

ministering to souls diseased is by sober conviction and *systematic training* in religious life and habit. Such a nurture and admonition the Church provides, as she had it from the Apostles. We have only to use it consistently to find in it, all that we need and all that the word needs.—*Living Church*.

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

INFLUENCE.

They tell us that each pebble dropped
On ocean's glassy breast,
Must make a pulse in th' boundless deep
Whose ripples never rest;

But ever sweep through coral caves,
Or break on distant sands,
To kiss cold faces which the deep
Holds far from loving hands;

Or eddies 'round the treasures lost,
Which her calm bosom hides,
Yet still forever ebbs and flows
Upon her changing tides!

They tell us that each word we speak,
Tho' ne'er so softly said,
Shall still be throbbing thro' the air
Long after we are dead!

And that, although we hear them not,
Around us ever ring
The laugh and sigh of long ago,
The shifting breezes bring.

It may be that with mighty words,
Like pulses on the deep
We stir the hearts of other men,
And rouse them from their sleep.

It may be that each word we speak,
Like an echo on the air,
Though scarcely heeded when 'tis said,
Yet leaves its impress there.

Howe'er this be, 'tis God's decree,
We cannot live alone.

No one can fold his arms and say
"My life is all my own."

The life of each is bound to all
By cords we can not sever,
A ripple that shall never cease
Upon time's mighty river.

—*Pacific Churchman*.

Daddy's Boy.

(By L. T. MEADE.)

CHAPTER XVII.—[Continued]

Ronald did not again allude to the Christmas gifts. One quick glance he gave as they drove home together at his aunt's rather expressionless face, but for the rest of the short drive he kept his eyes fixed on the window, though it is to be doubted if he saw much of the familiar landscape.

After dinner, without asking leave from any one, he quietly disappeared. He slipped up to his bedroom, and, locking the door, began carefully to collect together and pack up in a sheet of brown paper all the presents he had received that morning. He tied his parcel rather untidily with a piece of whipcord which he happened to have in his pocket, and then watching his opportunity, he went downstairs and out of the house.

He carried a bulky brown paper parcel in his arms, and he was awfully afraid that he might be seen and brought home in disgrace before this parcel reached its destination.

He was far too much excited to think of putting on his overcoat, but just as he was, in his little tight-fitting black velvet suit, he ran up the avenue panting, and even stumbling as he

ran, for the night was very dark, and his parcel was badly tied and heavy to carry.

The questions of right or wrong did not even occur to him. His whole soul was set on what seemed to him one most obvious duty, the making up to Peters and the almswomen for the dreadful way they had been neglected that morning.—He had scarcely been able to eat his own Christmas dinner for thinking of them. With his usual habit of jumping to conclusions, he imagined them to be really starving. He felt sure that Peters had gone in debt for the eggs, and he was absolutely certain that the six almswomen and the old sexton Peters would be put out for a whole year in their calculations owing to his want of thought.

After the first flush of hurt feeling had passed he ceased to blame Aunt Eleanor for not giving him her purse.

"She can't be expected to understand, poor thing," he said to himself; "she could not guess that it was always father's and my way. No, I knew all about it, and I am the one to blame. I should have talked it all over with Aunt Eleanor a few days back, and tried to explain it to her. She is a little slow about taking in a thing, Aunt Eleanor is, and I should have spoken very slowly, and been patient, and taken a long time over it. Poor Aunt Eleanor, she can't help being slow. Well, I must try and get her all to myself to-morrow, and in the meantime I'll explain how things are to the almswomen and to Peters. I am so glad I got those Christmas boxes this morning, because they will be better than nothing to give them while they are waiting for their money. I wonder now if I had better give my musical box to Jane Pratt or to Peters! It's a dear little box, and it plays the 'British Grenadiers' so nicely. It would amuse Jane Pratt when she is alone to turn the handle and hear the 'British Grenadiers' striking up; but then Peters is the one that has the gift for music. How well he did his anthem to-day! Wouldn't father have been delighted!"

By this time Ronald had gained the high road, and taking a short cut across a field which he knew very well, he found himself exactly opposite the neat little almshouse which had been built more than a hundred years ago by an ancestor who may have possessed as kind a heart as his own. Ronald stopped in front of the little gate which led to the almshouses, and here he felt a sensation of great uneasiness. Five of the almshouses were in complete darkness; not a ray of light from any modest little candle shone out on the wintry landscape.

