

never be said to belong to himself. He is known amongst his friends as the man who cannot say "No." He belongs to whatever can capture him. He is carried about by every puny force, and one thing after another claims him by arresting his attention, while he is trying to go on; as twigs and leaves floating near the edge of a stream are intercepted by every weed, and whirled in every little eddy.

The examples of men of decisive character are comparatively few. The Freshman who decides on a certain course of study, and immediately carries his resolution into systematic practice, and allows nothing to interrupt him, is invariably the man who does well in his examinations. Not only so, he lays a sure foundation for the success that will attend him in whatever profession he may afterwards select. His mind is thus systematically trained to deliberate quickly, even in insignificant matters, and to decide, once for all, on a certain line of action. The advantages of such a mind are signal. The passions are not consumed among dubious musings, and abortive resolutions, but are thrown with all their animating force into definite operation. Such a character is exempt from much interference and annoyance, which irresolute men have to encounter.

One of the fundamental requisites to constancy of purpose is an harmonious nature, i.e., the agreement of the mind with itself, and with the conscience; the consenting co-operation of the passions, disposition, etc. Lady Macbeth, though devoid of conscience, was in other respects of harmonious nature. She willed the murder of the king, and did not shrink from forming plans for its accomplishment. Her ambition, passion, courage all aided her. Macbeth also willed the death of the king, but through qualms of conscience his resolution began to stagger. She then threw contempt on his change of purpose, and accused him of fickleness and cowardice, and thus shamed and hardened him to the deed. Here conscience was warped and deadened by passion. Conscience is "the great troubler of the human breast," and when it loudly declares against a man's project, it will be a fatal enemy to decision, till it either reclaims the passions, or be warped by them, as in Macbeth's case.

It follows, therefore, that a true Christian can only possess this constancy of purpose when his decision is given for what is right and good, otherwise conscience would be constantly opposing him, and would make him undecided. Of course conscience may entirely lose its power. The *Crustacea* of the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky quoted by Mr. Drummond, have chosen to abide in darkness. "Therefore they have become fitted for it." So the moral perception of man may become so blind to the working of conscience, that finally it waives the right to see. This blindness, complete or partial, contributes to constancy of purpose; but with a bad tendency. Revenge for instance has been known to bring about total blindness to the workings of conscience. The Arch-

enemy in "The Paradise Lost" boasts of—

"The unconquerable will,  
And study of *revenge*; immortal hate,  
And courage never to submit or yield,  
And what is else, not to be overcome."

Here persisting constancy of soul gives dignity even to a character, which every moral principle forbids us to admire.

Partial blindness is, to a certain extent, illustrated in all obstinate persons. On certain matters they fail to see the warnings that conscience places before them, and here they will be found to exhibit a stubbornness of temper, which can assign no reason but mere will. It is a lamentable fact that a man of such a character invariably boasts of his *firmness* and *decision*.

It is commonplace to remark that the will and character depend largely on the constitution of the body. It is for physiologists to explain the reason for this, but the truth is apparent from the fact that, as a rule, the decisive character possesses great physical firmness. This may account for the fact that women in general possess less decision than men. It is somewhat amusing to notice the natural indecision of the average woman, when she seats herself at the counter of an upholsterer's shop, and prices a curtain silk. She feels it to verify the value of its texture, objects to its colour, asks to be shown something else—something of the same kind only different; a little more so in fact, or perhaps not quite so much, and finally concludes that she is not quite sure which of the samples she will take, but will decide on the following day.

Whilst constancy of will depends to no small extent on the physical nature, there are many circumstances which are adapted to encourage and confirm decision, so that no one, through physical weakness, need despair of being able to overcome his fickleness, lassitude, or indecision. In constantly overcoming opposition, one becomes stronger after each victory and more resolute. Is it then only through the *victory* that opposition conduces to constancy of purpose? Clearly not. It is a matter of every day experience that when one is opposed throughout the prosecution of one's designs, that very *opposition* becomes an ally by strengthening the resisting and deciding power of the mind. The poet's delineation of Richard III. illustrates this. He looked upon every opposition as an inducement to persevere, and accordingly advanced with ever increasing constancy, fulfilling his vow to "cut his way through with a bloody axe." Even when opposition was strongest, he declared "A thousand hearts were great within his bosom," and his determination and perseverance to overcome his last great opponent, "to seek Richmond even in the throat of death," are powerfully illustrated in the oft-quoted cry, in which he offers to exchange his "kingdom for a horse."

The spirit of independence contributes to the decision of character, and if kept within bounds is most bene-