

The Young Man and His Problem

PERSONAL INFLUENCE

Every man has an influence as broad as his circle of acquaintance, and influence is immortal. It goes on from decade to decade and from generation to generation. Who can measure the influence of Florence Nightingale or Frances E. Willard, or a host of others. "How is it I cannot get a glass of liquor anywhere in this wretched village of yours? 'My lord, something over a hundred years ago a man named John Wesley came to these parts.'"

DIVORCE

The saddest word ever written over the doorway of a home is that black word: DIVORCE. Macaulay, sitting in the House of Commons, at a great crisis in English history, even such a crisis as the trial of Warren Hastings, exclaimed afterward in describing the scene: "It was like seeing Caesar stabbed in the senate chamber. If I live fifty years it will be impossible to blot out the impression." A divorce is not a sudden affair, but the end of a long struggle of unutterable woe, but the record of it is sometimes told in a few brief pregnant sentences as when John Wesley wrote in his journal those words concerning his cruel companion who had suddenly turned her back upon him forever: "I did not desert her. I did not send her away. I will not recall her."

FAITH IN HUMANITY

You will never succeed in any popular sense unless you believe in men. Humanity at the centre and core is good. The meanest man who ever lived had in him a spark of the divine essence. Oh, that we could discover the good in men and cultivate it. An exchange remarks: "A pathetic scene was witnessed in a western city the other day. A wretched criminal in the penitentiary was condemned to die. He was to be executed at midnight on a certain date in March. In the afternoon preceding this important midnight he was removed from one part of the prison to another, and standing in the street outside the prison, he saw the sun sinking in the west. He stopped to gaze upon it. The officer gently urged him on. He drew back, and said: 'Warden, please let me stand here a few minutes and look at the sun; for it is the last time I shall ever see it. Before the sun shall rise tomorrow morning I shall be dead. Let me stand here and look at it a little while.' His request was granted; and the officer had to use some gentle violence to make him move on. He was an ignorant man, a cruel man, a bloody man, a murderer; but down deep in his wretched heart there was a chord which vibrated with sympathy when his eyes beheld the sun. It is this that makes it hard for some people to die."

YOUR WEAK POINT

Every man has a weak point. It may be a love for drink, or a quick temper, or an insane love of praise, or passion for sensual pleasure, or a mean and uncertain disposition. Whatever it is, guard well your weak point. Prof. Henry Drummond once said:—"I knew of a man who was a Temperance lecturer. In his early years he had been a great drunkard; but he was reformed, and had got considerable notoriety as a platform speaker in one of our large cities. By trade he was a glass cutter. One day, many years after he had been a confirmed Christian, as every one thought, a servant girl brought into his place of business a decanter with a broken neck, and asked him to cut it smooth. He took up the bottle to see what was wrong; the fumes of brandy came out of the neck, and went into his brain. He turned the decanter upside down, and got a drop of the liquid upon his finger. He put it to his lips. It set his blood on fire. He went to the nearest public-house and got drunk. That was the beginning of a very bitter and disgraceful end."

THE COMING RACE

God is looking for a race; a race which shall lead the nations of the earth. That race must have a world-religion, a world language, a world-policy and a world-program. There are world problems which must be solved. There is coming on the scene of action a new race, an imperial race; in the physiognomy of which the features of every great nation will be reflected. The Anglo Saxon with the face of Shakespeare, the Englishman with the face of Gladstone, the Russian with the face of Tolstoi, the Frenchman with the face of Victor Hugo, the German with the face of Bismarck, the Scotchman with the face of Knox, the Welshman with the face of Christmas Evans, the Irishman with the face of Daniel O'Connell, the Bohemian with the face of Huss, the Jew with the face of Disraeli, and the Italian with the face of Michael Angelo. A race imperial in the quality of its brotherhood, wearing the garland of a universal sympathy. A race which shall write the first lines of the world's Anthem and prepare the fabric of a universal ensign.

DOWN AND OUT

The time, above all others, to help a man is when he is down and out. When the world is against him. When every door is shut in his face. When all his society friends have "cut" him. In the hour when he would be black-balled in every fraternal organization. In that hour stand by him. The Herveys had been kind to Samuel Johnson in his early days of struggle, and he always remembered them with gratitude. "If you call a dog Hervey, I shall love him," he said.

CHARACTER IN THE FACE

No man can wear a perpetual mask. There is a color in the cheek, a fire in the eye, a pressure in the lips, an inflation in the nostrils, a quality in the complexion, a texture in the hair and an expression in the whole physiognomy, which reveals character. When Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey were holding revival meetings in Chicago in 1876, the former's attention was attracted one night to an usher who was seating the people. The evangelist did not like the man's appearance. In fact he became so impressed by the matter that he caused inquiry to be made in regard to the man's identity. Word was brought to the platform in a few moments that the man's name was Guiteau. The tree had not as yet brought forth its fruit. Posterity, however, remembers him as the man who assassinated President Garfield.

THE year 1914 is ended. Twelve more issues of The Western Home Monthly have gone forth to its army of readers. Notwithstanding the general business depression and the European War we have added greatly to our subscribers, and we have the assurance of many of our old time readers that the issues of 1914 were better than any that preceded them.

