

a small sample from every one of the laces in the department."

"What do you want of them?"

"I want to take the samples home and study them evenings. I want, if possible, to become so familiar with every make and pattern of lace that I could tell it by touch in the dark."

"Take the samples," was the brief reply.

After a few weeks of patient evening study, aided by the use of a microscope, Smith discovered that he knew three times as much about laces as he had ever expected to know. Out of his savings he bought a powerful hand magnifying glass that he carried with him daily to the store. By degrees he became able to demonstrate to customers the relative values of the different laces. The department manager looked on approvingly and added all the information in his power.

At the end of the second year Brown's salary remained at six dollars. Smith's pay had been increased to ten.

"Favoritism!" snapped Brown. "I wonder, Fred, why the manager can't see anything in me. I work as hard as you do."

"Not in the evenings," was the quiet answer. "I spend most of my evening time studying the laces. Why don't you do the same? You're a good fellow, and willing. Come up to the house with me to-night, and after supper I'll show you some of the things I've been studying."

"Can't do it," negated Brown; "got an engagement."

There was an evening high school course in chemistry. Deciding that he knew as much as he was able to learn about the fibers of every kind of lace sold in the store, Smith decided to take up chemistry in the hope that he could learn something more about laces. The course was an elementary one, but he applied himself with so much diligence that the professor soon began to take an especial interest in him. Then the young man explained what he wanted most to learn.

"Stop a few minutes every evening after the class is dismissed," advised the professor. "Bring samples of your laces with you and I'll see what help I can give you."

All through the winter, Smith toiled away at chemistry. He learned how to make tests of the lace fibers that were impossible with the microscope alone. One day a lot of samples of laces came in from abroad. Some of these the young man, after using his glass, considered spurious. He took them home that evening and applied the chemical tests. The next morning he reported to the department manager, a successor to the one under whom he had first been employed, that the samples were of spurious goods.

"Why don't you mind your own business?" was the irritable retort; "these samples are all right."

But Smith, saying nothing, went to the superintendent and made a statement of what he had discovered.

"How on earth do you know this?" demanded the young man's superior.

"Professor Beckmann has been instructing me in chemical tests of thread fibers for several months."

"I'll think this matter over," said the superintendent, briefly. He did, even to the extent of communicating with the professor. The result was that the new department manager was dismissed, and Smith, after some urging, took his place, at a comparatively low beginning salary of thirty dollars a week. Brown, who was now receiving eight dollars a week, had begun to feel positive dislike for his more successful friend.

Three more years went by. Smith drew forty-five dollars a week, while his erstwhile friend had gone up to ten. The buyer for the lace department, who had grown old and wished to retire, was about to make his last trip to Ireland and France for laces. He requested that Smith should go with him.

"You always have been lucky," growled Brown, when he heard the news. "You're off for a fine trip abroad, with all expenses paid, and I suppose you're going to have your salary raised?"

"Pitch in and study, Jack," whispered Smith. "I've three days yet before I sail. Come around and I'll get you started."

"Sorry, but I can't, old fellow. I've got engagements for every night this week."

Two months later Smith returned to the store, strolled through it, and went up to the lace counter. Brown stood there, looking most disconsolate. His face brightened up, however, as he saw his friend approaching.

"Fred," he whispered, excitedly, "I guess you can do me a big favor. I've been discharged. The fellow they put in your place has told me I'm through Saturday. Said a man who had been here so long and who was only worth

ten dollars a week wasn't worth keeping. I suppose, though,"—enviously,—“you've had another raise of pay?”

"Yes. Mr. Stallman, the foreign lace buyer, has retired, and I've been put in his place. I'm to begin with four thousand a year and travelling expenses."

Brown threw up his hands in a gesture that expressed a variety of emotions.

"Favoritism!" he muttered, scowling at the ceiling.



The Shadow of Peter.

"It was only a sunny smile,
And little it cost in the giving;
But it scattered the night like morning light,

And made the day worth living.
Through life's dull warp a woof it wove
In shining colors of light and love,
And the angels smiled as they watched above,
Yet little it cost in the giving."

While visiting in England about fifteen years ago, I heard a sermon on unconscious influence, based on these words: "The Shadow of Peter." I don't remember the name of the preacher, but the peculiarity of the text impressed itself on my memory.

It is taken from the fifth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and describes how sick people were laid on beds and couches in the streets of Jerusalem, that, at the least, "the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them." Sick people were also brought from other places, and "they were healed, every one." Of course, as the Apostle walked along, eager to help those who were diseased in body or soul, he could not always know where his shadow was falling. It was silently helping in the good work, without his knowledge. Is it not true that we are all in the same way unintentionally influencing for good or evil the people we live with, and even the people we only see occasionally, or even others whom we never see at all. It is a very solemn thought that we can't help influencing people, whether we wish to or no. And, like the shadow, a man's strongest influence is caused by his real character. He may preach virtue as much as he likes, but if he does not practice what he preaches, his unconscious influence must do harm. He can't control it, except by becoming what he wishes to appear. No one ever knows by what trifling word or action he may start another soul in a right or wrong direction. It is not for nothing that our Lord encourages such little acts of kindness as the giving of a cup of cold water. It is wonderful how much we all appreciate some little thoughtful attention, when it is not done for effect, but is the natural expression of a genuine spirit of friendliness. One of my near neighbors was ill a few years ago, and a friend of mine, who scarcely knew her at all, wrote me a very kind letter of enquiry, asking me to convey her sympathy to the family. It was not much trouble to the writer, but it cheered those who were enduring the deepest anxiety far more than a costly gift would have done, because it showed fellow-feeling and genuine friendliness. The same friend often writes kindly notes expressing sympathy with neighbors in times of both sorrow and rejoicing. Once when the blinds were drawn down and the house was very still because the Angel of Death had visited there, a few written words were prized when a visit would have been almost an intrusion.

