

PUBLIC OPINION.

Few persons realize the extent to which public opinion influences our motives, thoughts and conduct. By public opinion, I do not mean the Tribunal before which all things, of a nature to interest the great body of mankind, are carried. The daily newspaper speaks of Opinion as a sapient philosopher who scans, criticises, and re-adjusts religious and political matters; acquits or condemns individuals, and exercises a general supervision over human affairs. It is not this which creeps into our private life, our daily concerns. The best of us are too unimportant in this respect to become subjects of observation to the "eye of the World." The influence to which I refer, may perhaps be better, though less briefly described as *what others will think or say of us*. Thus deference to others is almost universally carried to excess. There are few independent natures who can truly say that their consciences are their only governors, and there are others—a much greater number than these—who, dead to both human and Divine influence, no longer care what others think. But I feel sure that almost all who reflect will confess, with meekness, that this undue deference has led them often astray.

Dr. O. W. Holmes, an admirable delineator of human nature, says that every individual embodies *three personalities*, and thus explains, in the person of one "John:"

1. The real John; known only to his Maker.
2. John's ideal John; never the real one, and often very unlike him.
3. His friends' ideal John, never the real John, nor John's John, but often very unlike either.

God has created us, and is ever present with us. Each thought of our hearts is known to Him, therefore we attempt no concealment, no palliation before him.—With ourselves we see, or think we can see, a thousand things which serve to ease our consciences, and which, if set before others in the light in which we view them, would lessen censure and increase admiration. Therefore we seldom clothe the outer manner in the garb of the inward mind. As a landlord who has reached the bottom of his beer barrel, carefully draws off the few remaining drops that no dregs may appear to tell the customer of its impurity; so the human heart, when it gives out its thoughts, draws them carefully, reserving the dregs to itself, that those which go forth may indicate the quality of the whole.

"And is not this right?" Many will say that it is, inasmuch as peace and unity would be almost annihilated, did we not conceal many things concerning ourselves and others. The right and wrong, however, depends much upon the motive.—When one refrains from circulating an unkind thought or remark, from charity towards another, or a wish to suppress evil communication, the motive is a proper one. On the contrary, when one listens to such remarks without opposition or reproof, their motive is evidently not good. Fear, a slavish fear of others, keeps them silent. The same fear might perhaps prevent their committing the same wrong, but not always, if their desire is *popularity*.

Were it possible, by a scrupulous regard to our conduct and language, to please others, or to satisfy them of our good intentions, then we should possess, in their esteem, some reward for our efforts. But it is in vain to hope for this. We know, or think we know, ourselves, that is, we have some motive for every word or action, and, as it is a law of nature that mankind should think well of themselves, we generally suppose our motives to be good and sufficient. It is useless to endeavor to make others see us as we see ourselves, as useless as the reverse. As Dr. Holmes says, what we appear to our friends is after all very different from what we appear to ourselves or our Maker.

Then is it not a waste of time, a weariness of mind, to say nothing of its irreverence toward our Creator, thus to make our souls subservient to the opinions and wishes of equally short-sighted and fallible beings? It makes us prisoners, slaves—it is a clog upon our mental progress and improvement, as strong, if not as galling, as the iron ball and chain. Supposing that we could receive true answers to our questions, we should be astonished to find how much evil is the result of fear for what others think.

There are gay butterflies of fashion whose hearts are warm and feelings kind, if they had but proper stimulus. Ask them why they waste their precious time, their health and sensibility upon hollow pleasures. "O, the world requires it of us. What would people think if we abjured fashion and folly, and set to improving our minds and morals, or those of humanity?" Ask the slanderer, the hypocrite, why they pollute the hearts of their fellow mortals with their evil thoughts. They will tell you that others do the same, though, perhaps, not as openly, and should they reform, they would be set down as more hypocritical than before. Ask more than half our ministers (there are some honorable exceptions,) why their voices are not heard from the pulpit and from the press, crying out against the abuses that sit unrebuked before their eyes in the midst of their congregations. They would doubtless say,—“Hush! Were we to preach as you say, we should have no congregation in a little while, we should soon have no pulpit. What would people think?” Ask our own weak, wavering hearts, on which glimmerings of new light have fallen, and which are longing to cast off old sins, old habits, to put on the life that is born of holiness, to gird themselves in the armor of an approving conscience, looking for the smile of God as their only reward; ask them why they still shrink and hesitate. The "All-seeing-eye," with all its clearness, gentleness, and penetration, has not yet overcome their dread of the searching, censorious, changeable, and anathematizable "eye of the World." C. A. H.

For the EDUCATION OF GIRLS in this country there is a variety of means provided, and among these none has more extensive influence upon the welfare and happiness of social life than the myriad of seminaries embraced in the title of "boarding-schools." Too many of these are called "fashionable," and are merely

superficial—justifying the satirist who characterizes them as "doing nothing for their pretty voices but supply them with intellectual varnish and gilding, and feed them with whipsyllabub at very extravagant prices. A languishing, sinpering, Rose-Matildaish manner, a little colloquial French, indifferently pronounced, a silly, sentimental, ah me style of English composition, tolerable skill on a piano-forte, a few paintings in oil, with finishing touches by the teacher, and badly done at that, a few pencil sketches, ditto, or at best so-so; these are the sum of the accomplishments for which fond and doting fathers annually pay a great store of redeemable bank notes."

But schools of a higher style are not scarce. There are enough of them to be found, where the truest views of school education prevail, and where the required talents in teachers and the most judicious superintendence and discipline preside to direct the sound and wholesome and practical education of the young woman, preparing her to discharge gracefully and usefully the duties of her influential position in the social circle of after life—Let such good schools be appreciated and patronized by discriminating parents, and it will still be found that the supply of thorough schools for sound and whole some education keeps pace with the demand.—*Educational Herald*.

PROSPECTUS

OF

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