to Nazareth and was subject to them.”

I should be very sorry, dear reader, to incur in your mind even the appearance of exaggeration or special pleading, and yet I fear an idea of it may crop up here, and you may be inclined to say : All this hidden life of our divine Lord may be explained by the custom among the Jews, of not permitting young men to commence public life until they were thirty years old. Therefore He was restrained from commencing His public ministry before that age, by the obligation He imposed on Himself of fulfilling the law in every particular. This explanation is very simple and natural ; but

I do not think that it is founded on any solid, Scriptural basis. I find no trace of this *law* in the Mosaic books of sacred Scripture ; and the only authority I can trace, in other parts of the Old Testament for calling it a custom, is a certain passage (1 Paralipomenon xxiii. 3) in which David is stated before his death to have numbered the Levites, "from the age of thirty years, and upwards." But no intimation whatever is given there, that this standard was in accordance either with the law or with custom ; and in fact, in the twenty-seventh verse of the same chapter, the very opposite seems to me to be clearly implied ; for we read there the following words : "So according to the last precepts of David, the sons of Levi are to be numbered from twenty years old and upward." Again, Samuel, David, and Solomon, who were each in his own way a type and fore-shadow of our divine Lord, were all three called into public relations with the people, long before the age of thirty ; and if He had felt it expedient to follow any precedent in respect to the time of beginning His active, teaching life, it would, I think, have been theirs. Moreover, any want of authority on account of His youth, would have been more than supplied by the wisdom of His teaching, by the sanctity of His life, and above all by His miraculous works. Hence, it seems just to infer, that His determination of devoting so long a period to the observance of home duties, was grounded on some other motive than the custom alleged ; and this motive must have been that which I have

already indicated, namely, His desire to show us, in His own life, the importance of discharging faithfully all our home duties in hiddenness and obscurity, without love of human praise or notice.

And now, dear reader, let us look for a little at this obscure, lowly, hidden life. It was intended for our imitation, and therefore for our study ; so although there is little revealed about it, it will profit us much to reflect on that little carefully. The home in which it was led was poor and simple, but well-ordered and happy. The purest earthly love was there, binding together the three holiest hearts that ever beat in human breasts ; but this love, strong as it was, had only the outer fibres of its nature made of earth : in its substance and essence it was divine, nay the divinest that ever entered into the relations between the Creator and His creatures. There was the Word of the Father, by whom all things were made, loving with His heart of flesh, as well as with His divine nature, two human beings that responded to His love with unswerving, perfect fidelity. The mutual intercourse of that family was much more in thought than in word : for heart spoke to heart, and soul to soul, in the sweetest cadences of love ; and there was, therefore, little need of human forms of speech, where a sublimer language supplied their place. From this love, which no man can imagine, much less describe, in intelligible words, resulted that union, and harmony, and peace, that bright and glowing, yet grave and calm cheerfulness, that sympathy

of the heart with all around it, that made their home at Nazareth another earthly Paradise, with its second Adam, and its second Eve, but infinitely holier, infinitely nearer to Heaven, infinitely dearer to the Blessed Trinity than the first.

We must not think, however, that that home was exempt from its share of human sorrows. Over the heart of the mother there rested the shadow of the Cross on which her Child was one day to die. He too knew well what the future was to be; and can we imagine, from what we ourselves know of it, that it did not sadden His young life, not indeed from the sufferings and cruel death it had in store for Him, for these He accepted gladly, but for His people's rejection of Him, for the world's obduracy and ingratitude, for the eternal loss of so many souls, notwithstanding the priceless Sacrifice that was to be made for their redemption. There must have been other trials too of a more commonplace nature in which each of that Family had a share. They lived at Nazareth, in the midst of a peculiarly coarse, unappreciative people; and we may naturally infer that their refinement and apparent exclusiveness, their unwillingness to hear or talk scandal, their quiet, uniform attention to their daily duties, were all misrepresented and distorted by the envy and jealousy of these Nazarites. Sin, too, in its varied shapes of deformity and guilt must have often shocked them by its nearness and its frequency, as well as by its innate malice and ingratitude. St. Joseph also, so full of the trust confided to him, and so jealously faithful to it,

and so simple and straightforward in discharging its minutest requirements—he too must have had his own trials in shielding his Virgin Spouse and her Child from the rudeness and insults,—perhaps even the studied persecution of the rough world around them. Of course, we have no revelation that these things were so; but the careful study of all the circumstances that we do know regarding that home and its surroundings prove them to be natural and most likely, and therefore fitting and useful subjects for our consideration.

The life then of the Holy Family at Nazareth was tinged with its own sorrow, as all human lives must be; and yet so clearly was the divine Hand visible in it, so convinced was each member of that Family of the infinite depth of love that underlay every trial sent or permitted to come, so united too and so conformed was the will of each to the divine Will in every vicissitude, that the spirit was never disturbed from its rest in God; the heart was filled with joy even when the eyes were welling over in tears, the depths of life were untroubled, though rude winds and dark clouds swept over its surface. Remember, dear reader, sorrow never finds its way to the inmost regions of the heart, except when the heart is not wholly given to God.

And now it may be asked was the home-life of the Holy Family at Nazareth intended for our imitation. As I shall hereafter make references to it on the supposition that it was so intended, I think it right to say something in proof of this

supposition here. All our divine Lord's actions on earth were done with a view to their being studied, and adapted to each individual human life. They were a perfect copy of the divine idea of what human actions should be, and they were revealed to us in the form in which they are contained in the Gospels, in order that they might supply us with a divine standard of excellence up to which we should constantly strive. Hence, all that we know of His Infancy and Childhood, and of His hidden Life, as well as what is told of His public ministry, all has been carefully recorded, with a practical view, in every minutest circumstance, to the special study and imitation of every human being. There is no stage of human life—youth, manhood, or old age ; no condition of it—poverty or wealth, marriage or celibacy, sickness or health ; no relation of it, whether to God, to our neighbour, or to ourselves, that does not find in the Life of our divine Lord, as revealed in the Gospels, its own lessons of instruction and guidance, its own helps to development and perfection. In this respect, that Life has its material type in the sun whose light, coming from one centre, has for each thing that lives or grows its own special requirement. From the humblest flower of the field to the lordliest tree of the forest, from the meanest thing with life up to man, through every variety of species and sub-species, each individual organization has its own gift specially provided for it, and plentifully bestowed upon itself exclusively by the grand centre of earthly light. So is it also in the spiritual world.

A Sun shines on it, in the revealed life of the Incarnate God, whose light is the principle not only of spiritual life in every human soul, but the principle also of its growth, of its expansion, and of its perfection. Of course the example of this Life is but one element of the light it gives. Still the example does not come to us alone : it is ever accompanied with inspiration and help to trace and bring out in our souls the image of Him whose every lineament is revealed to us in the Gospel history.

The hidden Life of our divine Lord, then, was intended for our study and imitation. But you will say : what can be studied in a Life of which we have only a few lines' record. There is much, if you only study these few lines well. Let me give you a general idea of what they suggest. "He went down to Nazareth and He was subject to them." Hence obedience is the great primary duty of childhood. It was so precious and so all-important in the eyes of our divine Lord, that he spent thirty years of His Life in its practice. Have we no lesson to learn from this, not only for our home-life but also for our relations with the world? Then again, the obedience He paid to Mary and Joseph was an obedience not due to them ; and yet it was as true and as entire as if it were the discharge of a strict duty. Now, much of the obedience exacted of us, no matter in what station of life we are, may sometimes be canvassed and disputed, and may in theory be of such a kind as to entail no clear and direct obligation on us. Are we therefore to rebel against it, and foment bad passions in ourselves and others by

resistance, and set the authority commanding it at defiance? Well; the spirit of the world and of our day especially tells us that we are, and that it would be servile and unmanly not to do so; but surely the spirit of Jesus Christ tells us the reverse, and His absolute obedience to two of His own creatures for thirty years must have been intended as an emphatic declaration of His divine will regarding this hard duty of submission to human authority.

I will give one more instance of the fruitful teaching of the home at Nazareth. There is no record, you say, of the events that filled in that long period. No, there is not; and what think you is the meaning of this omission? It seems to me clear that it would teach us not to look on the notice of the world, or the praise of men, or even their knowledge of our existence, as at all necessary to the faithful discharge of the duties of life, or to the fulfilment of God's commandments, or to the salvation of our souls. It tells us, moreover, that a lowly place in this world of ours must not make us dread that God has cast us aside, or that He forgets us; but rather that He loves us with a special love; and watches over us with a special care; and has given us in that lowly life, if we could only appreciate it, and content ourselves in it, and do its duties cheerfully, a sure protection against the many spiritual dangers of wealth and rank and fame.

I have now endeavoured to lay before you, dear reader, as clearly as I could, the chief motive of our divine Lord's hidden Life; and I have tried also to give you a general idea of its teaching. But in His

public Life also, He had many relations with homes and families, and He often spoke of their ties and duties. I trust, therefore, that it will not be amiss or uninteresting to consider in the next chapter some of those relations, as well as the bearing of some of His public words on our subject.

CHAPTER IV.

RECOGNITION OF HOME BY JESUS CHRIST.— CONTINUED.

WITHIN a three hours' walk of Nazareth, lay a little village called Cana ; and there, one day in the early spring-time, more than eighteen centuries ago, a large social gathering of friends and relatives had assembled at the house of one of the inhabitants. The occasion was the giving away of a young bride to her betrothed ; and it was celebrated, according to the custom of all ages, with much festivity. But among the Jews the festivity was only an adjunct to the religious ceremony which formed the essential part of marriage. And surely, there can be no time in a man or woman's life when the aid and blessing of religion is more required, than on the day when the son leaves his father's roof and the daughter tears herself away from her mother's arms, the one to meet the other in a sacred, life-long union, the most intimate, the most binding, the most solemn that two human beings ever contract. Two paths merged into one, two hearts given into each other's keeping, two lives flowing together through storm and sunshine, through weal and woe, through health and sickness, on to the great sea where all life-streams meet, such is marriage to the mind even of the

most unthinking. But there is little in this picture that gives either bride or bridegroom any true idea of the ruggedness, often the weariness, oftener still the sorrows of the way before them. The future to them is like the crown of flowers they used to put on the head of the Jewish bride. There is no thorn there to make the temples ache or to shoot its sharp pain to the heart. There is no thought of disunion or estrangement, no thought of bitter words or cruel looks, no thought of the misery that so often attends household cares. From what source, then, is the patience to come that will sustain those two young lives through the unknown future? Who will give them the strength to be true to their plighted promise? Who will keep that young, untried love of theirs, pure and fresh and strong to the end? And when, in years to come, they will have young children growing up around them, will they be able of themselves to train them by word and example in the path of faith and holiness which they ought to tread? and if not, who will come to their aid? Only God can do all these things, and He does them through the Sacrament of marriage.

To initiate this Sacrament and to show His estimate of its importance, our divine Lord and His disciples assisted at the marriage of Cana, to which I alluded above. "There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee : and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus was also invited, and His disciples to the marriage." (John ii. 1-2.) The first foundation of the Church had been laid a few days

previously by the calling of some of the apostles : Jesus had commenced His public mission, and His first public ministerial act, and the first public ministerial act of His disciples were to assist at this marriage of Cana. We may infer then with truth that the blessing and the sanctification of the marriage-bond took precedence in our divine Lord's mind of every other work, except the formation of His Church ; and we can see that in introducing that Church to the labours in which it was ever more to the end of time to be engaged, how He showed it that its first care was to be the regeneration and the spiritualising of the family. Hence, the Sacrament of marriage seems to have been the first of the seven Sacraments instituted by our divine Lord ; and although I am far from implying that it should be ranked in dignity above some of the other Sacraments, yet it may be safely and truly said, that it was intended to prepare human society for the faithful observance of Christian duty, for the due administration of the other Sacraments, and for the preservation and transmission of Christian faith. This threefold sublime end of the Sacrament of marriage is, I think, not unworthy of a little consideration, and I shall therefore ask your attention, dear reader, while I explain it in as few words as possible.

Most of the duties of men towards their fellow-men lie within the circle of their homes. I do not speak of course of those who, by a special call of their divine Spouse, have been drawn into the cloister, and whose life is literally hidden with

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Christ in God. Neither do I speak of those who have been led away from father and mother and all home relations to serve their divine Master as His ministers, and who have no earthly home-life, but have a substitute for it among the poor and the sick and the outcast and the unfortunate of their missions. I speak only of those who live in the family circle, as parents, or children, or servants; and I say that the bulk of their duties are confined to that circle. The head of a family, for instance, may have business relations with the outside world; but in nine cases out of ten the duties they impose on him are discharged with a view to the fulfilment of higher duties that he owes to his wife and children. So, too, with regard to these latter; they have no doubt engagements that take them from home perhaps daily, such as church, school, visits of charity or ceremony, &c., but if you examine them closely, you will find that they are all connected with home as their centre, and therefore show the truth of my statement. But husband and wife are, in their turn, the centre round which all the rest of the household is ranged, and with which it is vitally connected. Hence, if you enable them to discharge their duties faithfully; to give examples of truth, honesty, purity, patience, and the other domestic virtues to their children and servants, you may be assured you will build up there a well-ordered, happy Christian home. Now, marriage has been elevated to the dignity of a Sacrament for this very end, and hence it purifies the source of social life, and it provides a powerful help

for the fulfilment of all the duties that man owes to his fellow-man.

It helps, too, not only the administration of the other Sacraments, but also the preservation and transmission of divine faith. This double office seems so manifest that it requires but very few words of explanation. Were it not for the grace conferred by marriage and the spiritual character it gives to parental love, there would be very little care for the religious training and education of children, nor would there be much anxiety about their baptism in infancy. I think I can appeal confidently to the experience of missionary priests in large towns and cities for a proof of this statement. Ask any one of them the result of mixed marriages, contracted in defiance of the Church before the Registrar; ask him the result of illegitimacy; or, putting the question in a more particular form, ask him has he the names of all the children of Catholic mothers in his parish enrolled in his baptismal registry; are those children sent to Catechism; have they been confirmed; have they made their first Confession and Communion? The answer to each of these questions will, I can foretell, be in the negative, unless some providential circumstance should have enabled the Church to take the place of the parents in the spiritual training of these little ones.

You will now understand, dear reader, why our divine Lord accepted the invitation to the marriage of Cana, and commenced His public life by attending at it and blessing it, and pouring out

upon it those special helps and graces which were ever afterwards to be His rich, loving dowry to each Christian bride and bridegroom. He did so, to purify social life at its fountain-head ; to sanctify husband and wife through marriage ; to sanctify the household through the husband and wife ; and to sanctify the world through the household.

Towards the close of the marriage feast, there was much embarrassment among the household, owing to the failure of the supply of wine provided for the occasion. We all know what happened. The mother of Jesus, who seems to have been there, as, thank God, she has been ever since, in every true Christian home, more as a member of the family than as a stranger,—the mother of Jesus, to save the family from confusion, interceded with her divine Son, and in answer to her prayer, seconded by the promptings of His own affectionate Heart, He changed six large vessels filled with water into wine.

If we examine carefully the motive for which our divine Lord performed this miracle, we shall obtain a further revelation of His views regarding home-life. A shadow was coming to darken the first bridal day of the newly married couple. The customary benediction-cup, in which each guest should pledge them, could not be drunk. The aged parents, who had felt so happy through the morning in the happiness of all around them, were to be pained and saddened by the reputed disgrace of want of hospi-

tality. Our divine Lord would not have it so: He would save to that new home, and to every other home also, all the happiness He might, compatible with the destiny of fallen man: He would, in His relations with the world, permit no sorrow or pain, He would leave undried no human tears, unless the sorrow or pain or tears had a chastening purpose to fulfil. And so here. He put forth His divine power and worked His first miracle to keep bright and glad and joyful to the close that first day in the new life of the married couple.

I am not at all certain, that some persons may not accuse me here of trifling with the solemnity and austerity and the wholly spiritual character of our Redeemer's mission. "You put out of sight," I imagine I hear them say, "or, at least, you dwarf the true purpose of the Incarnation by giving so much importance to a very simple incident in our divine Lord's Life. He came on earth to regenerate and redeem the world by His preaching and miracles and death. He proposed to raise human thoughts and affections above the cares and anxieties of life, and fix them by constant contemplation on the eternal kingdom of His glory. He instituted the Sacraments as means to this end; and as to marriage, He never intended that it should make men forget, by bestowing temporal happiness on their earthly homes, the imperishable happiness of that heavenly home to which alone they must look forward for peace and rest."

Now I say in reply, that my intention in dwelling on our divine Lord's relations to home life, is not to depreciate the higher objects for which He came into this world. In fact, the scope of my subject does not require me to speak of those higher objects at all; but, on the supposition that they are already known, to show how He intended His teaching to be carried out in every-day life. I say that He intended it to be carried out through an institution founded from the beginning, but abused and degraded, until He came to purify and elevate it, and to restore it to its original purpose. That institution was the society of husband, wife, and child, which we call home.

But there runs through the foregoing objection, a vein of thought about which I wish to say something; and I say it all the more willingly, as it is intimately connected with the further development of the subject of these chapters. It seems to be insinuated, then, in the objection that Jesus Christ made no account of man's temporal happiness; that He cared nothing for the miseries, and sorrows, and sufferings, which, He knew, enveloped the earth like another atmosphere; but that His whole concern was for the restoration of fallen humanity to its pristine state of grace. Now this view of the character of our divine Lord is not entirely accurate. He had a human Heart, the tenderest, the most sympathetic, the most affectionate that ever beat in human breast. The sight of all pain and sorrow, grated on it as if a rasp-edged knife were

drawn across it, and it yearned with an intense, infinite longing to relieve and console the sufferer. If there be in the Gospels one truth more clearly revealed than all others, it is that He felt in His Sacred Heart unbounded pity and compassion, not only for the spiritual miseries of His children here on earth, but also for every form of human wretchedness, into which those spiritual miseries had led them. Hence, He could not have been indifferent whether the men He met, or the homes He entered, were happy or unhappy. On the contrary, He must have always wished to see Himself surrounded with bright, cheerful countenances; and He must have always had a great love for happy homes; for otherwise how can we account for the uniform object of nearly all His miracles—namely to bring light and joy to afflicted families, by curing all manner of diseases, and even by raising the dead to life.

Of course, our divine Lord had an ulterior end in view in miraculously healing all who came to Him, and driving sorrow from the homes He visited. He wished to attach men to Him by gratitude, He wished to prove the divinity of His mission and teaching, He wished to convince the world that He was the Messiah. But, even though the temporal happiness He diffused around Him was only a means to an end, there is no reason for saying that He grudged it to men, or that He dealt it out as though it were some dangerous, medicinal poison, of which a drop too much might be fatal to

the recipient. Imagine the joy of the widow of Naim when she returned home with her son restored to life, by the loving tenderness of the Redeemer who heard with compassion her heart-broken wail rise wild and desolate among the lamentations of the mourners. Imagine the joy of Martha's and Mary's home, that night after Jesus had called their brother back to them from the grave where his body lay rotting. Imagine the ecstasy of delight that was diffused in circles round about, from every miracle of His. Little children clapped their hands, and leaped, and cried with joy; old men bent down their bared heads in thankfulness, and their eyes streamed with tears of pleasure as they murmured a grateful "Nunc dimittis, Domine." Wives, and husbands, and children, kindred near and distant, neighbours, acquaintances, and even strangers, all were moved each time the healing divine power was exercised, now on a blind father, now on a sickly mother, now on a dying child, or again, on a poor servant-boy. Our divine Lord knew well this effect of His miracles, and He delighted in it, and it was one of the motives that induced Him to perform them.

We are then justified in concluding, that Jesus Christ is not indifferent to our temporal happiness. May His name be blessed for ever! He sympathises with every form of human misery; and where we are faithful to the obligations we owe Him, He always sends us His consolations, and sends them too in no stinted, niggard measure. The marriage of Cana and the miracle performed at it, as well as

most of the other miracles performed during His public ministry, bear testimony to this truth ; and in the loving promise it contains, every true Christian heart reposes, confidently and peacefully, through all the events of life.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHURCH AND HOME.

THE Church represents Jesus Christ ; and therefore she must have substantially the same relations with home that He had. Let us look around us and we shall find it so. There is in the present day an unnatural and cruel invasion of the rights of home, made by almost every known civilized government. Fathers have been cajoled into voting for it ; mothers, keen-sighted and easily aroused in other matters relating to their children, have been blind to it, and have permitted it ; no one but the Church has raised a voice against it. This invasion consists in the usurpation by the State of the education of the young. Scarcely have they grown too large for their cradles, when they are taken in charge by an official system called National Education, whose iron grasp is never unloosed until the seeds of infidelity are sown and watered and matured in their young souls. Christian faith is being thus rooted out of Catholic and Protestant countries alike. Parents stand by and look on. They see in their children the same physical beings as always, and they perceive in them a gratifying intellectual development that conceals from their sight the noxious undergrowth of infidelity I have mentioned. The moral and

spiritual evils of this usurpation are chiefly three-fold : society is rearing up for itself citizens without any sense of conscientious duty : parents are rearing up children without affection, that will be a curse to them in their old age : and the children themselves are being robbed of their one chance of eternal salvation, in losing all loyal adhesion to the teaching and discipline of the true Church.

The Vicar and Representative of Jesus Christ has from the beginning of the evil spoken out in clear ringing tones of warning against this invasion of home. He has in our own day denounced it by formally condemning the opinion : "that domestic society or the family derives its whole *raison d'être* solely from civil law ; and therefore all the rights of parents over their children, especially those of providing for their training and education, flow from and depend on the civil law only." The Catholic Bishops throughout the world, have in their respective sees, echoed the denunciation, and some of them have been exiled in consequence. At home, we all know the determined stand that has been and is being made to save to parents their inalienable right over their children ; and most of us have practical experience of trying sacrifices made by priests and people alike to resist the tide of Godless education.

But there is another and a still more sacred right of home for which the Church has fought against the world for the last eighteen centuries and a half. This is the sanctity of Christian marriage. The world would make woman the slave of man's

passions and caprices: it would make marriage a mercantile contract, like buying and selling, except, indeed, that this latter would have much the more binding power: it would, in a word, impiously lay hands on that bond that unites by divine authority man and woman until death, and is the only security of their own and their children's happiness. It is needless to say how strenuously the Church has defended the Sacrament of marriage, and the true rights of woman and the sanctity of home against these pernicious errors. If the tide of barbarism that rolled back before the march of Christianity has not yet swept in again on the rescued world: if civil and domestic society is still more than a memory and a name: if woman remains enthroned as queen in the realm of home; these results are solely due to the faithful, determined stand our Church has made and is making, against those kings of the earth and those leaders of infidel thought, who have taken counsel together against the Lord and against His Christ, and have determined to break their bonds asunder and cast away their yoke from them.

But let us descend from these general views of the action of the Church in relation to the family, and let us examine what is its action in our own immediate neighbourhood. In your parish Church, dear reader, there are three fixtures very closely connected with home life. They are the confessional, the pulpit, and the Altar. Every week a large number of your neighbours, yourself probably among them, crowd round that confessional, to

lay before the Priest of Jesus Christ who sits there, your sins and shortcomings, your neglect of duty, your want of patience, your uncharitable conversations, &c. Now put all that you have to confess together and take from the sum whatever is connected with home obligations, and what will remain? Your conscience tells you, very little indeed. The words of advice too which the Priest speaks before he pronounces the absolution are mostly about those same home obligations. He tells you how to practise patience in your relations with parents, children, brothers, sisters, according to your position ; how to be just and charitable to others in your thoughts and words ; how to sanctify your daily life by prayer, by habitual intercourse with God, and by the direction of all that you think, say, and do to His honour and glory. The confessional, then, may be considered as the spiritual guardian of home, and faithfully does it perform its office. Heaven alone keeps the diary of its world-wide influence ; and it will be only when that diary will be unrolled at the great Judgment, that men will perceive not only the immense treasures of grace dispensed through it, but also the countless social blessings it conferred on individuals and families. Peace, contentment, patience, cheerfulness under trials, resignation in sorrow and misfortune, these are some of its ministering angels that it sends back with us to our homes according to our requirements ; and their unseen presence is felt in the harsh word checked and left unsaid, in the cruel treatment meekly borne,

in cheerful brightness of look and manner, and perhaps most of all, in the fortitude and hope it inspires when death comes into our home-circle and takes away some one that—well some one from whom we were not prepared to part.

The pulpit, too, like the confessional, exercises a powerful influence on you and your neighbours. Its range is indeed wider, its teaching fuller, its exhortations more formal. It speaks to the people in the aggregate, while the confessional addresses each one individually ; but the voices of both, like two harmonized sounds, have the same end and purpose, and they mutually help each other to attain it. The Sunday sermon often haunts the guilty conscience of the drunken father or the unnatural mother or the undutiful child, following it with an importuning cry, and coming between it and its guilty pleasures. In solitary moments also, its echo in the heart thrills it through and through, until the resolution is sincerely formed of turning by a good confession to our patiently expectant, loving Father in Heaven. Thus the pulpit points and leads to the confessional, both co-operating in the work of individual sanctification, and each exercising its own distinct influence on home.

But confessional and pulpit converge to one common centre, namely, to the Tabernacle on the Altar. There is the true centre of spiritual life in every parish, and mission, and home throughout the Catholic world ; for there is our incarnate God, looking out on us through the white veil He has drawn around Himself, and loving us with the same

first love that brought Him down from His Father among us, and that makes it His delight to be with the children of men. Oh, blessed for ever be this everlasting love—the ever burning love of His Sacred Heart! He seems to have resumed His hidden life on earth, and to have made every altar of the Church another Nazareth, and to have resolved on staying in our midst, although we treat Him worse than the coarse, ill-conditioned Nazarenes of old.

And now what effect has this earthly residence of our incarnate God on our home-life? Does He interfere and mix with it? Does He help to brighten it, to keep it pure and holy, to lead it onwards and upwards until it merges for each of us in the eternal home-life of our Father in Heaven? To answer these questions for a small minority of my readers, I shall have to trespass on the patience of those who know already what my answer is to be.

I say then, that Jesus in the Tabernacle exercises a profound influence on Catholic home life. Whenever He is received with proper dispositions, as, thank God, He generally is, there must always be a thorough renunciation of sin and sinful habits. Therefore whatever is amiss in our home relations must be set right before we can venture to invite Him into our souls. This is much; but the grace, and strength, and light, He brings with Him when He comes, are a great deal more. Unfortunately those outside our Church (and perhaps some few who call themselves Catholics), do not understand

this influence. They think it the outcome of an excited imagination,—unreal, exaggerated, unintelligible. We cannot, however, feel surprised at their incredulity regarding the effect, seeing that they have no faith in the cause. But let them ask any missionary Priest, if he perceive a marked difference between the home-life of a man or woman, young or old, who receives Holy Communion frequently, and the home-life of one who receives It seldom or does not receive It at all. Let them ask those Sisters of Charity, or those Sisters of Mercy, or any of the other numerous Sisterhoods that bring the Church into communication with so many disordered homes, what is the invariable result when they get members of families to go to Confession and Communion. Let them ask, in fine, that helpless old woman who is supported by her daughter's weekly earnings; and not supported alone, but made comfortable and happy by her child's patient attention and love; to what does she attribute that daughter's fidelity to her often troublesome charge? The answer of each will point towards the Tabernacle. The priest will tell them that the frequent reception of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, even by one member of a household, remodels it beyond knowing; that it restores peace where there had been only bickering and dissension; order, where there had been confusion; love, where previously all manner of bad passions reigned. So too, the Sisters will tell them, that as long as the Sacraments are frequented, there is nothing to be feared for the home: the son will give no trouble

to the parents ; the daughter will guard herself from the social dangers around her ; the drunken father will no longer come home drunk ; and the wife and mother will not only know her responsible duties better, but she will perform them with greater fidelity. That old woman, too, knowing that her daughter makes time to attend Mass every morning after setting all things right in their simple home, that she receives the Holy Communion regularly every Sunday, that she seems, in fact, to divide her life between home, the Church, and her place of work,—that old woman, I say, will have but one cause to which she can attribute the saintliness of her daughter's life, and that will be the strength she receives, in her Communions and visits, from Jesus in the most holy Sacrament.

The Church, then, has many most important relations with the family, the beneficial effects of which are manifest to the world. Unfortunately, however, the world closes its eyes, and insists that it does not see them ; and so, its rulers, and statesmen, and theorists, push the Church, with the brute force at their command, from the home and the school which they turn into state institutions. There will be, however, one day, a twofold retribution of this unjust and unnatural action. The parental instinct will take the alarm, and recall the usurped control of the family ; and He who promised to His Church victory over the powers of darkness, and who gave her the commission to teach the nations of the earth, will

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rise in His might, and snap asunder the bonds that vain men would put upon her hands, and leave her free and untrammelled, as of old, to run her divinely appointed course. In looking forward prayerfully and patiently to this coming time, let us not lose sight of the duty of the hour ; but let each one do faithfully and well what Heaven has given him to do, in the circle in which he moves.

CHAPTER VI.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

HAVING given a general idea of home in the preceding chapters, I come next to speak of its duties in detail ; and I begin by treating of those that husband and wife owe to each other. Of course, constant, unwavering fidelity to their pledged troth and to the moral obligations it implies holds the first place. The most cruel and most unjust injury, perhaps, that one human being can inflict on another, is the deliberate violation of this fidelity. It not only kills every germ of social happiness, but it generally breaks up the home, and what is worse still, it breaks at least one heart in the ruin it brings. However, although this duty is the most essential bond of family life, I abstain designedly from dilating on it, as there will be, thank God, very few among my readers to whom any special warning on this head is necessary.

Next to fidelity then, the most important duty that husband and wife owe to each other is mutual patience and forbearance. Two wills very rarely, one may say never, agree in all things, nor does there appear to be any contrivance by which two persons can be made to think and act in perfect harmony. On the contrary, each has a tendency of his own, to go his own way, as being not only the pleasantest and best and wisest, but also the

only way for a reasonable will to go. Here then is a constant danger to the peace and happiness of home-life. How is it to be avoided? Simply by patience. If indeed both wills could be brought to see that neither should assert supreme and arbitrary control; but that having a common end in view, they should take common counsel in attaining it, this would be best. But this can very rarely be done, although it seems so easy and natural, without the previous exercise of much patience. A husband, for instance, has what is called a strong will, which generally means a will that is at once selfish, narrow and cruel; and he gives his wife no voice in the management of domestic affairs. He wishes to make her a kind of head-cook, parlour-maid, children's governess, all in one. He tries to maintain, indeed, a certain appearance of companionship; but it is nothing more than what he would condescend to show to an interesting child. To any married woman, treatment like this is irritating in the extreme; and for one who has not a patient determined will to live it down and to do her duty in spite of it, it is sure to lead to estrangement and unhappiness. But the question arises here, how is it to be lived down, and what is a wife's duty under such circumstances? I say then, that a wife has at least the right of a voice in the regulation of her home; yet if she be denied that right and set aside by her husband, she is obliged to obey. She can however protest, without any show of anger against his interference with her authority; and in nine

cases out of ten, she can, by prudence and tact, by careful management in what is left her to do, by trustworthiness, win back for herself gradually that trust and confidence of which she is deprived. She will no doubt require much patience and self-restraint, and she will have to suffer many mortifications and rebuffs before she attains her object; but no Catholic wife will depend on her own strength in such a crisis. She will have recourse to earnest prayer, and to the Sacraments, knowing that these are the keys of God's treasury of grace, and that by their aid she is certain to succeed. There is, however, one common mistake she must avoid; it is that of putting on an air of injury towards her husband, and treating him to a constant exhibition of tears. Some wives indeed go further and pay back their husband's treatment by sharp, bitter words, by sour, unamiable looks, and by habitual acts of keen, petty annoyance; but I do not speak of these at present, as I am considering the case of those only who, having entered the married state with the best intentions of forming happy homes around them, find themselves thwarted from the beginning by the high-handed action of their husbands. I say then, that matters will not be mended, but made much worse by constant tears, and by a sad, broken-spirited manner. The chief attraction of home for a husband is the cheerfulness of his wife, and although his harsh, unfeeling ways towards her may often make this cheerfulness extremely difficult, yet it will one day, sooner or later, win for her the position

she ought to hold in her home ; it will always lighten the burden of her trials ; it will make life less unpleasant to herself, as well as to those around her : and, in fine, she will do her duty all the better by resolving to do it cheerfully.

