

SELF-CONCIT.

There is one shoot which human nature keeps putting forth again, however frequently it is pruned away. It is self-conceit. That would grow into a terrible unyielding branch, if it were not so often shorn away by circumstances—that is, by God's providence. Every body needs to be frequently taken down—which means, to have his self-conceit pruned away. And what every body needs, most people (in this case) get. Most people are very frequently taken down.

I mean, even modest and sensible people. This wretched little shoot keeps growing again, however hard we try to keep it down. There is a tendency in each of us to be growing up into a higher opinion of ourself; and then, all of a sudden, that higher estimate is cut down to the very earth. You are like a sheep suddenly shorn; a thick fleece of self-complacency had developed itself; something comes and all at once shears it off, and leaves you shivering in the frosty air. You are like a lawn, where the grass had grown some inches in length; till some daisy morning it is mown just as close as may be. You had gradually and insensibly come to think rather well of yourself, and your doings. You had grown to think your position in life a rather respectable or even eminent one; and to fancy that those around estimated you rather highly. But all of a sudden, some flight, some mortification, some disappointment comes; something is said or done that shows you how far you had been deceiving yourself. Some considerable place in your profession becomes vacant, and nobody thinks of naming you for it. You are in company with two or three men who think themselves specially charged with finding a suitable person for the vacant office; they name a score of possible people to fill it; but not you. They never have thought of you; or possibly they refrain from naming you, with the design of mortifying you. And so you are pruned close. For the moment, it is painful. You are ready to sink down, disheartened and beaten. You have no energy to do any thing. You sit down blankly by the fire, and acknowledge yourself a failure in life. It is not so much that you are beaten, as that you are set in a lower place than you hoped. Yet it is all good for us, doubtless. Few men can say they are too humble with it all. And, as even after all our mowings, prunings, and shearings, we are sometimes so conceited and self-satisfied as we are, what should we have been had those things not befallen us? The elf-locks of wool would have been six feet high, like that of the prairies. And the shoot of vanity would have grown and consolidated into a branch, that would have given a lopsided aspect to the whole tree.

Happily, there is no chance of these things occurring. We seldom grow for more than a few days, without being pruned, mown, and shorn afresh. And all this will continue to the end. It is

not pleasant; but we need it all. And we are all profiting by it. Possibly no one will read this page, who does not know that he thinks more humbly of himself now, than he did ten years since. And ten years hence, if we live, we shall think of ourselves more humbly still.

Yes; we have all been severely pruned, in many ways. Perhaps our sprays and blossoms have been shorn away by a knife so unsparring, that we are cut very much into the form of a pollarded tree. Perhaps we have been pruned too much, and the spring and the non-sense taken out of us only too effectually. Certain awkward knots are left in the wood, where some cherished hope was snipped off by the fatal scythe, or some youthful affection (in the case of sentimental people) came to nothing; and it was like cutting a tree over, not far above the roots, when a man was made to feel that his entire aim in life was no better than a dismal failure. But it was all for the best; and defeat, bravely borne, is the noblest of victories. What an overbearing, insolent person you would have been, if you had always got your own way; if your boyish fancies had come true! What an odd stick you would have become, had you been one of the Unpruned Trees!—*Fraser's Magazine.*

ON THE MANAGEMENT OF MONEY.

In the humbler grades of life, certainly character is money. The man who gives me his labour in return for the wages which the labour is worth, pledges to me something more than his labour—he pledges to me certain qualities of his moral being—such as honesty, sobriety, and diligence. If, in these respects, he maintain his character, he will have my money as long as I want his labour; and, when I want his labour no longer, his character is money's worth to him from somebody else. If, in addition to the moral qualities I have named, he establish a character for other attributes which have their own price in the money market—if he exhibit a superior intelligence, skill, energy, zeal—his labour rises in value. Thus in the humblest class of life, character is money; and according as the man earns or spends the money, money in turn becomes character.

As money is the most evident power in the world's use, so the use that he makes of money is often all that the world knows about a man. Is our money gained justly and spent prudently? our character establishes a claim on respect. Is it gained nobly and spent beneficially? our character commands more than respect—it wins a place in that higher sphere of opinion which comprises admiration, gratitude, love. Is money inherited without merit of ours, lavished recklessly away? our character disperses itself with the spray of the golden shower—it is not the money alone of which we are spendthrifts. Is money meanly acquired, selfishly hoarded? It is not the money alone of which we are misers; we are starving our own human hearts—depriving them of their natural aliment in the approval and affection of

others. We invest the money which we fancy so safe out at compound interest, in the very worst possession a man can purchase—viz., an odious reputation. In fact, the more we look round, the more we shall come to acknowledge that there is no test of a man's character more generally adopted than the way in which his money is managed. Money is a terrible blab; she will betray the secrets of her owner whatever he do to gag her. His virtues will creep out in her whisper—his vices she will cry aloud at the top of her tongue.

But the management of money is an art? True, but that which we call an art means an improvement, and not a deterioration, of a something existent already in nature; and the artist can only succeed in improving his art in proportion as he improves himself in the qualities which the art demands in the artist. Now the management of money is, in much, the management of self. If heaven allotted to each man seven guardian angels, five of them at least, would be found night and day hovering over his pockets.—*"Castilian."*

PRECEPT AND EXAMPLE.

There is nothing more common than to hear a certain class of people give as a reason for not identifying themselves with the Temperance movement, that there is no necessity for them to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors, inasmuch as they never exceed, what they call, the bounds of propriety,—but can always use without abusing. This class of people will readily admit that the temperance cause is doing excellent service in restraining some, and reclaiming others from drunkenness; and they consider it no breach of consistency to urge an intemperate friend to sign the pledge. But when the intemperate man asks why they don't join example to precept, they very complacently reply that total abstinence is a superfluous precaution for them—that they are strictly MODERATE DRINKERS,—that they can restrain themselves, consequently there is NO DANGER OF THEIR BECOMING DRUNKARDS.

Now conceding to such persons the fullest ability to abstain from excess; granting that they can stand where thousands of greater men have fallen; admitting that there is not the slightest probability of their ever becoming drunkards, we ask will they not look at the question from a higher stand point than that of mere self, and sacrifice the intoxicating cup upon the altar of brotherly love? In a word will they not abstain as an EXAMPLE to a weaker brother? It is little better than folly to urge a man to give up his liquor unless we have given it up ourselves. "Precept without example is like a charge of powder without ball."—it will do but little execution.

To be effective in their efforts to make the drunkard abstain, moderate drinkers must first abstain themselves, otherwise they will not only do but little good to others, but will lay themselves open to a charge of inconsistency.—*Maine Temperance Journal.*