

started on a career of beauty and blessing by the influence of a noble act. The disciples saw their Master praying and were so impressed by His earnestness or by the radiancy they saw on His face, as He communed with His Father, that when He joined them again they asked Him to teach them how to pray. Every true soul is impressed continually by the glimpses it has of loveliness, of holiness or of nobleness in others. One kind deed often inspires many kindnesses. Here is a story from a newspaper of the other day which illustrates this. A little newsboy entered a car on an elevated railway, and slipping into a seat was soon asleep. Presently two young ladies came in and took seats opposite to him. The child's feet were bare, his clothes were ragged and his face was pinched and drawn, showing marks of hunger and suffering. The young ladies noticed him and seeing that his cheek rested against the hard window-sill, one of them arose and quietly raising his head slipped her muff under it for a pillow.

The kind act was observed and now mark its influence. An old gentleman in the next seat, without a word, held out a silver quarter to the young lady, nodding toward the boy. After a moment's hesitation she took it, and as she did so another man handed her a dime, a woman across the aisle held out some pennies, and almost before the young woman realized what she was doing she was taking a collection, every one in the car passing her something for the poor boy. Thus from the young woman's one gentle little act there had gone out a wave of influence touching the hearts of two score of people and leading each of them to do something.

Common life is full of just such illustrations of the influence of kindly deeds. Every good life leaves in this world a twofold ministry, that of the things it does directly to bless others,

and that of the silent influence it exerts, through which others are made better, or inspired to do like good things.

Influence is something, too, which even death does not end. When earthly life closes a good man's work ceases. He is missed in the places where his familiar presence has brought benedictions. No more are his words heard by those who oftentimes have been cheered or comforted by them. No more do his benefactions find their way to homes of need where so many times they have brought relief. No more does his gentle friendship minister strength or hope or courage to hearts that have learned to love him. The death of a good man in the midst of his usefulness cuts off a blessed ministry of helpfulness in the circle in which he has dwelt. But his influence continues. Longfellow writes:

"Alike are life and death  
When life in death survives,  
And the uninterrupted breath  
Inspires a thousand lives.

"Were a star quenched on high,  
For ages would its light,  
Still travelling downward from the sky  
Shine on our mortal sight.

"So when a great man dies  
For years beyond our ken  
The light he leaves behind him lies  
Upon the paths of men."

The influence which our dead have over us is oftentimes very great. We think we have lost them when we see their faces no more, nor hear their voices, nor receive the accustomed kindnesses at their hands. But in many cases there is no doubt that what our loved ones do for us after they are gone is quite as important as what they could have done for us had they stayed with us. The memory of beautiful lives is a benediction softened and made more rich and impressive by the sorrow which their departure caused. The influence of such sacred memories is in a certain sense