But a husband has generally something to say in his defence against the charge of degrading his wife's position. Let us hear what is his plea. He will probably begin by asserting that he is lord and master in his own home, and therefore has a strict right to his wife's obedience. He will next allege, that he waives his right to this obedience in many important particulars : for instance, he lets her go to Church as often as he thinks necessary for her ; she may pay and receive visits within certain limits ; and as for the control of money, women are too silly and extravagant in their tastes, and too heedless of their husband's interests to be trusted with it, unless under exact and business-like conditions. He will not admit, moreover, that he is either harsh, or cruel, or despotic towards his wife. She has quite as much freedom as she had at home under the eyes of her parents ; and if she be not happy and contented, the fault is her own, and she must, by firm management, be brought to see it.

Now it cannot be denied, that there is quite enough of plausibility about this reasoning to blind a self-interested, strong-willed man to the fallacies contained in it. If, then, such a one were to read these pages, I would ask him to put aside for a little the conviction he has of his unassailable

position towards his wife, and, without bias or prejudice, to give his serious consideration to a few remarks on the other side.

Traditional sayings sometimes give a vitality to abuses, that is very injurious to society. This is one of them, the husband is sovereign lord and master in his home. With certain necessary limitations, this saying is true, without them it is false and unchristian. The husband is constituted by Christian marriage the head of the family ; but in this headship the wife is associated as a partner, a counsellor, a co-director. She has an active voice in all domestic arrangements, in the care of children, in the management of servants, in the disposal of money for ordinary purposes. No doubt, she is subject to her husband, but this subjection does not exempt him from the strict obligation of consulting her and giving all due weight to her opinion on matters directly connected with the government of their common home. He should, indeed, take into account also the unhappiness and disunion that may result from the strict exercise of his authority ; and where the matter in question does not seriously affect the interests of the family, he ought to consider whether prudence and charity do not suggest the better course to be a graceful yielding to her authority in all home matters. This authority, therefore, is not of that absolute, irresponsible kind that Turkish husbands are said to exercise over their wives : it is rather that of a prudent chairman of some board of managers, who gives his casting vote only when the other members are evenly divided, and when the question at issue is of vital importance. In

truth, the family seems to me to be a sort of company analogous to those in the business world, inasmuch as it is ruled, and its affairs are managed by the parents as directors, and the father or husband as chairman, with one end in view, namely, the welfare of all the members, and with one common intention to devise and carry out the means of attaining that end. If the husband and the wife were to adopt this idea of their common duties, there would be much less disunion and unhappiness among them, and much less scandal given to children and domestics, than we unfortunately find in too many of our homes.

Moderation then on the part of the husband, and submission on the part of the wife, should always regulate their mutual relations; and the moderation and the submission are both secured by the practice of that patience which I recommended just above. It is a difficult task to be uniformly patient under all the petty, various annoyances of family life; but it cannot be remembered too distinctly, that in the Sacrament of marriage the right is given to all the spiritual helps, necessary for discharging faithfully and holily every duty of married life. Let this grace then be invoked habitually, let it be strengthened by the graces of Confession and Holy Communion, received often and fervently, let prayer begin and end each day, and, as far as possible, each duty,—with these aids, patience will be easy even in the most trying circumstances, and it will produce in the husband that prudent moderation, and in the wife that

cheerful submission, that are the foundation of a happy Christian home.

The next duty of husband and wife to each other, of which I wish to speak, is the duty of mutual confidence. They should each suspect nothing, believe nothing, listen to nothing prejudicial to the other, without the strongest and most convincing proofs of the charge alleged. Each should place implicit and absolute reliance on the truth, and purity, and honour of the other ; and should be as easily moved from that reliance as from the conviction of some moral certainty that cannot be controverted. Unworthy suspicions are a frequent cause of estrangement and loss of confidence between husband and wife ; gossipers and scandal-mongers are another cause. No matter what gives rise to an accusation against the being whom he has pledged himself to love and honour until death, whom he has chosen out of all the world to protect, and cherish, and make happy, who has given up for him all the endearments and amenities of early home ; no matter what gives rise to an accusation against such a one, let him not believe if there be a possibility of disbelieving it ; let him drive it away from his soul, or it may blacken it with deadly sin ; let him close his ears to it, for it has the breath of Satan, and the hiss of his tongue in its smallest whisper.

Jealousy is a morbid state of mind, directly opposed to this confidence of which I am speaking ; and husband and wife alike require to guard themselves carefully against it. Slight, and even

groundless suspicions are exaggerated by it into absolute certainties; a thoughtless, unmeaning word is made the clue to a supposed life of treachery or of guilt; home loses all its brightness; children that used to be loved and fondly cared for are hated and neglected; every thing and every body seems to have gone wrong; and the unhappy victim often seeks in suicide a relief from the fancied evils of life. I have little more to say on this mental delusion, than that its first symptoms should be repressed with unsparing vigour. No studied means should be adopted to find out whether foolish surmises be correct or incorrect. They should be dismissed as unworthy of oneself, and injurious to the person suspected. Prayer and spiritual guidance are also most powerful helps, and even the advice of a sincere, prudent friend will often be of use, if only to let in the light to the sore that is rankling in the heart. When jealousy, however, has become developed into a kind of monomania, it assumes a most critical and alarming form. In such a stage, it is as much a mental as a spiritual disease. Arguments and facts, the most evident and convincing, will seem to make the patient only more stubborn and impatient; prayer and Sacraments will generally be given up; and the Priest will have to leave the poor diseased soul in the merciful hands of its Creator. I will say again, then: Let him repress every first suggestion of distrust or suspicion of the consort whom God Himself has bound to him. He must pray against it; he must fight against it; he must wrench it from his soul; he must not leave a root of it there, or it

will grow up into a deadly poisonous plant, killing all that is healthy and good and happy, not only in his own life, but in the lives of many around him.

There is another form of mutual confidence, essential to the well-being and happiness of married persons : it is that which leads them to impart to each other whatever trials, or difficulties, or troubles, they may meet with in their daily intercourse with the world. As I said in the beginning of this work, one of the primary ends of marriage is to form for man a society of mutual help ; and there is no natural help more grateful, more encouraging, or, in any way, more important in the hour of need, than the sympathy that comes from a kind, affectionate heart. A husband then should keep no secret worrying trouble from his wife, through the mistaken delicacy of fearing to distress her and make her unhappy. He may be assured that the unconscious sadness of his demeanour at times, and the forced, artificial gaiety by which he will try to conceal some grave situation in which he is placed, will cause much more pain, than the revelation of the truth to her whom he intends to spare. To save her then the double grief, of knowing that her husband is in distress of mind, and of thinking that he does not deem her worthy or capable of sharing it, he should confide to her the cause of his anxiety, and consult with her bravely and openly about the best means of removing it. A wife, too, should hide no secret trouble from her husband. She may fear, perhaps, that he will look grave, or fret, or scold ; the trouble itself may be some pecuniary

difficulty, or some social annoyance, or any of the numerous daily trials of life; no matter what it may be or what immediate consequence its disclosure may entail, it is much the best that it should not become a wall of separation between herself and her husband. Let it be told candidly and fearlessly; and the confession is sure to result in an increase of happiness to both.

When I spoke, a few pages back, on the importance of cheerfulness to a wife, in the discharge of her daily duties, I touched one part of a subject of too much importance to home, to be passed over lightly. I say, then, that not only the wife should be bright and cheerful before the husband; but that wife and husband should make it a fixed rule to contribute to each other's happiness, even at the sacrifice of their own individual comfort and convenience. This mutual anxiety and effort to please is only a branch of that mutual love which they owe to one another; but yet it is so vitally connected with all the deepest interests of home, that a short explanation of what it requires of them will not be out of place here.

First of all, it requires that each of them give up any habit or peculiarity of manner that may be opposed to the tastes, or even to the prejudices of the other. It would be out of place in a book of this kind to mention what those habits and peculiarities are. They will be known to those concerned, and they will be removed too, no matter what the removal cost, if there be a sincere desire on the part of the one who has contracted them

to consult the comfort and convenience of the other.

In the second place, the wife should see that order, regularity, and cleanliness are scrupulously maintained in her home. If she ever become careless and indifferent in this matter, she may be prepared to find her husband gradually lose his love of home, spend less and less time there, and finally, show by his manner, if not by his words, his annoyance and disgust at the disorder and untidiness he sees about him.

There is one other thing demanded of husband and wife alike ; and it is, that neither should ever deliberately forfeit the esteem and respect of the other. Such a loss would be sure to undermine the love, and to go far to unloose the bond of union that unites husband and wife together.

If, then, these recommendations that I have laid down in this chapter be observed, I have no hesitation in giving the highest assurance, that they who follow them will with the blessing of Heaven, succeed in forming bright and happy Christian homes.

CHAPTER VII.

FATHER AND MOTHER.

GOD has given to fathers and mothers a nobler and more sublime authority than He has given to the kings and queens of this world. The latter have power over the external actions of men ; the former have power over the souls of those committed to their charge. A temporal ruler has the power of life and death over his subjects ; but he has no power of causing them to be saved or lost eternally. A parent, however, has this power over his child. Look at that infant newly born : it is fluttering between life and death, and a few hours will take it back to eternity. Its soul is not pleasing in the sight of God, for it is still overshadowed by the curse that humanity brought on itself by its first sin. Will it be saved, or will it be shut out from God's face for ever ? The father and mother can answer : for its eternal destiny is in their hands. If they have it baptized, it will be saved ; if they neglect its baptism, it will be deprived of the graces and blessings of the Redemption. See again that father training his son in a profession of sin,—stealing, I will say. There is a regular, business-like apprenticeship served ; and after it the boy plies

the trade on his own account. He grows to manhood, living by it and perhaps thriving on it. He knows it to be sinful; but there are no holy influences around him to strengthen and ripen this knowledge into a determination to give it up. He pursues his career then until death comes to summon him to judgment. And what is that judgment likely to be? and if it be an unhappy one, who was the moral cause of it? Another instance: see that woman with the baby in her arms, coming with unsteady step out of that public-house, in one of our large towns. She is the wife of a labourer. She has been drinking, and has been wetting the infant's lips with strong drink, until, lulled into a stupor, it now lies, an incipient drunkard, on its drunken mother's breast. Suppose that infant to be a girl,—what a life of misery and degradation is before her? And if she keep her face turned in the direction of her mother's training, and if she follow the impulse of that mother's example to the end, her eternal ruin will be the work of her who received from God an awful, mysterious power for her eternal well-being.

Fathers and mothers then have the moral shaping of the world around us. The future of society is in their hands. Their children's eternal happiness in great measure depends upon them. What a power to be confided to weak human beings! what a responsibility to be imposed on them! to what a dignity are they not raised!

Parents, have you conceived an adequate sense of the position you hold? Do you know that

you are connecting links between God and all future generations? that your action towards those tender beings entrusted to you may fill either Heaven with saints or Hell with lost souls? Do you realize how intimately your own salvation is connected with a full conception of your sublime calling, and a conscientious discharge of its duties? There is nothing farther from my mind than the intention to exaggerate your responsibility; and yet, I am going to assert a conviction of mine that you will perhaps think to be unwarranted. It is, that I fear very few parents get the grace of dying a good death, who neglect during their lifetime the moral and religious education of their children. Nor do I speak solely of those who have had the terrible misfortune of knowingly bringing up their children in a course of vice. I speak generally of those fathers and mothers who have disedified their children by their bad, irreligious lives, and who have taken no trouble to counteract the scandal they have given, by any attempt at the moral and religious training of their family. Such a wilful, life-long dereliction of duty has been, as far as my experience goes, generally punished by a death that any one of Christian faith must contemplate with horror. No one can pronounce, of course, any assured opinion as to how God deals with such souls; but if the visible events and things of life be the shadows and the symbols of the invisible, then surely, there is at least great reason to dread that the invisible death of the soul is shadowed and symbolized in the unpreparedness

and the unrepentance of the visible death of the body. God grant that it may not be so ; but may God grant also that you will never expose yourself to the terrible danger of staking your salvation on a mere possibility.

The thought may arise here in the mind of some parent, that the common sense of mankind does not attach all this importance to the proper training of children ; and as the common sense of mankind is more apt to be right than wrong, he thinks he will be safe in doing as his neighbours do, and paying no attention to these exaggerated notions.

Now there are two serious mistakes made by the person who entertains this thought. One is a mistake in principle, the other a mistake in fact. The former consists in supposing that the teaching of mankind—of the world, is or can be the guide of a Christian to the knowledge of his duty. It was said, a long time ago, by an inspired writer, speaking of the Word made flesh, that “the world knew Him not.” The same may be said of the world still, if we look on its actions as the expression of its belief. Therefore the common sense of mankind, by which some think they may be guided, is a teacher, without faith in Christ, without views beyond the present life, without any divine sanction whatsoever. We may accept the practice and maxims of the world, in our manner of bringing up our children, as well as in our estimate of the importance of bringing them up well ; but if we do so, let us keep this truth in mind, that we have

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virtually denied our Christian faith ; for we have taken the world that knows not Christ to be our instructor in our moral duties.

The mistake of fact to which I alluded above is the error of thinking, that the world from its own point of view is not a strict and severe, not to say cruel, disciplinarian of youth. It makes no account of religion, because practically it does not believe in it ; but it begins almost from the cradle to teach its own principles to the young: "love money, and devote your whole life to making it; love ease, and comfort, and pleasure, and let no foolish scruple of conscience keep you from enjoying them; be afraid of these three things, and these only, in all your actions; namely, ridicule, want of respectability, and all opposition, wilful or unwilful, to the rules and usages of society; run down Christianity where you can do it conveniently, shake it off when it becomes the slightest incumbrance to you, and if you must put it on, don't let it get near the skin, and especially the heart, and let it be trimmed according to the latest fashion; remember above all things that Catholicity is never fashionable." These are some of the principles that the world begins to teach the child when it first shows its capacity to learn anything; and the world has, in ridicule, a sharp cutting rod to enforce its teaching,—a rod, I may say, that is wielded with impartiality over old and young alike; and is felt indeed more sorely by the old than by the young.

I might speak of the number and variety of the teachers and teaching influences in this world-wide

training school ; but I think I have said enough, to show that the common sense of mankind is no guide to a Christian parent in teaching what is his moral duty to his children, or how he is to perform it ; and also, that if any lesson is to be drawn from the world's training of the young, it is this ; that Christians should at least be as anxious to make good Christians, as the world is to make thorough-going worldlings.

Fathers and mothers, then, who form a just estimate of the responsibility and dignity of their duties towards their children, will not allow themselves to be influenced by the principles of the world in their manner of educating them. But they must be prepared to meet with much opposition and obstruction. As I have said already, modern legislation has interfered unjustly and unwarrantably with the rights of parents. The slave of the world, the legislator of our day has no wish nearer to his heart, no work in which he engages with greater zeal, than to root Christianity out of the souls of the people, and out of all the institutions with which he can interfere. Chief among these is the school, and he has almost succeeded in expelling from it every form of Christianity. By this action, parents have been cruelly hampered in their control and training of their children ; and they have also been placed in an awkward and perplexing dilemma. Are they to send their children to those godless state schools and universities, and endanger their faith and morality ? or are they to forego for them the benefit of secular

education, and so, practically exclude them from the learned professions, and the higher walks of life? It would be presumptuous in me to dare give any general solution of this difficulty; and I have therefore only to recommend those who find themselves placed in it to consult their respective Bishops either personally, or through their clergy; and to abide loyally by their decisions. The Hierarchy in every country throughout the world has had this question of secular education before it for a long time; it has taken counsel with the Holy See regarding it; and it has drawn up decrees which every good Catholic must respect and obey. Where, however, there are exceptional circumstances or extreme cases that do not seem to have been contemplated or included in those decrees, prudence absolutely requires that those concerned should not decide for themselves, but should have recourse to the legitimate ecclesiastical authority.

I think it will be seen from these few remarks, that Catholic parents have a special reason to be on the alert, in our day, against the terrible dangers that threaten their children from the infidel school-legislation to which the world has become subject. I shall have to return to this subject again; but before dismissing it for the present, I would urge on every Catholic the obligation he is under of using all his privileges of citizenship to help in changing those laws that have driven Jesus Christ out of the schools of Christians; that have tried to stop

His raised Hand from giving the nuptial blessing to the marriage contract; and are doing their utmost to destroy the sanctity of our homes and of home life.

I trust that what I have now written will bring home to parents a true sense of their position towards their children, and of their responsibility to God for them. But lest the idea of this position and responsibility should discourage them by its magnitude, and by the consciousness of their own weakness, it may be useful to say something here on the helps and facilities provided for them to fulfil it. The good God never imposes a burden on anyone beyond his power to bear; and His wise, loving Providence has arranged, that parents especially should not be deprived of abundant spiritual strength to help them to bear their burden. This strength comes to them from three sources: from the Sacrament of marriage, from Confession and Holy Communion, and from Prayer. I do not think it necessary to do more than mention these helps at present; as I shall have to speak of the last two further on, and I have spoken already of the first. Besides these spiritual sources of strength, however, there are others which, although not spiritual, are very important and should not be overlooked. I shall mention only two, the first of which is the mutual love that exists between parents and children. Natural instinct inclines a parent to secure in every way possible the highest interests of his child; and when he knows that

these consist chiefly in its spiritual training, and the formation of its Christian character, he refuses no effort or sacrifice, and he neglects no precaution necessary or conducive to the attainment of this object. And when he sees the visible result of his exertions, in the love and dutifulness, as well as in the innocence and bright promise, of the young soul given him to train, he is not only rejoiced at the thought of his past anxiety and care, but he feels stimulated to continue, and, if necessary, to increase them, in order to perfect the noble work he has begun.

But, perhaps, the assured hope of happiness in their old age from the loving tenderness of their children buoys up parents in the discharge of their arduous duties, more than any other human consideration. Fathers and mothers have their day-dreams of the future, like the rest of men ; and they build up a visionary home for themselves in their helpless old age, where children and grandchildren will vie with each other in making the sunset of their lives bright and beautiful and happy. The son will come from his far-off home to visit them, and they will talk with him about his childhood and youth ; the married daughter will come with her young family, and join them ; their own youth will be renewed in the youth and freshness of all around them ; and there will not be a cloud in the summer sky of that imagined time ; every one there will be happy and they themselves the happiest

of all. Such a picture as this has not always its fulfilment on this side of the grave ; though it often has, for the good God seems often to permit the happiness of eternity to overflow into time, particularly near its close, for those parents who have discharged faithfully and conscientiously their duties to their children.

Poor, anxious, fluttering hearts of parents ! wearing yourselves out in doing God's work well, hope and pray, by all means, for rest ; but do not set yourselves too intently on that which, at its best, is only a faint earthly shadow of the great Sabbath-rest of eternity. Stretch your longing a little farther,—beyond the veil,—beyond your children's home, to the infinitely happier Home of your own Father in Heaven. Think of meeting there in the wide family-circle, of which the ever blessed Trinity is the centre, child and grand-child in a reunion that will know no separation. I do not say, indeed, that your day-dream of a bright future, even here below, when you will be able to work no longer, is unholy or forbidden ; yet it should be tempered by resignation to the divine Will that, for your own higher good, may not permit it to be realized ; and it should be secondary to that infinitely brighter vision that our Father Himself has revealed for our comfort : " Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them. And they shall be His people : and God Himself with them shall be their God. And God shall wipe

away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away.”—(Apoc. xxi. 3, 4.)

CHAPTER VIII.

EXAMPLE OF PARENTS.

PARENTS are taught a terrible lesson in reference to the example they ought to give their children, by certain words of our divine Lord, spoken on one occasion, when His disciples came to Him asking: "who is the greater in the kingdom of heaven?" And Jesus, calling a little child to Him, took him in His arms and set him in the midst of them, saying among other things: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones, it were better for him that a mill-stone should be hanged about his neck and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea."—(Matt. xviii. 1-6. Mark ix. 35.) "A little child, held in the arms by Jesus, embraced by Him," as St. Mark writes, and set in the midst of the twelve Apostles! What tenderness for childhood this divine act displays! but what an appalling threat is conveyed in the words! How anxiously He would shield the young, innocent soul from the poisoning influence of bad example! "The person," He would say, "that tampers with the innocence, or truth, or purity of a child, if he knew the divine displeasure he provokes, and the terrible everlasting punishment he incurs, would, rather than do so, very gladly prefer to be drowned

with a mill-stone round his neck in the depth of the sea.”

Now you may easily see, dear reader, the special application of this threat to parents. They have imposed on them by God Himself, the vitally important obligation of training their children in the knowledge, and love, and practice, of Christian virtue and duty. They have two means of doing this, by word and by example. Well ; if, instead of using these means as they ought to use them, parents habitually or even occasionally turn them both to the moral corruption of their children ; if they lie, and swear, and speak foul words, and run down religion in their presence ; and if they give them the example of stealing, or of any other species of dishonesty, the example too of drunkenness, brawling, etc. ; if they are never seen to say a prayer, night or morning, if they never go to Mass, or Confession, or Holy Communion :—oh ! what a special enormity of guilt there is in such conduct ; what a special displeasure it must cause to the Heavenly Father and Protector of those little ones who are being thus handed over to Satan by their own parents ; and, in fine, what must be the punishment in store for such unhappy parents, if even a stranger scandalizing a little child, only by a single act, is threatened by Jesus Christ with the severe rigours of divine justice ! There seems indeed to be a double punishment inflicted by the just anger of God on parents who scandalize their children ; or rather it might be more correct to say, the eternal punishment due to this unnatural crime, projects

its shadow upon their earthly life, darkening it with sorrow, and misery, and remorse. How many a mother, hastening to her grave with a broken heart for her daughter's shame, has been herself the moral cause of that shame! How many a father, crawling about the wards and courts of our parish workhouses, have sons spending weekly in drink double or treble what would support him at home in comfort! Why do they not do it? The reason is: he set them the example of drunkenness, and they have followed it: he cultivated no home affection in their souls, and they have none: he never troubled himself to teach them their duty to their God, to their parents, or to society; and they now live with their hand raised against all three, and the ban of all three upon their heads. It certainly is a terrible, although just, dispensation of divine Providence that punishes the parent's sin against his child by the hand of the child itself. And oh, how frequently is it to be seen? But I trust I need not say more on this painful subject. If parents who read these pages do not tremble at the words of Jesus Christ against the scandal-giver of children, no words of mine will have any influence with them, and they will run their course blindly and recklessly, until the time of the earthly avengement comes. Then indeed, whether they live in castles or in cabins, they will be equally powerless to shut out the sorrow and anguish of heart, and the remorse, and perhaps the disgrace and shame, that will come and stay by them, like black mocking phantoms, and that will fill their solitary homes

with a refrain that will be re-echoed in their inmost hearts : your children should be to you a crown of joy in your helpless old age, but your bad example has made them a crown of sorrow for ever !

But you must not think, dear reader, that no parent gives scandal to his child who does not commit some grievous crime, or speak some detestable word, or habitually neglect some important moral or religious duty in its presence. On the contrary, I am convinced that many parents who lead what we call respectable lives very often by their example give a moral warp to their children's habits and dispositions, from which, in many instances, they never recover. That lady, for example, who tells her young daughter not to associate with the children of such a neighbour, as they are much below her, and their mother is vulgar, and their father only a shop-keeper ; or that other lady who never speaks a kind word of any one, and who in presence of her family is ever detracting or slandering her friends and acquaintances ; that respectable father too whose whole life, as well as his words, is constantly dinning into the ears of his children, the omnipotence of money, the disgrace of poverty, the grandeur of rank, the divinity of power, the worship of success : each of these parents is in his or her own way teaching worldliness and unchristian habits, and sowing the germs of vice in the soul of the child, as surely as he who commits gross sin by word or act in the presence of his family. In truth, the child's earliest school of morality is home, and very often it is its

only school. There the parent's actions are the child's lessons, and very carefully and assiduously are they conned and committed to practice. Never in after life will it give the same rapt attention to teacher or professor, never will it read books as eagerly, never will it listen to sermons or instructions with the same docility and will, never in a word, will it be influenced by the formal teaching of books, or schools, or masters, as it is influenced in its early childhood by the daily lives of its parents. Oh, that parents would understand this absolute power of good or evil, that they have over their children! I pray God to grant that my words may bring a true sense of it home to them, and that the consciousness of it may always abide with them, making them prudent and circumspect in every word spoken, and every action performed before their children.

And yet, there are such deeply rooted, mistaken notions in the minds of parents about their children's education, that I fear much for the success of my words. Even a good, pious mother generally measures the religious education of her child by the number of prayers it can lisp, and the questions of the Catechism it can answer, never thinking that all she has succeeded in doing is simply to develop its memory by stamping on it, perhaps to the pain and disgust of her little one, a long list of words that as yet are without sense or meaning to it. I admit, of course, that the words, remembered afterwards, will be of use, and I admit the principle that the sooner a child's religious

education is taken in hands the better ; but then the first lessons ought to be simple and intelligible, and conveyed in actions rather than in words. The child is a keen observer of the little world around it. Its first instinct is to take part in it, and to do what it sees others doing, particularly those it loves. Let the mother, then, and the father, too, give it the first lesson of prayer, by going on their knees night and morning, and saying their own prayers with uniform regularity. Let them give it lessons in patience, charity, truthfulness, purity ; not by definitions or homilies, but by practising these virtues faithfully and avoiding with scrupulous care everything opposed to them. Let them at the same time keep from it every influence that would counteract or neutralize the good effect of their own example ; and let them, above all, use extreme caution in the selection of those to whom they entrust it, either as nurses or servants. If parents have no experience themselves of the moral injury done by such persons to the young, they should be guided by those who have ; and they should consider it a most sacred duty to inquire into the moral and religious character of every domestic who will in any way come into contact with their children.

And yet, the necessity of this inquiry is almost entirely overlooked by parents. They require indeed a character for honesty and sobriety in servants. If they are not honest they will pilfer ; and if they are not sober they will not attend to their master's or mistress's business ; and so master

and mistress rest content in having a guarantee that their property is secure in their servants' hands. But what guarantee have they that the characters, the habits, the future life, and the eternal salvation of their children are equally secure? None whatsoever; nor do they seem to care; for they do not look for any, nor do they indeed generally expect it. Now I think this carelessness of parents shows rather clearly the relative value they set on the preservation of their property, and the preservation of their children's innocence. And yet I put it to your experience, dear reader, to say, if it is not the usual course of those who employ servants to act so. I know it may be urged with much show of truth, that it is nearly impossible to get a servant perfect in every respect, and that servants are not employed to edify children, but to do their work honestly and conscientiously. Although both these statements be admitted, the substantial charge of neglecting to save children from the danger of corruption by servants is not removed from parents. For all they know, the person they employ may be very demure and proper before them, whereas if they took the trouble of investigating as closely as they ought her previous character, they might find many reasons for not entrusting their children to her.

I would then recommend parents, first, to employ no one in their family, as nurse or governess, whose moral and religious character is not thoroughly good. I would recommend them, in the second place, to be cautious in allowing their children to

mix unnecessarily with servants. Of course they must at the same time guard against an opposite danger to which young people are naturally exposed : I mean that of hauteur and superciliousness towards those whom they may be led to consider their inferiors. The vice of pride in a child is not only odious in God's sight, but it is destructive of that simplicity and unselfishness that make childhood so beautiful and interesting. This danger, however, may not be apprehended, if parents themselves be kind and gentle, and considerate in their dealings with those under them : for the child is sure to follow in this as in other respects the example given it.

But, perhaps, some reader may be inclined to think that I exaggerate the importance of safeguarding children from the influences of bad example. Children, they may say, not being intended to lead the lives of monks and nuns, ought not to be reared up in isolation from the world around them. From the first, they ought to be thrown into the midst of those influences in which they will have to live afterwards. Caution them by all means against sin, and secure them if you will against its unnecessary occasions ; but if a mother always keeps her sons and daughters by her, without giving them liberty to run about the house and speak to whom they please, they will grow up unfit for taking their place in society or in business ; they will have no training in self-restraint ; for they will have no external temptation from which to restrain themselves ; and the ultimate con-

sequence will be, that they will either be moved aside by the world when they enter it, or they will be borne backwards into sinful excess by the strong reaction that is sure to set in from their previous life of seclusion.

I have known some well-meaning Catholic parents who were guided by these principles in bringing up their families; and I have seen the result. It was in some few cases successful, in the others injurious—successful, where the servants had been carefully chosen, and carefully looked after; unsuccessful, where only the stereotyped requirement of honesty and sobriety was sought for in their appointment. Thus the recommendations I have already made seem to be confirmed by the issue of this mode of treatment. But, it must not be thought that, in keeping children from mixing indiscriminately, and unnecessarily with servants, I would have them put under any painful restraint. If you would have them to grow up morally healthful, you must let them run about and play and enjoy themselves to their heart's content. It would be advisable even that you yourself, their father or their mother, should show your sympathy with your children in their sports and amusements; and if I were sure of being acquitted of levity in making the recommendation, I would go so far as to say that you might now and again unbend your dignity of parenthood with advantage, and join in their sports. But, as to the idea of deliberately allowing children to go into the occasions of sin, with the purpose of

training them to avoid it—this idea seems to me so preposterous, that if I had not heard it defended by parents themselves, I could scarcely think it possible that any one with a Christian conscience could entertain it. It simply comes to this, in effect though not in intent, that the world and the devil must have fair play in their fight with Jesus Christ for the soul of the child. No one side must have the start of the other : both must begin from the beginning. What is taught in the parlour must have a chance of being untaught in the nursery, or the kitchen, or the stables. Or put the idea in another form. A gardener will lose his situation if he neglect to shelter young plants, and flower-seedlings, and budding rose-trees from the nipping frost, and the harsh, biting wind ; but a parent is only promoting the future moral growth of his child by exposing it, in all its tender helplessness, in all its unsuspecting, unguarded innocence, to every sinful or dangerous influence with which chance may bring it into contact. Oh no, dear parents ; the fight will be an unequal one ; for the child's own nature inclines it towards the world and sin. Give Jesus Christ a chance : let the good example of your own lives have an opportunity of taking root and springing into active growth, before the devil can sow his tares in the virgin soil, entrusted to you for cultivation. Believe me, experience will come soon enough to your child : so it need not be forestalled, but rather its inevitable coming

should be feared, and every preparation should be made, and every precaution taken, that when it does come it may at least meet with no predisposition in its favour.

CHAPTER IX.

PARENTAL LOVE.

YOU will probably think, dear reader, that this is a very unnecessary chapter, and that it must be filled with all manner of platitudes, in as much as it treats of a duty in which no parent ever fails to his child. Still, I request you to read it carefully. You may indeed have heard or read before all the truths it contains ; for I do not pretend to novelty or originality in this work ; but you must remember that important practical truths require repetition to make them sink into the soul, and influence one's conduct. If there be in these pages one truth more important and practical than any other, it is that which I try to inculcate in this chapter ; namely, that parental love should be supernatural, and should be manifested in securing primarily and sovereignly the eternal interests and welfare of the child.