"It was only a kindly word,
And a word that was lightly spoken,
Yet not in vain,
For it stilled the pain
Of a heart that was nearly broken.
It strengthened a fate beset by fears,
And groping blindly through mists of tears
For light to brighten the coming years,
Although it was lightly spoken."

Later on, when the same near neighbors were dressing a bride for her wedding, came a few dainty flowers and a tiny note of friendly congratulation. How little any of us can measure the mighty influence of little things. Some time ago a young man left his happy home in California, got into wild ways, and was arrested and sent to the Sing Sing prison. He had a loving mother and sister, but it seemed as if their prayers and tears were wasted, and they probably thought they had no influence over him. But influence works mysteriously, and a spark will often light a great fire when the train is laid as it was in this case. Over the cot in that prison cell hung a picture. It only represented a little low-roofed cottage, which could hardly be expected to preach a sermon or point a moral, but it was the spark which lighted up the fire of repentance and love in that criminal's heart. It reminded him of another cottage in sunny California, where there were two women who loved him; and their influence was strong enough to drag him back from his career of crime and plant his feet in the path of righteousness and happiness. The shadow of that happy home stretched across America and healed a soul, in prison—in more senses than one.

"The memory of a kindly word,
For long gone by,
The fragrance of a fading flower,
Sent lovingly;
The gleaming of a sudden smile,
Or sudden tear,
The warmer pressure of the hand,
The word of cheer,
The hush that means, 'I cannot speak,
But I have heard!'
The note that only bears a verse
From God's own Word:
Such tiny things we hardly count
As ministry—
The givers deeming they have shown
Scant sympathy;—
But when the heart is overwrought,
Oh! who can tell
The power of such tiny things
To make it well?"

It isn't usually the people who preach at us most who succeed in making us try to do our level best. Anyone who is trying with all his might to be good is sure to inspire others with the wish to be good too. We sometimes meet one of these every-day saints on the street, and find ourselves going on our way with a new impulse towards the higher life stirring within us—healed by his shadow, almost unknown to ourselves and quite unknown to him. Sometimes it is only a glimpse of a pictured face which sets us thinking and resolving. It may be the face of a friend, or only that of a perfect stranger, which speaks eloquently of the noble soul within. It is said of

the Apostles Peter and John that even their enemies "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus," and no one can live constantly with Christ without showing it.

"I would my friends should see
In my glad eyes the beauty of His face;
Should learn that in His presence
there is peace,
Strength and contentment, that can
never cease."

The smallest actions may reveal character, and it is not the action itself, but the character behind it, that influences people. A young man once folded his hands in quiet, patent surrender of his greatest earthly ambition, and that slight gesture has influenced many souls. It was not done for effect, but was quite unconscious, being the natural expression of his complete self-renunciation. God accepted and greatly blessed that sacrifice. This is how it happened.

Many years ago, two young men in Nuremberg had set their hearts on being artists. They worked diligently for a long time, but when they compared pictures one day, it was very plain that failure was the only word to apply to the work of Franz Knigstein. Albrecht Durer's picture was full of life and beauty, but that painted by Franz was cold and lifeless. It was a great disappointment, but he said, bravely: "Albrecht, the good Lord gave me no such gift as this of yours, but something, some homely duty. He has waiting somewhere for me to do."

Albrecht seized his pencil and, telling his astonished friend not to move, made a rapid sketch of the hands so patiently folded together. Franz was more astonished than ever when his friend showed him the sketch, saying, "Those hands that may never paint a picture can now certainly make one. I have faith in those folded hands, my brother—friend. They will go to men's hearts in days to come." Albrecht Durer's famous picture, "Folded Hands," is still preaching eloquent sermons to those who see or even hear of it. How little that young man thought that his unconscious gesture would influence the world. But it was not the gesture, after all, it was the noble soul within, whose shadow has been able to help other souls from that day to this.

We can't control our unconscious influence, and yet, in one way, we can. The surest way of healing, instead of harming people by it, is to live very near to God. He can, if He will, use our smallest actions as he did those "folded hands." While we are thinking of the great and noble things we should do if we only had a chance, other people are unconsciously carrying out God's plans for the healing of the nations in the kitchen or the fields, as His own Son did for years in the little village carpenter shop at Nazareth.

"God's ways are not as our ways: we lay down
Schemes for His glory, temples for our King,
Wherein tribes yet unborn may worship Him;
Meanwhile, upon some humble, secret thing
He sets His crown."

HOPE.

The Russian-Japanese War

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