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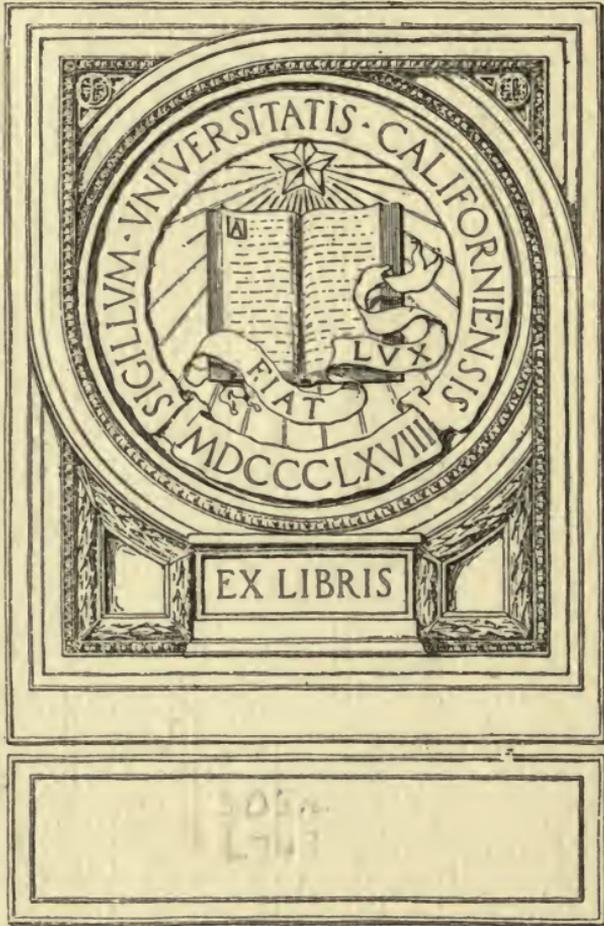
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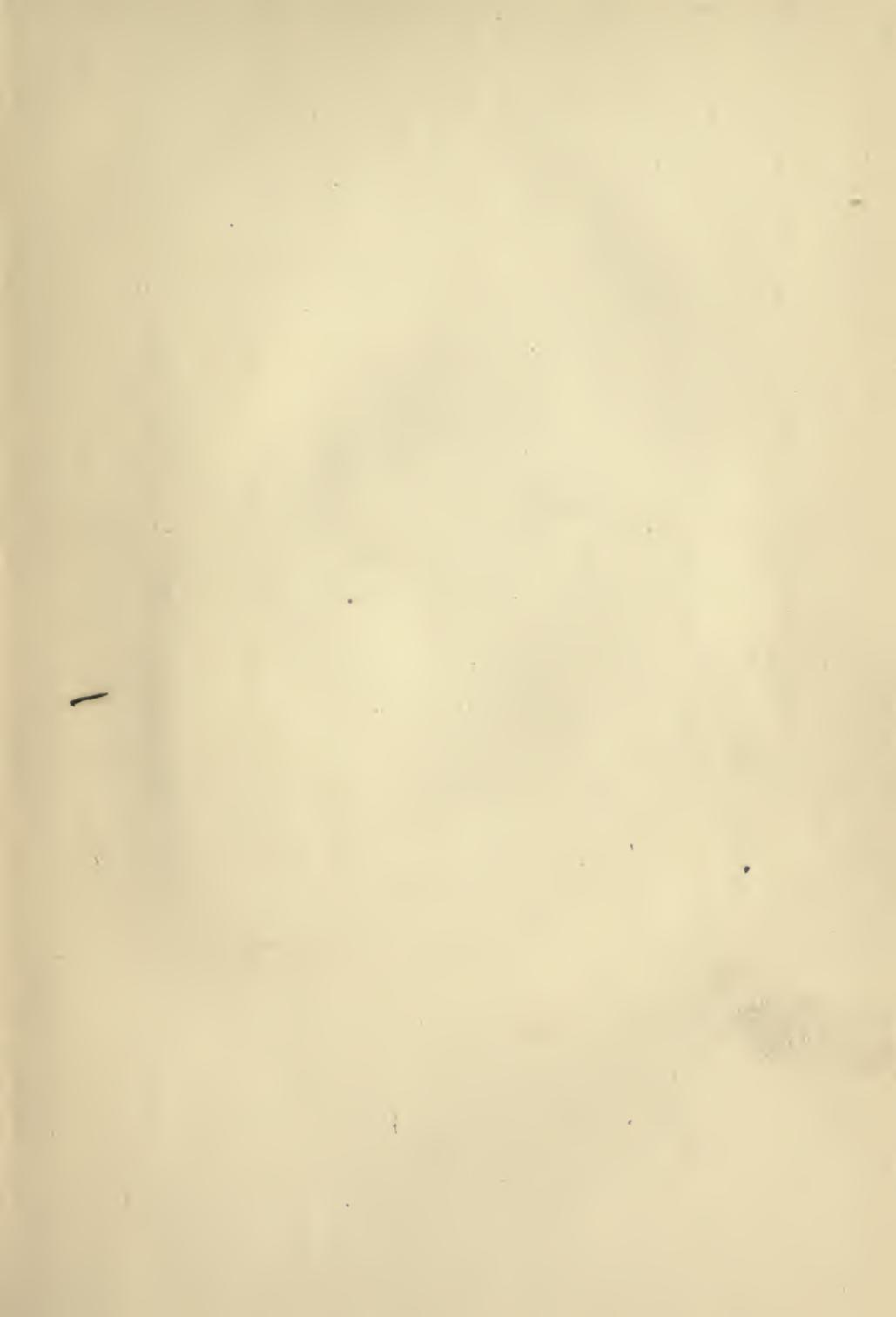
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THE SPIRITUAL CARE OF A CHILD

