

The Mother's Home Life.

The Rev. Dr. James M. Pullman, of New York City, preached a sermon in the Church of our Saviour on "The Mother's Part in the Home Life." What, he asked, are a woman's duties as wife and mother, and in society? As a wife she should, first of all, have affection. From mercenary matches no good could come. Marriages of convenience were destructive of home life. Her husband should be the first in whom the wife should confide. Only after the wife has been repulsed by her husband should she confide in any one else. Chastity was also necessary. The married flirt was an abomination. Veracity was another requisite. Untruthfulness was often the wedge which gradually destroyed the home life.

There was a fourth requisite, obedience. Where conscience and filial duty were in question the wife should acknowledge no power but her own. These two things aside, who was to give in to the other, man or wife? Well, the best-hearted and wisest would do so. In matters concerning the home or training of children the wife was best skilled. In other things the husband was given the superiority, or perhaps it would be better to say the priority. To keep up her power woman should not, after marriage, lose all taste in dress or abandon the practice of her many little accomplishments, which before marriage attracted the attention and pleased the fancy of her husband. Moreover, she should practice frankness; not the frankness of some women, who say right out everything that is in their head, and more beside, but the frankness which leads the wife, when the husband has done something to wound her, to go to him and in a kind, gentle way tell him of it. Better than to let the injury fester in her breast and grow by nursing to such proportions as to be beyond all righting.

One of the most beautiful sights was that of a young man, who, as he grew stronger and stouter, became more and more the protector of his mother. There was a tendency among American mothers to limit the number of their offspring, and to turn them over to the care of servants or hirelings. This had the effect of making the husband more selfish. On woman in the social part of her home life, the preacher said, there was not time to dwell at any length. He would only say that she should throw open the doors of her home and invite her friends to share with her the beauties and delights of her life.

"I" and "It."

It is one of Ruskin's pithy sayings that "the obstinacy of the mean man is in the pronunciation of 'I,' and the obstinacy of the great man in the pronunciation of 'It.'" This difference may be said to divide all energetic men and women into two general classes, those who are bent upon establishing themselves, and those who are bent upon establishing something which they hold more important than themselves. Each of these characters may be seen in every station in life, and in every occupation. Two men are performing the same manual labor with equal industry; one is calculating how much labor he need expend in order to satisfy his employer and keep his situation; the other, while fully conscious that he is earning an honest livelihood, is also interested in the outcome of his work, and is anxious to see it well done.

Two men are deeply engaged in politics: one puts forth all his force and ingenuity to secure for himself some coveted position; the other is equally energetic in pushing forward a needed reform, or in securing the best man for an important post, that the welfare of his country may be promoted. Two scientists are both earnest in maintaining a recent theory, or

in diffusing a recent discovery; one because he hopes thus to lift himself into notice in the scientific world and be looked up to as an authority; the other because he firmly believes in it and desires that mankind shall benefit by it. Two artists are putting forth every power; one for the sake of fame, the other for the sake of embodying his conceptions and giving them to the world. Two women are capable teachers, one is planning solely to secure her own promotion, the other is incited by the idea of elevating and enriching the young minds intrusted to her care. Two others are diligently engaged in works of charity, one in the hope of being called Lady Bountiful, the other desiring nothing so much as to lift some of the heavy burdens of the poor, and to let in a ray of sunshine upon the afflicted. In every case the one is absorbed with the thought of "I," the other by the thought of "It." Though working apparently for the same purpose, and using perhaps the same methods, their aims and aspirations point in opposite directions, their hopes and fears are centered around different objects, and the success of either one alone would appear like failure to the other.

It may seem at first sight that, if the energy of each of these characters is equally expended in the same direction, the difference of their secret motives cannot concern anyone but themselves. If their work is done, and done well, what more has society to ask? It will be found, however, that only to a certain point can any work be performed well when the aim is wholly selfish. There comes a time to each man and to each woman when his or her own interest and the excellence of the work seem at least to clash.

Perhaps a larger view would show that there really is no such conflict, that eventually the good of the worker and the good of his work will be identical. But at present, at least, we are not always able to take this larger view, and, whenever they seem to us to come into collision, one or the other must give way. The self-seeker has no hesitation. His own interest is uppermost in his mind, and if he imagines that he is to be promoted by slacking his efforts or adulterating his goods, or giving short weight or measure, or catering to what he knows to be a corrupt taste, or sacrificing some public benefit, the die is cast, and society is by so much impoverished and injured. He who, on the other hand, keeps his eye fixed on excellence as the chief good, can stoop to suffer, for he has higher hopes and nobler aspirations that he will not sacrifice. Whatever stands in the way of his best accomplishment must yield, and thus it is in every case the man who emphasizes "It," not he who emphasizes "I," who is of the highest value to the world. Every employer knows how to prize a conscientious subordinate who makes the employer's interest his own, and society will be dull indeed, if it does not prize its conscientious servants, who in every walk of life make its best welfare and happiness their first and main concern.

This interest in our work, for its own sake, is a cultivatable quality. We all possess it in some degree, and we may all increase it if we will. Children may be accustomed at a very early age to take pleasure in the success of their own efforts, quite apart from any personal good they may derive from it. The careful observer of child nature will notice that this is a natural delight, and is only deadened and diminished by the growth of selfish considerations. If care is taken to make work as congenial as possible, to prevent its being excessive and exhausting, and to sympathize and encourage the natural joy of success, there is no reason why it should ever decrease. —*Philadelphia Ledger.*