

THE UNDYING VIRTUES.

They were gossiping in the country store, and the theme was the coming marriages of three young men in the neighborhood. Most of the crowd appeared to think that George was making the best alliance, for his fiancée was none other than a college-bred girl with a fine education, who had really written articles in the magazines. A few thought that David was not far astray. His lady-love was admittedly the most beautiful in face and figure in the whole community, and she had a charming way with her too. But when Old Josh was asked for an opinion he remarked that perhaps he wasn't a very good judge, but he predicted that in ten years both George and David would admit that young Adam had made the best choice of all in taking the plain unassuming Sarah as his bride. "It's just like this," he said, "after a few years with a woman who knows a lot more about books than you do, who has higher ideals, as she calls it, you get a little sour on the business. You feel that you are not in her class and she makes you feel it all the more. Then she calls in her friends who can appreciate her powers, and there you are—out in the cold. So it's no scholar for me, unless I'm a scholar myself. And as for David's girl—well, it's a great thing to have a wife like that around you all the time with her pretty ways and looks, but I tell you that isn't enough when the crop is bad and the children cross and the mosquitoes troublesome. That is just where Sarah will come in. She has genuine goodness, that doesn't fail during the hot weather. She is just the same in hard times as in good times. She is good and she is useful and she is loyal and loving and these are the things that count in a long life."

Old Josh wasn't so far astray. The thing that lasts is love, and love is the source of all genuine goodness. You can prove this to your own satisfaction in a very simple way. Suppose someone accuses you of ignorance. For instance he says that you do not know the maiden name of the Queen or the name of the King of Italy. You do not feel such a charge very keenly, for you say that nobody knows everything. If you are ignorant on these points you know a good many things, about which most men are ignorant, and so you can hold your own, and you know it. But if it is proved that you are lacking in taste on good habits it is different. The charge is more personal. You feel disgraced if you recognize yourself to be boorish or filthy or slovenly. It is even worse when you feel that you are rightly accused of being immoral or of possessing a bad temper and a quarrelsome disposition. Knowledge, taste and habits are in a sense accidents of one's being, but disposition is the essence. So you feel that every attack on your goodness and sweetness is a direct attack on your very self. In the long run you do not mind being poor or unlearned or uncultured but unless you are a politician you do mind it if you are proven to be dishonest, disloyal or hateful.

NATIONAL GOODNESS.

When one comes to view it from a social and national standpoint there is nothing of such great value as genuine goodness. Within the nation itself, goodness—which is another name for honor, honesty, fair-dealing and love for the other fellow—is the one condition of abiding peace and stability; and in international dealings the case is just the same. The story of happy community life is the story of loving relationship. Where men honor their wives, and wives are true to their husbands, there is no danger of family discension; where employers are honest with their employees, and where employees are fair to their employers, there is no likelihood of strikes

and lockouts; and so it is, not only in the family and the vocation, but in every social organization. Love and goodness are the sure guarantee of permanent peace and prosperity. It is impossible by force and cunning, by law and regulation, to secure the blessings which come only to those who are right in heart and deed. Herein is the difference between the socialism of the disgruntled and the true Christian socialism.

GOODNESS IN THE HOME AND THE SCHOOL.

Now, goodness can find its way into social and national life, only as it is developed in the primary

THE IMPERISHABLE

I walked the fields a morning prime,
The grass was ripe for mowing,
The skylark sang his matin chime,
And all was brightly glowing.

"And thus" I cried "the ardent boy,
His pulse with rapture beating
Deems life's inheritance is joy—
The future proudly greeting."

I wandered forth at noon:—Alas!
On earth's maternal bosom,
The scythe had left the with'ring grass
And stretched the fading blossom.

And thus, I thought with many a sigh,
The hopes we fondly cherish,
Like flowers which blossom but to die,
Seem only born to perish.

Once more abroad at eve I strayed,
Through lonely hay-fields musing,
While every breeze that round me played
Rich fragrance was diffusing.

The perfumed air, the hush of eve,
To purer hopes appealing,
O'er thoughts perceptive too prone to grieve
Scattered the balm of healing.

For thus "the actions of the just,"
When memory hath enshrined them,
E'en from the dark and silent dust
Their odours leave behind them.

—Barton.

institutions of civilization—the home and the school. Education, style and wealth are insignificant in a mother where compared with the quality of goodness. Cleverness, ability to earn, power to manage are nothing in a father without honesty, uprightness, and fair-dealing. And in a school it is a comparatively small matter how many facts are committed to memory, how many little accomplishments acquired, or how many marks taken on examination. The outstanding products of any good education are character and conduct. In the grammar of life the two important verbs are not to have and to hold, but the verbs to be and to do.

A contributor writing from the country says that the schools are very inefficient, and among other things says that in them no emphasis is placed on good behavior. Whether this is true or false does not concern us just now. It is a fair subject for investigation. This much is true, however—

that the schools are the direct expression of the will of the people. If teachers are poor it is possible to get better by paying the price; if moral conduct is not emphasized it is because the spirit of the community is placing the emphasis on other things. The fundamental institution in society is the family, and its ideals and practices govern life in all social institutions. If there is real goodness in the home—there will be evidences of goodness in the school, the church, the country house, the factory and the legislature. Few things could be more calamitous to society than for parents to set up material wealth and social standing as the supreme ideals of life; few things more damaging than that they should insist upon preparation for money-making as the chief aim of the school. Genuine morality, old-fashioned goodness—which includes right thinking, pure feeling, noble action—is the beginning and end of education.

CHRISTMAS GIVING.

It is not out of place at this season to talk of goodness, since the season is named after Him who went about doing good. It is wonderful when one reflects upon it how much good has crept into the world as the result of His example and His teaching. The thirty odd charitable institutions in this city are a good illustration of the out-working of the loving, Christian spirit which is abroad in the land. It is doubtful if the founder of Christianity is seen to as good advantage in His own peculiar institution, the Church, as He is in the organizations and institutions of modern civilization, for every one of them gives expression to His teaching.

THE GIVING OF ONE'S SELF.

Real institutions consist in more than good intentions and good wishes. It is manifested chiefly in good actions. To be good is to do good. The man who is prepared to enter upon service must learn to give, and in his giving must first of all give himself. When one does this it is easy to give money and time and possessions of every kind. Unless one gives his heart all other giving is burdensome.

"Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,
Himself, his hungering neighbor and me."

This is how parents must begin. It is not toys and trinkets children chiefly need at Christmas time; they yearn for a mother's love and a father's attention. And the parent who gives his affection will not find it difficult to give the toys and the trinkets. He will enjoy rather than grudge the giving. In the same way the preacher, the teacher, the giver to missions or charity will find that where the heart is, there will go the treasure.

THE VIRTUE OF FORGIVING.

The highest form of giving is forgiving. The Western Home Monthly would urge upon its readers the practice of this virtue. All who have done wrong in the sight of God or man—and who has not?—will know what it is to be forgiven. All who have been wronged or misinterpreted—and who have not?—will know that there is no joy so great as that which follows an act of forgiveness. At this season then, we urge all our readers to forget the bitterness of the past—the entanglements between lovers, between husband and wife, between friends and relatives, between sects and parties. Let us in the name of the Prince of Peace, resolve to make a fresh start in the spirit of love so that the Christmas bells may chime for our hearts the song the angels sang—"Peace, good-will, for evermore."