This is all very gratifying to us, and it also must be satisfactory to our advertisers to know that they are spending their money with a magazine worth while, a magazine whose popularity increases with every issue, and that closes the year with its sphere and influence greatly extended.

KEEP COOL

There is a world of meaning in Emerson's phrase: "Energy is repose." Anybody can get excited, but the man who is sure of himself is the incarnation of composure. Wellington uttered his military behests to his subordinates in a tone which bordered on a whisper. If agitations swept his soul nobody ever knew it. The great man is the man who has become master of himself. When a candle is burning it light; when it is sputtering and buzzing it yields smoke. Smoke is wasted illumination. Nervousness is a sign of strength, but it is not strength. "It is a fundamental mistake to call vehemence and rigidity strength! A man is not strong who takes convulsion fits; though six men cannot hold him." It took four men to hold Napoleon in his death convulsions.

GOOD TASTE

Be careful about the law of association. Let nobody associate with your name and memory a mean thing. Stand for good taste in all things. Woe be the preacher who has a reputation for "slang." Let vulgarity have a wide berth. Let no questionable story or incident fall from your lips. Give no mortal on God's earth a chance to connect anything foul, mean or low with your personality. Be careful that when you make people "laugh" you are not making them laugh at you. Speaking of low class literature a writer says:—"Why should the low and vicious be selected as the type, and served up in literature as mental pabulum? 'Oh,' says one, 'they are facts!' Well, a dead dog in a back lane is a fact, and a very repulsive one; but that is no reason for placing it on the sideboard. Much of the literature that finds its way into the homes and minds of the people is of this 'dead dog' variety, and needs burying quickly and deeply, with no hope of resurrection."

THE FIRST YEARS

In childhood we have nothing to do but remember. We remember faces, places, phrases, incidents, events and association. The deep stain on the memory of infancy and childhood can never be erased. The human eye is not more sensitive than the thoughts of a child. "The first five years of my life made me an infidel," said Tom Paine.

HOW TO LIVE

The great problem of life is not: "How to Make a Living," but how to live. A man's life centres in the home. There you see him at the best and at the worst. Gloom lies near the border line of happiness. John Bunyan in describing his dream remarks: "I saw in my dream that at the very door of heaven, there was a gate leading to hell." The changing of the position of the railroad train, three inches to the right or three inches to the left, means "off the track"—and disaster in every possible shape and form.

CONFESS YOUR MISTAKES

Be big enough to acknowledge "the corn." If you have blundered, say so. If your plan has failed, grant the point. If your words have needlessly offended, apologize. If you have stood for a method which would not work, give in. A learned man has said that the hardest words to pronounce in the English language are, "I have made a mistake." When Frederick the Great wrote to the Senate, "I have just lost a battle, and it's my own fault," Goldsmith said, "His confession shows more greatness than his victories."

CRUEL IMPATIENCE

All men are not equal. All persons are not equally quick in their mental operations. Some people are slow to grasp but strong to retain. Others are quick to see but certain to forget. There is a difference in brain quality. And some of those who are the slowest in the beginning are the brightest in the end. It was said of Dr. Arnold of Rugby: He would often dwell on the curious alternations of cleverness or dullness in school generations, which seemed to baffle all human calculation or exertion. "What we ought to do is to send up boys who will not be plucked." A mere plodding boy was above all others encouraged by him. At Laleham he had once got out of patience, and spoken sharply to a pupil of this kind, when the pupil looked up in his face and said, "Why do you speak angrily, sir?—indeed, I am doing the best that I can."

THE MODERN SAINT

The modern saint is of all sorts and conditions and almost too numerous to mention. There is the orthodox saint, he can tell you what to believe; the institutional saint, he can tell you what to do; the smiling saint, he can tell you how he feels; the praying saint, he can tell you the secret of spiritual power; the criticizing saint, he can tell you when you are going wrong; and the conservative saint, he can always tell you "what not to do." Time would fail me to tell of the esthetic saint, the spasmodic saint, the evangelistic saint, the new thought saint, the up-to-date saint, —all good saints. The saint with the downward look—material. The saint with the upward look—spiritual. The saint with the inward look—mystical. The saint with the sideward look—careless. The saint with the wandering look—wayward. The saint with the forward look—aggressive.

HOW TO TREAT

Are you favored with an honored guest? Don't be concerned about him. At least do not let him see that you are concerned. Act as though you were accustomed to men of such distinction in your home. Just be at home in your own home. And being at home you will make him feel at home. Turn him loose. Give him the "freedom" of the establishment. Thus you will honor your guest and yourself.

"Prof. Swing told this story of his dog, Chihuahua, of whom he was very fond: 'When Canon Farrar visited Chicago I had him at dinner with me. I was a little fearful that being so 'big a gun' he might be shocked when he saw my dog sauntering around the dining room. Now, it has always been my habit to pass little bits of meat down to my dog as I sit at the table. What was my surprise and pleasure to catch the great Canon Farrar handing Chihuahua a sliver of turkey before his Eminence had been waited upon three minutes. 'Each one of my ten children,' he said, 'has a pet of some kind at home, and like your dog the pets have the freedom of the house. And you may believe that I feel at home.' These words told me more of England's great preacher than I could have learned from many an able lecture."