I begin then with an assertion that sounds like a paradox ; and I say that one of the rarest home-graces to be found on earth is perfect parental love. It is easy to find a mother who professes her willingness to die for her child ; and every one knows, that there are to be found fathers and mothers, all the world over, whose lives may be

said to be burning out in the loving service of their children. To get them food and clothing, to keep a warm roof-tree over them, to maintain a bright, cheery fireside, round which the whole family may gather in the evening, are some of the natural ends for which most parents work, and indicate a strong, untiring love indeed ; but at the same time an imperfect, human, material love. It is a love that would be quite possible to a social, warm-hearted pagan, and would be very laudable in him ; but in a Christian raised by his Baptism to the sublime dignity of God's adopted son, and to the co-heirship with Christ in God's own kingdom in Heaven, in a Christian, I say, this love must be supernaturalized to be truly praise-worthy or meritorious. Yet, in how very few Christians is it supernaturalized ?

But what is meant by this supernatural, parental love ? It means simply such a love as would make the spiritual, eternal interests of children paramount to every natural or human consideration in the eyes of their parents. Our divine Lord said once : "seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi. 33.) Christian parents should make these words their guide in the discharge of all their duties towards their children. To make them know and love God, and feel their entire dependence on Him for every spiritual and material requirement ; to make them dread sin and shrink from it, as the greatest evil of life ; to elevate and beautify their characters by adorning them with every

Christian virtue ; to strengthen and protect their immortal souls against all the assaults of temptation, so that in after life when they mix in the world, they may keep them for God, pure and unsullied. These should form the great primary work of Christian parents, and they should be the outcome and expression of that perfect, Christian, supernatural love that, as Christian parents, they owe to their children.

Let us now look, dear reader, into a few of the homes around us, and compare the parental love we actually find in them with that which we ought to find. Here is a family in which the order of nature is reversed, for the children rule the parents and order them about like servants to gratify every whimsical wish of theirs. Nor do the parents object much. They idolize their children, and cannot bear to see them unhappy. "Poor darlings," the mother cries, "they would fret themselves to death if I were to check them, or refuse them what they want. They will be wiser when they grow older." And so the "poor darlings" grow up into little domestic tyrants, disobedient, and disrespectful to their parents, impatient of all control, unrestrained in their desires, and indulging every bad passion of their nature. Now I would wish to know, can any one in his senses call this true parental love. Are these parents consulting the welfare of their children by such training. I will not ask what kind of Christians such children will become, for it is not to be thought for a moment that they will become Christians at all, except in

the loosest and vaguest sense of the name. But will they turn out good, respectable members of society? If they be wealthy, will they use their wealth moderately and usefully for the good of others, or will they squander it in the gratification of those passions and sinful desires that have grown up with them under all the fostering care that their parents could bestow? If, on the other hand, they be born in poverty, and have to live by their labour, will they restrain themselves from the sensual gratifications within their reach, will they make good husbands and wives, good fathers and mothers, good loyal subjects. I think, dear reader, we need not dwell on the answers that the experience of each one will give to these questions. It is enough to say that here is no true parental love.

Let us now see how things go on in a totally different home, which however we need not go far to find. Here is a father who rules his family with a strong hand. His wife has long since been subdued into meek submission, and she now chimes in with his views in everything, among the rest, in his management of his children. This management is rather peculiar. He is gruff, curt, and dictatorial with them on every possible occasion. He gives them no liberty, never trusts them, never shows them the slightest feeling of paternal tenderness or love. He has a cast-iron rule by which he governs his household, and it applies to every one alike, from his wife down to the baby toddling across the floor. Everyone is in awe of him; there

is scarcely a word spoken in his presence by any member of his family, and when his step is heard, as he returns from his hard day's work, for he does work hard and conscientiously for his family, a painful feeling of restraint and distress comes upon wife and child, and remains upon them until he takes his departure the next morning. Nor does it entirely leave them during his absence : for his shadow seems to remain in the house, checking all freedom of action and speech, and all that spontaneous mirthfulness and flow of spirits so natural and necessary to children.

Now this father loves his home and family. He may even be a religious man in his own and the world's eyes ; and may have the spiritual good of his children at heart, and may try to promote it by the excessive rigour I have just described. But see the consequences that generally result from such training. Every member of his family is full of discontent and suppressed resistance to his authority. The world which his children are forbidden to know, has for their fancy 'a morbid fascination which makes its very wickedness alluring. Thoughts which to a healthy mind would be revolting and almost inconceivable, grow up within them like the vegetation of some foul, stagnant pool. Their ill-regulated passions gain in reactive force in proportion to the unnatural compression of every childish, harmless instinct. And what is the end ? The daughter finds some means of escaping this unbearable thralldom, and she leaves her home ; first, because any life seems

to her better than her home-life ; and secondly, because she will not seek advice in the step she takes so precipitately, and in her dazzled sight there is nothing but beauty, and perfection, and untold happiness in the tinsel object of her choice. And the son of such a father fares no better in after life; although society, very unfairly I think, gives him more chances of redeeming his character than it gives to his erring sister. He had never been taught the use of money, and he comes suddenly into its possession. His mind had for a long time dwelt on the life of unrestrained pleasure that wealth might secure. He is now his own master, and the master of a liberal income, earned by the hard labour of a self-denying father. How is that income spent? What is the result of that father's harsh training? Has it profited this child of his, either for the present world or for the next? To answer these questions, if indeed an answer be necessary, one scene in his after life is sufficient. He is at a gambling table with three or four others. The dice-box is rattling from hand to hand, and large sums of money are constantly changing owners. He plays recklessly and with varying fortune, until maddened with impatience and wine, as well as with the savage desire to grow rich by the ruin of others, he risks all his fortune on one throw. He risks all and loses, and he goes out into the deserted streets, in the bleak gray morning, a ruined spendthrift. And yet his is no uncommon or exceptional end: it is rather the natural result of the faulty training of his youth,

and of the mistaken parental love that would unnaturally compress the springs of life, and would expect no rebound as soon as the compression was removed.

Let us now visit one other typical home before we turn to the consideration of a different part of this subject. Here is a family given up to a worldly, unchristian, money-making life. There is no undue severity on the one hand, or foolish indulgence exercised on the other. All work in harmony together. The sons are apprenticed to their father, or to some one in his business, and are in every way treated as apprentices: the daughters too are at a trade, and they are regarded simply as boarders under the parental roof. They bring home their wages on saturday night, and hand part of them over to the common fund. On sundays and national holidays, they do what they please, go where they please, come home when they please. So too with the sons, except that they never spend their evenings at home. It would be too much of a bore to sit there with their mother and sisters; so they have their club to go to, as their father has his, and they go to it regularly, returning at an appointed time for supper. There is no religion in this family worth mentioning. They may go to Church as a matter of form, but no act of their daily lives is ever influenced or spiritualized by motives of Christian faith or charity. There is an *esprit de corps*, and a common feeling of respectability as well as of self-respect among them, that keep them from low excesses, and cause them to stand high in the

good opinion of their neighbours. You will look in vain, however, for the place that Jesus Christ holds in that home ; and yet, I venture to say, that it is in all essential characteristics the type of very many homes around and among ourselves. Of course, I need not remark, that the parents of such a home show no true love for their children, by bringing them up as they do, like respectable pagans. Since the promulgation of Christianity, there is a personal obligation incumbent on every human being to know Jesus Christ and His teaching, and to conform his life to it. Parents, then, who live and suffer their families to live, unchristian lives, incur a double guilt, and, if they do not repent, and repair as far as they can the injury they have done their children, they will in the life of eternity most assuredly receive a double punishment. Yet when one of them is told of this, he grows impatient, and probably undertakes to prove that he is leading an eminently Christian life, and that he himself knows best what manner of life he ought to lead, and that every morally good man is a Christian, though he never practise any religious observance. What reply is to be made to such a one? I have generally found it useful to recommend him to imagine himself at the point of death, still holding these unchristian opinions, and I ask him to say whether he will probably hold to them with the same tenacity then, as he holds to them and acts on them now. If he answer with warmth that he will—why should he not ; I try

to bring to his minds some expressions of Sacred Scripture which from his view of a Christian life must seem altogether unaccountable. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you." "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth." "But lay up to yourselves treasures in Heaven." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things will be added unto you." "And He spoke also a parable to them, that we ought always to pray, and not to faint." These texts and several others of a like import that might be adduced, may produce no immediate change in the parent of whom I have been speaking; but they will dwell in his mind, and they will haunt it, like some supernatural shadow, and they may one day lead to his conversion.

Parental love, then, in its true Christian form, is not shown in undue indulgence or harsh severity towards children, neither is it to be found in those homes where religion is practically ignored, and the bond of union is wholly of earth. Now from these three negative marks we may see what should be the essential characteristics distinguishing true and perfect parental love from that which is false and imperfect. First of all, parental love should be *well-ordered*. It should regard the eternal interests of the child's soul above the interests of its temporal life, making the latter wholly secondary and subsidiary to the former. In the second place, it should be *inflexible* in the determination of securing those eternal interests. Flesh and blood,

human affection, natural tenderness, and every other earthly consideration should have no power whatever to turn the parent aside from the primary end of his parental duty: which is, to sanctify his child and thereby secure its eternal happiness. The third characteristic of perfect parental love is its *spirituality*. The child should be loved for God and in God. Some mothers love their children with a love they should give to God alone. I do not say this to depreciate the ordinary, natural love they give to them; but to caution them against that morbid, all-absorbing, idolatrous, attachment sometimes witnessed especially in young mothers towards their first-born. I have had the pain of hearing God knowingly blasphemed on one occasion by a mother of this class; because her only child had been taken from her by death. God is jealous even of a mother's love for her child, when it becomes excessive and usurps the place which is His by right in every human heart.

Although many useful practical observations might be made on each of these characteristics, I shall not weary your attention, dear reader, by making more than one. This regards the duty of correction, a duty which is the necessary adjunct of that inflexibility of purpose which I have mentioned just above, and which requires that parents should use every means in their power, for the one great object they ought to have in view regarding their children; namely, the sanctification and perfection of their souls. Some secular educationists tell us, that the old idea of correction is erroneous. It

is enough, they say, to *show* the child that what it does is inconvenient, ignoble, mean, despicable. Make it understand this, and it is sure to correct itself. This theory is the natural outcome of that rebellion against authority which characterizes modern thought. It should therefore be carefully guarded against. And besides, it has injurious consequences for the child, which is sure to take its idea of all human authority, if not of divine authority also, from that exercised over it by its parents. If the child find correction to consist merely in showing it what to do and the reasonableness of doing it, it will naturally expect in after life that every species of authority shall first recommend itself to the understanding and judgment before it be recognised as a binding power. I think that not even the authority of God, expressed in His commandments, will be exempted: these will be measured by the idea conceived of their utility and reasonableness; and so, the first principle of rationalism will be admitted; namely, that all things divine and human are to be submitted to the sovereign judgment of human reason. But even though we suppose the laws of God to be exempted, those of the Church are sure not to be exempted. Ecclesiastical authority, which from its very nature, is absolute and unrepresentative, will be looked on with distrust, its action will be criticized and censured freely; and its enactments will be received or rejected as they seem rational or irrational to the private judgment of the individual. The

Catholic Church with her divine mission to teach the world, and to guide and rule the consciences of men has never tolerated such insubordination to her authority. Rather than do so, she has cast out whole kingdoms from her communion, giving thereby a proof to the world, if it would but reason with candour, that a visible power like hers, capable of such energy and strength, such unity of purpose, such heroism in defence of a sacred principle, must be sustained by the divine sanction and support.

I consider it, then, a matter of great importance, that parents should give their children a true idea of what authority is, and of the necessity and justice of submitting to it absolutely, when it does not command something evidently sinful, in the manner in which they correct their children and exercise their authority. The punishment of children is a disagreeable and an unpopular subject. It is, however, as I have already implied, essentially connected with the parental love which forms the subject of this chapter, and therefore I am committed to speak of it in the interest of those whom I would instruct.

The first remark I have to make on this subject is, that before correcting a child, its fault should be carefully examined, especially as to its nature and motive. Many faults committed by children have no malice in them. They arise from carelessness or inadvertence; and it would be the height of unreasonableness to punish them for a want of

judgment and forethought to which even grown up persons are liable. Carelessness, however, when it seems to be growing into a habit, ought to be corrected by some privation connected with the matter in which it is displayed. If a child, for instance, break its toys, as it is very apt to do, there should be no haste in buying new ones : if it soil its clothes by walking through the mire, it should be deprived of the opportunity of walking there again until it has learned the wisdom of being careful. When the fault, however, arises from pure accident or inadvertence, it should never be corrected, nor, I think, even chidden. A sense of injustice is evoked in a child's mind by being beaten or scolded for what it could not really prevent. It is of course provoking to have the cups broken, chairs upset, windows smashed, &c ; but you yourself may do any of these things without deserving blame ; and if you are blamed, you very naturally urge in excuse that you did not mean it. Well, it is only right that you should excuse your child on the same plea with which you defend yourself.

But there are other faults committed by children, knowingly and deliberately, which ought to be checked by corporal chastisement, proportioned to the malice displayed in them. Some arise from the growing passions, and are not characterized by much forethought or premeditation. Others show design and cunning, as well as a deliberate violation of conscience. Then again some occur only at

rare intervals ; while others are habitual or are becoming so. I shall not undertake to say what punishment should be inflicted for each of these classes of deliberate faults : I give them here merely to show parents in a general way how they should examine into them before they undertake to correct them.

I have now to say a word on the temper with which correction ought to be administered. The actuating motive being the love of the child's true welfare, passion or anger should never influence the parent in the discharge of this duty. This recommendation is often repeated, and yet very few act on it. Hence corrections are, I believe, generally in excess of the fault committed ; and the consequence is, that the child thinks itself treated harshly and cruelly, and becomes hardened against those who treated it so. I would also recommend parents after correcting their children not to show themselves foolishly anxious to become reconciled to them, or, as it is said, "to make it up" with them. It is much better that the child should, by being left in disgrace for some little time, be brought to see and reflect on its fault and to make the first advances towards complete pardon. I need not add that pardon, when asked, ought to be readily granted.

And now, in concluding this chapter, let me impress on parents the vitally important truth, that it is only from Heaven, through the frequent and fervent reception of the Sacraments, and through earnest and constant prayer, that they can obtain

perfect Christian love for their children. Let them use these means, and they may rest secure in the assurance that God's choicest and most powerful graces will not be wanting to them in the discharge of their arduous duties.

CHAPTER X.

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

IT does not belong to the scope of this chapter to treat of secular education except as a help or hinderance to the moral training of children. It is a help to them when it is directed and controlled by religion, a hinderance when it is not so controlled. Therefore Catholic parents incur a grave responsibility when they send their children to schools or colleges where the Catholic religion is not taught. Nor does it alter their responsibility to be assured that no religion is taught: for education without religion is condemned by the Church and may be fitly compared to a branch cut from the living tree. Now it is hard to convince fathers, who have worldly prospects in view for their sons, that there can be any thing wrong in this kind of education. Comparatively few, however, in these countries, disregard the enactments of the Church concerning it, and therefore I shall only touch on two of the many reasons that have led to those enactments. The first of these reasons, is the religious indifference to which such education leads. Material prospects may be realized by it; but faith is undermined, the student suffers in his spiritual

life, he gives up Mass, and Sacraments, and prayer, and he remains a Catholic only in name and in not casting off his connection with the Church. This result, brought about gradually and insensibly by influences apparently harmless, is realized in the great majority of cases in which Catholics have tried the experiment, and it surely is sufficient by itself to justify those charged with the spiritual government of men, in prohibiting parents to expose their children to so serious and proximate a danger of sin.

Another reason which also, I think, led to the condemnation of undenominational schools and colleges is the pernicious infidel error asserted by their patrons and defenders: namely, that there can be a complete system of science or of education without any reference to God or to His revelation of Himself in the world around us. True science should show man the causes of the phenomena he observes within and around him: it should analyse and arrange those causes: it should trace and point out their convergence to one great, final, central cause: it should make its investigations in the light of divine faith, although with the eyes of reason: it should be the help-mate of Religion, leading men to it and reconciling their intellects to its teaching. The education that teaches science in this manner is blessed by the Catholic Church; but how different is such education from that which we see in State schools and colleges. Nature is studied in every variety of form in which she presents herself to the senses; the operations of the

mind too are analysed and classified ; but secular education, having taught these studies and analyses, has reached its limit : it does not lead to God, it professes to know nothing of Him, or rather, when it throws off its mask and speaks out its mind, it teaches that there is no God. It cannot be surprising then, that the Church, watching with a mother's jealous care over the eternal interests of her children, has cautioned them in tones of earnest warning against this latest phase of spiritual danger.

But in our day, when Catholic schools and colleges of the highest standard, thank God, exist in our midst, parents make but little sacrifice in keeping their children from non-catholic educational institutions. They therefore are wholly without excuse who disregard the prohibition of their pastors, and for some fancied or trifling material advantage, expose their sons to the loss of faith, and to the imminent risk of their eternal salvation. Such parents have generally, even before their death, occasion to regret their sinful disobedience : for they find the result of their ambition not to answer their expectations. Alas ! it is Adam's and Eve's sin in another form : they would eat the fruit for the expected knowledge, and they would risk the consequences. The knowledge comes, and the consequences come too, but I need not say, they are not what they were expected to be.

I now come to speak of the religious and moral education that parents are bound to give their

children. This consists of three parts, which may be designated as the doctrinal, the moral, and the ritual. Every soul is created to know God, to aspire to union with Him, as its last end, and to be united to Him in eternity. The knowledge of God, then, through the divine revelation which He has lovingly given of Himself, is the first step in religious education. It includes the history of man's creation and fall, of his redemption, of the Church:—in a word of all God's action towards men, and of men's relations to God. This is doctrinal education. But man's knowledge of God must not be a barren, speculative knowledge. It must lead him to love God, and to aspire to Him; and this is done by observing faithfully the laws which He has made for the guidance of human conduct. The knowledge of these laws in all their details, and of the motives that should induce us to keep them, forms the second or moral part of religious education. If we were able of ourselves, by our natural strength, to perform all that God requires of us, and if there were no necessity of professing externally by acts of divine worship our absolute dependence on Him and His absolute dominion over us, there would be no need of any further knowledge or help to aspire and attain to union with Him. But we require God's assistance in every step we take towards Him; and we are bound by formal sacrifice, to pay Him the homage of our adoration; and hence, it is necessary to know the means He has mercifully instituted of supply-

ing us with supernatural help, and to know also the nature of that Sacrifice by which we are enabled to offer to Him "a clean oblation," worthy of His supreme majesty and infinitely acceptable from us. The knowledge then of the Sacrifice and Sacraments of the new law, of prayer, and of the whole economy of divine grace forms the third or ritual part of religious education.

You will perceive, dear reader, that I have given here merely a summary or brief analysis of the contents of an ordinary child's catechism of Christian doctrine. In truth our catechism, when well learned and understood, is a treasury of spiritual knowledge ; and even the old and the learned can always find something profitable in the study of its pages. The mind reads and understands in proportion to its light ; and as this light increases, or ought to increase as we grow older, it follows that the reperusal of the catechism of our childhood ought not to be dreaded or avoided in after years, for its sameness and monotony. The material words are indeed the same, but their meaning and their interest for us should be ever deepening in proportion to the spiritual and intellectual development of our souls. Very few, however, look on a catechism as anything more than a child's book ; and as for taking it up and reading it after leaving school, the idea seems never to occur to anyone. Among children, too, the catechism is by no means popular. There is no such eagerness displayed in accepting a present of a new one as in receiving a pictured story-book ;

and if anyone make a gift of both, and inspect them, after some days, he will most probably find the former preserved in all its original neatness and freshness, while the latter will show unmistakable signs of frequent use. I think the reason of this unpopularity is easily found. The child does not understand the catechism ; and it has to commit it to memory as a task. It looks on it, then, as a dry, uninteresting task-book with no pictures and no stories. Even the cover seems uninviting, and the uniform alternation of Q's and A's from beginning to end adds to the general dulness. Hence it is very natural that children manifest no enthusiastic interest in the catechism, and stow it away among their ordinary school-books, and draw it out to learn it with long solemn faces.

Now the catechism is the frame-work of a child's religious education. It must be learned and understood to gain that three-fold knowledge of which I have already spoken. It is therefore the interest of every one engaged in bringing up children, to invest the catechism with all possible pleasant associations : to make all the hard words bright varied pictures, and all the answers, the morals of sparkling stories, or, what is better, to make them represent angel-guardians, teaching children to be good and holy. When this is done by a fond parent, it cannot fail in producing the desired effect ; namely, to make the child love its catechism and learn it with interest. And this is achieving a great deal, perhaps much more

than is at all foreseen : for the associations of our childhood, and the remembrance of its guileless pleasures cling to us through all our lives, and have an influence on them that sin does not wholly destroy. The child that is now listening to you, its parent, with moistening eyes and suppressed sobbing, as you tell it of what wicked men did to God when He came on earth for love of them, will never lose the association of your tender love with the history of the Passion ; and the Cross will ever again have for it a special human interest that will intensify the higher spiritual interest it has for every Christian. And so will it be with every other truth of faith which you invest with interest.

But, perhaps, you will say, that you leave the catechism to be taught to your children at Sunday-school, and that you have too much to do to take the place of a teacher towards them ; or you may have a governess, or a tutor in your family, and you expect this duty to be performed by the one or the other. Now, I do not think that you act prudently in thus throwing all the responsibility of your children's religious education on others. Of course in those others I do not mean to include priests or any teaching ecclesiastical body. A child is quite safe in their hands ; and where their superintendence is within reach, it may be wholly trusted in without scruple. But children will never learn the knowledge of religion, of moral duty, or of ritual observances as thoroughly or with the same interest from other lay teachers as

they will from their parents. Therefore, I think, no matter what your employments are, you ought to make time once a day to bring your children around you, and tell them some child-story illustrative of one or other catechetical doctrine. If this be done systematically, by going from question to question, and from chapter to chapter, it will be all the better, and the result will be much more satisfactory than if the questions explained be taken at random.

It will probably be said, that this child-teaching is a special talent, and that all parents are not capable of it. It may be urged moreover, that it requires reading and study, for which parents have no time, and, perhaps, no inclination ; and furthermore, that it is a novelty, a crochet, in all likelihood, of the writer of these pages, and therefore a matter of very little importance. As to its being a special talent, and its requiring preparation, I do not believe that it demands more of the one or of the other than is demanded by any serious business of life. There is no man or woman who cannot state a simple fact in simple language and surround it with imagery, suited to a child's fancy. This is all that is absolutely necessary, and it has to be done every day by parents in reply to their children's inquiries about surrounding objects. Let the same simplicity of language, the same adaptation of words to the young mind, the same anxiety to please, and interest, and enlighten it, be used in teaching a question of the catechism as is used in answering an inquiry about your

watch or your spectacles, or about any other common object, and you will have done substantially all that is required, to give the child a loving interest in the acquirement of religious knowledge.

Nor do I admit that this manner of teaching catechism to children is a novelty. If I thought so I should have considerable difficulty in recommending it: for it would be rash to imply that Christian parents have had to wait nearly nineteen centuries to be told at the present day how best to educate their children in the Christian faith. On the contrary, I believe it to be, in its essential form, the manner dictated naturally by parental love, and always practised by those fathers and mothers who have entertained or entertain an adequate sense of their duties towards their children. At the present day, however, the number of such fathers and mothers is not as large as it ought to be; and hence we find so many others in every grade of society willing to catch at every excuse and every means in any way calculated to lessen their parental responsibility. Hence also, the employment of nurses, nursery-maids, governesses, tutors, &c., on whom parents have thrown all the duty of their children's bringing up, as well in their religious and moral, as in their intellectual and physical development. They think they can discharge all their parental obligations by proxy; so they permit their children to grow up in a little inner home-circle of their own, an *imperium in imperio*, visited by them indeed occasionally, but managed in-

dependently of their supervision or direction. The consequence is that the children will be found in after life to have taken a leaf out of their parents' book, and to love them by proxy, as they themselves were loved by proxy. In other words, they will have transferred their affection to those who took the place of father and mother to them; if indeed, as more generally happens, they will not have grown up without any home-affection whatsoever, selfish, soulless things, creatures of fashion, slaves to the hollow forms and ceremonials of society, without one strong religious or moral principle to relieve the barren waste of their lives.

I say, then, that parents themselves ought to be the first teachers of their children in religious matters. But perhaps it may be thought that this course interferes with the teaching authority of the Church. It interferes no more with it than does the employment of Sunday-school teachers: for, like these, parents act only under the guidance and direction of their pastors; they are their helpers and co-operators; and as they never dream of asserting an independent teaching authority, their work shares in the blessing promised to all religious teachers: "They that instruct many to salvation shall shine as stars for all eternity." (Dan. xii. 3.)

Parents, however, are obliged to bring their children, as soon as they are old enough, under the direct teaching of the Church. They must not take it on themselves to finish their religious education at home, when there is an oppor-

tunity of receiving instruction in the Christian doctrine directly from those whose office obliges them to give it. Hence, as a rule that should not be lightly set aside, children ought to be sent punctually to Sunday-school, especially if the Priest in charge of the Parish or Mission gives a catechetical instruction at it. I know it is a custom in some places that the children of the upper classes are not sent there; and the reason generally given is, that only the poor attend it:—a very illogical reason, I must say; for it simply comes to this: “we wont send our children to Sunday-school, because we don’t send them. The place is not respectable, because we don’t send them; and we won’t send them, because it is not respectable.” But the true reason is, because the pride of wealth, or of position, or of something else, makes it revolting to some purse-proud families to let their children meet in the house and in the presence of Jesus Christ, before whom all men are equal, those other children who wear coarse clothes and live in poverty. But if the Priest superintend the school himself, and if, notwithstanding his fatigues of the morning, he set apart some of the school time to instruct the children personally, then it seems to me positively undutiful and disrespectful to the Church and injurious to the children themselves to keep them away from the teaching of their Pastor, simply because they will have to sit with poor children whose mothers have done all their best to send them as clean and as tidy as they could.

Ah, believe me, dear lady, the divine eyes that are looking out from the Tabernacle see generally, at least as much purity and innocence of soul under those cotton and corduroy garments at which your lip curls in contempt, as under the silk and velvet and fine linen in which you have decked your own dear ones. Send their governess with them, by all means, if you will ; and let her see that they do not suffer from any of the physical or moral dangers so often put forward as further excuses ;—ask her to help the Priest by teaching a class, if you can get her to do this really good work ; but, at all events, send the children, and send them punctually ; and do not unteach by your example, what you teach them by word regarding the universal charity and the Christian brotherhood in which we should live with all men. Moreover, the attendance of your children may be the means of bringing others to attend ; it may make Sunday-school fashionable ; and thus you will help to lighten one of the chief anxieties of your Priest, who generally finds it a matter of extreme difficulty to bring all the children of his Parish together for instruction.

But you ought to send them to your Priest especially when they are preparing for Confirmation and for their first Confession and their first Communion. The occasions on which these Sacraments are received are the most important events in the lives of children. You should not, therefore, rest contented with the religious instruction they receive at home from yourself or others ;—it would denote presumption on your part to do so, no

matter how thorough such preparation might be ; and it would also be taking on yourself a grave responsibility for which you have no legitimate sanction.

There are a few other means of religious education about each of which I wish to say a word. The first is the Sunday sermon. Ought children be made to sit through a long formal sermon intended for adults and almost wholly unintelligible to young minds? I think not. We should not associate religion in the minds of children with that feeling of constraint and wretchedness experienced by them on such an occasion, especially as it does them no good. Perhaps you may say that it is a salutary discipline, and that it teaches them patience and self-control. It may be so ; but the lesson is too dearly bought at the price paid for it, particularly as there are many other ways of teaching it to them. If, then, there be a children's Mass at your Church, send yours to it regularly. If there be none, you must of course bring them to the ordinary Mass, and lighten for them as best you may the tedium they are sure to feel during the sermon-time.

The next means of educating children in religion is to provide them with interesting spiritual books, written specially for them. The importance of this can hardly be exaggerated. Such books fill their imaginations with bright and beautiful images of holy things ; they teach them to emulate the pure and noble and self-sacrificing deeds of which they read ; they are an antidote

against the insidious poison of the ordinary story book or novel, and what is more, against many of the temptations of youth as well as of adult age. They also create a taste for good reading, which taste is one of the most pressing requirements of the present time. Profane, worldly, even infidel literature has a powerful ally in men's natural craving for excitement and novelty and unreality. The habit of reading such literature is therefore easily acquired, and considering the profusion and cheapness with which it is supplied to the public, we can scarcely be surprised to find the world becoming besotted under its influence. It is, in fact, the right hand of Satan, raised against and striking at Christ's Church with all its satanic strength; and many and fatal are the wounds it inflicts on individual souls. Parents fulfil, therefore, a double duty towards their children in supplying them with books of Christian tone and pure morality. By the same act, they shield them from a most serious spiritual danger, and they help them to acquire a taste that will have a most important salutary influence on their lives.

Thank God, we have a plentiful supply of Catholic books written expressly for the young; and Catholic parents have no excuse for ignoring them. Yet, to the shame of many of them it must be said, that they do ignore them, and that while their nurseries are well stocked with non-Catholic publications, very few that are purely Catholic can be found there. Of course, owing to

our limited numbers compared to protestants, we cannot bring out our books as cheaply as they can ; but I think that the price has nothing to do with the selection made by the parents of whom I speak. The fault, I imagine, has a deeper source, and I attribute it to a certain feeling once prevalent amongst us, and even at present not wholly shaken off, namely, that in our secular education, and in our literary productions we are below the standard of our protestant neighbours. We know that we have infinitely superior advantages to them in our Church and Religion ; but this knowledge does not keep some of us from looking up to their current literature—not indeed as a protestant literature, but as a work of art—as something far beyond and above any thing that we ourselves are at all able to produce. This feeling is the outcome of the three centuries of social degradation to which protestantism has condemned us ; it is a portion of the still unhealed soul-wound that past persecution has inflicted, the mark of the chains with which penal laws fettered our civil and religious liberties. If it were not to digress too much from the direct subject of this chapter I could point out how this same feeling is traceable in all our social and business relations with protestants. But such a digression is unnecessary for my present purpose. To confine myself then to our literature for Catholic children, I assert confidently that it compares favourably in its health and purity of tone, in its artistic finish, in attainment of its object, with the

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same class of literature outside our Church, whether protestant or unsectarian. I say, therefore, that Catholic parents have no reason for putting uncatholic works into the hands of their children, seeing that they have a plentiful supply of their own for the purpose; and I say also, that there is always danger in doing so. Even though we were to acquit uncatholic writers of all proselytizing intentions in their works for children, there is, nevertheless, in such works something worse than outspoken error, in their suppression of doctrinal teaching; in their exaggeration of natural moral strength, independent of grace; in their assertion, or at least their insinuation of man's self-sufficiency for attaining the end of his creation. These are faults that are not the less dangerous, because they are hidden beneath the surface, or can only be detected by careful readers.

I shall now sum up the recommendations contained in this chapter. First of all, parents should commence the religious and moral education of their children, by making the catechism interesting to them, and by teaching them religious and moral truths by means of stories, anecdotes, parables, &c. Secondly, they should bring them as soon as they can under the direct teaching of the Church, by sending them to Sunday-school and to catechetical instructions intended for children. Thirdly, they should provide them with attractive books on religious and moral subjects, suited to their intelligence and calculated to create in them a taste

for solid and useful reading. I will add too, that they ought to keep from them, not only non-catholic books, but also that poison of young minds, the penny literature of our day.

CHAPTER XI.

