

our people! Burns' "Cottar's Saturday Night" has historic as well as poetic value. Sabbath evening exercises for the children tell further the story of Scotland's training when Bible and catechism were repeated, sometimes with little sense of meaning among the little ones, but gradually with more of the sense, ultimately with treasure in mind and character. Show us the teaching, or the preaching, or the Christian associations which can take the place of this. Blessed are the people who have these four all in line. Give us onwards, in our people's history, these Sabbath evening family gatherings, with God's work in the midst, memory work lightened by singing of favourite hymns, and the sunshine of love everywhere. May such Sabbath influence be as a fountain of happiness, sending a pleasant stream of joy through all the week. Influence in such forms is deep and lasting. The logic of consistency convinces without talking. A true-hearted life is light and joy and hope all in one, spreading the influence of all these into the hearts around. These are the thoughts we put foremost in attempting to say a few helpful words as to parental influence.

It is a strong love which moves in the heart towards the children, who are part of our own life. Sustained by such love, there is a mighty power in the lives of father and mother, whose looks and words and acts reckon for the guidance of the young lives around. Within the door which closes in the home within whose shelter the family gathering is daily complete, there is a dignity of influence, a power to dispense blessings, a pledge of future greatness in the wise and sympathetic life of the parents, which no other form of government can equal. On this account mighty importance must be attached to the conception which

parents form of the ideal of home life. To have such an ideal, and to aim at it, is the first thing; to have it as a living reality, embodied in one's daily thought, and brought up betimes as a silent test of how things are going, is a second thing, and more precious. Even the fitting of some ideal before the mind has real value, though it be as the vanishing circular light, which returns to the line of vision only after a period of darkness; better still if it is as the fixed light which shines without flickering with its long pencil of brightness across the sea of life.

But men and women are apt to be too hurried, too burdened, too bustled, too full of care to think of ideals. The word sounds as something too "superfine" for the work-a-day life of an ordinary household. This is one of the popular delusions with which our ears are growing familiar in this busy, bustling age. There is a snare hid under this soft excuse. Every family circle has its ideal fixed by those who rule it—in some cases a lofty one—toward which honest efforts are made; in other cases, a common-place "ordinary" one, when things get on "as well as can be expected," and movement is like that on the dead flat of a canal. A true, honest Christian ambition is needed to put outside the door anything which may be convicted of the evil spirit of contentment with little things. Yet nothing is easier than that custom should rule the family life by ruling its rulers. So it happens that common-place becomes fixed. And parents see it at times, and feel a sense of disappointment, too, yet do not effect the needed revolution in their ruling, though the reins are in their own hands. It is not that men and women are unwilling to be convinced; it is rather that it seems to them as if there were no room for change.