

making such marriages rare. More than enough is talked of the duties of children to parents; the other side of the question is often carefully concealed from sight. It seems to me that the duties of a parent to his children are tenfold as onerous as those of the latter to the former. His influence for good or evil over his offspring is enormous; theirs over him for many years insignificant. He can always ruin or injure their body and soul; they can rarely do much to cause him suffering; at least, not until their habits and opinions are acquiring strength. But let him not forget that as he trains the twig so will the tree incline. The opinions he implants in his children, the habits he allows them to form, will be in nine cases out of ten their habits and opinions through life.

The truth is that a parent fails signally, scandalously, unpardonably, in his duty to his children, if he does not train them up so as to fit them for this world as well as the next, if he does not enable them to enjoy life, and to be calm and hopeful when death approaches; no one can be the latter who looks back on a blighted existence.

To me it is sickening to hear fathers talk of the blessing and the duty of resignation to the will of God, and of the necessity of teaching children pure morality, when in their own lives they have persistently failed to show their faith by their works. The Christian religion teaches a man to labor while strength lasts; it commands him to prepare himself for the next world, not by pretending to hold certain dogmas and creeds, but by so living that in his actions he shows forth the spirit of his God. How, I ask, can ill-educated and diseased children do the work of life? The negligence and folly of parents and teachers make many a man unfit for the struggle before him. When such a person dies, whether early or late he leaves an empty place, which it had never been in his power properly to fill.

Long life should not be the object of existence, but every man should try to live well. No parent should wish to prepare his child for a career of idleness and luxury. He should esteem it his noblest gift to his offspring to fit him for living well, usefully, and therefore happily. But how can he pretend to give this training unless he knows something of the laws of health?