CHRISTIAN TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

TRAINING is practical education ; or, in other words, it is education, by practice of the person taught. Children learn in the Catechism what they ought to know and what they ought to do in order to become perfect followers of Jesus Christ and attain the end of their being. This learning, however, is merely an exercise of the intellect and memory ; and if it stop at this, it is of little account in the formation of a Christian life. It should then be looked on by parents, in the same light as we look on an architect's paper-plan of a building. It is the ideal which is to be realized in the soul and character, and habits of the child and this work of realization is what I mean by training. Hence the work of training a child in the practice of religious and moral duty is far more important than the mere teaching spoken of in the last chapter. It should therefore be the chief study of parents ; and I shall devote this chapter to showing them how it is to be done. I may in the course of it have to repeat some things that I have already written ; or I may have to anticipate some things of which I shall have to write more fully hereafter ; but I trust I shall be pardoned for these

inconveniences on account of the vital importance of the subject.

First of all, then, the parents' own good example is the grand lesson-book that is ever to be kept before the eyes of the child in the training school of home. The child can read in this book while it is still at its mother's breast. Its appreciation and love of it and its instinctive leaning to follow its guidance and walk in its light, go on increasing day by day as it advances in years; and even when it has grown old, it is still improved by the memory of this hallowed teaching. As I have dwelt already on this subject, I shall say no more of it here than this, that I consider the essence of a parent's relations and duties to his child to consist in giving it constantly and uniformly the example of a good, holy, Christian life.

The second means by which parents ought to train their children in religious and moral duty is *direction*. They ought to show them how to apply in their daily lives the truths and precepts taught in the catechism; and they ought to superintend and guide them in this application. To show more clearly what I understand by this direction, let me take the instance of a mother and child—the latter I will suppose to have arrived at the age of reason. The first duty of the day being prayer, the mother will see that her child says its prayers, punctually and uniformly, immediately after dressing. And it is not well that she should merely get it to kneel down and say what prayers it chooses: she should appoint the prayers to be said, the devo-

tion and attention with which they ought to be said, and the length of time that should ordinarily be given to them. She will then show it the connexion between this simple action and the first commandment of God, telling it that every time it prays it pays to Him the divine worship enjoined by that commandment. She will also read for it, or get it to read the chapter on prayer in the catechism ; so that it may understand why it has to go on its knees at certain times to pray. The young mind of a child feels a strong natural pleasure in discovering this conformity between its own actions and the principles of religion ; and the discovery of it will have two beneficial effects upon its life : it will take a greater interest in its catechism in consequence of it, and it will not be likely to consider prayer, as some children do, a dull, tedious, mechanical work.

At meals also, and at night before going to bed, the mother will point out to her child how it is to perform this same duty of prayer ; and she will see that it performs it regularly. She will caution it against the danger of routine and irreverent carelessness in praying, and impress upon it the heavy judgments of God inflicted upon the Jewish people, forasmuch as they drew near Him with their mouth, and with their lips glorified Him, but their heart was far from Him. (Isaias xxix. 13.)

I will suppose then, that this child spends the usual number of hours every day at school, away from the immediate supervision and control of its

mother ; or it is during these hours with a teacher at home, or it is sent to a boarding-school. In any of these cases, the mother ought to have an understanding with the teacher or principal under whose care her child is placed, that full and accurate information should be sent or given to her, at frequent intervals, of any vice or serious fault developed in its daily conduct. She must be prepared for finding at times this information unfavourable ; and, perhaps, sometimes the source of painful disappointment, provided the whole truth be told her. Yet it is better that she should know the whole truth ; and that teacher acts unfaithfully to his charge who suppresses the truth, and gives an uncandid, although flattering, report of the moral character and dispositions of his pupil. I wish that such unfaithful reports were less frequent than they are. Much after-sorrow would be saved to parents, and many vices in children would be weeded out before they had sunk their roots beneath the foundations of virtue and religious principle.

But a mother should not lose either patience or courage, because her child disappoints her. She should, on the contrary, pray fervently for both ; and then take the first opportunity of speaking to it gently and gravely about its error, and the pain it gives her, but the much greater pain it is calculated to give the good God who died for it on the Cross. She might also with advantage refer to the particular chapter in the catechism, where the vice committed, or the opposite virtue is spoken of,

Great prudence and charity, however, are required in correcting a child's first serious fault, and it is very easy to err, on this occasion as well as on others, by too much "preaching." Let the mother, then, show sorrow, if she will, but not anger; let her words be few and full of tenderness; and let them breathe more of the hope of amendment in the future, than of severe blame for the past.

The child's time out of the hours of school, meals, prayers, and sleep, is generally occupied in the study of home lessons, in the performance of household business, in play, or in sitting by its mother, either prattling to her, or listening to what she says, or observing what she does. Here then are opportunities in plenty for moral training by direction and superintendence; and no good mother will fail to avail herself of them for the improvement of her young charge. With regard to household business of any useful kind, children are generally averse to it, and they shirk it when they can, or they do it in a slovenly manner, or they do it under protest, grumbling and murmuring the while. Thus, dislike of work, laziness, unfaithfulness to duty, together with disobedience, and disrespect of parental authority, are in danger of being developed, and of growing into confirmed habits from this one source alone. The mother then must be careful to teach her child how pleasing to God is labour well and faithfully done, no matter how mean, or trifling, or commonplace it be. She must show it how labour became a condition of life, in punishment of the first sin of

disobedience ; and she will do well to draw a picture of the Incarnate God, when He was a little child no older than her own, living in the simple cottage at Nazareth, obeying His earthly parents by doing the very same kind of work that she asks her own child to do. Indeed I would recommend this picture of the Child Jesus at work to be impressed with all possible vividness on every child's imagination, and I would recommend frequent reference to be made to it until the lesson of obedience and humility and fidelity that it conveys is thoroughly learned, and taken to heart, and reduced to practice.

Again when the child is seated at its mother's knee, a golden opportunity is offered for directing it in the practice of many virtues. If it be allowed to babble away freely, as it generally ought to be, it will probably develop some of the tendencies towards vice, that are sure to be latent in its character. Of these, untruthfulness, vanity, selfishness, and cruelty, are the most likely to appear ; but I need not say that, no matter what the vice is, it ought to be corrected by the parent, and every effort used to make the opposite virtue look amiable and desirable to the child. Yet this should be done with great prudence, and gentleness, and love. It is a serious loss to one who directs children to forfeit their confidence by making them reserved and guarded in his presence ; and they are always made so by harsh rebuke, or by constant captiousness as well as by "hauling" them up for every mistake they commit. Therefore the parent

should be very prudent in this matter, not correcting every fault of theirs at once; and while he does correct each singly, showing, if possible, an increase of interest in the outpouring of their confidence. Untruthfulness, however, should never be overlooked in a child. It is generally deliberate, and there is always the consciousness of wrongdoing about it; and besides, there are more temptations to it, and more facilities to give way to it, than there are to most of the other faults of children. It should therefore be checked at once in its first manifestation, and checked severely, so that the child may conceive a horror of it from the beginning, as something detestable, not only in the sight of God who is the Truth, by essence, but also in the eyes of the world.

Correction is the third means, and the last I intend to propose, of training children in religion and morality. It is very intimately associated with the direction of which I have last spoken; but it is distinguished from it in this, that correction regards the prevention of faults, while direction has for its object the manner of practising virtue, and of acquiring virtuous habits. Having had occasion to refer to this third means when speaking on parental love, I shall not delay long on it here, but shall merely supplement the recommendations I then made regarding it. First of all, parents should never show any diversity of opinion among themselves about the correction of a child; and much less should one of them interfere with the correction of the other. Yet, in ordinary homes, such

interference is very common. The father is too severe, and the mother too indulgent; or *vice versa*, the latter is for chastisement, the former for pardon, and each seeks to carry his or her opinion into effect. The consequence is that the child witnesses the disedifying spectacle of divided authority, and even though the chastisement be inflicted, its salutary effect is neutralized by the sense of injustice aroused in it by the sympathy of its more indulgent parent. Moreover, every manifestation of discord between parents weakens their hold on the respect and affection of their children; and it proportionately weakens their influence over them. Of course it is morally impossible for two persons to take uniformly the same view of the kind and the amount of correction useful or necessary for each individual child, in the endless variety of cases in which the question of correction may arise. But they should discuss amicably their different views between themselves, and they should do so, each with a disposition to yield something to the other; both having one sole aim before them, namely, the spiritual good of the child. When this is done, their combined authority is sure to be exercised temperately, and at the same time firmly, and thus it will always command the respect of their children.

It is a mistake to think, as some parents do, that correction consists wholly in corporal punishment. This mistake often leads to undue severity, and sometimes to the permanent injury of the child's moral and religious character. A father, for in-

stance, uses the rod on all occasions, slight or serious, in which he thinks correction necessary. Those occasions happen to be frequent, for he has a wild, thoughtless, high-spirited boy to deal with ; and the consequence soon shows itself in the tearless, unwincing sullenness with which the chastisement is received, and the cool deliberateness with which the same or a similar fault is very soon afterwards committed. The boy feels that he is being treated harshly ; he is put on his mettle ; he resists, and begins to detest the authority from which he has to suffer so much ; and from being thoughtless, he becomes wilfully disobedient. Sometimes, however, there is a different issue to this treatment. The boy's spirit is broken down thoroughly ; he trembles at his father's voice ; the tread of his footstep fills him with terror ; he has no heart for childish frolics ; he seldom laughs, or even smiles—never indeed in his father's presence ; exteriorly he is all compliance and servility to the slightest wish or nod. Perhaps this is considered by some a wholesome, salutary discipline ; but those who think so are grievously mistaken. That boy has become a hypocrite under the paternal treatment ; his young soul seethes with burning, revengeful, unholy thoughts ; every germ of virtue is scorched and withered there ; and one day the sense of injustice that goes on growing within him will find vent and burst forth, showing the evil consequences of his misguided training. No ; corporal punishment is not the only nor even the principal means of correcting a child. There are

besides it, two other means much more efficacious, both of which ought to be tried before recourse is had to the degradation of the rod. These means are rebuke and privation. The tongue may be made to utter words of warning, or sorrow, or pain, or anger, at the wrong-doing of a child, that frequently have as deterrent an effect on it as the most cutting scourge could have. Such words are calculated to evoke the better feelings of the child's nature; its self-respect is not affected by them, provided they be spoken temperately and affectionately; and they can always heal the wound they inflict. If children be not spoiled while very young, they can, I am convinced, be generally corrected by rebuke; especially when it is confirmed by their parents' good example, and kind affectionate training. I do not mean, however, that the fear of corporal punishment should be entirely unknown to a child. On the contrary, I say that it ought to be kept in its mind, looming in the background behind the idea of parental authority; and when this authority is exercised by a command or a prohibition, and much more by a threat, the fear of punishment ought to be brought more to the front, so as to strengthen the higher motives actuating the child in its obedience. And here I would caution parents against the mistake of threatening children with punishment under certain circumstances, and when the circumstances occur, not inflicting it. A child very soon learns to look on such threats as so many unmeaning words; and it begins to lose all fear of them, and even to

conceive for them indifference or contempt. Promises should be invariably and faithfully discharged—even when they refer to the corporal chastisement of a child.

But even although words be unavailing for the purpose of correction, there is still the punishment of privation, that may be tried before the rod is used. Privation is the natural punishment of excess or abuse ; and when excess and abuse are wilful, and are becoming habitual, in spite of admonition and warning, no better remedy can be applied than to deprive the young culprit of that in which he exceeds, or of which he does not choose to understand the use. A boy, for example, plays truant from school ; let him be deprived of his recreation, and kept to his books. He is idle at his lessons ; let him be put to some hard constant work, until he has learned the value of time. He spends on play-things the money given him for another purpose ; let the play-thing be taken from him, and let him not be trusted again for some time. A boy will feel punishment like this all the more, because he cannot but recognize its natural justice ; and he will profit by it for the sake of his own personal comfort, if for no higher reason.

Sometimes, however, corporal punishment becomes necessary to correct a child on whom every other mode of correction has been tried in vain. Let it then be inflicted, but without any show of anger ; let it be in proportion to the fault committed ; and let it never be excessive. Above all, let neither corporal punishment, nor privation, nor censure,

give the child to understand that you consider it incorrigible. No child is incorrigible ; indeed I believe no human being, however hardened in sin, to be wholly beyond the possibility of reform. It is, then, injurious and even cruel to a child to have its hope of amendment taken from it by its parents dinning into its ears their conviction that it will never come to any good. In fact, by doing so, they are using a very effectual means of realizing their conviction : for the child is led to the conclusion, by a very simple process of reasoning, that if it is never to come to any good, there is no earthly use in trying ; so it resolves not to try. No ; the parent should never appear to lose his good opinion, or his hope of the child whom he corrects. He should rather lead it to expect very soon a return of his favour, provided it changes its ways and shows at least a sincere desire of improvement.

And now I would say a word about those fathers and mothers who bribe their children to secure their obedience, and "to make them good." A more silly course, or more short-sighted could scarcely be adopted. Such children will grow up without any idea of authority ; they will very soon begin to tyrannize over their parents ; they will wrangle and dispute among themselves without any effectual check ; and their home will be a constant scene of clamour and confusion. The experiment has unfortunately been often tried, and it has invariably led to these deplorable results. Men must submit to be governed by lawful

authority without prospect of reward ; and children must be trained into this submission by the firm exercise of parental authority. Bribes or rewards given to children for simply doing their duty, are as a rule demoralizing ; they interfere with the higher motives for which a child should obey ; and besides, they excite in the minds of the other children of a family who are not so treated, feelings of jealousy, and also suspicions of favouritism. No grounds should ever be afforded of such suspicions. Let good conduct, docile dispositions, real merit be the only recommendations to favour in the eyes of those who would make their authority respected by the young.

CHAPTER XII.

FILIAL LOVE.

THE most important of the obligations by which human society is bound together, is the mutual duty of parents and children. This seems clearly implied in the place assigned in the Decalogue to the Commandment enjoining it. "Honour thy father and thy mother," is the first Commandment on the second table of stone whereon was written the summary of our moral relations with the world in which we live. I do not mean, indeed, that any sin of filial disobedience, taken by itself, is as great as a sin of murder or as a sin against the sixth commandment. To prevent sins of the former kind—to make a child obedient, loving, respectful to its parents, is to go far in making it observe all its other duties to society. The criminal classes are not recruited from well-regulated homes; and the useful, law-abiding citizen is scarcely ever the outcome of a childhood that dishonoured parents, and brought sorrow on old age. In this sense, the fourth Commandment must be regarded as the most important and fundamental of all those that God has given us to guide and determine our relations with each other.

But why was not the fourth Commandment im-

posed primarily on parents—why did it not run thus: “Fathers and mothers, train up your children in My love and service?” Of course, we do not know what were the reasons for which God gave the Commandment in the form in which we have received it. But I think it is useful to seek for reasons, in all humility, as far as they may be discovered, in order that we obtain a clearer insight into the nature and importance of the Commandment itself. It would seem then, that it was given in its present form, first, to assert the divine authority over man from his very infancy: secondly, because the child who fulfils it will require in after life no special command for its guidance in dealing with his own children: thirdly, because in discharging its duties to its parents, the child is being effectually trained for the faithful discharge of all its duties to society in after life. Hence, it appears to be of greater importance that children should perform their duties to their parents, than that parents should perform their duties to their children. And yet, these two classes of duties are so interlaced and so dependent on each other, that practically speaking, the one can scarcely be performed if the other be neglected.

The bearing of these remarks on our present subject may be easily seen. We have already studied in detail the duties of parents to children; and as we have proceeded, a sense of their importance has been growing upon us, until it is in danger of lessening the importance of the

corresponding duties of children to parents. In coming, therefore, to the careful examination of these duties, we must assign to them their legitimate place in point of importance, with the other duties of home ; and from what I have just written, I think it will be seen that this place is the first.

“Honour thy father and thy mother.” The obligation imposed here on children includes three distinct duties: love, reverence, and obedience. To begin with the first : a child is obliged to love its parents with a constant, practical, supernatural love. It may seem, indeed, superfluous to impose a commandment of filial love on children ; for their very nature inclines them to it without any external motive. Yet if we look closely into family-life, we shall be forced to acknowledge that, even with the commandment superadded to the instinct of nature, there are many children who do not love their parents, and what is worse, there are many children who are deliberately unkind, and even cruel to them. I have myself witnessed an instance of filial degradation worse than cruelty itself ; I have seen a grown-up daughter raise her hand and strike to the ground an aged, unoffending parent. Therefore, from what we witness in the world around us, it becomes evident that the commandment of filial love is by no means unnecessary.

But very often a child loves its parents with a limited, varying love. It loves them, only because they are kind to it, and only as far and as long as they are kind to it. This is not the

filial love intended in the divine Commandment. The kindness of a father or a mother is not the basis or motive on which the commandment is grounded ; and the error of thinking that it is has led to many a sin of undutifulness. No ; it cannot be too thoroughly instilled into the mind of a child, that its parents represent God Himself to it, in their love of it, in their care for it, in their authority over it—that in fact its parents are given to it as earthly symbols of its heavenly Father ; yet not mere symbols of Him ; but His agents also, by whom He governs it, and supports it, and trains it in the way of holiness. The child, then, ought to look on its parents as the representatives of God, and it ought to love them as such. They are an expression of His love for it ; and they are the most precious gift and blessing He has outwardly conferred on it ; and in each of these respects, they ought to be loved by it, no matter what be their individual characters, or how they discharge their parental duties.

But you will ask, perhaps, how can one love a harsh, cruel, tyrannical parent, who shows no love on his own side, and who possesses no single amiable quality that would attract and engage the love of a child. It cannot be doubted that this is hard ; for such a parent, in many respects, neither represents nor reflects the divine love, nor the divine care, nor the divine authority in his parental relations. Yet, as the earthly author of

the child's being, he is the representative of its divine Creator; and he can never forfeit this character, no matter what be his short-comings and his dereliction of duty. He is, therefore, still to be loved with that constant, practical, supernatural love which is the child's first duty to its parent. But grace is required for the performance of this duty in such circumstances. Unless the mind of the child be divinely illumined, the reflection of the Creator, being obscured and disfigured, will be hardly discerned or discovered in the unworthy parent. The will also must be attracted supernaturally to what naturally it has so much cause to consider hateful and repulsive. But let the unhappy child, who finds himself treated with uniform, systematic cruelty by an unnatural father or mother, remember that his Father who is in Heaven looks upon his position with infinite compassion; and that if he prays to Him and firmly relies on Him for assistance, trying hard at the same time to do what lies in him, God will never fail to give light to his understanding, and strength to his will, by which he will be enabled to do with ease and alacrity, what to flesh and blood seems morally impossible. God will help him to be kind and attentive and affectionate to one who repays his kindness, his attention, and affection with only a sneer or a curse. He will help him to go on earning by his daily toil, ease and comfort for one who deprives himself of both. He will help him in the sacrifice he makes of his own future prospects—of his settlement in life—of other affections than those which bind

him to home—when the sacrifice is made for the sake of filial affection, and in spite of the thanklessness with which it is received.

A child's love for its parents, then, must be founded on something far deeper than their mere dispositions towards it; otherwise its love will not be constant. And yet it is little, if it be not constant and enduring, even until death. What great merit is there in loving our parents only during the sunny hours of their life, while they are able to help themselves, and the world smiles on them? If we turn away from them, when they are in want or suffering; if we do not stand by them, when they are old and helpless; if we do not do all we can to cheer and comfort them, when sorrow and misfortune press them down in the dust; above all, if their unkindness and unamiableness, and perhaps their irregular, sinful lives estrange us from them and turn our better feelings towards them into dislike and aversion, of what use to them, and of what merit before God can be that love which we so ostentatiously profess for them, and which nevertheless is incapable of so slight a strain upon it, and which is altogether so selfish and unsacrificing and ungenerous?

Filial love should also be practical; that is, the child ought to do all in its power to secure its parents' happiness. I have known married sons and daughters to live in a high social position, while their parents were eking out a miserable existence on a wretched weekly or monthly allowance, supplied to them grudgingly, and on

the harsh condition, that they should never visit the fashionable homes of their children. I have known young men to give expensive parties, to surround themselves with the most extravagant luxuries, to squander, in fact, their income in the most foolish, reckless manner, while their parents, whose hard earnings had made them what they were, lived uncared for, and unprovided with the ordinary comforts of life, in poor, desolate cabins away in the country. I have known also old men and old women, living out the remnants of their lives in parish workhouses, while their daughters were spending on dress, and their sons on drink, more than double the amount that would keep their parents at home in comfort. And yet if any one of those children were to be taxed with want of filial love, he would, most probably, deny the charge indignantly, and try to convince you, as he had already convinced himself, that he did love his parents; and that he visited them occasionally (except indeed in the last case, where there would be danger from the parish authorities); and that he would be sorry to hear of their illness or death. The truth is, he has a kind of love for them; but it is not that practical love that he ought to have.

Again, there are children who never have a kind word for their parents. They use them roughly; put them aside as inconveniences; give them no voice in domestic matters; and show in every way by their manner and treatment, that they would get on much better without them. I wonder do

those children ever reflect on the pain their unfilial conduct occasions; do they ever study the cause of the sad look that often comes into their father's face, of the tears that often well up in their mother's eyes. Perhaps they attribute the one and the other to the pettishness and doting of old age. But they have a deeper cause. That father and mother, in their early married days, painted a beautiful picture of what their children were to be to them in their declining years. It was a picture of a bright and happy home, with a sunset splendour on it that seemed to make it a blending of earth with Heaven. There was an aged couple in it that had fought the battle of life together, bravely and nobly for their children. But they were relieved long ago from all further worry and trouble by those same children who now surround them—in the picture—with every comfort that loving hearts can devise; children who anticipate their every wish, who shield them from every care and sorrow, and who still look up to them, and honour them, and feel proud of them, as they did years and years gone by. The picture, thus painted by the young married couple, was gazed on and spoken of with rapture by them, and their constant thought of it, and their frequent conversations about it nerved them through many a dark, difficult passage of their lives, and led them to speculate, and to invest their present comfort and happiness on the chance of their having them paid back with interest in their old age. Well their old age has come upon them; and their investment has

proved a failure ; and their picture a mockery. Their picture ! alas it has to be torn from the memory ; but the process is a painful one, for the memory is near the heart. No wonder, then, that the father of an unloving child looks sometimes sad, and that its mother sheds frequent tears. The sadness and the tears are not without their cause, nor are they the result of dotage. They are for what ought to have been but will never be.

O child, whoever thou art, that hast a living parent, love him, cherish him, comfort him in every way thou canst. No matter about his shortcomings, his peevishness, his unthankfulness : make him happy : the sun of his life may have been often clouded—let the sunset be as bright and glowing as thou canst make it. He will thank thee in his heart, though his words be curt and stinted ; it may be, that on his death-bed he will show the gratitude that he felt all through, although he never before spoke it. But even though it be never spoken, when thou standest by his grave, thy own heart's consciousness will thank thee, and thou wilt never have to bear through life the bitterest remorse that the heart can feel—the remorse of having clouded a parent's last days with sorrow, and of having made him pray that those days might be shortened and he himself might be at rest.

The third characteristic of filial love is that it should be supernatural. I have already partly explained this characteristic ; but it will not be amiss to dwell on it a little longer than I have yet done. Our love for our parents, then,

ought not to be wholly grounded on that instinctive sentiment of our nature that inclines us towards them from our infancy, and that goes on either growing into a deep and passionate, although natural love, under the influence of their own loving kindness to us; or else withering into a mere barren feeling of regard, on account of the harshness or the neglect with which they treat us. Such love would be a purely natural love, unworthy of a Christian and not meritorious of eternal life. We have been raised by our Baptism to a state in which God known by Faith, is the central object to which all human love must be directed. We must regard creatures partly as His gifts to us, and partly as coins that have His image impressed on them more or less distinctly. Our love for them therefore, if it is to be supernatural, must come from this twofold light. We must love the gift for the Giver; and we must love it all the more, because it is a revelation of the Giver. It follows from this, that the more a creature reveals our Creator to us, the more that creature is to be loved; and as no created thing contains a higher natural revelation of God than our parents; hence, no created love of anything formally external to us can ever legitimately supersede the love that we owe to them. We must not, therefore, love our parents chiefly for themselves; nor may we love them solely because they are gentle and amiable to us. It is true, indeed, that we love them naturally all the more, when they are to us all that parents ought to be, but even in this case, our deeper love

of them must be the result of the greater brightness with which the image of God shines out in them.

There may be some who will object, that this teaching is too subtle and metaphysical for children; and that it ought to be quite enough to tell them love their parents, because God has commanded them to do so. With regard to the former objection, it must be remembered, that all the truths of faith are more or less metaphysical, in the sense in which the word is used above; yet they must be taught to children, and brought home to their apprehension by suitable images and illustrations. Why then should not a practical duty be explained to them in like manner? Are they to be let grow up in ignorance of a moral obligation of the highest importance to themselves and to society, because it requires some patience and trouble to explain to them its nature and characteristic qualities? But I scarcely think we need be metaphysical in telling a child that everything it has, everything around it, everything that is good to it, is a gift from its loving Father in Heaven. It may afterwards be easily led to regard all those things as signs or tokens, or images of that Father's goodness, and it may next be taught to consider its parents as the highest of those images, and to love them as such. Everything necessary for it to know on this subject is thus explained to it without either mystery or *metaphysics*.

As to the assertion, that it is enough to tell children to love their parents because God has commanded them to do so; I admit that it is enough,

provided you tell them what kind of love they are bound to give them. But as we have already seen that there are many kinds of filial love that do not satisfy the divine Commandment, there is danger of teaching serious error, unless these different kinds be carefully explained.

CHAPTER XIII.

FILIAL REVERENCE.

A CHILD is obliged to love its parents, because they represent to it God's infinite goodness and love: and so too, it is obliged to reverence them, because they are the highest natural representative, and the most intimate natural revelation it has of His infinite power and authority over all things visible and invisible. To bring home this idea to the young, they must be told in simple, interesting words of the majesty and greatness and glory of God; and then they must be instructed in the necessity of always having a deep, reverential awe for these attributes, and also for every thing that represents them and calls them to mind. Now, parents are given to children for this purpose among others, that they may be to them "so many images of the immortal God;" that they may represent His authority over them, and call to their minds the reverence which they owe Him. These truths lead easily and naturally to the conclusion, that parents themselves are to be honoured and revered with a certain reflection of the honour and reverence given to Him whom they represent. Hence, filial reverence must be an internal disposition of the mind and heart of a child bowing down

before the divine authority which it sees mirrored in the authority of its parents. Hence, also no parent can ever wholly forfeit his right to the reverence of his child. He may be a drunkard ; he may be cruel to the extent of savagery ; he may be the slave of the worst vices of a father and of a husband ; still the child must force itself to see in him the deputy of its Father in Heaven, and honour him as such. I am fully conscious of the great difficulty experienced in the fulfilment of this duty ; but with divine grace all things are easy ; and free access to divine grace is open to every one through prayer. " I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me," says St Paul (Phil. iii. 15) ; and our divine Master Himself gives us the promise, that " every one that asketh, receiveth : and he that seeketh findeth : and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Matt. vii. 8). Let a child, then, make an earnest effort to be respectful to its parents, in spite of every obstacle ; and let it pray confidently for help in the discharge of this duty ; and it may be assured, that the help will be given it in full, generous measure.

Many children fail in interior reverence towards their parents, by censuring their ordinary actions, slighting their views and opinions, thinking them slow, and behind the age, and dotards, despising them, in fact, in their hearts, notwithstanding a certain outward show of respect. This failing is by no means uncommon in our day ; and many of our home-evils may be traced to it. Many sons and daughters think they know much better than

their fathers and mothers what is right for them to do. Hence, when they are told of this or that duty; when they are cautioned against this or that danger; when they receive parental advice of any kind; they listen perhaps silently and submissively, but if their thoughts were to be written, they would run most probably some way thus: "what nonsense he talks! I know myself what to do quite as well as he can tell me. He thinks the world has been standing still since he was a child, and that I am to be ruled according to the notions of my grandfather. He does not remember that he was himself once young, and perhaps, he was not so strict then as he wants to appear now. Danger in doing so and so; such an idea! why everyone is in danger in that case. What young person is there who is not a milksop, who does not read such books, go to such theatres, remain out in the evening, keep company, &c., &c." These thoughts all help each other in destroying that interior reverence for the authority of parents that a child should have. They therefore help in making it set itself up as its own master and guide and director; and they soon lead to external contempt of parental authority, and to deliberate and habitual disobedience.

There is another kind of interior filial irreverence committed by children against which they must be carefully guarded. When they are corrected or chastised, or when they are labouring under a sense of some fancied injustice they speak to themselves violent, irreverent words against

their parents; nay more, they sometimes curse them in their hearts, and the curse is likely to be all the more malignant, inasmuch as, being interiorly formed, it may be uttered with impunity, as far as parental authority is concerned. This irreverence, indeed, is sometimes so passionate and uncontrollable, that it breaks out into acts of malicious spite vented on any object that comes within reach, and that can be injured or destroyed without exposure to fresh blame. Of course all these acts become, from the motive with which they are done, so many external acts of gross filial disrespect.

Children, then, must be taught to avoid every temptation that would lead them to despise interiorly the authority of their parents; and it should be pointed out to them, that unless the honour enjoined by the fourth Commandment spring from the heart, and be grounded in the belief, that it is a conscientious duty, God will reward no mere outward show of it; nor will He accept any spoken expressions of it, as a fulfilment of His law in this matter.

I come next to speak of those external manifestations of filial reverence which ought to result from the interior dispositions of which I have just spoken. And first, as to words. A child is always bound to address its parents respectfully. It ought indeed to speak to them affectionately and familiarly; but the affection and familiarity must be tempered with respect, and they must never lead the child to be forward or pert, or self-

assertive. There is no way perhaps in which more sins are committed against the fourth Commandment than by disrespectful language ; and yet, I do not think that the world of our day is improving much on the past in its efforts to stamp it out. Impertinence to parents is indeed fostered rather than checked by our modern system of education ; for one of the first principles of this system is to teach children the habit of thinking and acting for themselves, or of self-reliance, as it is called ; and they take kindly to this teaching, and carry it out at home in asserting their own judgments and opinions against the authority of their fathers and mothers. We, Catholics, however are saved, thank God, from this source of home-evil. We protest against the rejection of parental authority implied in the first principles of modern school-systems ; and in support of our protest, we maintain our own schools, as far as we are allowed, in which we teach indeed self-reliance, as an useful and desirable business-quality in temporal matters ; but we do not permit it to interfere with legitimate authority, nor to make our children insolent or self-conceited.

There are other causes of disrespectful language in children ; one of them is the difference of opinion frequently displayed by parents in the management of their domestic affairs. Divided authority is not calculated to command respect ; and, moreover, a child must take the side either of its father or of its mother in case of such difference ; and therefore must be in opposition to one or other of them. It will naturally feel itself justified in asserting

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this opposition, having the sanction of one of its parents ; and the consequence is pretty sure to be, that it will be led into rude, impertinent expressions towards the other. I have already recommended fathers and mothers carefully to avoid all disputes in presence of their children ; but as I am now speaking specially for the latter, I wish to point out to them how they are to act when such disputes arise. First of all, they should, as a rule, never interfere. They are not bound generally, either in charity or justice, to do so ; as, on the one hand, they have no right to judge between their parents ; and on the other, they can scarcely do any good, but are most likely to do much harm by their interference. They are placed in a painful, difficult position, and they ought to pray earnestly for light and strength to do their duty in it. They ought to pray also, and with like earnestness, for their parents, thinking reverently of them, taking no scandal from them, but rather considering them face to face with a great temptation, namely, that of forgetting their duty to each other, and to their family.