"It's just as I feared," said Ronald to himself; "they can't even afford a bit of light on Christmas day. I suppose they have had to go quite starved to their beds, poor things! poor things!"

The sixth almshouse, however, reflected on the gravel path a quite unusual brilliancy. This almshouse was considerably larger than the others, and the old lady who resided there was always treated with marked respect, a good deal of deference, and not a little concealed envy by the inferior almswomen.

Ronald stole up now to the casement, and peeping over the short, white blind, looked in.

"Dear, dear," he said to himself, "I did not know that Susan Blake was rich enough to give a party.—Why, of course, that accounts for all the little candles being put out. I do declare she has got the five other almswomen in—Mary Cotter and Ann Beale, and the rest. How smart they all look, and aren't they having a good dinner! Why, that's plum-pudding that Susan Blake has just put on the table; jolly one it looks, too; nearly as good as ours. I wish I had had another bit of ours at dinner; I wanted to, only I was so sure that Peters and the almswomen were starving, and that took away my appetite. Well, well, Susan Blake must have saved a good deal of money; it's very generous of her to invite the other almswomen to dinner. Oh, and if there isn't Peters

sitting at the head of the table in the wooden arm-chair! how red his face is, and how happy he looks! See, he's cutting the plum-pudding now. Well done, Susan Blake. I think you're a very noble woman."

Ronald ran round and knocked vigorously with his knuckles on the oak-beamed door.

"Let me in," he called out; "I've got a big parcel in my arms, and I can't lift the latch; let me in please, Mrs. Blake."

Mrs. Blake opened the door, and instantly all the almswomen got up and dropped little courtesies, and expressed great delight at seeing Sir Ronald.

"You'll sit in the arm-chair, Sir Ronald," said Peters, relinquishing his throne of dignity and comfort with a hastily suppressed sigh.

"And perhaps, my dear, you'd like a delicate slice of the pudding," said Mrs. Blake, as she reached down a valuable china plate from its shelf over the mantelpiece.

"I'd like the pudding very much indeed," said Ronald, "for I'm quite hungry, indeed, I have been having a rather anxious time, and I'm very hungry, so you need not make the slice of pudding too thin, Mrs. Blake; and, Peters, you must not think of giving me your seat, you must sit where you are and out the pudding; you don't know how snug you look there with your face so shining and red. No, I'll stay by the fire and eat my pudding. Oh, Mrs. Blake; I'm so glad you were able to save a little money, and that you are not keeping it for yourself, but are spending it on others. They would have all starved but for you, Mrs. Blake; but you've acted on that verse out of the Bible, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Doesn't it make you very happy to feel that you are such a noble woman?"

Eh, my dear!" said Susan Blake, in rather a bewildered way as she placed Ronald's pudding before him. "I don't quite know what you are driving at, darling. I haven't saved no money; how could I, dear? And this is the roast beef and the plum-pudding, and the curly greens, and the cake, and the tea, to say nothing of two bottles of wine which the good lady, your aunt, sent up from the big house yesterday, and, of course, Peters comed in for his share, for Peters was mentioned particularly by your aunt in her note, my dear."

"It's a nice pudding," said Peters; "but I think, Mrs. Blake, and no offence is meant, ma'am, that the meat was done to a turn too much. I likes it more with the red gravy in it, ma'am."

"I'm of your way thinking, Mr. Peters," said Mary Cotter, "the meat was done a turn too brown; but as you say, no offence is meant, and we must be all thankful for small favors and not cultivating of a complaining spirit."

"Dear, dear," said Ronald, when he could find breath to speak, "how dreadfully I misjudged Aunt Eleanor. I never thought she would give you all such a beautiful dinner; it is a good dinner, isn't it? And you are none of you starving, are you? You don't know how miserable I was in church when I remembered about your sovereigns and your half-sovereign, Peters. It was all my own fault, and I can tell you I was unhappy, and I did beg Aunt Eleanor to give me her purse in church, and she would not. Poor, dear thing, I don't suppose she had so much money in her purse, and, of course, she knew that you had plenty to eat to-day. I hope I wasn't rude to Aunt Eleanor. Peters, you did sing the anthem well! How many raw eggs did you take this morning? You have a great gift for music, Peters.—Well, I came to bring you all a few little presents, and to tell you that I'll ask for your money to-morrow."

The information that their sovereigns were likely to be forthcoming gave immense pleasure to the six almswomen, and Peters also announced 'that he generally laid in a store of tobacco with his ten shillings, and that he would have missed his accustomed weed very