

Influence of Associates.

If you always live with those who are lame, you will yourself learn to limp.—FROM THE LATIN.

If men wish to be held in esteem, they must associate with those who are estimable.—LA BRUYERE.

1. **By What Men Are Known.**—An author is known by his writings, a mother by her daughter, a fool by his words, and all men by their companions.

2. **Formation of a Good Character.**—Intercourse with persons of decided virtue and excellence is of great importance in the formation of a good character. The force of example is powerful; we are creatures of imitation, and, by a necessary influence, our tempers and habits are very much formed on the model of those with whom we familiarly associate. Better be alone than in bad company. Evil communications corrupt good manners. Ill qualities are catching as well as diseases; and the mind is at least as much, if not a great deal more, liable to infection, than the body. Go with mean people, and you think life is mean.

3. **Good Example.**—How natural is it for a child to look up to those around him for an example of imitation, and how readily does he copy all that he sees done, good or bad. The importance of a good example on which the young may exercise this powerful and active element of their nature, is a matter of the utmost moment.

4. **A True Maxim.**—It is a trite, but true maxim, that "a man is known by the company he keeps." He naturally assimilates by the force of imitation, to the habits and manners of those by whom he is surrounded. We know persons who walk much with the lame, who have learned to walk with a hitch or limp like their lame friends. Vice stalks in the streets unabashed, and children copy it.

5. **Live with the Culpable.**—Live with the culpable, and you will be very likely to die with the criminal. Bad company is like a nail driven into a post, which after the first or second blow, may be drawn out with little difficulty; but being once driven in up to the head, the pinchers cannot take hold to draw it out, which can only be done by the destruction of the wood. You may be ever so pure, you cannot associate with bad companions without falling into bad odor.

6. **Society of the Vulgar.**—Do you love the society of the vulgar? Then you are already debased in your sentiments. Do you seek to be with the profane? In your heart you are like them. Are jesters and buffoons your choice friends?