

character lies first in the power to perceive that all work which God gives us is important work, and then in the ability from simple materials to bring about mighty results. It has been quaintly put in the verse:

"That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it;
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Discovers he knows it.
That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred's son hit.
This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses a unit.
That has the world here, should he need the next.
Let the world mind him!
This throws himself on God, and, unperplexed,
Seeking shall find Him."

While it is true that men fail because they look for too large a sphere of influence, forgetting that it is by doing the duty that lies nearest that we become fitted for higher service; yet one cannot but feel how far one's life comes short of the ideals placed before it. How often failure seems to be written, as this world judges, over a life that was guided by pure motives and deep sincerity of purpose! How often the highest hopes are disappointed, and the truest aims are not realized! How often friends misjudge, and the world fails to understand the life of a true and earnest soul! Who has not found it true that

"Life itself
May not express us all, may leave the worst,
And the best too, like tunes in mechanism,
Never awaked."

The power wielded by influence begins very early in life. It was a grand epitaph, and an unconscious tribute to the value of influence, when the words were written over the green grave of one of God's little ones; "A child of whom her playmates said, 'It was easier to be good when she was with us.'" Indeed the most powerful influence is often the most unconscious. Some one has well said that the Bible calls a good man's life a light. The light shines out because it is light, spontaneously it fills the world unconsciously with its glory. Just as Moses was unconscious that his face shone, so influence is often the greatest when it is exercised without our knowing it.

But who can estimate the power of personal influence? Carlyle says: "It is a high, solemn, almost awful, thought for every individual man that his earthly influence, which has had a commencement, will never, through all the ages, were he the very meanest of us,

have an end." Is it because our beloved Queen rules over the greatest Empire the sun has ever shone upon, that her personal influence is so great? Or is it because she wears upon her heart "the white flower of a blameless life"? When the treaty between England and Madagascar was made, these words were written on the margin: "Queen Victoria asks, as a personal favour to herself, that the Queen of Madagascar will allow no persecutions of the Christians." The treaty was signed in Madagascar with the insertion of the words: "In accordance with the wish of Queen Victoria, the Queen of Madagascar engages there shall be no persecution of the Christians in Madagascar." It was the gracious influence of the Christian woman, rather than the power possessed by the Queen and Empress, that won this great concession. In our measure, and according to our opportunity, we can all exert such an influence for good. We can take away from the heap of misery in the world around us and add to the mountain of happiness; we can stand for truth, for right, for freedom, for God. Let us, then, be up and doing; it is good to be here, our opportunity is great, our call clear, our duty pressing.

"Men of thought! be up and stirring
Night and day;
Sew the seed, withdraw the curtain,
Clear the way!
Men of action, aid and cheer them
As ye may;
There's a fount about to stream,
There's a light about to beam,
There's a warmth about to glow,
There's a flower about to blow;
There's a midnight blackness changing
Into grey!
Men of thought and men of action,
Clear the way!"

—W. J. ARMITAGE.

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

ON CHURCH COLLECTIONS.

"WHEN I look at my congregation," observed the rector one fine Sunday morning in the height of the season, "I wonder where the poor are. When I come to count the collection, I wonder what has become of the rich." An analysis of the Sunday collection in the average Church produces a sinking sensation that can hardly be described. That the standard should be so low seems incredible, and suggests an idea somewhat akin to that expressed by the young ticket agent who found it was the exception, not the rule, for

money by accident paid over to be returned. "The public ain't honest." Perhaps the explanation is to be found in the fact that people are largely influenced in their actions by two powerful motives:

1. What others do. 2. What others think.

Now, in giving in Church both of these motives operate to lower the standard. For if they are moved by what others do, then they can find fifty who give cents to one who gives a quarter or a half-dollar, or a dollar. And if they are moved by what others think of them they are unobserved in the mass, and can evade the obligation altogether without being noticed. The church collection gives an opportunity for meanness to escape exposing its true character by offering something, and yet to give next to nothing.

But is there meanness? Is the giving of these small coins not possibly accidental? Is it fair to attribute this to such a low motive? After a careful consideration, we think that in many cases it is. Even charity is forced to admit that the church collection is a proof beyond all question that there are a large number of mean people in every Church when these things are considered, for, in the first place, the size of the coin that is found, in the vast majority of cases, to be the favourite one shows that its selection has been the result of deliberation. If out of an average congregation, for the most part composed of respectable and decently dressed people, of 300, five-sixths of the contributors are found to give cents and five cent pieces, this is proof positive that these coins have been the result of deliberate selection. In other words, that the *copper* and the five cent pieces have been provided beforehand, and have been put in the pocket for the purpose of being put on the plate.

Further, in over 90 per cent. of these cases there is very little doubt that the selection of these pieces meant the deliberate passing by of other and larger coins in their possession or their command. The dress worn, the occupations pursued, and the amounts given to other objects where their pleasure, or profit, or reputation is concerned, by these persons justifies the assertion that more could be given if there was the will. Therefore, it is clear that people who could give