But there are cases in which parents break out into angry recriminations against each other ; and their children have to hide their faces and stop their ears in pain and sorrow ; and the words grow louder and louder ; and the trembling little fingers are unable to shut out the sounds ; and there is one sound especially that they cannot shut out—the savage blow to which such recriminations only too often lead. Oh poor little ones ! from my heart I

pity you. I pity you for the bitter cup of sorrow that you are made to taste while you are yet so young. I pity you for the scandal you receive and which you are in such imminent danger of taking ; I pity you for the effects of that scandal on your future lives. Yet do not lose your respect for the one who struck that blow, or for the other who provoked it. Think of them, dear children, not as they stand now face to face, glowering on each other ; but as they stood one bright happy day, some years ago, before God's Altar, vowing love and fidelity to each other, in weal and woe, until death should part them. Think of them trying to keep that sacred promise with honesty of purpose, until Satan came to sow discord between them. Think of them in their better nature, as you think of the sun, which, although often clouded, is still the type of all that is bright and dazzling to your mind. Let them also be still honoured and revered by you as the reflection, though momentarily dimmed, of the divine authority which they represent. Pray for them too, that the division made by that blow may be quickly removed ; and pray that you and your brothers and sisters may be saved from the scandal of ever again seeing it repeated.

I may mention here that prayer for our parents is laid down by the Catechism of the Council of Trent, as "a duty of respect that ought to be conferred" on them. These are its words : "There are, besides, other offices of honour which ought to be conferred on parents, for we then also honour them, when we suppliantly beg of God that all

things may turn out to them well and happily ; that they may be in the greatest favour and honour amongst men ; that they may be most acceptable to God Himself, and to His Saints who are in Heaven." This pious act of respect, coming from the gratitude and love of a child's pure, innocent soul, must be most pleasing to God and will surely obtain the blessings it invokes. But it will also reflect to the child's own good : for it will deepen and strengthen the feelings of reverence and love from which it springs ; and it will render more easy the discharge of all other filial duties.

We should show reverence to our parents, not only in speaking to them, but also in speaking of them. This follows as a natural consequence from the internal respect of which I have spoken already : for if we honour them in our hearts, we are sure to honour them outwardly, in their absence, as well as in their presence ; and it is only a child who is hastening to become that very mean and unworthy thing, a hypocrite, that is at all capable of putting on a submissive, dutiful look, and of speaking reverently before its father and mother, while, behind their backs, it mocks and ridicules them, and laughs with those who speak ill of them, and censures their conduct, and calls them cant names. Brothers and sisters when by themselves are very liable to irreverence of this kind. There is no external restraint on their conversation, and their fondness for each other and their artlessness, joined perhaps to a certain natural love of gossip, make them speak out their inmost thoughts, whether of praise

or censure, about everyone that has been kind or unkind to them, and especially about their fathers and mothers. Now in cautioning children against all backbiting, they should be told of the special evil of backbiting their parents, on account of the irreverence it contains and the evil consequences to which it leads ; for it should be impressed on them, that they who slight their parents in their absence will gradually lose respect for them in their presence, and are almost certain to end in dishonouring them by some positive, deliberate act of irreverence.

I come now to speak of the last duty of filial reverence, of that, namely, which consists in the reverential action or conduct of children towards their parents. Interior reverence and reverence in words should lead up to this, as their culminating point and perfection. How then is a child to fulfil this last duty? Chiefly in three ways: first, by conforming itself to their teaching and authority and accepting their views and advice in all that relates to its guidance and to its future welfare: secondly, in consulting them before taking any important step in life ; and thirdly, in imitating their example, as far as that example is good and holy.

I shall speak in the next chapter of the first of these acts of reverence. As to the second : no one except a parent himself can tell the pain and humiliation caused by a child taking stealthily some important step, unknown to him ; a step on which, perhaps, its future happiness depends, and which therefore, on the occasion of taking it, should

have all the light thrown on it that only the love and the experience, and the anxious care of a father or a mother could throw. Of course I refer chiefly to grown-up children entering the married state without the knowledge of their parents. In doing so, children are, as a rule, guilty of filial ingratitude, of filial disrespect, and, implicitly, of filial disobedience. They sin against the love, the reverence, and the obedience they owe in the moral order to those to whom they owe everything they possess. But I am very far from wishing to take exclusively a parent's view in this, or indeed, in any other matter in which children form views of their own. Let us hear then what is the defence usually put forward by young people who make up their minds to marry without their parents' knowledge. They say, first of all, that their future earthly happiness depends on their marrying the person of their choice. Let us examine this reason seriously, for it does no good to disregard it, or to term it silly and romantic. Young people are convinced by it and act on it; and if their parents believe them to be deceived, they can only undeceive them by reasoning, not by ridicule. It is alleged that a young person's lifelong happiness depends on a certain marriage; and that there is no irreverence, ingratitude, or disobedience implied in contracting that marriage, unknown to parents, simply because, if these knew of it, they would do all in their power to put a stop to it. Let me ask that young person, however, whom I will

suppose to be a young lady, what she means by lifelong happiness. Does she mean that the partner of her choice will always appear to her what he now appears ; and that their mutual love can never wear out, or become less, or be other than it is at present, if not deeper and more perfect ? Or does she mean, that this special marriage will secure her against all suffering and sorrow ; and that it will make her life uniformly bright and happy, as is sometimes described in novels, but is never found to exist in real life ? In either case, she cruelly deceives herself : she acts rashly and presumptuously : she commits herself to the guidance of a fancy fed to an unhealthy and unnatural growth probably by the reading of romances : she hushes to silence the voice of her better judgment and nature that tells her it would be more safe for her future welfare, more grateful and respectful to her parents, who are her natural guardians and protectors, as well as her kindest and truest friends—in a word, more honourable and upright in every way, to consult them and reveal to them the secret of her life, than, on her own responsibility, to take so decisive and irrevocable a step as marriage.

But does this young lady think it unnecessary to attach any weight to the opposition of her parents, or to the reasons on which it is grounded. There surely is, at least, a presumption that they have her true welfare at heart, and that they know best what is necessary to secure it. Has she any convincing evidence to the contrary ? And if not,

why should she fear to take them into her confidence? Let her openly say what reasons she has for her choice, and that she does so from her sense of honour, as well as from her sense of gratitude and duty. In almost every case, they will admire the spirit that dictates such confidence; and the young lady herself may be assured, that if there be any thing selfish in their opposition, it will be set aside; and if it be in any way compatible with her future happiness, they will give up their own views to comply with hers. If they do not do so, then she may be equally assured that she is about to take a false step that, in all likelihood, will end in unavailing regret.

But young people put forward other reasons for entering the married state secretly, the principal of which reasons is the mercenary views entertained by some parents, who seem to look on their children as so many bales of merchandise to be sold to the highest bidder. It cannot be denied that there are such parents, and that their conduct towards their children, in forcing them to marry men of wealth, for the sake of money, is shortsighted, worldly, and uncharitable. But they are by no means so numerous as many of the poets and novelists of our day would give us to understand. Indeed I may remark here, that those poets and novelists who write such beautiful sentimental nonsense about the cruelty of parents or guardians, and the thwarted affections of children, mistake their vocation and betray their duty to the public. They make no distinction

between the sordid avarice of the few who sell their children for gold, and the prudent anxiety for the future of the greater number of parents who, knowing the want of judgment and the inexperience of those under their charge, try to do their duty to them faithfully by directing and, if necessary, by controlling them in a choice so intimately connected with their future interests and happiness. Many of our popular writers, making no distinction between these two classes of parents, lead children naturally to think that their own case is identical with a case, like the following, of a distressed, ill-treated heroine of whom they read that:—

“ Her father, livid with rage, and holding Miss —, the governess’s letter in his trembling hand, rang the bell violently and ordered the servant who answered the summons to tell Miss Arden’s maid to say to Miss Arden that her father wished to speak to her at once in his study.

“ Edith, with a presentiment of coming evil for which she could not account, hastened to the ever-dreaded presence. There she found her stern, unbending parent rapidly pacing the apartment, and at each step bringing down his heel as if he wished some human heart were under it to crush it,” &c., &c.

Imagine a young lady, who herself has been prohibited on the grounds of ordinary propriety from carrying on a certain dangerous correspondence, reading nonsense like this. Her first idea will be to compare her own father with the cruel father in the novel, and to transfer to him every harsh

term and every repulsive characteristic she finds applied or attributed to the latter. Discontent, irreverence, and ultimate disobedience are thus fostered by our popular literature ; the child is alienated from the parent by it ; the home is made unhappy on account of its pernicious teaching ; and the domestic virtues, that took so much time and care to develop, are affected by its influence, as tender flowers are affected by frost against which they had not been secured.

I have permitted myself this digression for two reasons : first, because it points to novel-reading, nowadays so common among young people, as the ordinary source of their opposition to their parents' views of their settlement in life. In the second place, it illustrates the distinction I wish to draw between mercenary parents, and parents who are prudently anxious to secure their children's happiness according to the light of their own experience. All fathers and mothers know the misery that comes from unequal marriages ; they know also that a comfortable income, when it can be secured, is most desirable for a young married couple ; and although, in the selection of a wife or husband for their son or daughter, they should not let wealth blind them to defects or faults that would make the future of their child a gilded sorrow ; yet, they are not only justified, but they are bound, to provide as far as they possibly can for the temporal comfort of their children, and to see that the objects of their choice possess those sterling virtues and dispositions which, although

generally unvalued by the young, wear better in the end than showier and more superficial qualities.

If, then, parents are bound to provide for the future welfare of their children, there must be a corresponding obligation on the part of children to take no step seriously affecting that future welfare, unknown to their parents. This is a rule that admits of no exception, unless in the very rare case where an evidently unworthy, sordid marriage is forced on a child, whose father and mother think nothing of the certain misery it will bring, in view of the temporal advantages attached to it. Yet, even in this case, caution and prudence are necessary; a sincere friend should be sought out and consulted; direction from one's Confessor or Priest ought to be asked for and listened to with respect; and recourse ought to be also had to prayer. Above all, it should be remembered, that no opposition to parental control in this or any other matter, even in extreme cases, should ever be grounded on one's own unaided judgment, particularly if that judgment is biassed by a strong predilection on one's own part.

It is not necessary to say much on the imitation of the good example of parents, as the discharge of another duty of reverence towards them. Children are inclined to grow up naturally in the moral form of their parents' lives; and if they be shaped into that form by wise, loving direction reverently followed, they are sure with God's grace to bring out line by line every characteristic trait

of those lives, and they will thus pay implicitly, perhaps the highest mark of respect in their power to those whom they imitate.

But there is another kind of imitation to which children are at least equally inclined, and against which it is most essential to warn them. This is the imitation of their parents' moral defects or vices. I have already said much on the dreadful evils caused by the bad example of parents; but where those evils are ignored, and the bad example is deliberately and systematically given, how is its influence on children to be counteracted? I can only advise the means common to every one placed in spiritual danger that must be confronted. These means are prayer and personal effort. We must pray earnestly and constantly that we may be saved from the danger; and we must use every effort in our power to second our prayer. We must try to close our eyes to the faults or vices in our parents that scandalize us; we must try to excuse to ourselves those that we cannot shut out; if they are inexcusable, we must still keep this truth before our minds, that if we allow ourselves to be led away by the bad example given to us, our divine Judge will hold us accountable for our sin, notwithstanding that it was caused morally by the bad example of our parents.

I shall conclude this chapter by mentioning the grossest irreverence of which a child can be guilty against its parent. I mean the irreverence of raising its hand against him and striking him. The simple thought of such an impious act makes

one shudder, and seek relief in the hope that it is scarcely ever committed. Well ; as far as my experience extends, it is, thank God, scarcely ever committed, except where all that is spiritual in man, and even his higher animal instincts, have been crushed out of him by the vice of drunkenness. In such a case, it is not indeed frequent ; but neither can it be said to be altogether rare. When it does happen that a child commits this terrible crime, the avenger, Remorse, with its scourge of scorpions, takes its stand beside the wretched being, and begins in life the torture of the soul, that only a sincere repentance can prevent from continuing through all eternity. It is unnecessary to say more on a matter that can scarcely have any practical interest for those who are likely to read this work.

CHAPTER XIV.

FILIAL OBEDIENCE.

ONE of the duties of a good Christian is to be a good citizen ; and the chief characteristic of a good citizen is loyal and conscientious obedience to the authority and ordinances of those who govern the community to which he belongs. Without such obedience in its members, civil society can have no coherence, no solidity, no principle of perpetuity. It may indeed be kept together for a time by factitious means ; but it is ever open to disruption. A designing, unscrupulous agitator, or a spontaneous popular outbreak, or a harsh measure unduly pressed, may at any time dismember it and reduce it to chaos. Governments are then short-sighted to their own present interests, as well as to their dangers in the future, when they regard in the subject only his outward, formal compliance with his civil duties, and take no care in making his obedience heartily and conscientiously loyal. But the governments of our day commit a greater folly still : for they prevent by their legislation, and particularly by their intrusion on domestic life, and by their tampering with its relations—they prevent, as far as they are able, the present generation from

bequeathing to the future any tradition whatsoever of that religious allegiance to civil institutions rights and laws, on which society must be based and by which it must be protected, if it is to withstand the onset of revolution and anarchy.

Now these remarks have a very intimate connexion with the subject of this chapter. Home is the training-school of a child in the obedience which, in its after-life, it will be bound to give to the civil authority under which it is to live. The rule of the parent, then, ought to prepare it for the rule of the state ; and the conscientiousness with which it subjects itself to the former ought to characterize its adherence and fidelity to the latter. The authority of parents therefore, and the obedience of children, are two important factors in the constitution of every well-ordered civil community ; and whatever can be done to strengthen and perfect these factors ought to be done by those who have the government of such a community in their hands.

I am not, however, writing a political treatise, and I say these things solely for the purpose of giving parents an adequate idea of the importance they should attach to the proper discharge of their authority over their children. It is necessary to instruct children also in this idea, that they may see the practical bearing of their present obedience on their future lives.

And now, as to the conditions of this obedience: it should first of all be conscientious; that is, the child should feel itself bound under pain of sin

to obey every just command of its parents. "Children," says St. Paul, "obey your parents in the Lord : for this is just." (Eph. vi. 1.) And in another place he repeats the same divine precept, nearly in the same words : "Children, obey your parents in all things : for this is well pleasing to the Lord." (Col. iii. 20.) Fear of punishment, therefore, should never be the predominant motive of a child's obedience. External wrong-doing may be repressed for a time by such fear ; but there will be no permanent good done by it ; there will be no salutary discipline of conduct in it ; and it will inspire the child with life-long, inward dislike for all authority—a dislike, I may add, that will make its possessor a dangerous, if not an obnoxious member of the community to which he will belong. Merely natural love of parents also, and unwillingness to give them pain, and anxiety to secure their good opinion, these and other like human motives, although amiable and desirable in themselves, will not secure either the true and lasting obedience of the child or the ulterior benefits to which that obedience should lead, unless they be subordinated to the supernatural motive of fulfilling the divine Will revealed in the fourth Commandment of the Decalogue.

A child therefore should be taught, as soon as it is capable of learning anything, that by doing what it is ordered to do by its parents, it pleases not only them, but also its divine Father who is in Heaven. In like manner, when it disobeys wilfully, it ought to be told that it incurs the divine dis-

pleasure by such disobedience ; and that it is far more serious and dreadful to displease God than to displease parents. This twofold idea ought to be instilled into a child's mind until it becomes thoroughly imbued with it. Of course, the other motives for obedience should not be made light of or ignored. Love, gratitude, fear, hope of reward, every inducement, in fact, that usually acts on the young, ought to be made use of ; but the great primary motive, to which all others should be subsidiary, is the divine authority manifested and exercised through the parent.

Such conscientious obedience will be uniform and unchanging in all the varied forms and circumstances of home-life. Whether parents be kind or unkind ; whether duties be difficult or easy ; whether there be an immediate advantage in doing them, or no advantage at all ; in every case, the obedience will be the same, because it will be grounded on the one unchanging motive of the divine will. And when this obedience will be transferred from the parent to the state, namely, when the child will have grown to manhood, it will result in an allegiance more true, staunch, and permanent than the most stringent laws or the largest standing army could ever secure.

Another condition of filial obedience consists in its being prompt and willing. In fact, obedience that is forced and slow scarcely deserves the name. There is indeed an external compliance in it by which the work ordered is done ; but this compliance proceeds only from fear or some human

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motive ; and the will rebels and resists while the hand is put sulkily and grudgingly to its task. Yet when parents command something difficult or laborious, they are very often obeyed in this manner. The child hesitates, murmurs, complains, excuses itself, or declares broadly that it will not do what it is told. After a little, however, but still under protest, it sets about doing it ; and we may well guess how imperfect and unsatisfactory is the performance of any work under such conditions. If you follow the history of such a child's life you will find that it generally results in absolute stubborn disobedience. A time comes when it is no longer afraid of chastisement ; nay, when that child actually defies its parents to chastise it. There is no motive then for obedience, and in consequence, it follows its own will, upsets the order of its home, takes the government of domestic affairs on itself, tyrannizes over its parents, and in the end, either breaks their hearts outright by its ingratitude, or adds sorrow to sorrow in the end of their lives.

I have seen many homes of this description ; and I need scarcely say that they were not happy. I have often been called into them to check the brutal violence of sons to their parents ; and I must confess, that I count my efforts in trying to do so among the most fruitless missionary efforts of my life. If children once "get the upperhand" of their parents, they will, as a rule, never resign it as long as they remain under the parental roof. Hence, I would most earnestly caution parents not

only against permitting insubordination and disobedience in their children ; but also against tolerating any manifestation of unwillingness or grumbling in the execution of their commands. Let them insist firmly on prompt, unhesitating obedience, and let them do all in their power to make it cheerful and willing. I would also impress on children the necessity of this cheerful and willing obedience. It is the only kind of filial obedience that is acceptable to their Father in Heaven ; the only obedience that can make their parents happy and justly proud of them ; and the only obedience that can lighten the difficulty and trouble of any disagreeable or unpleasant task that may be imposed on them.

There is one great danger to which filial obedience is exposed, and against which every possible precaution must be taken. It cannot perhaps be better described than by calling it the *esprit de corps* of children. Young people will talk among themselves about their parents and their domestic grievances, and they will boast to each other of their stout resistance to paternal, and their utter contempt for maternal authority. Among boys at school in particular, that one who is bold enough to assert any filial respect, is sneered at, and treated roughly, and called very unpleasant names, of which "milk-sop" is perhaps the mildest. In the same way, if a boy be apprenticed to a trade, or be a clerk in an office, or an assistant in a shop, he will generally find that disrespect for parental counsel is considered by his companions

as a very manly feeling, and one that is almost necessary for his incorporation with them. To illustrate this, imagine a young lad fresh from home, thrown among twenty or thirty others of his own age in a shop or office. There is an immemorial custom in the establishment that each new comer must entertain at supper all his new associates, and he complies with the custom. Everything is provided on a liberal scale, and the guests sit down in high spirits, disposed to think favourably of their new friend, until they find to their horror that he is a water drinker—a teetotaler. He is at once called to task for his reputed crime ; and if he have the courage to say, that through respect for the advice of his parents, he had pledged himself some time ago against the use of all strong drink, there will be an unanimous outburst of indignation raised against him for submitting so slavishly to the parental counsel. There will be much denunciation of parental authority in general ; and one or two fledgelings are pretty sure to be more outspoken than the others, and to assert that it is unworthy of gentlemen like them to be led at their mother's apron-strings.

Now if this illustration be substantially true, as I think it is, it shows two things : first, the anti-parental *esprit de corps* existing among children of the class referred to ; and secondly, the serious danger to which even the best of home-teaching is exposed when brought into contact with that *esprit de corps*. Perhaps the home-teaching will hold out for a time, but only for a short time, if it be not

assisted by supernatural help. This, of course, implies a thoroughly religious life, morning and night prayer, frequent reception of Sacraments, Mass, Meditation, &c. Yet even these practices are themselves undermined by the spirit of which I am speaking; so that he who continues them regularly and uniformly must have had a sound religious home-training indeed. How often are fathers and mothers sadly and painfully disappointed in their children on their return for their holidays from their place of employment or of apprenticeship? They left home obedient, respectful, affectionate; they return, ready to assert themselves "their own masters" on the first opportunity, and to patronize with a sort of comical condescension the parents of whom they formerly stood in dutiful awe. However, if the cause were to be sought out, it would be found, in most cases, to consist in the giving up one by one of devotional practices, and thus leaving themselves defenceless against all the evil influences of the society in which they live.

Children should therefore be impressed by their parents on leaving home with a due sense of the dangers to which they will be exposed, and of the surest means of coming out of them unscathed. This means, as I have already said, is perseverance in the usual exercises of piety in which they had been previously trained. Indeed, I would recommend earnestly that for this purpose they be placed under the personal care of the Priest in charge of the mission in which they will reside; and that a letter of introduction to him be obtained

from their Parish Priest at home. It will be given with pleasure, and it will be a passport to whatever Catholic clubs or associations for the benefit of young people may exist in the mission to which their new home belongs. I have known letters of this kind, given to children emigrating to foreign countries, to produce most beneficial results; and I do not see why similar results should not be produced by those given in the circumstances I mention.

I would make another recommendation also in this matter of saving young people from danger when they leave home. It is, that parents put themselves in communication with the Priest of the place where their child resides, and not only ask him to look after it, but let them know from time to time about its attendance to its religious and moral duties. I can scarcely conceive the reason why this obvious and effectual means of maintaining their supervision and control over their children is not more generally resorted to by parents. If they fear giving trouble to the Priest, they are much mistaken; for they rather assist him in the performance of his duty; and if they think that they intrude on his time which he owes to his mission generally, they can recoup him by becoming benefactors to his schools or to some work of charity in which he is sure to be engaged. Many young persons of both sexes would have been saved from dangers through which unfortunately they did not pass unharmed, and by which some of them were ruined, had their parents taken this precau-

tion. The first downward step would not then have ever led to a headlong career of vice : and the religious and moral training of home, protected by the continued, though indirect supervision of parents, would have been a sure safeguard against every evil and seductive influence.

Even children who reside at home with their parents, but who go to work during the day, often show in their conduct the effect of their association with others, whose moral training was either neglected or produced no good result on them. In such cases, there will be at first no actual insubordination or formal disobedience. There will be merely an unwillingness to do what is ordered, a slowness and a slovenliness in doing it, a well-disguised assertion of independence, an assumption of authority over brothers and sisters. These are what may be called "feelers ;" but if they be not checked at once, they develop very rapidly into open and habitual violation of all the duties imposed by the fourth Commandment on children. Parents, then, should watch for such manifestations and be prepared to check them at their first appearance. They should never tolerate impertinence, even from their grown up sons and daughters ; but they will find it very difficult to prevent it, if they do not begin at the beginning. When a child once gains a foot-hold, by an overlooked or uncorrected act of wilful disobedience or disrespect, the act is sure to be repeated, and it will be much more difficult to correct it effectually, the second time it is committed, than it would have been at first.

But in order to insure true and constant filial obedience, parents ought to be prudent in the orders they give their children. Those orders ought to be adapted with care and forethought to those who have to fulfil them, so that they may not be looked on as unreasonable, harsh, or degrading. A child should not be treated as if it were a hired servant; for such treatment is not only unnatural and wrong in itself, but it forces the child sooner or later to rebel against it, and it tends to destroy all filial affection and reverence. Neither should grown up sons or daughters be asked to do things unbecoming their age, and for which they may be subjected to the banter and ridicule of their companions. In fact, it is most important that parents should trust their children to act more and more on their own discretion as they become older. They will thus be taught gradually that self-reliance in business and domestic affairs which they will have to practise afterwards in the new home for which they are destined. Nor will the parental authority be in any way lessened by such relaxation: it will rather be strengthened by it; because children, seeing how reasonably they are treated, will have all the more respect for those commands that will be imposed upon them.

I have now to add a few words before I conclude this chapter on the management of a class of children called "incorrigible." I dare say everyone knows, at least by hearsay, if not by actual acquaintance, what is meant by "an incorrigible child." It is a child that is always doing some

mischief or other, and that, no matter how often or how severely it be punished, continues to be a mischief-doer. Its unfortunate little life is divided into two parts, namely, sleep and mischief, and the latter is by far the greater part. Nor are its faults attributable to levity or any other excusing cause, for if they were, it would not be considered beyond hope of reclamation ; but the saddest thing about it is the seeming premeditation and malice with which it goes on repeating acts for which it had been already punished, perhaps only a few moments before. It does not appear to care what pain it gives, even to those who love it : it will not be bribed by kindness : it will not be daunted by chastisement : it will follow its own way, stubbornly, persistently, ungratefully, and the more opposition it meets the worse it becomes.

Now, what is to be done with a child of this kind ? The answer cannot be given in one word ; but I will try to compress it into as few as possible. I would say, first of all, that the name, "incurable" is one that never should be given to it, unless indeed it be a veritable little monster, unaccountable for its actions, and unamenable not only to the influence of reason but also to that of the higher animal instincts, through which even brute beasts are tamed and domesticated. If this be the character of a child, nothing remains to be done but to treat it as an imbecile, and to have recourse, if necessary for the moral safety of its brothers and sisters, to confinement in an asylum

for the insane. I do not think, however, that such a case of real incorrigibility as this is ever found, or if it occur once in a hundred years, there is no practical utility in discussing it here. I hold, then, that so-called incorrigible children are generally not incorrigible at all; and that they are made worse by being reputed and called incorrigible; and that there is a way to their hearts by which they can be educated and trained, if parents and teachers will only take the trouble to study their peculiarities of character and disposition. But this is not generally done: sometimes the first act of wilful stubbornness or disobedience, instead of being studied, that the motive may be discovered, is supposed to be the outcome of a hardened perverted nature, and a cruel unrelenting war is commenced on the supposed perverted nature which in reality has no existence; it is carried on, by inflicting on the child corporal punishment, disgrace before its brothers and sisters, loss of self-respect, and the deprivation of its father's and mother's love. It feels that the hand of every one is against it, and that it is hunted down and driven into a corner; and like every animate thing so driven, it turns on its persecutors, even though they be its parents; it turns on them and wounds them in the most painful manner, perhaps, in which a child can wound its parent, that is, by its wilful, persistent and formal ingratitude. Now, I have no hesitation in saying that in cases like this, judicious, kindly treatment would have reformed and saved the so-called incorrigible.

We must prepare ourselves, without losing patience or hope, to meet in children some very ugly manifestations of vicious propensities; and the manifestations will be all the more ugly and repugnant, because the propensities are directly opposed to those that we most anxiously seek to develop. A young child, for instance, has a tendency to theft. The parents are horrified; because, being thoroughly honest themselves, they cannot bear to be mixed up with the dishonesty of others, especially of their children. They feel themselves disgraced by it; they resolve to crush it out at once, no matter at what cost; and, in doing so, they allow themselves to be carried away by their excited, wounded feelings. They chastise the culprit; they separate it from the rest of the family; they scold it bitterly. All this would be right and expedient, if it did not destroy the child's hope of becoming better. But it does destroy it; for in the angry, unmeasured words spoken, the expressions, "hardened wretch," "incorrigible little sinner," "disgrace of the family," and others of a similar import are sure to be used; and they all tend to the one conclusion, that the parents' good opinion being lost irretrievably, there is no inducement to regain it. And this conclusion becomes still more evident from the stern, unrelenting demeanour which the child sees displayed towards it afterwards. It tries to show its sorrow in some shy way of its own; but it is discountenanced or perhaps

scolded anew; and so, it loses hope in despair and makes no effort to repress the temptation to steal when it next recurs.

I would impress upon parents, then, never to lose hope of their children, or tell them they have lost it; but to tell them on the contrary, that they are never beyond redeeming their characters and becoming reformed. They should encourage them with the prospect of becoming once more what they had been, by repentance, by the avoiding of dangerous occasions, and relying on the help of divine grace. This encouragement ought to accompany all correction; for without it, correction is sure to fail in its purpose, and to make the child more stubborn than before.

If parents, however, train up their children carefully *from the beginning*, they will in most cases have no reason to complain of their afterwards becoming incorrigible. I have, in fact, generally found that early over-indulgence is at the root of all that studied disobedience and contempt of parental authority, and of all that filial ingratitude that sometimes make the young the curse of their homes. I shall conclude this chapter, then, by repeating what I have already in these pages frequently inculcated: Begin the training of a child from the first dawn of its reason: teach it to love and respect its parents: show it how to do what is right, more by example than by words:

exercise authority over it firmly and uniformly, but, at the same time, gently and considerately. Parents will thus secure its love, its reverence and its obedience, and by these means they will go far towards securing its eternal happiness.

CHAPTER XV.

MASTERS AND SERVANTS.

“SERVANTS, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the simplicity of your heart, as to Christ. Not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With a good will, serving, as to the Lord, and not to men. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man shall do, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

“And you masters, do the same thing to them, forbearing threatenings : knowing, that the Lord both of them and you is in Heaven : and there is no respect of persons with Him.” (Eph. vi. 6-9.)

The relations between masters and servants, which St. Paul defines so clearly in these words, have dwindled down in our time to a mere commercial contract of letting and hiring. A servant has a certain amount of work in him which he wishes to convert into food and money ; a master wants the work and agrees to give the food and money for it ; and so, after a few preliminary inquiries about the character and habits of the hired worker, a bargain is struck and the two

parties are brought into mutual relations. These relations (with many exceptions, thank God), are nowadays generally characterized on both sides by selfishness, jealousy, and opposing interests. The master often claims too much for his money, and the servant quite as often wants to give too little; or the former is cruel, niggardly, and unfeeling towards the latter, while he in his turn is lazy, careless, and eye-serving, perhaps, even unfaithful and dishonest. Neither takes the slightest interest in the other's welfare; nor indeed can he well take any without incurring the charge of impertinence. "What does the governor mean by bidding me go to church? He hasn't hired me to go to Church: he doesn't pay me to go to Church. I'll do what I am paid for, and I'll go to Church or not as I please. It's none of his business." Whoever knows anything of the modern servant recognizes these remarks as characteristic of him; and they are justified by the position which his master wishes him to hold in his family. For if he steps out of his way to tell this same master something very useful for him to know; or suppose he is found doing something beyond the sphere of his duties, that other servants were employed to do; how often is he snubbed, and told to attend to his own business, and reminded that, not being paid for doing the work of others, he need not trouble himself whether it be done or not.

Now masters and mistresses should bear in mind that servants ought to be treated as members of

the family in which they live. This is the idea of their position which the Catholic Church has always inculcated; and it is the idea most in harmony with the character of a Christian home, as well as with every feeling of humanity. They are made in the same image of God, and they are redeemed by the same Precious Blood, and they are sealed by the same Baptism, and made heirs of the same Father and of the same kingdom of Heaven, as the rich and noble and the exalted. Wealth and position indeed make social distinctions that are legitimate in themselves, and are recognized by the Church; but they cannot interfere with the law of charity that is intended to bind men together in an universal brotherhood, irrespective of caste or condition. Servants, therefore, have a claim on the charity of their employers; and this claim is satisfied by the faithful discharge of three duties in their regard: by looking after their spiritual interests; by providing for their material comforts; and by displaying a kind, humane demeanour towards them. I shall say a few words on each of these duties, as it is important that Christian masters and mistresses should know them thoroughly.

First of all, then, Catholic servants should be obliged to attend to their religious duties: Mass on Sundays and Holidays; Confession and Communion, at least once a year; the Fasts of the Church, &c. It sometimes happens that a very useful servant, honest, sober, and hard-working perhaps, cannot be brought to go when he ought

to Sacraments. He will plead various excuses, or he will defend himself for not going by saying that he has no sins to tell. Such a domestic, as a rule, will be found either to have been badly instructed in his youth and to have only vague ideas of religious obligations, or, if sufficiently instructed, he will be found to have contracted some habit of sin that he is not willing to cast off. In either case, he should be brought under the notice of the Priest in charge of the mission where he resides ; and if he refuse to see him, or if he show indifference to his admonitions, he ought, I think, in ordinary circumstances to be dismissed. If, however, he make any reliable promise of amendment, or if he seem to be influenced not by disregard of the Sacraments, but by a morbid dread of approaching them, then charity demands that he be dealt with kindly and patiently, and that he be left in the care of God's infinite mercy.

