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PERSONAL INFLUENCE

"Oh, it is a terrible power that I have—this power of influence—and it clings to me! I cannot shake it off. It was born with me; it has grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength. It speaks, it walks, it moves; it is powerful in every look of my eye, in every word of my lips, in every act of my life. I cannot live to myself. I must either be a light to illumine or a tempest to destroy. I must either be an Abel, who by his immortal righteousness, being dead, yet speaketh, or as Achan, the saddest continuance of whose otherwise forgotten name is the fact that man perishes not alone in his iniquity."—Punshon.

September

We watch the summer leaves and flowers decay,
And feel a sadness o'er the splint
 thrown,
As if the beauty fading fast away
From Nature's scenes would leave our
 hearts more lone,
More desolate, when sunny hours are
 gone,—
And much of joy from outward things
 we find,
But more from treasures that may be our
 own,
Through winter's storm, the higher
 hopes of mind.—
The trust which soars from earth—earth
 has no claims to bind.

—Peachody.

September was derived from *Septem*, the seventh month of the Roman year, and *tember*, which means a shower. The Saxons named it "grist-month," as they then carried their new corn to the mill.
—Loaring.



Of all the impressive statements made by the illustrious Punshon, who is still remembered by many of the older Methodists of Canada, none are of greater importance to the younger men and women than those we quote in the preceding column. Dr. Punshon has put the case clearly, and his emphatic words should be carefully studied by every person, but particularly by Epworth Leaguers, who stand committed by the principles and pledge of their League to the highest and boldest influence possible to a human being on earth.

It is true that one has an individual life to live, and that one's own personal relation to God is of utmost value to him. But there is a sense in which no life is isolated. We are related beings, every one affecting others in a hundred different ways either for good or ill, for weal or woe. This is a world of human society with varied relationships uniting its members and making them truly component parts of one great universal whole. No life is or ever can be wholly independent.

It is of pressing moment, therefore, that the fact of personal influence, with all it involves, shall be intelligently faced and studied, as the words of Dr. Punshon suggest. It is not a matter of choice whether or not we shall influence our fellows. The only thing for us to determine is the character of our influence. Shall it be good or evil? Shall it be an increasing force for righteousness or sin? These are grave questions for everybody, and especially for young people. And they must be personally faced and settled. Others may advise us, their counsels may be lovingly given for our guidance, but our own wills are supreme, and we must face the responsibility of our own decisions.

Yet, when the choice of good is once made, our daily associations will not only give us opportunity for practising it, but will help us become efficient therein. This is one of the main purposes of the Epworth League. It exists as a company of like-minded young persons set on realizing for themselves the

highest good, and united to stimulate one another in distributing that good on all around. Its machinery is intended not only to help its members achieve something of Christian character for themselves, but to give them all needed opportunity for the practice of deeds of real Christian helpfulness for the benefit of others about them. It ministers to the young people that they may each become the stronger and more influential in ministry to some one else.

This personal influence of every Christian is a thing of value in itself alone, but when the united influence of a godly company is exerted for the accomplishment of some wholesome project, it becomes cumulative almost to the degree of omnipotence. It is as true today as long, long ago, that if one shall chase a thousand, two shall put ten thousand to flight. This thought is surely heartening to all who would combine forces with others of God's children for the righting of wrongs, the cleansing of errors, or in any way spreading the Kingdom of Righteousness in the earth.

While Dr. Punshon's words impress one with a sense of terror at the possibility of the misuse of one's powers of influence, they also inspire one with joy and thankful hope as he thinks of the corresponding power of personal influence for God's glory and the uplift of one's fellow-men. Few, if any, of our readers are consciously or purposely exercising themselves for evil, while thousands of them are really anxious above all things else to "do good unto all men and especially to those who are of the household of faith." These lines are for them. The coming Fall and Winter seasons will bring innumerable opportunities for the exercise of our influence in one way or another for the profit of some one else. Let us be awake to each passing day. By personal word and deed, by united and concerted plan and method, in all ways and at all times, let us exercise ourselves unto godliness, and we shall rejoice that our influence grows for God as the days multiply and the years increase.