

Home Life.

Among the various social institutions which civilization and Christianity have conferred upon man, that of the family or home life stands pre-eminent.

As a supporter in the various sorrows incident to human life, it has a peculiar adaptation. It binds together those whose material interests are already at one, by the stronger and more endearing ties of a common sympathy. It is a citadel of defence and protection to the young and unwary, in which the tenderest emotions of the human soul are cherished and fostered, and around which they cluster with unyielding embrace; the vantage ground whose immovable barriers ward off the tide of adverse influences, or so impede their force as to prevent them from overwhelming the frail moral powers which are being developed in the rising man. Man, in the later walks of life, surrounded by continually varying circumstances, and struggling in the great conflict against poverty, is wont ever to reflect on the great beacon light in the past, which casts an illumining ray all down the line of active life and is reflected into the great beyond. The lowly cottage, the cheerful fireside, the happy family, remain imperishable in the retrospect; though over the vision may be drawn an occasional veil of gloom, as the ruthless hand of change spreads a blight over the face of the past, and leaves to the view but the splendid ruins of what had before stood out in complete symmetry and in beauty unsurpassed. A supreme love of, and attachment to, home is characteristic of the inhabitants of the old world, while a desire to emigrate seems to inhere in those of the new. Both of these desires, when kept within their just limits, are proper and commendable, but either may be carried to dangerous extremes; the former tending in course of time to material disadvantages, while the latter is too apt to culminate in both material and moral ruin.

The family is a God-ordained institution, and is useful, not only as a source of protection and restraint, but also as a source

of practical education, both social and moral.

As a school for moral training the benefit of the home compact is beyond computation. There is a principle in the constitution of man which, though founded on only the semblance of reason, has a strong influence over his actions. This is the principle which leads him to look upon all restraint as an evil, and to consider subjection to any number of laws as absolute slavery. On the contrary, the experience of the race goes to prove that there are certain fixed, unalterable laws which must be observed by those who would attain to the greatest possible extent of social or religious happiness, and the neglect of which always entails self-inflicted punishment. Thus it would appear, contrary to the general supposition, that the more of those just and necessary laws a man obeys, the freer and happier man he is, as any digression from them always brings with it its consequent injuries. In the home circle these strict and apparently harsh rules are modified and made pleasant and attractive by the circumstances of the position. Each member of the family learns to feel that the sacred honor of every other individual member depends directly on his or her conduct in society, and thus we have the strongest incentive of a common interest operating in favor of the best interests of the whole compact, and of society in general.

That this is a very important object to be gained by the family compact, will, we think, be acknowledged by every one who has any knowledge of the human constitution, and of the various degrading influences which act upon it. The underflow of man is all animal, and contains tendencies that are a continual drawback on the higher aspirations of the mind; but there is an upper current which flows through the realm of the emotions, and which, if led on through proper channels, contributes by far the most lasting benefit to the man as a whole; hence the necessity that this moral current be supplied from an efficient source, which source the