

homes in which the character of the child is but a miniature reflection of the vices of the parent,—in which parental indulgence and folly have done their best to spoil the natural graces of childhood,—and the result you witness is perhaps the unlovely spectacle, instead of childish sweetness, of childish sullenness and intractableness, of coarse manners, evil tempers, and rude ungente ways; or, if not these, perhaps that other and scarcely less offensive product of parental imbecility and vanity, what is called a precocious child. What, however, these exceptional cases mean is no more than this; that all children are not childlike. There is an ideal of this, as of other stages of human life, to which individual examples may or may not attain; though, as a rule, inasmuch as the causes of failure are here less numerous and less common, children do in general more nearly approximate to it than other ages to their peculiar standard. And it is this ideal to which our Lord's teaching refers when he makes childhood the representative of the Christian or saintly character, and to which also, on its negative side, reference is made in the words of the text, "In malice be ye children."

But whilst we are thus exhorted to become as little children, it is obvious that this precept has its limits. It is only a certain range of virtues which the childlike character embraces, and a character made up of these alone would be one-sided and weak, because lacking some of the noblest ingredients of goodness. Guilelessness, docility, submissiveness, affectionateness, delicacy of feeling, quickly moved susceptibilities, reverence for superior minds, emotional piety,—these and the like qualities it might possess. But there are other and at least equally noble and necessary qualities,—such as fortitude, self-reliance, love of freedom, love of truth and justice and righteousness, unbending integrity, sternness against evil, hatred of oppression and wrong,—which such an ideal does not comprehend. However attractive and engaging, the character that excludes these must lack breadth and power. It is well to be gentle and docile and pure; but he who would be a man, and not a milkop, must strive also to be strong and brave and true.

Moreover, it is to be considered that not only does the child-type of character lack some of the most essential elements of the goodness of manhood, but even some of those which it contains, and which constitute a great part of its charm, will not bear translation into the life of riper years. Beautiful in childhood as are its fair rounded face and simple artless ways, they would be as little beautiful in manhood as that same fair face if placed on a man's shoulders, or those playful gambols and pretty lispings words in the bearing and speech of a grown-up man or woman. And the reason is,

that the life of childhood is necessarily something shallower and more superficial than the life of manhood. The former is the life of nature, of spontaneity and instinct. The reflective, critical, ratiocinative side of man's being is yet dormant in it; and its virtue and goodness are the mere expression of amiable instincts that effloresce without effort and without thought. Its innocence is not only attained without conscious aim, but it is greatly due to the ignorance of evil and the absence or careful exclusion of temptation. But the life of manhood is the life, not of nature, but of spirit. With the awakening of the powers of intelligence and the stirring of the deeper passions in the breast, comes the inevitable knowledge of evil,—in one view a downward step, but in another an almost incalculable advance. A step downwards, because it bears us for ever away from that fair Paradise of innocence, glowing with the flush of morning, and lovely with the bloom and fragrance of unconscious virtue, and because it introduces conflict,—the strife of duty with appetite, of reason with impulse and authority, of the finite with the infinite side of man's nature, where formerly all was calmness and rest. But it is also a step in advance, for it opens up the possibility of a life nobler and grander than the guarded safety and negative innocence of the past, the life of truth that has been wrought out by the struggle with error, of good that has been attained by the conquest of evil,—these li of Christian manhood, of nature quickened, glorified, transfigured by thought.

TESTIMONIALS IN FAVOR OF

REV. PATRICK GORDON, ORDAINED MISSIONARY MINISTER OF FORT-WILLIAM.

From the REV. JAMES GRANT, Minister of Kirkmichael.

Having intimately known Mr. Patrick Gordon, Preacher of the Gospel Tomintoul, from his infancy, I can bear ample testimony to his character and disposition. He is a young man of modest and unassuming manners, and of a warm and affectionate disposition. His moral character has always been irreproachable, and his walk and conversation circumspect. In his religious views he is orthodox and evangelical,