It may perhaps seem hard to dismiss any servant on account of his religion ; but if he be adopted into a Christian family and be made a member of it, the head of that family surely has a right to insist that he fulfil the obligations which every one else belonging to it has to fulfil. He suffers no hardship, therefore, in being made to comply with his religious obligations in return for his admission into a home-circle, where he is treated with that consideration and kindness that Christian charity demands for him.

In many cases, however, in which servants omit their religious duties, the master is himself the

cause. He is either a Protestant who does not believe in Catholic observances, or he is an unworthy member of our own Church, who, from a grinding, avaricious disposition, insists on taking the last penny-worth of labour out of those under him. Each of these masters makes the hearing of Mass on Sundays and Holidays, and the observance of fast and abstinence days, as well as the reception of Sacraments, morally impossible by his domestic arrangements which he will not alter on any consideration. Now I would tell such masters that they are not only guilty of great cruelty towards those whom they treat so ; but they also contribute much towards making them unfaithful and dishonest. The surest safeguard of a Catholic servant's trustworthiness is his attendance to his religious duties : if this attendance be prevented, he is deprived of powerful spiritual helps for the regulation of his conduct ; and besides, he often acts against his conscience by remaining in such service ; and from this infidelity to his Master in Heaven, he easily falls into what he considers the lighter infidelity of betraying the interests of his master on earth. From purely temporal motives, then, as well as from those that are higher, servants should not be prevented from fulfilling those obligations which the divine law and the Church impose on them. On the contrary, every facility should be given them for their performance, even with the sacrifice of personal convenience.

As I have already remarked in another part of

this work, very great spiritual injury is often done to children by irreligious or immoral servants. It would be a serious fault, then, to retain such servants either as nurses or governesses or tutors, no matter how useful or necessary they may be. Parents are more bound by charity to their children than by that which they owe to servants; and therefore, no matter what hardship these may incur, and no matter how much they may have endeared themselves to the children in their charge, they should be dismissed at once before they have time to poison the young hearts and minds of those committed to them. I know that servants cannot be expected to be wholly devoid of faults; but I speak here not of faults but of vices—swearing, lying, drunkenness, and others not necessary to mention.

Masters should not only look after the spiritual interests of their servants; they should also provide for their material comforts. I have known some families in which much more care was taken of brute beasts than of Christian servants. I have known fires to be kept up, night and day for months every year, in their harness-rooms, while, even in the depth of winter, their unfortunate domestics had to lie down at night, shivering with cold in their fireless dormitories. Other instances, similar to these, of disregard on the part of masters for the ordinary wants of those who do their work, might be multiplied so as to fill many pages. But there is no need of proving what every one is convinced of who has any knowledge of our modern social life.

We have abolished slavery in name, but it is retained in its substance and essence in many of our homes, and even in the homes of that class from which most of our legislators are taken. What boots it for a nation to proclaim its subjects free, when a large portion of them are bound to serve and slave and wear themselves out without feeling or regard for their comforts; without ever a kind word to cheer them, or a kind act to show them that master and servant are both children of one Father who is in Heaven? The lash of the slave-master that used to cut into the body is nowadays converted into one that cuts into the soul, or rather that cuts between body and soul, often sundering them, if its threat does not command submission? Dismissal is the new form that the slave-master's lash has assumed in the hands of society. We have such an over-supply of servants, and they are driven to such straits to live and to help those depending on them to live, that they can be bullied and badgered, and made to feed on scraps and offal, and sleep in garrets and cellars, and submit to several other inhuman usages, simply because if they refuse, others are ready to step into their place, and they themselves are liable to be cast out into the streets to beg or starve, or become so many festering sores of the society in which they live.

Nor has civil legislation any power to cope with the growth of this social slavery. Only the remodelling of our homes on the principles of Christian charity can make men truly free, not-

withstanding their inequality of condition. When the master thinks of his servant as of a human being like himself, made after the same divine Model, redeemed by the same divine Sacrifice, destined for the same eternal home where there is no respect of persons—when, thinking of him thus, he treats him with kindness, and speaks to him affably, and shows in his manner that a human being is more in his eyes than his brute pets—then the servant will begin to be truly attached to his master, and to feel a pleasure in working for him, and to defend his interests, and to stand by him in difficulties and troubles, aye, and to be faithful to him when all the world may have shrunk from him or cast him off.

Kindness of demeanour should then characterize the relations of masters towards their servants. The man or woman who has to go out from home and parents, and cast his or her lot among strangers to earn a livelihood, is an object of pity for which the all-embracing love of our Father in Heaven has made provision. In His infinite wisdom, He permits such a one to sell, and us to buy, the labour of his hands ; but Christian charity obliges us, as a condition of the contract, to recognize and respect in him the dignity of his nature, created, as I have said above, in the image, redeemed by the Blood, and destined to share the eternal glory of God. This condition, however, is frequently ignored ; and the feelings of many masters and mistresses towards those in their employment are nowadays substantially the same as they were in the olden times of

pagan slavery. It is, indeed, only in truly Christian homes (and every one knows how rare they are), that the servant's true position is acknowledged ; that his treatment is uniformly kind and considerate ; that his labours are lightened by the kind word, and the benign look, and the grateful encouragement of his employers. In such homes he feels at rest and happy ; and he becomes every day more and more trustworthy, for he feels himself "at home" and he works, not with the grudging, stinted spirit of a mere hireling ; but with the genuine, loyal heartiness with which men labour for their own fireside.

Dear reader, if you have servants, treat them as I have here pointed out, and you will soon find yourself doubly rewarded. Their fidelity and their attachment and their gratitude will make their hired labour more valuable and productive. This will be your temporal reward ; but far greater than this will be the spiritual reward, the happiness of having done a work of Christian charity, the merit of having done it for God, and the record of it that is registered in Heaven, awaiting you there. "If thou have a faithful servant, let him be to thee as thy own soul : treat him as a brother." (Ecclus. xxxiii. 31.)

Besides the duties of charity which masters owe to their servants and of which I have now spoken, they also owe them a duty of justice. This duty consists in paying promptly, when asked, the wages due to them. I do not think that much need be said on this subject, notwithstanding its great im-

portance. Civil society so far protects servants as to enable them to recover the price of their labour; and every one imbued with ordinary principles of honesty and fair dealing recognizes the obligation of paying those they employ what is due to them without compelling them to have recourse to legal proceedings. Some masters, however, curtail without scruple the wages of their servants on account of damages done by them, no matter how indeliberately. They make this curtailment a rule of their household; and they carry it out so strictly, that they not only succeed in reducing very considerably the amount of the salaries due, but they keep their furniture, delf, &c., constantly renewed at the expense of their domestics. Now, I admit the justice of charging these latter for the consequences of deliberate neglect in the discharge of their duties; and I admit also, that every reasonable precaution should be taken to make them careful of whatever is intrusted to them; but I deny the equity of punishing them for losses arising from purely accidental causes. But perhaps it may be said that servants usually attribute every mistake of theirs to accident, and that therefore if they are to be believed and the principle I advocate is to be accepted, there is no safeguard for masters against the wholesale destruction of their household property. Well, in every individual case of damage, such as I am writing about, a fair judgment can be formed as to its culpability. If the servant be habitually careful and truthful, and if he aver that it happened accidentally, then, I

think, his word ought to be believed. If, on the other hand, similar mistakes have been not unfrequently made by him, if he have a reckless manner of doing his work, if his word cannot be relied on, then the presumption of negligence, no matter what he asserts to the contrary, seems to justify his being fined for the loss incurred. If a master take the trouble of inquiring thus into each act of his servants before punishing them, he will save himself from the danger of doing them great injustice, and he will also save them from the temptation of recouping themselves for the portion of their wages kept back from them—a temptation, I may add, that has led many good servants into pilfering, dishonest habits.

I now come to the second part of the subject of this chapter ; namely, the duties of servants to their masters ; and as fidelity is by far the most important of these duties, I shall treat of it first. A servant, faithful to his master's interests, faithful to every trust reposed in him, faithful in thought and word and work, faithful in adversity as well as in prosperity, faithful when no eye is upon him equally as when he is under supervision, faithful under censure and rebuke, faithful under suspicion or false accusation, faithful in derision and contempt, faithful always and in all things—such a servant has more true nobility and heroism of character than many of those whose noble and heroic deeds are written and emblazoned and admired in history ; he has more true holiness than many a reputed saint ; aye, and in all likelihood, he will

hold a higher place in Heaven than some of those fashionable ladies who visit his mistress and of those high-toned gentlemen who dine with his master, both of whom scarcely think him worthy of a passing look, and have very slight appreciation of his fidelity, when they hear it casually mentioned.

Such fidelity, however, must be the outcome of religion ; as human nature, unaided by divine grace, is not capable of it. The patience and meekness, as well as the conscientiousness and the self-sacrifice which characterize it, prove it to be of Heaven and not of earth. Hence, a servant, to be truly and uniformly faithful to his duties, must not rely on his good purpose of being so, or on his natural dispositions, no matter how strongly they may incline him towards honesty and diligence. Such purpose and dispositions are most useful as a groundwork ; but Prayer and the Sacraments, and the careful observance of religious duties are morally necessary to obtain the supernatural gift, or in other words, to build up a supernatural life of true interior Christian fidelity. Of course, in writing these words, I have before my mind Catholic servants primarily ; but the necessity of divine help, as a condition of the uniform discharge of duty, extends to servants of all denominations, and indeed to every class of men and to every position in life. Now, as divine help is obtained ordinarily only through the means established by our divine Lord, it follows that every one, Catholic and non-Catholic, servant and master, must have recourse to them in one form or another, if they would

fulfil undeviatingly the obligations of their state of life. No matter then of what creed a servant be, if he have not habitual recourse to Heaven for strength to be faithful to his duties, he will not be faithful to them in all the varying conditions of life in which he will be placed.

Hence, it follows, that masters, if for no other reason, at least for their own self-interest, should encourage their servants to attend to their religious duties. It follows also, that servants should convince themselves of the necessity of doing so, as a means and a condition of their perseverance in that fidelity which they owe their employers and on which their own future welfare depends. They may not indeed have time to say long prayers, night and morning ; they may not be at liberty to go to Church as often as they wish ; they may have to omit many devout exercises very useful and conducive to sanctity ; but notwithstanding these drawbacks, they can practise their religion in a way most pleasing to God, by thinking of Him frequently at their work, by saying what prayers they do say with attention and fervour, and by making up in increased devotion at Church for the fewness of the occasions on which they are permitted to go there.

I think this is a fitting place to bring before servants a certain natural motive well calculated to insure their fidelity. It is a motive indeed that has in it nothing sublime or heroic ; it is, if you will, self-interested and material ; yet it cannot be devoid of use, if it help higher motives in the

attainment of their end. Every one is bound to take care of his character; but it is not of the same vital importance to everyone as it is to a servant. A servant's character is, at the same time, his reserve and his floating capital. It is capable of acquiring increased value every day; and it is capable of being lost in an instant. Unlike invested money, however, it can scarcely ever be recovered when once forfeited. Repentance that avails before Heaven is held of little account by earthly masters. There is no stain of the soul too deep for our merciful Father to blot out; but the world is unforgiving and inexorable where its material interests are at stake; and it requires in those it trusts, and in domestic servants perhaps more than in all others, an unexceptionable character for trustworthiness. It follows from this, that domestic servants are in a special manner bound to earn a good name for themselves by their diligence and fidelity, and by constant study and effort to make that good name grow brighter and brighter day by day, until the little kingdom of the home in which they live, by unanimous vote, raise them to the social peerage of their class, the distinguishing title of which is the simple but matchless title: "Faithful." Those who act so are sure never to be thrown adrift in their old age; for besides their being useful even then to watch over the interests for which they worked while they could, they will have long before gained a place in the affections of their masters, who will never refuse them a comfort or convenience that their condition

and circumstances may require. They will thus have the assurance of being gently treated in their growing infirmities ; of being tended by kind, loving hands in their last illness ; and of closing their eyes in the sleep of death amid the genuine sorrow of those whom they had served with such unvarying life-long fidelity.

But what a different prospect lies before those other servants who have always been grudging and selfish in their service, and who have never shown any true loyalty to their master's interests. They prevented any except the most formal business relations to exist between themselves and those they served ; and the consequence naturally follows, that in their old age or in sickness they have no claim on the kind consideration of those latter ; they are bound to them by no tie, and they are dismissed without a single feeling of regret or a single thought of what is to become of them. They are often too old or too much broken down in health to find another place ; and they have to eke out the remnant of their lives in the parish work-house, and after death they are buried in a pauper's grave.

This end, however, so much dreaded by every one who has not lost all self-respect, as it is the probable fate of those just described, so it is the morally certain fate of another class of servants who, secretly dishonest or intemperate, try to keep up appearances before their masters, and think they will succeed in doing so to the end. They may succeed for a time ; but as habit

becomes stronger, they become more and more incautious; they feel emboldened by their previous success; and they go on recklessly, never dreaming that they are binding themselves with a chain of suspicious circumstances that will one day end in their loss of character, and in the consequent loss of their situation. Each one thinks this misfortune possible for others; but he never considers its possibility for himself. If he sees some of his fellow-servants dismissed for the very same conduct in which he himself secretly indulges, he attributes the dismissal to want of prudence in avoiding detection; his sense of security is increased; he walks on the edge of an abyss with the freedom of one a hundred miles from it; and the sure result is that he falls in. With his blighted character and his bad habits, whither can such a servant turn himself to procure a new place? He can do manual work, perhaps; but how seldom do domestic servants become ordinary day-labourers, and how many of them are altogether unfit to do a constant day's work? No; he will drift steadily to the prison or the workhouse; and, as a rule, he will end his days in one or the other.

Fidelity then is the first and most important quality in a good servant. Respect for his employer is the second. He is admitted into the household in which he serves, as one of its members, and he thus becomes subject to its head, who is in that household the representative of his divine Master in Heaven. This, I feel certain, was the thought St. Paul wished to convey when he wrote :

“ Servants, be obedient to them that are your lords according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the simplicity of your heart, *as to Christ.*” (Eph. vi. 5). Masters, therefore, should be honoured and respected neither on account of their wealth or their social position, nor from a motive of expediency to gain their favour, but on account of Him whose divine authority they represent in their households. This view of their position and duty, I need hardly say, is very seldom taken by servants. Many of them are dogged and obstinate in their demeanour towards their masters ; others are meek and humble and almost whining before them, while, in their absence, they ridicule and detract them, and sometimes even curse them for some real or fancied wrong received from them. There are in fact no subjects of conversation among servants more ordinary than the private characters, the domestic arrangements, the vices or follies, and the secrets of their masters. Individual grievances, too, are spoken of freely ; and the revengeful feelings caused by them are relieved by the disrespectful and sometimes disgusting expressions used against those who inflicted them. Now in all such conversations, servants not only violate charity, and when they publish secrets or discover secret faults, justice also ; but they dishonour God in dishonouring them who represent Him. There are some, perhaps, who may not be deterred by this view of their conduct from pursuing it in the future ; but there are others I am sure, who with divine grace will resolve to respect

their masters, and conceal their faults, and keep their secrets, whenever the temptation or the opportunity presents itself of violating these obligations. In fact they cannot be said to be truly faithful unless they do so.

I need not say much of the third quality of a good and faithful servant, namely, of the obedience which he owes to his master. If indeed he be faithful, he is sure to be obedient; that is according to his own idea of obedience. But unfortunately that idea is sometimes a very defective and inadequate one. Most people know by experience that old, attached and faithful servants occasionally give much trouble by their dogged adherence to their own opinions regarding the right way of doing what they are ordered, or indeed the expediency of doing it at all. They err through excess of zeal for their master's interests; but notwithstanding their good intentions, they cause confusion in the household; and their stubbornness often renders them unbearable. Now, I have only to say to such servants, that they seem to forget a very important part of their duty towards their master in not doing his work as he wishes it done. They also seem to lose sight of the inferior, dependent position they hold in his family, and they incur the risk of being dismissed from it much oftener than they imagine. Fidelity will of course be always highly valued in servants; but in the eyes of many employers of our day, who wish to conduct all their affairs in a formal business-like manner, fidelity will not always excuse officiousness, and much less will it excuse stubborn-

ness or wilful disobedience. And yet it is hard, if not cruel, to deal severely with those whose chief fault, as far as we are concerned, is over-zeal in our service. We should therefore be patient and forbearing towards them, overlooking as far as possible their defects, or correcting them with gentleness and charity. The chances are wholly against our getting better servants, if we dismiss those we have, after testing their fidelity and finding it staunch and true in every circumstance of difficulty and temptation. .

CHAPTER XVI.

STUMBLING-BLOCKS—DRINK.

WHEN a mother teaches her child to walk, she takes great care to remove everything that might trip it up and make it fall. She knows that its ideas of equilibrium are yet very limited, and that it has no consciousness of the danger of striking its little foot against the fender or fire-irons if they lie in the way of its first journey. Now in the moral training of a child there are stumbling-blocks to be removed corresponding to the fender and fire-irons of the nursery ; and their removal is all the more important and necessary, as the fall they occasion, instead of inflicting a mere bodily wound, generally kills the soul by depriving it of its life of sanctifying grace. But they are stumbling-blocks not solely to the young members of a family. Fathers and mothers, likewise, are unfortunately only too often brought to the ground by them ; and when this happens, their children will, in all likelihood, be brought down in their train.

The most ordinary and most dangerous stumbling-block in families is intoxicating drink. It is, in fact, more or less connected with every other obstacle to domestic well-being and happiness, and until it is removed from the reach and sight of children, and, in many cases, of parents also, every

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attempt at home-reform will be fruitless and ineffectual. I have then, dear reader, to invite your most earnest attention to this subject. There is none other of which I have treated or shall treat in this work more vitally important; and there is none other about which more mistaken—deplorably mistaken ideas prevail in every class of society.

To begin then. I say to parents: keep intoxicating drink from your children. Let them not know the taste of it; let them not see it at table as an ordinary part of your meals; let them not see you taking it or giving it to others when they call; especially, let them never see you under its influence. Then again: speak often to them of the dangers, spiritual, moral, and social, to which it exposes those who become fond of it; and tell them it is very easy, indeed, to become fond of it. Point out to them the usual ways in which young people are led into drinking habits: how, at first, they nauseate the drink, and, after tasting it once, would give it up for ever, were they not led to think foolishly that it is unmanly not to do what they see others like themselves doing so easily and so habitually. Draw for them, too, some vivid word-pictures of drunken sons, in their frenzy, striking their helpless, broken-hearted parents to the earth; of drunken daughters, become by drink such a shame to their desolate families that their names are never mentioned, and the very thought of them is put away as though it were a thought of sin. Draw for them other pictures of filthy, dilapidated homes, with half naked, starving children, crouching round

fireless hearths, or seaching for food in empty cupboards, or lying asleep on the bare boards through the long night, while their brutal, drunken fathers spend their wages in the public-house. Representations like these may be multiplied indefinitely, and darkened with every imaginable shade of heartless cruelty without danger of untruthfulness or exaggeration. Repeat them frequently with all the variety you can introduce into them, and your efforts will not be long without result. Your children will soon begin to manifest such a dislike for drink that it will gradually assume most of the characteristics of a natural instinct. They will thus grow up to manhood without knowing the taste of drink, and therefore without any craving to indulge in it ; and because they were taught when young to shun it from conviction, not from compulsion, there will be no danger, when they go out into the world, of their giving way to that natural reaction that follows enforced restraint. In spite of all the seductions of intemperance with which they will be surrounded, the habit of abstinence in which their childhood and youth were reared, will cling to them in their after lives and shield them, like an impenetrable coat of mail, not alone from drunkenness, but from the grovelling vices, the social wretchedness, the premature physical decay to which drunkenness usually leads its victims. And, I ask you, dear fathers and mothers, from your own experience of these lamentable effects within the circle of your acquaintances, do you think that any amount of wealth or any extent of property you may, after a

life of hard labour, be able to leave your children, can be at all compared in value or usefulness to this inheritance of a confirmed habit of abstention from drink. Without it, where will be the gathered fruits of your industry in a few years after your death? and where will be those to whom your riches were left?

I turn here to consider how this advice will be received by my readers, especially by parents for whom it is primarily intended. My experience tells me that the English-speaking public for which I write, devotedly attached as it is to its beer and wine and other strong drinks, will scout the idea of bringing up children on Total Abstinence principles. Drink is in truth a part of our social system. Without it we cannot converse ten minutes with a friend; we cannot do a day's work; we cannot enjoy a holiday; we cannot make a journey; in a word, we cannot begin or carry on or complete the most ordinary business of our daily lives, unless drink is taken to nerve us for the task and cheer us through it. And this habit of drink is indulged with the settled conviction that it leads to no danger, and that it is not the parent of vice or crime, nor the source of poverty, degradation and wretchedness. We condemn drunkenness at the same time that we love drink; and we will not let the idea sink into our minds, that there is but a thin, and often invisible line of demarcation between moderate and excessive drinking, or, in other words, between the habit of drinking we ourselves indulge, and the habit of drunkenness which

we abhor in others as something loathsome and degrading.

Such, then, being the temper of the public mind regarding drink, I expect many of my readers to come to issue with me here and to dispute the correctness of the advice to parents given above. Some will say, perhaps, that children ought to be accustomed to drink from their earliest years, in order that they may not afterwards crave for it, as an untasted novelty. I have seen this experiment tried and I can vouch for its result, in one case at least. The children indeed did not afterwards crave for drink, as a novelty—but they craved for it, as a necessity: they became confirmed drunkards. Few parents, worthy of the name, however, will, I think, entertain this opinion or act on it; for it must seem evident to the dullest understanding that to give drink habitually to very young people, is to force a liking for it on them; and a liking for drink in a child leads naturally to excessive indulgence in after years.

But most of those parents who will take exception to the advice I give them in this matter, will not advocate the habitual use of drink for children. They will admit that children do not require drink, and that in ordinary circumstances they are better without it. They will not see, however, why extraordinary precautions, such as I have recommended, should be used to keep them aloof from the sight and taste of it; and they will have a particular objection to sacrifice their own use of it, at their meals especially, in order to edify the young members of

their families. Now it must be distinctly understood that I do not pretend to say there is any strict obligation, under pain of sin, to adopt the treatment of children in regard to drink, which I have pointed out. The moderate use of drink is in itself lawful, and therefore it would be not only untrue but ridiculous to assert that any law is violated by allowing children merely to taste it, or by parents themselves tasting it in their presence. But things in themselves lawful, are not always devoid of moral danger; and in proportion to the nearness and gravity of such danger, their lawfulness becomes more and more questionable, until, degenerating into scandals or occasions of sins, they come to be positively forbidden. The use of drink is something of this kind. It is harmless in itself; but on account of the craving it begets, and on account of the terrible excesses to which it leads, it is always more or less dangerous to the person habituated to it, and it is particularly so to children, whose habits are not yet formed, and who may, with nearly the same facility, acquire false and artificial tastes as they may cultivate those that are true and natural.

However, while the danger arising from the use of drink, whether to oneself or others, remains remote and unlikely, there is no obligation to give it up. But when is it remote, and when does it become proximate? How much drink may be allowed to a child, or how far may parents indulge in drink before it, until there arises an immediate danger of its being corrupted? The answer to these questions depend

almost entirely on experience, and the experience of each one being different from that of his neighbour, I cannot expect that any solution of them that I might give would be acquiesced in unanimously by all my readers. Some may have lived all their lives away from town and city influences, and may know nothing whatsoever of the drunkenness and the consequent misery and degradation of our crowded courts and bye-streets ; some may have the happiness to move in a home circle in which, although drink is taken at meals, still its use is so regulated and so limited that it never grows into a pressing, serious danger. Others again may have from their childhood been brought up in the settled idea that drink is nourishment, and that it is unmeaning, as well as cruel, to ask people to renounce it, either for their own or their children's sake. Now all these persons will most probably accuse me of exaggeration when I say, that the habitual daily use of drink by children, or even their frequent, although occasional, use of it, generally exposes them to the serious, if not the immediate, danger of becoming drunkards. And yet I am fully convinced of the truth of this assertion, and of the truth of this other also, that parents, taking drink habitually and freely before children, give them such a strong bias towards it as to make it difficult for those children in after life to resist the temptation of intemperance. I do not wish to determine, if indeed it can be determined by any private authority, when grievous sin is committed in these circumstances. Conscientious parents who are seriously anxious for their

children's welfare, will take a higher view of their duties than seek to escape by hair-breadths from their serious violation. They will therefore, irrespectively of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of their manner of bringing up their children, consider whether that manner is conducive to their future welfare or not. If they deem it not conducive, or less conducive than it ought to be, then they will change it at any sacrifice, rather than run the risk of leaving them a heritage of social misery, and, perhaps, of eternal ruin.

Here then is the view I would most earnestly impress upon parents regarding the use of drink by their children. People do not want drink while they are yet children; and if they get it habitually, they will imperceptibly contract a fondness for it that will cause them in after life much trouble and difficulty to overcome. Now as parents ought to put no obstacle to the future well-being of their children, but ought, on the contrary, remove every stumbling-block in their way, it follows clearly that they ought to keep the taste, and sight, and use of drink away from them, and that they ought to do this without waiting to determine how far they are strictly bound in conscience to do it. I admit it is difficult to do it; but if they love their children with a true Christian love, I do not think they will be deterred by any difficulty from trying all they can to save them from the terrible danger of an early fondness for drink.

Perhaps it may be well to point out here some obstacles that will have to be encountered in carrying

out this purpose. First of all, your neighbours are pretty sure to laugh at you, and to tell you that you are spoiling your children ; that you are too severe on them ; that the reaction hereafter will be much more dangerous to them than the moderate use of drink would be at present. To meet these and other objections of a similar import, it is enough to keep in view the one great reason that influences you in the course you adopt ; namely, your resolve to preserve your children from the vice of intemperance, by implanting in them a dislike for the very taste of drink. Raillery and ridicule are, however, keen weapons, and most people have a sensitive dread of them. To save yourself, then, from the annoyance of having to parry them constantly, I would recommend you to give your neighbours to understand seriously and determinedly that your manner of training your children is altogether your own concern ; that you owe to them no account of it ; and that their interference is uncalled for and unwarranted. This may seem harsh advice to give, but I think it will be found necessary in many cases ; and I am convinced that there will be no uncharitableness in adopting it.

Parents will have another difficulty in keeping drink from their children, when it is ordered by medical authority. Of course, everyone admits the medical use of stimulants in certain rare cases of illness ; but passing by those cases, we find many doctors ordering their patients wine or spirits, not as medicine but as food ; and not on one or two occasions, but continually and regularly during

their convalescence as well as during their illness. I believe many a drunkard can trace the beginning of his wretched state to such a prescription of his doctor; and it is very natural to suppose that children so treated will acquire a fondness for drink that will abide with them in after life, and will prove a constant source of trouble and temptation to them, if indeed it will not lead to their degradation and ruin. Now some of the most eminent medical authorities of the present day deny the absolute necessity of drink in the treatment of patients; and if they do occasionally prescribe it under extraordinary circumstances, the quantity to be taken is so small, and the number of times it is to be taken is so limited, that no danger can arise from its use. Parents therefore, with this safe practice before them, need have no scruple in declining to give drink frequently and freely to their sick children, even although it be prescribed by their doctors. They should in fact ask those doctors to substitute some regimen as conducive to health as they believe alcohol to be, but free from that dangerous after-effect of alcohol taken habitually, namely, a morbid fondness and craving for it. If they say they are unable to do so, then they should be told, with due respect to their professional acquirements, that they have not fully studied all the resources of their craft.

I do not intend or wish to say anything derogatory to a body of men so rightly trusted, as our physicians are, with the most important human interests of society; but I fear there is much truth

in the charge brought against many of them, that for one reason or another they are too facile in allowing drink to their patients. If physicians held out with firmness and unanimously against the use of drink, except as a medicinal poison, which it has been proved to be, and if they ordered it only as they order any other poisons, then we might look for a speedy revolution in the drinking habits of our day, and the victims of those habits would be much fewer than they are. But it may be alleged, that a physician of extreme temperance views would be looked on by the public with suspicion and distrust, and would never rise to eminence in his profession. I do not think that this excuse has much weight. Where there is a question of life or death, or of speedy recovery from severe illness, people look out for the most skilful advice and assistance, no matter from whom it has to be obtained. I know indeed that those suffering from the effects of drink often call in doctors whom they expect to cure them without interfering materially with their social habits. But if those doctors be true to the convictions that their reading and experience must have forced upon them, they will not merely limit their intemperate patients to a certain quantity of drink, but they will insist, at least in the majority of cases, on their becoming total abstainers. If they act thus, and act in concert, no fee will be forfeited, and no one branch of the profession will have any exceptional advantage in this respect over another. Let it be granted, however, that advocates of total abstinence are not popular as medical

advisers. Does it then follow that they are justified in waiving their principles and prescribing against their conscience for the sake of an increased income and a wider popularity? The temptation, I admit, would be considerable, but I think no medical gentleman worthy of a fee, would be swayed by it.

In many cases of indisposition in families, no doctor is called in; but there is a kind of traditional pharmacopœia resorted to in his stead and believed in much more by the masses than its legitimate sister of the faculty. It consists chiefly of alcohol in one or other of its numerous forms. If a child have a pain, it is given a little brandy; and if a grown-up person has got a severe wetting, or has been working very hard, or has got into a great heat, or feels a cold chill all over him—in each of these cases, and in most others of trivial illness that occur daily—"something hot" is supposed to effect a certain cure, and it is taken accordingly. It is stated too, although I cannot say whether truly or falsely, that some ladies, when they go out shopping, and when they pay each other formal visits, and when they are supposed to have a quiet tea, think it absolutely necessary to take "a little something" to relieve the fatigue and *ennui* of their daily lives. It is said that they think this something is absolutely necessary for their health; and that in consequence they take it habitually, and sometimes in excess. However this may be, it is certain the belief prevails generally that drink is a panacea for most of the ills of humanity. Now, I venture to say, that parents will never be able to train their children in habits of

temperance, until they are disabused of this belief and entirely discard it in practice. Total abstainers are at least as long-lived as any other class of people, and yet they never use drink in sickness. It follows therefore (and parents ought to be full of the conviction), that there is no necessity, either in sickness or in health, for the use of alcohol either as food or as medicine.

I have now to point out another danger to which children are exposed under this head of drink. In most families there are, from time to time, social gatherings of friends at which the children of the house are permitted to attend. Wine and spirits are, unfortunately as a matter of course, set on the table. The guests partake freely of them, if they please, and they often assume the liberty of plying the little ones with them, while the parents are too weak-minded to prevent the practice, or even to protest against it. The use of drink begins from that time to be associated in the minds of those young people with bright, beaming looks, and abundance of good cheer, and gay laughter, and jovial table-talk. It is surrounded in their imaginations by a false glamour that makes it more and more attractive, until it comes to be loved for itself and for the excited, unregulated feelings it produces. A boy thus indoctrinated will soon begin to seek, among his companions, in stolen reunions, and perhaps with ill-got money, the reputed pleasures of an over-heated brain, that may not be supplied to him at home as often as he would wish. I need not trace the after-career of

such a one, as it will unhappily be known to most of my readers. The *roué* in the higher classes of society, and the corner-boy and jail-bird in the lowest, represent the condition to which he will naturally fall; and the broken-hearted parents will have to reproach themselves bitterly in their old age for the training that led to such a miserable result.

