

CHARACTERS.

Character is a condition, not a commodity. Character is an achievement and not an acquisition. Character, says an eminent writer, is the roadway in the soul over which the emotions, the virtues, the vices, that which makes the man, has passed as his life has gone on. Character is the residuum of pureness which is left after the refining fire has made it possible to skin away the dross. Character is the bottom fact of human nature, yea, more, it is the arena of the soul. It matters not how it comes, whether from man's own working with the force which God has given him, or whether it comes from a man working out his own salvation while God works in him to will and to do of his own good pleasure. When it is come, it is the resultant of the field of ethical and intellectual choice of the forces that there operate.

The man or woman who for the outcome of his life reaches this return to the likeness of God, contributes so much to the uplifting of the world. From us there must come this uplifting if it come at all, from Church, from state, from society. It may be in a thousand ways. If we have the gift of music by organ or by voice, or in the choir, we may so render that which Beethoven and Handel have left behind as to move along the pathway of devotion some soul upward toward God. It may be by the voice we can inspire men to nobler thoughts, and nobler deeds. It may be with the pen or pencil we may live thoughts like those of Thackeray or Browning or Carlyle, but if we do in any or all of those lines, we will do it because there is working in us the divine Spirit, building up, developing, opening out to fulness and power that wonderful thing possible to us all which we call character.

COULD DO NO WORK.

"Large sores broke out on my body, head and limbs, and also on my hands, so that I could not do any work, and my hair came out. My trouble was called eczema. I began taking Hood's Sarsaparilla. When I had taken several bottles the sores and itching disappeared and I was cured." Mrs. J. G. Brown, Brantford, Ont.

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THE CHILDREN OF THE BIBLE.

A great many books have been written about the characters of the men and women of the Bible, but very few about the children, or even the childhood of those who are held up as our patterns and examples.

The poet Wordsworth says that "the child is father to the man;" which means that the boy holds in his hands the character of the man, just as a sculptor holds the wet clay which he moulds and presses into shape. The boy is all the time moulding into shape the future man. Every thought, every word, every act leaves a mark on the delicate character stuff like the mark of the potter's thumb on the clay; and if it

is easy to spoil a clay figure, how much easier is it to ruin a nature made of so much finer material.

The Germans have a saying: "Was Hanschen nicht thut, thut Hans Nimmermehr." What Johnny can't do, John will never do," which means if we do not learn when we are young, we can never learn; so, after all, the responsibility rests with the boy. He builds the house and the man lives in it. I think, then, if we study for a few weeks the characters of those whose childhood and youth are spoken of in the Bible, we will understand better just what made them such great men and women, or what made their lives such sad failures.

Adam and Eve had no childhood. But think how eagerly and earnestly they must have watched the development of their little sons, Cain and Abel, the first children of the human race. The Bible does not tell us anything of their childhood, but we cannot help feeling how their father and mother must have grieved over the first signs of Cain's jealous temper, which was one day to ruin his life. Perhaps they tried to correct him, but like many children he was self-willed. He must have been sullen, too, as a boy, and deceitful, for even after his terrible crime, when one would expect him to be too full of remorse to try and hide it, he says to God: "Am I my brother's keeper?" pretending that he knows nothing of Abel's death.

O, boys and girls, you who know the terrible story of Cain's murder of his brother in a fit of jealous anger, be careful how you let your tempers get the better of you; and if you do give way to jealousy or anger, try to own up like a man, and to be truly sorry, so that your characters may never bear the mark of Cain.

ON THE BLUE LINE CAR.

The Blue Line street car stopped at the corner, and an anxious looking woman put a small boy inside.

"Now, Bob," she said as she hurried out to the platform again, "don't lose that note I gave you. Don't take it out of your pocket at all."

"No'm," said the little man, looking wistfully after his mother, as the conductor pulled the strap.

"What's your name, Bob?" asked a mischievous-looking young man sitting beside him.

"Robert Cullen Deems," he answered.

"Where are you going?"

"To my grandma's."

"Let me see that note in your pocket."

The look of innocent surprise in the round face ought to have shamed the boy's tormentor; but he only said again:

"Let me see it."

"I can't," said Robert Cullen Deems.

"See here, if you don't, I'll scare the horses and make them run away."

The little boy cast an apprehensive look at the horses.

"Here, Bob, I'll give you this peach if you'll pull that note half way out of your pocket."

The boy did not reply, but some of the older people looked angry.

"I say, chum, I'll give you this whole bag of peaches if you just show

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CHICAGO

me the corner of your note," said the tempter.

The child turned away, as if he did not wish to hear any more; but the young man opened the bag, and held it just where he could see and smell the luscious fruit.

A look of distress came into the boy's face. I believe Bob was afraid to trust himself; and, when a man left his seat on the other end to get off the car, the little boy slid quickly down, left the temptation behind, and climbed into the vacant place.

A pair of prettily gloved hands began almost unconsciously to clap; and then everybody clapped and applauded, until it might have alarmed

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Bob, if a y not slipped said: "Tell y congratul man stron tion, and y from it."

NOT KE

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