

ence equal to that of the first ten. These first ten years have done more to fix the bent of his life and character than all the long years he may live through in days succeeding. In them, as the poet said, has been the main fashioning of him; and whose has been the chief part in that main fashioning? Has it not been his mother's? How momentous a matter for him, then, what sort of a one that mother has been—vigorous or feeble, healthful or ailing, hopeful or depressed, cheery or complaining, composed or irritable, systematic or chaotic. How much does it matter what sort of a mother he has had to the individual. How much does it matter what sort of a succession of mothers it has had for its successive generations to the race. Is it surprising that there should be that adage as to remarkable men and remarkable mothers? And human excellence is not exclusively that of those who have been remarkable.

"A man's fate," said an Oxford tutor, looking back upon his college experience, "a man's fate all depends on the nursing—on the mother, not on the father. The father has commonly little to do with the boy till the bent is given and the foundation of character laid. All depends on the mother."

Galton, in his *Hereditary Genius*, after citing, as examples of remarkable women, the mothers of Bacon, Buffon, Condorcet, Cuvier, D'Alembert, Gregory, Watts, and others, adds: "It appears, therefore, to be very important to success in science that a man should have an able mother. . . . Of two men of equal abilities, the one who has a truth-loving mother would be more likely to follow the career of science."

Again, who—in Lewes' *Life of Goethe*—can read the poet's early history, with its absorbingly interesting account of the training he received from his mother, without feeling how much the marvellous material owed to its marvellous manipulation; how what the son grew into was very largely what his mother made him into; or, at lowest, prepared and fitted—in fact, enabled—him to grown into? What if Goethe's mother had never married? Would she have written *Faust*?

These questions suggest that, from the training of the man—the manipulation, that is, of the human material—we go back to the material itself; to the making of that which, after it had been made, the mother's training had to manipulate—from the infant new born to the infant unborn. Here, doubtless, we are in a region of far less certainty. Here, we bethink us of the Psalmist's: "We are made secretly." Nevertheless, even here there are such considerable probabilities as, I cannot but think, ought to have great practical weight with us. "Material," why the word itself is but Latin for mothering, a lengthened out form of *mater*. We have no corresponding *paterial*.

A few moments since, we had before us the wonderful contrast of what man was on the day of his birth, and what, in nine or ten years from that birthday, his nursing and training had made or manipulated him into. But, now, let us look at a still more wonderful change and transfiguration, transcending that other one even far more than it transcends all those of later life—change and contrast brought about, too, in a period much shorter, one counting, indeed, by months, instead of years.

Instead of nine or ten years forward, from his beginning on the day on which he was born, go nine months backwards, to the true beginning and starting-point of him, when, by growth, and development, he had to be built up and prepared for being born. "What," asks Mr. Herbert Spencer, "can be more widely contrasted than a newly born child and the small semi-transparent gelatinous spherule constituting the human ovum? The infant is so complex in structure that a cyclopaedia is needed to describe its constituent parts. The germinal visicle is so simple that it may be described in a line.

But, that all but structureless and unspecialised cell, or cellule, is itself a minute bit, more or less detached, of the maternal organism; and (except for the other scarcely distinguishable paternal cellule which originally coalesced in it), that whole wonderful antenatal structure, with all its perplexities, is merely and exclusively made out of the mother's living substance; it has been