But what are parents to do under the circumstances described above? Is the time-honoured custom of introducing the young people towards the end of dinner to be done away with, or is the host to be rude to his guests in forbidding them to offer a little wine to his children with their fruit or sweet meats? I answer that both inconveniences may be avoided by tact, blended with moral courage. The children may, by all means, be allowed to come, as they are supposed to gain much in refinement by this social custom; but then it should be announced, as a domestic arrangement, with which surely no one will think of interfering, that the children are not allowed to take drink on those occasions. There is no rudeness in this announcement, and provided the other safeguards mentioned in the beginning of this chapter be adopted, there will little or no danger arise from the mere sight of the grown-up members of the party taking their wine in moderation. Where, however, there would be a likelihood of excess in drink among the guests, or where, contrary to the express will of the parents, drink might be pressed on the children, a stricter rule is necessary; and on no account, and

for no social advantage, should young people be permitted to be present at such a party.

But drunkenness in the present day prevails much more among the labouring and artizan classes than among the higher social grades ; and accordingly the children of the former are exposed to many dangers of intemperance from which those of the latter are almost wholly free. The poor have their cellar in the public-house, and their children are the drawers. Now imagine a little boy having to go two or three times daily to fetch his father's beer—to how many temptations is he not exposed ? He is inclined first of all to conclude that there must be something manly in being a beer-drinker. Then he sees so much excitement and fun in the bar which he visits so often ; everyone seems to enjoy himself so thoroughly ; there is such laughing and joking and singing all round ; it naturally occurs to him, seeing but one side of the picture, that beer-drinking must be a source of very great pleasure indeed. Again, in carrying home his purchased measure, his curiosity is excited and he tastes it stealthily. At first it seems bitter and he does not like it ; but in the after trials that are sure to follow, the very bitterness becomes attractive to him, and he soon turns out an embryo drunkard.

This, however, is only a slight danger compared to that arising from the bad example of drunken parents. I have already written so much on the subject of the disedification of children, that the further reference to it here may seem tedious and out of place. Yet it is of such vital importance, that

I must be excused for recurring to it in connexion with the stumbling-block of which I am treating. I have generally found the children of drunkards possessed of a strong bias towards intemperance. In many cases, thank God, they overcome this bias; but most of them follow in their parents' footsteps, and become in their turn a source of scandal to their children. In this way the tradition of drink is perpetuated among us, notwithstanding the efforts that are being made to destroy it. There are, indeed, most cheering, hopeful signs that we are getting at the root of the evil. A vigorous, firmly-knitted organisation is leagued under the banner of the Cross and pledged to eradicate it, and right nobly is it doing its work. Yet one obstacle rises up like a wall of adamant to bar all progress in the work of reform, and that obstacle is the example of drunken parents. To understand the difficulty of surmounting it, imagine a child with a drunken father. It took the pledge, let us suppose, some time ago, and it honestly meant to keep it; but it has to go for beer every day, and every night it has to witness its effects on him whose example for good or evil it is inclined by an instinct of its nature to follow. In all likelihood, it is disgusted at first and has no temptation to break its pledge. We all know, however, that habit wears out disgust; and even the unsightly spectacle of a drunken parent will in progress of time be viewed without repugnance or aversion. When that time comes, the hour of trial for the child is at hand; and an hour of terrible danger it is. The pledge

will begin to weigh on that child like a heavy chain ; the sight of drink will begin to fascinate it ; and the drunken excitement it will have to witness will seem like glimpses of an Elysium from which it feels itself cruelly debarred. And there is a special circumstance that increases the child's danger when it loses its disgust for drink. It is the hereditary character of the inclination to drunkenness. I am thoroughly convinced that this inclination is transmitted by generation, and that it remains in the child even when the formerly drunken parent has in course of time become reformed. In itself it is the root of abiding temptation that must be carefully watched to prevent its growth ; and surely it is a sufficiently evil inheritance already, and should not be made worse by the addition of that other inheritance of the example of drink. Yet there are parents who leave both to their children, and who go, without fear of the consequences, before the judgment seat of their Creator, to answer, among other things, for this manner of training their family.

I often try to look into the mind and soul of a drunken parent, and to understand the motives that influence him in his conduct towards his children. It is a sad, repulsive study ; and yet some good may be drawn from it : let us see what it reveals. His conscience, I find, is, in the beginning of his downward career, bitter and stinging in its reproaches. " Has God blessed you with children," it seems to say, " that you should hand them over to

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Satan? You know you are doing so by the example you give them. Would it not be better that they were in their graves, and their sinless souls among the angels, than that they should live to grow up in the blighting shadow of your drunken life? What will your daughter be when she will have come to womanhood? Do you wish to rear her for the streets? Look at her now as she sits shrinking from you in a distant corner. She is still innocent, and pure, and home-loving; but what will she be in twenty years' time? Your son too; what is to become of him? Is he to turn out a drunkard and to vie with you and surpass you in the vicious excesses to which drunkenness leads? If these be the views you have formed for him, then indeed you may continue in your present course, for it is the very best you can adopt to realise them."

What answer does the drunkard make to these reproaches? They trouble him at first, and he has no answer ready. Perhaps he gives up drink on account of them for a month or two. But the answer comes at last. His children will never turn out drunkards. He is giving them a good education. Their mother sees that they attend to their religious duties. In fact, his example will be a warning to them rather than a scandal; and so all this croaking is but an attack of *the blues*, for which drink is the only remedy. This reasoning gradually produces a state of false conscience in which he lives on for years; his children grow to manhood and womanhood; some of them become a curse to

the community in which they live ; others bring disgrace on the name they have inherited ; and all have faithfully followed in the footsteps of their drunken father.

But what about the influence of Religion on that father's career? Are the Sacraments, prayer, Mass, spiritual reading, all given up when he has once set his foot on the inclined plane of drunkenness? No ; I do not find that they are, at least in the beginning. Satan seldom tempts us to leap down all at once into a yawning precipice : he rather leads us downwards by easy stages, until our eyes become used to the darkness, and, on looking upwards, all hope of returning sickens and dies in us. Night prayer is omitted or said irregularly ; and the Tempter is satisfied with this for a beginning. Morning prayer is next left off. Then the confusion and disorder in daily habits, always caused by drink, prevents spiritual reading and the other exercises of piety to which good Catholics are accustomed. In a short time, or perhaps from the very outset, Confession becomes irksome ; a great effort is required to make it ; and sooner or later the effort becomes too much for the besotted will of the drunkard. Holy Communion, of course, is out of the question when Confession has been once given up ; and thus the miserable soul is left to itself, or rather has withdrawn itself from all the spiritual means divinely appointed to strengthen it against temptation, and to confirm it in its good resolutions, and to light its path to Heaven.

There are some drunkards, indeed, who do not give up Confession, and who continue, nevertheless, to lead drunken lives. They deceive themselves into believing that they are committing no grievous sin of intemperance, because they do not bring themselves to a condition of insensibility by the quantity of drink they take. They set their brains on fire, they shake off every restraint on their passions, they speak wild, unreasoned words, they ruin their nervous system and their bodily health, they neglect their business, they squander their money, they scandalise their children; and yet they imagine that they are guilty of no grievous sin, because they do not fall off their chairs and have not to be carried to their beds after their nightly carousals. Those men bring on themselves a terrible hardening of conscience by their abuse of Sacraments; and even at the hour of death I have found it extremely difficult to awaken in them a consciousness of their self-inflicted blindness.

I would urge then upon parents, with all possible earnestness, to remove the temptation of drink from themselves and from their children. Of all stumbling-blocks in our homes this is the greatest and worst, as well as the most prevalent. The Church has always some hope of bringing back under her saving influence, those who still enjoy the use of reason; but for the drunkard who has his reason habitually swamped and steeped in drink, she can have but little hope indeed; and she is forced to class him with the idiotic and

insane in our lunatic asylums; and to watch anxiously for some lucid interval, when she can direct his look to the dark abyss down whose steep side he is every day sinking faster and faster.

CHAPTER XVII.

UNHEALTHY LITERATURE.

TO prevent misunderstanding, I have to remark in beginning this chapter, that I treat of literature only in its connexion with the training of children. The wider question of the influence of modern literature on Religion, although extremely useful and interesting, does not come within the scope of the present work. No doubt, it has an indirect bearing on home-life, but so has almost every other subject that could be mentioned ; and as this is not a treatise on things in general, it would be out of place to discuss in it matters not immediately connected with its main scope and purpose.

Young people have a passionate fondness for the excitement caused by novels and romances. The more this fondness is indulged the more absorbing it becomes ; and even though it be checked for a considerable time, it seems never to die out : for the opportunity of gratifying it, an idle hour, the possession of a certain book, the mention of a certain story—these or other similar circumstances may, at any moment, rouse it into activity, when there will be always more or less trouble in resisting it successfully. But it may be asked, why should it be resisted at all ? The habit of novel-reading, seems, at worst, only a harmless weakness :

it does no injury to others, and it saves oneself from much low pleasure-seeking, besides refining the mind and ennobling the thoughts, and giving us grand, beautiful views of the world we live in. Is it not also an agreeable and perfectly legitimate recreation, after a hard day's work, to spend a few hours of an evening in unravelling some intricate plot or following the course of some human passion to its final results? These are some of the principal arguments urged by the novel-reading class in their own defence: let us see how far they justify parents in permitting their children to belong to that class.

A love for the simple, unostentatious duties of home is a necessary condition for their faithful fulfilment. This is indeed true of all duties whatsoever. When the heart is not in the work done, it is sure to be done badly; and certainly it will not be done uniformly and perseveringly. But work done for a supernatural end and in compliance with divine authority requires in a special manner the co-operation of the interior, without which it would become a mere mechanical, outward observance on which God sets no value. A child, therefore, to be truly obedient and respectful to its parents, to be kind and affectionate to its brothers and sisters, to be patient and forbearing under home trials, must have a real, heartfelt love for the practice of obedience, and of kindness of disposition, and of patience in all its relations with its family. Now, one of the direct and immediate effects of novel-reading on children is to make them look down

with sovereign contempt on all their everyday surroundings. They live and breathe in a land of dreams ; they enjoy the sweet companionship and are received into the inmost confidence of lords and ladies, and even of kings and queens : they are taken to balls and parties, and range through suites of rooms luxuriously appointed with all that wealth or taste can devise to fascinate the senses ; their ears are ravished with sounds of sweetest music ; their eyes are dazzled with lights and colours of brightest hues ; the rarest flowers diffuse their delicious odours all around them. But there is a sudden, rude awaking. A sharp, unsympathetic voice recalls the dreamer to some neglected matter-of-fact, domestic duty. What a miserable lot ! The companion and confidant of princes and princesses has to run on vulgar messages, and to mind a cross-grained baby, and to be scolded, and sometimes even to be caned ! I need not say what discontent and disgust are constantly seething and on the point of boiling over in that young person's heart, nor how aggrieved he feels for the unworthy manner in which he fancies himself treated. And what crowns his misery is the thought that there is no release from the harsh, unfeeling cruelty to which he is subjected. Well, I am very much mistaken if domestic duties can be satisfactorily and uniformly fulfilled by one who is actuated by these dispositions ; and yet they are the dispositions naturally and directly engendered in young people by the habit of novel-reading.

The loss of valuable time also is a consequence

of this habit. To the husbandman, an hour in spring-time is worth a day in summer. Patient industry and constant labour are required to prepare the soil and to plant and cover in the seeds, that there may be a fruitful harvest. So too with the child : its youth is its spring-time, and part of its seed-sowing is its school-education ; and every moment it loses then is a waste spot that remains fallow during all its future life. Of course, this illustration shows the folly of youthful idleness in general ; but novel-reading is not only a waste of time, it is also an obstacle to all serious study and mental culture. When the young mind with its intense craving for knowledge can satisfy that craving by glancing its eye over a page of description or of dialogue, it is very natural that it should turn with difficulty and reluctance to a far different page, say of some dead language, in which every word is a riddle demanding patient study to solve ; and when solved, conveying very little meaning after all. There is indeed a wide contrast between a novel and a school-book, as well in point of interest as of easy comprehension ; and without the habit of self-discipline, the novel will be devoured while the school-book will be treated like a dose of nauseous medicine, and set aside as long as possible.

The morality of novels is another objection to their use by children. I do not deny that there are good Christian novels ; but the habitual novel-reader regards them in the light of sermons in disguise, and shuns them accordingly. They are too insipid for his taste ; they have not the high

flavour that he relishes so much, of thinly-veiled indecency, or of adultery and murder, palliated, if not sanctioned and approved, by many fashionable novelists. Sensual love is, indeed, one of the main-springs of that fascination which novels have for their readers, and without which very few of them have ever become really popular. Now there is no passion more dangerous to the young, none more destructive to spiritual life or more prejudicial to the welfare and happiness of homes than this same sensual love. Parents, therefore, are bound in a most special manner to guard their children against it and against all the avenues by which it may approach their children's souls. The knowledge of sin will unfortunately come soon enough to them from causes that no vigilance can prevent; but this is no reason why all preventable causes should not be removed, so that our Christian homes may be like gardens planted with lilies, as far as parental care can make them.

If novels, then, did no other mischief besides sully the pure virgin souls of the young with indelicate, not to say, indecent, thoughts and images, this surely ought to be enough to make parents scrupulously assiduous in their supervision of their children's reading. No human respect, no fear of being called bigots or purists or martinets, should deter them from the faithful discharge of this duty: for no amount of severity or strictness can be excessive, where the purity and innocence of a child's heart is in danger.

Perhaps it may be thought that I allude here

only to those novels and romances that so outrage public decency as to bring a blush of shame on the cheek of every modest man or woman who reads them. But I do not allude to them at all; and indeed I have no reason to believe that it is necessary to put ordinary parents on their guard against them: for the instinct of parental love will save the child from this scandal at least. To speak plainly then: the works of fiction to which I allude are those we see in lending libraries and at railway book stalls; they are those we find in the catalogues of popular booksellers, and that are being poured out by the press in a constant stream at prices varying from a penny to a guinea and a half. They are books, too, whose effect, like those of certain poisons, is cumulative. The reading of the first is not half so injurious as the reading of the second; nor the second as of the third; and so on, until the moral constitution of the habitual reader becomes wholly undermined, and the life of sanctifying grace, after long flickering, suddenly dies out.

'Of course it is to be understood that I have spoken up to this of the habit of novel reading as it affects children and young people whose education is not yet finished. But the larger question may be referred to here, namely, how far may the habit be indulged without serious danger of injury, by grown up persons whose minds are fully matured, and consequently not as impressionable as they formerly were. In reply, I think it may be safely asserted, that habitual novel-reading is dangerous to young and old,—not indeed equally, but to such

an extent in both cases, that no prudent person can sanction it. I am led to this opinion by the consideration of the many unbecoming, if not sinful scenes and images with which the imagination is stored by such reading ; scenes and images, I may add, that are scarcely compatible, under the circumstances, with that cleanness of heart which the Gospel requires of its followers. Our modern novelists deify sensual love ; and they think that they fail in the fulfilment of the purpose for which they write, if they do not make their readers also deify it. Hence they surround it with all that is beautiful and attractive in nature and in art ; and they enlist in its service every highest endowment of the soul. Surely then, it is reasonable to conclude that not the young alone, but the old too, are in serious danger of corruption from so many seductive influences.

I feel that this view of mine regarding the light literature of the day will not be freely accepted by all my readers. But those who will object to it will be persons who attach little importance to interior purity. Unfortunately there are many such to be found. They think that the divine law, like the human, has to do merely with external sin ; and that it is intended to exercise no control over the acts of the mind or the movements of the heart. They account it then nowise, or at least, but lightly sinful, to dwell mentally on impure thoughts and images and to revel in the impure pleasure they occasion. I can easily understand how persons with such views may justify themselves in reading

even obscene books ; but I cannot understand how, with any knowledge of Christian teaching, they are able to bring themselves to hold those views. Our accountability for interior acts is so clearly revealed in the sacred Scriptures, that it seems to be a fundamental truth of Religion ; and reason itself, pointing to one Supreme Being as the Author both of soul and body, points out also the necessary subjection of all the deliberate acts of each to His absolute dominion and control. Indeed if this were not so, there would be no meaning in the words of our divine Lord, pronouncing a blessing on the clean of heart, and declaring that man to be an adulterer who shall look on a woman to lust after her. As internal purity then is commanded by the same divine law that forbids external sin, it follows that whatever sullies or endangers it is to be avoided with scrupulous care by all those who would lead good Christian lives.

The morality of novels is almost equally blamable in some other respects as in respect of purity. Revenge for injuries inflicted, blow for blow, life for life, this is the gospel of the world ; and the novel is its most eloquent exponent. The heroism of restrained passion, of forgiveness of insult, of patient endurance of calumny, is pronounced craven and white-livered. Duelling, too, is a cherished institution in works of fiction ; and I can well imagine the look of blank amazement, gradually settling into deep disgust, that would darken the face of some fair reader, were she to find the hero of her last three volumes from the lending

library guilty of refusing a challenge from conscientious motives. In fact, the type of manhood held up for admiration, and expected to be found, as a matter of course, in novels, has not a single Christian trait to recommend it: nay more, it is wanting in some of those characteristics that paganism itself required in its ideals. A Spartan or a Roman mother would disown, were he her son, the effeminate fashionable snob, stereotyped in novels, whose only claim on our notice is his cynical contempt of marriage ties and of the happiness of the homes into which he is admitted. And the novelist's type of womanhood is still worse. Instead of being represented as queen in the realm of her home, as the centre of domestic love, and the light of domestic life, woman is painted in colours that fit only a class that no Christian wife or daughter can belong to without sin. But it is needless to pursue this part of my subject any further.

From these remarks I think I may fairly conclude, that the habit of novel-reading is injurious both to young and old, and that parents do not discharge faithfully their duties to their children, when they neglect to exercise a careful and constant supervision over the books of light literature read by them.

But there are other books beside novels against which children must be safeguarded. English literature is, for the most part, anti-Catholic. Indeed it could scarcely be expected to be otherwise, written as it has been, almost entirely, by

Protestants for a Protestant people. We are, thank God, beginning to have a literature of our own ; but the time seems to be still distant when it will be sufficiently complete to satisfy all the requirements of Catholic readers. Meanwhile, the utmost prudence is necessary to pass safely between the two opposite evils : That of starving the intellect and the imagination through fear of poison in the food supplied to them ; and that of being reckless whether the food be poisoned or not.

History, as it is written by non-Catholic writers in this country, presents, I think, more dangers to young people than any other branch of English literature. The Catholic Church has from her beginning exercised so profound an influence on human events, that her action must be discussed by every one who would give even an outline of modern history. But Protestants are naturally reluctant to give any credit to the Catholic Church for the benefits she has conferred on the world. They hate her too cordially to see any good or even any capacity of good in her ; and therefore they are wanting in the first essential requirement of an historian,—that freedom from prejudice, namely, that would help them to see and narrate events as they really occurred. Truth is the groundwork of history ; and as there can be no reliable truth where there is a prejudiced statement of facts, it follows that our Church must be always more or less misrepresented by those historians who deny her infallible authority and her exclusive mission to teach the nations of the earth. In fact, she must

either act under divine influence in asserting the absolute control over men's consciences which she asserts, or she must act from ambitious human motives, such as love of power and heartless despotism. Non-Catholics, of course, can scarcely admit with consistency the former alternative; and accordingly they feel bound to square all their views and statements of ecclesiastical facts with the latter. Hence we cannot take up a modern history written by an English non-Catholic author, without finding in almost every page something to pain and insult us. In one place, it is a Pope whose moral character is vilified and his public action attributed to base, unworthy motives. In another, it is a heretic or an heresiarch whose rebellion against the Church is characterized as manly independence; or again, it is some occurrence about which two statements widely different have come down to us, one of which, inasmuch as it tells against us, is sure to be the one recorded. In writing about the Reformation period, in particular, non-Catholic historians have hitherto accepted party accounts of men and events that are now proved by documentary evidence to be scandalously false. And yet those accounts are embodied in school books and taught in universities and colleges and schools, as though they admitted of no contradiction. Hence it comes that Catholics must be on their guard against many books of history that have become part of the literature of our country. We have been over and over again called hard names for this prudent caution; but the investigations that have been lately made into the State

Papers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries show now how fully our caution has been justified. In fact, modern English history has not yet been written by any non-Catholic historian in the full light of unprejudiced truth ; and until it is written so, the same principle that keeps men from giving poisoned food to others must also keep us from putting into the hands of our children the popular English histories that our Protestant neighbours prize so highly, and whose every statement they accept with such implicit confidence.

There is one other department of English literature about which I feel bound to say something. I refer to the philosophy of science. Many writers have in the present generation acquired a reputation by discussing, and, to their minds, determining, the relations between science and Faith. They set out with the first principle that a conflict may exist between these two sources of knowledge ; and the entire scope of their works consists in formulating theories by which men may be guided when such conflict presents itself. These theories are generally very ingenious ; and having been worked out with much literary skill, they gain many readers for the works. Their authors are talked about wherever men usually assemble, the quarterlies and monthlies and weeklies have learned articles on them, and even the daily papers have notices of them and allude to them in occasional leaders. In this way among others, we, Catholics, are brought into contact with them, and what is the consequence ? It is, that we

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either read the books themselves or study the theories second-hand in Reviews or Magazines. This would be right enough if the Reviews or Magazines were Catholic ; but unfortunately, as the bulk of these serials, read by our people, are not Catholic, the influence of the second-hand reading is much the same as that of reading the works themselves. Divine Faith is spoken of there as though it were a mere human invention, and its dogmas are discussed and criticised and condemned with a scorn and a flippancy that are not only irreverent in the highest degree, but are outrages on all decorum and good taste. Scientific facts, on the other hand, are strung together and vested with an infallibility that is denied to the word of God ; and so human reason is deified, while the Author of human reason is deposed and vilified, and crushed out of His own creation. This, I believe, to be the gist of most of the books to which I am referring. Now what is the influence of those books on Catholic readers ? It is, I think, chiefly twofold. First of all, they get from them an exaggerated idea of the importance of modern scientific discoveries in their bearing on revealed Truth. Most of us have a tendency to become slaves to the books we read. We are inclined to accept unhesitatingly the opinions and views they express, and to surrender our judgment to their teaching, as if they had some authoritative mission to instruct and guide us. Hence, when they tell us that science is to be the light of the future, before which all other lights are to pale, and into which they are to merge, and

when they tell us that facts already discovered by scientists disprove the truth of all Christian revelation, we become anxious and disquieted, and a half-conscious, involuntary fear grows upon us, that modern science and modern discoveries are about to bring some terrible disaster on the Church to which we belong. The step from this point to doubts about divine revelation is short and easy ; and unfortunately it is frequently taken, to the serious, if not permanent, injury of the soul.

The other influence that this class of literature has on Catholic readers is the uncatholic idea of Faith which it conveys. With us the object of Faith is God's *spoken* word to man ; and the motive of our belief is the truthfulness of Him who has spoken. Now everyone who admits the existence of God must attach the highest possible credit to His spoken word ; so much so, indeed, that no evidence either of the senses or of reason can have any weight against it. But in order that men attach such credit to Divine Revelation, some medium, absolutely certain and unerring, must have been established by which it is to be conveyed to individual souls. Even though God spoke in times past by the prophets, and last of all by His Son, we must be assured by some authority appointed by Himself, first, that He has spoken, and secondly, what He has spoken, before we are obliged to give His words the credit due to them. This infallible authority resides in the Catholic Church. Hence whatever the Catholic Church teaches to have been spoken by God, has, beyond

all possibility of doubt, been spoken by Him; and it would be impious to set up the testimony of the senses or the testimony of reason or any other possible testimony against what He has said, Indeed it would not only be impious but irrational to do so.

Non-Catholic writers convey a very different idea regarding the Christian faith. They invariably go on the supposition when they admit any revelation at all—that God spoke to the world without making any absolutely sure provision for the teaching and transmission of His word to future generations. They, therefore, accept it on grounds exactly similar to those on which they accept other historical statements, that is, on merely human testimony. And this supposition or first principle leads to another, namely, that all testimony in favour of revealed truths is to be set aside whenever it conflicts with reason or science. According to those writers then, Christian faith is a body of truths stated to have been revealed by God, that have come down to us side by side with other truths not revealed. Their origin as well as their transmission to us are to be weighed and examined before they ought to be accepted; and the same canons of criticism are to be applied to them as are usually applied to other historical truths.

Infidel writers treat of Christian faith very much in the same way as those just mentioned. They examine the teaching of Jesus Christ just as they examine a Dialogue of Plato, and they bring to the examination, as their first principle, the rejection of

the supernatural. Denying the existence of any living authority in the world commissioned to teach men God's message to them, denying, too, the possibility of God speaking to His own creation, except through human reason and external phenomena, those philosophers, denying all this, naturally look on and write about revealed truth as the mere outcome of a grand and beautiful but merely human intellect. They accept it as a past or passing phase of humanity ; but they deny it to be a supernatural expression or a gratuitous message of love from a personal God to His creatures.

It will be seen, then, how dangerous for Catholic readers is the habit of perusing works treating of religious matters from an un-Catholic standpoint. Such Catholics very soon come to take the same standpoint themselves ; and the consequences need not to be particularised.

All that I have been writing in this chapter may, perhaps, lead some to suppose that I look with indifference, if not with a certain amount of distrust, on the habit of reading in general. This is not so. I think a habit of reading is most useful and desirable for everyone ; and I think Religion has few more powerful natural helps than such a habit, safeguarded and controlled by Christian prudence. The mind acquires an elevated tone by it, and all the faculties receive from it a development that could scarcely be attained by any other means. It produces, too, broader views of life than we would otherwise have, and it proportionately enlarges our

sympathies with our fellow-beings. Our daily employments and surroundings are only too apt to make us hard and material and selfish, whereas a habit of judicious reading brings home to us insensibly that we were not created for ourselves exclusively ; that we have duties and responsibilities towards the world in which we live ; that life is something more than a money-making speculation ; and that the tender sentiments of our nature were given to us not to be plucked up as useless weeds, but to be trained and developed as well for our own perfection as for the help and advancement of our neighbour. This habit may indeed be made a powerful means of enlightening and eventually saving the souls of those with whom we come in contact. Ignorance has been always a most fertile root of infidelity and vice. Bring, then, a well-stored, well-informed mind in contact with one that is narrow and shrivelled by want of education, and the light of the former will very soon find its way into the latter, and will very likely be made for it the vehicle of faith and holiness in the merciful designs of divine Providence. In these countries, at the present day, a sublime apostleship seems to be conferred on our Catholic laity, in the work of spiritual enlightenment, a work they have such splendid opportunities to discharge. They eat and drink and work with men, many of whom are kept, solely by traditional prejudices, out of the Church of Christ. Why not direct the habit of reading to the acquisition of that doctrinal and historical knowledge that would enable us to dissipate those

prejudices and to open the way to those men's conversion? Unlikely as it may seem, I find it nevertheless to be true, that much more is done in this direction among the labouring and uneducated classes than among those holding higher ranks in society. Good taste is generally put forward by these latter as an excuse for not mentioning religious matters in mixed society; and, no doubt, it is a valid excuse when the circumstances of time or place or person are unfavourable. But very often they are not unfavourable; and yet the silly fear of being thought over-zealous and enthusiastic keeps many from speaking a seasonable word or making a casual suggestive remark that they know might be productive of good. There is more zeal among the poor of our Church; and if they were to eschew controversy and suppress all display of party-spirit, confining themselves to a simple explanation of what they believe as Catholics, the good they are undoubtedly doing among their fellow-labourers and companions would be very much increased.

I have now, before concluding this chapter, to add only a few words about the libraries of our Catholic homes. They ought, as far as possible, to consist, to a large extent, of Catholic books. Now that the Reformation has given back to us some of the brightest talent of which it robbed us, and that talent being conspicuously displayed in our contemporary literature, we can have no excuse for not making our libraries emphatic expressions, not only of the Religion we profess,

but also of the earnestness with which we profess it. I do not know a surer test of a man's character than his library; that is, when he has the selection of the books entirely in his own hands; and so too, a truly Catholic home is best known by the collection of Catholic books found in it. Standard works, of course, need not be excluded, although their writers be not of our faith, provided their general tenor be not anti-religious or immoral. But we look in a library not merely for a proof of the owner's literary taste, but for an expression of his individuality, and this expression, in the case of Catholics especially, is found in the class of modern books with which they fill up their book-shelves and strew their library tables. Unfortunately many of our homes, examined by this test, give a very unfavourable idea of the religious earnestness of those who control them. Indeed if any of our cities or towns were to be suddenly overwhelmed, like Pompeii of old, and to be excavated after eighteen centuries, the explorers would find, in the libraries discovered, little clue to help them to distinguish between Catholic and non-Catholic homes. The fact is, we have no taste for Catholic reading, and we make no effort to acquire it, and our indifference reacts on the Catholic book-market, limiting the sale of religious books and diverting Catholic talent into un-Catholic lines of exertion. We must awaken from this apathy and show more appreciation of our own literature before we can hope for a general revival of

Catholicity in this country. But independently of this consideration, we must seek to preserve and nourish and develop the spiritual life of our homes ; and a great aid to the attainment of this object is a good Catholic library.

CHAPTER XVIII.

UNTHRIFTINESS, UNTIDINESS, UNSOCIABLENESS.

THE three obstacles to domestic union and well-being which I am now about to explain, have direct reference to the social, rather than to the religious, life of home. It may be thought, therefore, that they are out of place here ; but a little reflection will show that they are not. Want of prudence and foresight in the management of family affairs, habits of slovenliness and disorder in family arrangements, estrangement of neighbouring families from each other—these, although social evils, have an influence on the religious and moral character of our homes that cannot be overlooked. A spendthrift father or husband who lives beyond his means is not only bringing those depending on him to social ruin ; but he is exposing them and himself to the violation of all the duties of domestic life. A slovenly wife, too, who neglects the social duties of order, cleanliness, and regularity, is fast driving her husband to spend his time away from home and to break through the ties that bind him to it. A family, in fine, that maintains no friendly, social intercourse with its neighbours, will not supply of itself to its young members all that harmless relaxation and enjoyment for which they feel a natu-

ral want ; and the consequence will be, that they will seek for it in places and in company more or less dangerous to the purity and innocence in which they had been trained. It will be seen, then, that the three obstacles of which I am now about to treat, unthriftiness, untidiness, and unsociableness, have a moral as well as a social aspect in their bearing on home life, and therefore, that they come naturally within the scope of the present work.

Young married people frequently begin life on a scale far beyond their means. The bride, in her inexperience of money matters, thinks her husband's salary or income, like an elastic band, capable of covering over any number of bills. He, too, living wholly in the present, flatters himself that "it will be all right ;" and gives her *carte blanche* to order what she pleases. Furniture, plate, china, pictures, books, &c., are bought in bewildering confusion, and a fairy castle in miniature is erected almost as quickly as fairies were believed to do those things ; and all on the strength of poor John's few hundred a-year. After three months, however, a great change has come over the castle. The walls are indeed there, and the furniture, and the plate, and all the rest ; but the landlord is there too, pressing hard for his rent ; and the tradespeople are making themselves troublesome about their bills ; and the butcher has sent the servant back without the meat until his account is settled. How his or any other account is to be settled is just the question that brings such a cloud of perplexity on the brow of the husband as he sits at breakfast with his pile of

bills beside him and his young wife opposite. It would be well if that cloud were like a shadow in springtime, passing over a smiling landscape ; but more frequently it has its image rather in the long bank of dark, leaden vapour seen over the horizon in the early morning, telling of a rainy day to come in which there will be no gleam of warm sunshine. The proverbial first quarrel that arises between the married parties sooner or later has its source generally in a fault or mistake like this ; and if the fault or mistake cannot or will not be repaired, the quarrel is very seldom healed, but goes on poisoning home-life to the end.

But it is not solely at the start that unthriftiness causes trouble and inconvenience and leads to disruption in married life. In the upper classes of society, Fashion has as many old and middle-aged, as youthful votaries in her train ; and the first commandment in her Decalogue is, to keep up appearances at any cost. "Run your husband into debt ; stretch your own and his credit to its utmost tension ; screw money out of your starving tenants or employees if your income comes from them—even gamble, and play for high stakes, and go to the very verge of compromising your honour ; but keep up your establishment and your style of living at any cost."

There is no one that cannot see to what social and moral dangers life, regulated by these principles, naturally leads. There is no true peace or union or love in such a life ; there is no faithful discharge of domestic duties in it ; above all, there

is no religion in it. Prayer and Sacraments are almost wholly given up ; high Mass may be attended on Sundays for the music and singing, but for nothing else ; and as for thought of eternity and of earnest preparation for it, it is put away as something intensely unpleasant, obtrusive, and unfashionable. Dinner-parties, balls, theatres, operas, &c., are the gilded covering of a discontented mind, of a remorseful conscience, of health impaired by dissipation, of embittered home relations, in a word, of all manner of secret misery and wretchedness. May God preserve all who will read these pages from any personal experience of such a wasted, useless life ; for it is so unhappy that the meanest domestic drudge has no reason to envy it.

And the consequences to home-life are not much different when, as more generally happens, only one of the married parties lives beyond his income. A husband, for instance, has a mania for betting. He risks on a single chance a considerable part of his income ; and whether he wins or loses, his family suffers. If he wins, he is drawn deeper and deeper into a *set*, the very existence of which depends on its members withdrawing themselves from home-ties. If he loses, social disgrace gathers round him, and all belonging to him. Perhaps, however, he is in a position of confidence and has the handling and management of other people's money. His accounts are checked only at long intervals, and in the meantime, no one will know if he borrow for a few weeks a certain sum from his employer's account to meet the deficit of his betting speculations. A

temptation of this nature is sure to arise at one time or another out of the difficulties caused by betting or other reckless expenditure ; and our law-courts and prisons reveal to us some of the cases in which it is successful. Yes ; but they leave us to imagine the number of wives and mothers whose home-lives are for ever poisoned by it, the number of children reduced to penury by it, the bright prospects, the high hopes, the successful beginnings, brought to a sudden, fatal termination by it. Surely unthriftiness, in the form of gambling at least, may be fairly classed among the moral as well as the social stumbling-blocks of our homes.

But we have unthriftiness in other forms in the homes of our middle and working classes. I cannot undertake to speak of all those forms, and therefore I must confine myself to a few of the leading ones. The first is the expensive habit of imitating the wealthier classes in dress and general outfit. This is closely allied to an unthrifty habit already pointed out ; but there is this difference, that in the former case, people live beyond their means in order to maintain their standing in the class to which they belong ; while in this, unjustifiable expenditure is incurred to raise oneself or one's family from one social level to another that is considered higher and more respectable. The vulgarity and the bad taste of this practice are perceived and despised by every one except by those who give way to it. A servant-maid will spend a quarter's wages in trying to turn out like her mistress, a shop girl or milliner's

assistant will dress more showily than those she attends; an attorney's clerk will have more jewellery about his person than his master's client; and so on, all the way upwards in the social scale. But if vulgarity or bad taste were the only consequence of this custom, I would scarcely refer to it here. It has, however, a moral bearing on home that brings it directly within the scope of the present chapter. A young person who spends all his earnings or most of them on dress can scarcely be a dutiful, affectionate child. As a rule, his parents, if they live, require whatever help he can give them. Perhaps they are old and cannot procure for themselves those little comforts that old people value so very highly. Perhaps they are unable to work or are bed-ridden and depend to a great extent on him for the necessaries of life. Perhaps they expect from him merely some sign of his unchanged affection—some grateful recognition of their own past sacrifices for him. In all these cases, it seems cruel and unfeeling that a son or daughter should spend on himself or herself, foolishly and unnecessarily, earnings that would produce so much happiness if spent on home comforts.

I scarcely think, indeed, that young people who act so reflect seriously on what they do. If they were to see how ridiculous they make themselves in the eyes of others, and how disgusting their conduct towards their parents looks to all right-thinking persons who know them, they would be prevented by very shame from continuing it. They would also feel stung to the quick by the consciousness of their in-

gratitude, and their gayest and most extravagant pleasures would lose their zest and become insipid and nauseating. As long, in fact, as the memory of home continues fresh in those who are absent from it, so long will the ties and duties that still bind them to it exercise a salutary influence on their own lives as well as on the lives of those who were left behind. Filial piety and affection will not change into a mere transient sentiment, but will remain the same strong passion of their nature that it was in their childhood. Parents, then, ought to endeavour by every means in their power to maintain a close connexion between themselves and their absent children. They will thus contribute materially to their own happiness and they will prevent the absent ones from drifting into those reckless, unthrifty ways of which I have been speaking.

Another practice that I have known to bring ruin on more than one home is that of educating children for social positions far above the position held by the parents themselves. There are cases, I admit, in which this is not only allowable but praiseworthy. A child, for instance, shows a special aptitude for some calling or profession, and its parents, without injury to their other children, can assist it to follow the direction of its talents. If they do so, they co-operate in God's work, and gain for themselves the merit of seconding His designs on their child's future destiny. But how often do we see children spoiled for life by having an education or a profession for which they are not fitted

forced on them, simply to gratify the vanity or ambition of their wealthy, purse-proud parents. "I am but a humble man myself," I have sometimes heard a father saying. "I have got very little school education; I had to make my own way in the world, and I have succeeded. Well, I will have one gratification when I die, that my sons will be gentlemen and my daughters ladies. Money can do it, and I'll take care that the money will not be wanting." The sons accordingly are sent to the most fashionable high-toned colleges, and the daughters to the most aristocratic boarding schools. Time passes on; the process of transformation is completed, and the father looks eagerly for the result. He looks to see realized in his son his ideal of a finished gentleman; but to his disappointment he finds him only a finished rake. He finds him with an unlimited capacity for spending money, but with none whatever for earning it. He finds him, too, indolent in his demeanour, thankless for all that has been done for him—in fact, ashamed of his home and family and surroundings. The daughters, too, are another source of disappointment. They can, perhaps, speak French and German fluently; they can paint and draw; they can play sonatas of Beethoven and sing selections from "Il Trovatore;" but they are utterly ignorant of all useful domestic affairs. They cannot cook or superintend the cooking in the kitchen; they can neither make nor mend their own dresses; they cannot keep the weekly house accounts: in a word they can only dawdle over their toilets, read French

novels, snub the servants, and spend the rest of their time in indulging silly day-dreams or in longing for somebody to call. As a rule, no one that they consider "somebody" does call, and so they become ill-tempered and unsocial, and they make their homes as unpleasant as can be, and their parents' beautiful air castle turns out after all to be a miserable failure and mistake. I can well imagine the chagrin and disappointment of one of those parents who has spent his hard-earned cash in making his children ladies and gentlemen, and who finds after they have finished their boarding-school and college education that they entertain an ill-concealed contempt for their home and family, as well as for the business by which he made his money. But it is the after-fate of such children that generally brings the greatest pain to parents and the greatest desolation on homes. Their marriages are almost sure to be imprudent and unfortunate; for they will not be able to marry into the circle to which their ambition aspires, and they will not submit to marry into their own; and so an unsuitable alliance is most likely to be the consequence. I have seen in more than one case the hard-earned means of business people pass over by such alliances into the hands of penniless adventurers and spendthrifts; and it generally took only a year or two to squander to the last penny the savings of a father's lifetime.

The second of the three stumbling-blocks mentioned at the beginning of this chapter is untidiness. A slovenly, lazy, unpunctual wife will never succeed in making her home what it ought to be, either socially,

morally, or religiously. Husbands and grown-up children have strong temptations to spend their evenings away from their families. The public-house attracts the poor, the club and the theatre the rich. Other resorts, too, hold out their own characteristic allurements. No expense is spared by the caterers of popular amusement and of social enjoyment to draw away crowds, evening after evening, from home intercourse and home influences, until a distaste for domestic life is engendered, and the habit of disregarding domestic ties and duties has sapped the principles of morality and of religion in the soul. A wife can generally counteract these evils by keeping her home bright and cheerful and well-ordered. A husband who knows that loving hands are busy putting the family sitting-room to rights in order to give him pleasure, and that anxious loving eyes are looking out for his coming, and that a warm-hearted welcome awaits him on his return from his day's work—such a husband is not likely to forego the genuine pleasure in store for him, and to give pain to one so intent on his comfort, for all the noisy, tinsel gaiety and excitement of clubs or theatres or drinking saloons.

A poet of the present day has told us, that "What the husband is the wife is;" or in other words, that the wife rises or falls to the moral level of the husband. I must say, I do not think so. My experience would rather lead me to believe that, as a rule, the husband is what the wife is; or to put it more accurately, the husband is what the wife:

makes him. She has his salvation and his ruin in her power ; and she will effect either the one or the other directly or indirectly. I know there are many weak-minded women who exercise no influence on their husbands, but let them drift whithersoever their natural inclinations draw them. There are many drunkards' wives, for instance, who never try to counteract the allurements of the public-house by the counter-allurements of home—who never have a warm, comfortable meal prepared for them, nor a bright, clean, well-ordered room before them, nor a cheerful, affectionate welcome with which to greet them. They sit idly all day, lamenting their hard fate. Everything around them is in confusion: the grate is without fire, the floor is unswept, the furniture is undusted. And when their husbands return at night, "the worse of drink" most likely, they are met with reproaches, and scolding, and nagging, and the unfortunate men are let go supperless to bed, and altogether treated as if they were children in disgrace. Now I am convinced that wives are in fault in treating their husbands so. Such conduct has never reformed a drunkard ; but, on the contrary, it has confirmed many in a habit of intemperance. The fact then that a wife does not always reform her husband, in most cases simply proves that she does not always fulfil her duty to him. She does not try to make the best of her position ; she does not use the means in her power to wean him from his evil courses ; she does not, above all, lessen, as she can do, his temptations from the outside world, by making his home more

bright and pleasant and attractive to him. I think it will be admitted, that she is bound to do all this, to save him from ruin ; and with patience she will find it will save him in the end.

But the influence of a well-ordered, cheerful home on some natures does not manifest itself all at once. It works slowly, and, at first, imperceptibly, undermining old habits, cutting the roots of strong passions, dissipating the glamour of temptations hostile to home life. Occasionally, those on whom it is brought to bear will rebel against it and perhaps be made worse by it—for a time. But if the wife be patient, and prudent, and steady in carrying out her purpose of reformation, the time will not be long. The contrast between the solid joys of his home and the hollow, boisterous gaiety that would lure him away from it, is sure to strike the husband's attention and make him reflect on the loss he sustains by a life of dissipation. Gratitude, too, for the love so unselfishly and uncomplainingly devoted to him will have its share in leading him into the path of domestic duty and helping him to walk in it to the end.

A woman, therefore, must wait patiently and hopefully for the result of her efforts to make her home what it should be. But there are many occasions in home-life in which human patience breaks down unless it be strengthened by divine help ; and no one is more frequently placed in such circumstances than the mistress of a household. Hence it follows that she must have habitual recourse to prayer and to the Sacraments of Penance and the

most holy Eucharist, if she wishes for strength to persevere in the faithful and cheerful discharge of her duties. I do not believe that so many wives and mothers die of broken hearts as are generally supposed; but of those who so die, the greater part, I am convinced, consists of those who have no faith in the efficacy of prayer and the Sacraments to sustain and console the wounded or overburdened spirit. They rely wholly on themselves, and they think that their human love of husband and children and their merely natural fidelity to the duties of their state will shield them from the deadly blight of brutality or ingratitude. But they find out how mistaken they were, when their shattered health, and their lost courage, and their hope turned to despair, and their love to bitterness, force the conviction on them that death is about to claim them for its own.

The case is wholly different with those who, recognizing their own moral weakness, put all their confidence in the strength to be gained by prayer and the Sacraments. You may sometimes have seen a woman, delicately organized and altogether unfitted for the rough ways of life, bearing up with patient courage under the harsh treatment or the harsher neglect of her husband; and you may have been puzzled to find out what secret power sustained her and counteracted the crushing influences of her daily surroundings. The apparent mystery would be solved if you saw her in prayer before her Crucifix or during her thanksgiving after Holy Communion. The light that kindles in her face,

and makes her look so bright and happy, is but the reflection of the divine light beaming on her soul; and no human consolation, nor any human feeling, no matter how intense or highly strung, could ever produce the calm, settled resolve to suffer with which her intercourse with heaven inspires her. By suffering Jesus entered into His glory, and by suffering, too, we must enter into ours. Such is the dispensation under which we live; and when the truth is brought home by the habitual communion with God that is secured by prayer and the Blessed Eucharist, neither bodily suffering, nor coarse treatment, nor unrepaid conjugal love, nor even the grossest and most deliberate ingratitude of spouse or child will of itself be ever able to crush even the most sensitive spirit or the most delicately organized nature. In all human suffering, the bitterest element is the hopelessness of relief; and this is the very element that prayer most effectually destroys. Indeed, the very act of prayer is an implicit act of hope; and hence he who prays habitually acquires of necessity the virtue of hope by which the heaviest trial is lightened and made endurable, and the sharpest pain, whether physical or mental, is dulled to the senses or the soul, if not wholly deadened.

A wife, then, who would keep her home well-ordered, bright and cheerful for the purpose of winning her husband from the haunts and companions and vices that draw him away from his own fireside—such a wife must wait patiently for the successful result of her efforts. She must not be discouraged by first failures, nor by the brutality

that possibly may be provoked by her steady adherence to the one line of conduct. In every event and circumstance she must be patient and persevering ; and in order to be so, she must constantly pray, and with great fervour, and she must have frequent recourse to the Sacraments of Penance and the most holy Eucharist. From these sources of spiritual strength she will derive in abundance that patient, cheerful courage that will bear her lightly over the most disheartening trials and difficulties of her married life.

Everything kept in its proper place, everything done at its proper time—these should be the two primary rules of a wife in the management of her domestic affairs, and if they be carefully observed, they will secure cleanliness, order, and punctuality in the home. They will thus attach all its members to it, and they will neutralise the counter-attractions that modern society patronises and supports with all its influence, although they tend directly to its own destruction.

I now come to the last of the three obstacles of home life that I have placed at the head of this chapter. I have called it unsociableness, as this word comes nearer to express the obstacle I am about to explain than any other I can bring to mind. And yet it is only to one special kind of unsociableness—namely, to that which keeps families from meeting and mixing in social intercourse, that I now wish to direct attention. I think, if we examine closely the relations existing between the families we are acquainted with, we shall

find them, in many cases, characterised by much pride and uncharitableness. Hair-breadth lines of distinction in social status are magnified into walls of separation, over which there may be a nod of recognition or a greeting in monosyllables, but no cordial, friendly intercourse. The consequence is, that families thus cut off from each other are thrown in upon themselves and have to rely on their own resources for that supply of innocent, healthful amusement and recreation, so useful for young people. Now everyone knows that variety is a very necessary element in all provisions made to interest the young ; and as there can be very little variety in a home in which a strange face is scarcely ever seen, in which the same familiar voices are always heard, and in which occurs, evening after evening, the same round of occupations or amusements, it follows that the young will not have all the relaxation to which they are reasonably entitled, if they are to depend for it exclusively on the resources of their homes. Moreover, the home-instinct (of which I spoke in the beginning of this book) which binds the child to its parents during the time of its mental and physical development, seems afterwards to yield precedence to another instinct, inclining the young man or woman to become the centre of a new home of his or her own formation. Of course, this is merely another way of saying that young people will get married and will look out for suitable partners, and, after finding them, will desire to live as much as they can in their society. Let parents be as strict and vigilant and

exclusive as they may, and let them make their home as pleasant as home can be, still the young will seek out the society of the young, and if they cannot find it under the guidance and supervision of their parents, they will be strongly tempted to find it in stealthy and imprudent ways. Let them, then, find this society under the guidance and supervision of their parents. Let parents take a more enlightened view of the requirements of their children than they are in the habit of taking. Let there be more social union and intercourse between the families constituting each class of society than there is at present. Let no miserable punctilio, dictated by pride or envy or ambition, be permitted to expose the young to terrible temptation, and to stand as an obstacle in the way of their future happiness.

I know that there are other considerations besides those to which I have alluded, that keep homes separated from each other more than they ought to be. Two of these considerations may be mentioned here; namely, want of time and economy. Some families have to work from morning until night for their daily bread, and, in consequence, have no time for social intercourse with their neighbours. Others, whose living does not depend on the labour of their hands, have, nevertheless, a well-defined routine of duties arranged for each day; and, being of that serious, narrow-minded class who do not believe in recreation, for young or old, they make, of course, no provision in their cast-iron time-table for paying or receiving social visits,

and, much less, for bringing young people together under the supervision of their parents. Here, then, are two cases in which families live isolated from each other, because their friendly intercourse is not believed to be of such importance as to require any fixed time to be especially set apart for it. Wrong convictions are not easily dislodged by mere reasoning : hence I can scarcely hope that the reasons I have given above for greater sociableness among families will, by themselves, produce any practical effect. I would appeal, then, to the experience of those parents who have brought up their children in strict seclusion from the society of other young people. What was the result of such training? I think it will be admitted to have been generally one or other of these two. Either those children became stupid and broken-hearted, holding distorted, unhealthy views of life and acting on them ; or they broke through the unnatural restraint to which they were subjected and brought shame and sorrow on their families by the unequal and injudicious marriage alliances they privately contracted. Among the labouring classes, too, in which the young are usually allowed to associate with each other, at odds and ends of time, without any parental supervision, experience shows us not unfrequently the sad spectacle of innocence destroyed, and characters blighted, and stainless family names disgraced for generations—misfortunes that never would have happened, if parents had had the wisdom to promote social intercourse between their own and their neighbours' homes.

The other consideration that sometimes prevents this social intercourse is that of the expense entailed by it. Family gatherings imply an outlay of money not always in keeping with limited incomes, and many persons are accordingly deterred by a motive of prudence from dispensing or accepting hospitality as much as they would wish. It must be admitted that this consideration has much weight ; but it does not follow that it should prevent absolutely the adoption of the course I recommend. Families may be on very intimate terms with each other and may interchange visits very frequently without giving costly dinners, or, indeed, without incurring any expense worthy of notice. I am not at all inclined to think that the true interests of home-life are promoted by those formal social reunions that seem to be the chief glory and aim of the fashionable world. Such reunions create a distaste for ordinary domestic duties ; they are often sources of danger to the young ; and they generally entail a waste of time and money that is justified by no adequate motive. However the bulk of those for whom I write are not exposed to the temptation of spending either time or money on those frivolous entertainments, and therefore it is not necessary to say more about them.

There is one matter, however, intimately connected with the social relations of families, about which it is necessary to say a few words here. When young people meet together for amusement, they usually contrive to get up a dance. Now dancing, when conducted with modesty and pro-

priety, is at least a harmless recreation ; and I consider those persons very shortsighted and unwise who discountenance it in all forms and under every circumstances, and who use their authority to prevent it in families. The gaiety and mirthfulness, characteristic of youth, should not be repressed, but regulated and controlled. Divine Providence had a wise purpose in making children merry and light-hearted, and that purpose ought to be seconded by parents in giving those under their charge a certain latitude in the choice and enjoyment of their amusements. Prudence, however, has in this matter a very delicate office to discharge : for most amusements are apt to be abused and perverted into occasions of sin, and it is often extremely difficult to decide at what particular point such abuse and perversion begin. This is especially the case in dancing, on account of its many varieties, some of which bring young people into positions that must be pronounced unbecoming and indelicate, if not positively immodest, while others are distinguishable from these only by a faint colouring of propriety. Of course, parents should never allow their children to take any part in dances that are naturally and evidently suggestive of sin ; and, I will add, they should also discountenance those that are probably suggestive of it. We make ourselves positively certain of the wholesomeness of the food we give children before giving it ; and if we have reason to fear that it contains poison, we are careful to put the food away, lest their lives should be endangered by it. Surely, then, it is not from narrow-minded-

ness or undue severity, but from a feeling of conscientious duty, that prudent parents forbid their children to take part in dances that provoke to sin either openly or covertly. But unfortunately the spirit of the non-Catholic community in which we live has entered into many Catholic homes, with this lamentable consequence, that the warning, and, in some places, the prohibition, of the Church against "fast" dances are practically disregarded, in obedience to the tyranny of Fashion and the requirements of "respectable society."

It is unnecessary to dwell on the evils arising from such insubordination. It weakens respect for the authority of the Church, as exercised not only in matters of discipline, but also in discharge of her teaching office; and it leads moreover to dangerous tampering with Sacraments, prejudicial, if not fatal, to the life of grace in the soul. Surely no good Catholic will ever expose himself or his children to such dangers as these. He can easily maintain social intercourse with his neighbours, and share in every advantage arising from such intercourse, without swerving in the least from the guidance of his Church, and without sacrificing the innocence, and perhaps the salvation of his children.

I have now said all that I think necessary on the three obstacles to home-life, mentioned at the head of the present chapter. I have still other obstacles of this class before my mind, about which it might be useful to say something; but I wish to keep this little book within the reach of the poor, and therefore I am anxious to exclude from it everything

not directly connected with its scope and object. If, however, the recommendations already made be carefully observed, they will, I am confident, be a sufficient safeguard against most of the obstacles that affect the peace and well-being of home.

CHAPTER XIX.

A LAST DANGER.—CONCLUSION.

I MUST refer here to a serious danger which threatens our homes, a danger indirect indeed, yet none the less sure and imminent. Secret Societies, the danger to which I refer, are undermining religion, morality, and constituted government throughout Europe, if not throughout the civilized world. They are working under the surface of every-day life. They hate the light, because it is fatal to their existence. They stab men in the dark and from behind, because they are the offsprings of cowardice. They profess to hate tyranny, yet they are themselves an example of the grossest tyranny of which the world has experience. They tear the husband from his wife and children, or the son from his widowed mother whose support he had been, and they bid him, under penalty of death, commit a crime of blood that not only cries to heaven for vengeance, but generally brings down on its perpetrator the extreme penalty of civil justice. I do not understand how a brave man can consent at the bidding of one of those societies, and even at the peril of his life, to commit the dastardly, cold-blooded murders which we have seen committed or attempted in our day. True bravery would shrink from taking a marked victim unawares, or striking him down ruthlessly, when least able to defend himself.

But secret societies strike down not public men alone, in carrying out their plans of anarchy and destruction. Helpless women, innocent children, servants doing their masters' work, charitable persons on errands of mercy to homes of sorrow, or suffering, or death—all these may at any moment become victims to the enemy in our midst—to the secret societies that pose, notwithstanding, as the apostles of a new and better gospel, than our Lord Jesus Christ has left us. But their gospel stands convicted before the world as the gospel of meanness and cowardice, as well as of injustice and inhumanity.

Most of those whom they inveigle into their meshes can never have given a thought to the nature or consequences of the step they take, or they would never cast in their lot with men who, for all they know, may be swindlers and ruffians of the lowest kind. What is easier than that two or three men, clerks, workmen, journalists, may club together for private ends of their own, and form themselves into a secret society for the pretended redress of political or social grievances. They may enlist members, collect subscriptions, hold private meetings. They may bind their dupes to the blindest and most absolute obedience, under oaths that make the blood curdle with horror. Yet the man who joins them is deprived of communion with his Church, and, until he renounces his connexion with them, of all hope of salvation. Moreover, he must be ready, at a moment's notice, to break every tie that binds him to his home and family, and to go and crouch behind some hedgerow, or to lie in wait in some dark passage,

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until his doomed, unsuspecting, defenceless victim passes by. That victim may be in mortal sin; yet his heart has no time to turn to God, until the dagger or bullet is through it. A young wife, a helpless family, aged parents—any of these, or all of them, may, by his murder, be thrown into deepest sorrow, that only death will end; but the assassin of the secret society must do his allotted work, even though the soul of his victim perish eternally, and wife and children and parents may never know happiness again.

And yet, if the principles of secret societies become generally prevalent, and be carried to their natural issues, each member of them will himself be exposed to the same death that he is prepared to inflict on others. He may, for example, have some private enemy who will denounce him to the secret council of his society, charging him with betrayal of "the cause," and demanding for him the traitor's usual punishment. He will be allowed no opportunity of clearing his character: he will not even be told of the accusation against him: he will walk unsuspectingly to the members' trysting place, and shake hands and chat and make merry with the very man who is under orders to despatch him, before he returns home to his wife and children.

And how is that unhappy dupe prepared to die? He is under the ban of his Church; he has been living consciously for years in the state of grievous sin; he has no priest near him by whom he might be reconciled to heaven, even though he had time and the will for such reconciliation; he receives none of the last rites of the Catholic Church—he

dies, in fact, so unprepared for his judgment and for eternity, that I can see no likelihood of his salvation.

The determined opposition of the Church to secret societies has brought much trouble on her from different quarters, but particularly from her own children. She has, thank God, saved thousands of them from temporal and eternal ruin, by her condemnation of all conspiracies, either against herself or against any established civil authority. But many of her children, too, have unfortunately disregarded her warnings and prohibitions, and have preferred to listen to irresponsible agitators, and to give up their chance of salvation, as well as their very right to live, for an idea impossible of execution, a dream that will never be realized. She feels deep sorrow for those ill-advised rebellious children ; but she can never change the legislation by which they live and die excommunicated. They must retrace their steps and abjure their connexion with the secret society to which they belong, and then she will welcome them back, and reconcile them to God whom they have grievously offended. There is absolutely no other way of salvation for them ; and they simply make their chance of repentance more and more remote and unlikely, by the impious hope, sometimes entertained, that God will save them eventually on account of the *noble* purpose to which they are pledged, although the Church has cut them off from her communion.

I trust these words on a subject of very great importance at the present time will not be deemed out of place or uncalled for. Secret societies have

a very considerable, although indirect, bearing on home life. It is impossible for a member of any of them to discharge his home duties faithfully and uniformly. The secret oath or pledge or promise by which he is bound will overshadow all his domestic relations, and make him not only unhappy in himself, but the cause of unhappiness to those around him. And when it falls to his lot to imbrue his hands in the blood of a fellow being, we may easily imagine the struggle of his better nature and of divine grace against the terrible crime he is about to commit. How carefully he shuns all avoidable intercourse with his family, until the fatal deed has been accomplished! And oh! what a happiness, if he could forget it then, and return to his former life. But no; it haunts him waking and sleeping, not for a few days only, but for all the days he has to live. Surely the home of such a one has a gloom gathering round it that must destroy all that is brightest and happiest in the relations and intercourse of its members. And how often is that gloom deepened by the shadow of a gibbet on which the assassin has expiated his cold-blooded crime.

Let parents, then, caution their children against secret societies, and against all sympathy with their designs. In every community there are grievances that call for redress; but there are, too, constitutional means of redressing them; and if we use those means persistently and energetically, we shall do a truly patriotic work, will have God's blessing on it, and will eventually succeed.

The ideal of a Christian home, which the preceding pages are intended to convey in detail to the minds of my readers, may now be put before them in miniature in a very few words. Parents, children, and servants, united to God, through Jesus Christ, by faithful observance of the divine law, by cheerful submission to the divine will, by frequent recourse to the divine help supplied by the Sacraments, by the holy Mass, and by prayer—parents, children, and servants, united to one another by mutual charity, mutual forbearance, and mutual assistance—parents, children, and servants, seeking their own individual sanctification in the uniform practice of the virtues and duties of home. Such is, in miniature, my ideal of a Christian family; and my object in writing the present work is to help as many as possible to realize it.

And what would be the results, were it to be realized? They would be, in the spiritual order, not only the fulfilment of the divine intention in the creation and redemption of man, but also the attainment of man's own eternal happiness. Home in the divine economy is the great training-school where all those virtues are to be learned and practised by which God is glorified and the soul sanctified. In the social order, too, the largest amount of human happiness attainable on earth would be secured. Man is not destined for perfect happiness in this life; but most of the unhappiness he suffers is the fruit of his own undisciplined life. Let him bring his passions into habitual subjection to his conscience, and his conscience to the divine will and law, and in proportion to the earnestness and

completeness with which he does this, will be, as a rule, his immunity from the heaviest, the most prevalent, and the most lasting miseries of our nature. Now, as the faithful and uniform fulfilment of home duties in a Christian manner implies the practice of all those virtues in which our perfection consists, it follows that by such fulfilment we become beyond all measure happier than those whose passions are in rebellion against their conscience, and both passions and conscience are in rebellion against God.

Peace with those around us is one of the most important elements of human happiness ; and who enjoys peace so thoroughly as he who lives in a family in which each one vies with the others in consulting their wishes and securing their ease and comfort ? Then, again, everyone knows how much an act or word of sympathy, or even a kind, sympathizing look will do to lighten the weight of some heavy trouble or sorrow. In truth, in all our troubles and sorrows we naturally yearn for such sympathy. A child runs to its mother with a wounded finger, or an aching head, or even a broken toy ; and sobbing itself to rest in her clasped arms, it feels its pain or grief disappear fast under the gentle influence of her love. In after life a like instinct still remains with us ; so that even when we would shut ourselves up with our grief and withdraw from all communion with men, it relieves us more than is generally acknowledged, to hear that some one has called and expressed his condolence, and promised to call again. Now, when any great trial or sorrow comes upon our homes, it is generally shared by all the members alike ;

and the effort each one naturally makes to console the others, must necessarily help all to feel their burthen less heavily. Thus a truly Christian home lessens the unhappiness, as it increases the happiness of each member connected with it.

The community also in which we live would be benefited, were the families composing it to realize the ideal of home given above. The most important, and, in fact, the primary duty any individual owes to the State is the faithful, uniform fulfilment of his home duties. Without this, there can be no perfect allegiance, no true patriotism. A nation of ill-regulated families is a nation ripe for anarchy, and an easy prey for some despotic hand to seize and crush. And the reason of this is easily explained. People are not enthusiastically devoted to disordered homes, where there is no affection, no mutual respect, no proper authority, no subordination. Now, love of home is, I believe, one of the strongest motives that urge men to labour and make sacrifices for the well-being and stability of their country. If this love, then, be destroyed or have never existed in the families of a community, that community wants one of the strongest ties that can bind it together. "For Home and Altar" was a battle cry of olden times, and was wisely chosen, for it symbolized the two things that men usually hold most dear, and for which they are most ready to die; but it loses most of its significance and power for him whose home is associated with no endearing memory, no parent's care, no child's affection.

I mentioned in the chapter on the obedience of

children another important influence of home on the State; and I may be pardoned for alluding to it here, as it is by no means the least of the results of which I am giving a summary. Conscientious submission to the laws of one's country is a duty that we cannot ordinarily violate without sin. To form good citizens, then, it is necessary to inspire them with an idea of civil authority that will make them loyal in heart and conscience, as well as in their outer life. How is this to be done? By the prudent discharge of parental authority at home. The child trained to obey his parents conscientiously will in after life, I am convinced, conscientiously obey the laws of its country. Thus a well-regulated home becomes a nursery of law-abiding citizens, and a source of security and strength to the State.

I have now finished this work, and I look forward hopefully to its beneficial results on a few of our homes, at least. It has been written in the intervals of hard missionary labour, and sometimes in spite of discouragements and obstacles which it was difficult to overcome. One thought, however, sustained me throughout—the practical usefulness of a work like this to all our Catholic homes, and, perhaps I may add, the want that exists among us for such a work. If I have not supplied this want, I sincerely hope that some one more experienced may be inspired with the resolution of supplying it. Meanwhile I pray God that this effort of mine may contribute something towards making our homes truly Christian, and thereby truly happy, as far as happiness is attainable in this life.

THE END.