BOOKS BY

Anna Robertson Brown Lindsay

CULTURE AND REFORM

GIVING WHAT WE HAVE

VICTORY OF OUR FAITH

WHAT GOOD DOES WISHING DO?

WHAT IS WORTH WHILE?

THE SPIRITUAL CARE OF A CHILD

Price 35 cents each by mail

THOMAS Y. CROWELL & CO.

NEW YORK

THE SPIRITUAL CARE OF A CHILD

BY

ANNA ROBERTSON BROWN LINDSAY, PH.D.

AUTHOR OF "WHAT IS WORTH WHILE?" "CULTURE AND
REFORM," "GIVING WHAT WE HAVE," "WHAT
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THE SPIRITUAL CARE OF A CHILD

THE upbringing of a child is one of the most ancient of arts, and yet to this day, in certain of its phases, it is the least mastered. The physical care of a child has been deeply studied, — a baby's food is now analyzed and measured to the fraction of an ounce. Its intellectual life has been provided for, — we have a progressive system of education from the kindergarten to the close of the graduate courses of a University. But when we examine into the problem of the best spiritual care of a child, we find ourselves far from fixed guidance.

Civilization itself, over-refined and sensuous, hampers both word and deed. There is a moral constriction in public sentiment, and aspiration is too often hampered by what others say. Our times are the best times of the world, and yet in many ways the spirit of the age is intensely hostile to a child's best welfare.

Consider the general type of citizenship which we are to-day preparing in the American nation. Do we not too often overlay childhood with impressions of a bitter struggle for wealth, fame, position, or material success, to the inevitable coarsening of temperament, and degradation of ideals? Do we not undermine fibre when we buy our children indolence and ease? Do we not put toy pistols and noise for patriotism, and stories of mischievous children, who daily imagine new tricks, for the great and ancient heroisms of the race? Do we not apparently value recklessness instead of courage, competition instead of loving-kindness? Do we not put forth hasty impulses or soft-tongued sentiments for real convictions? — careless parenthood for reasoned control? — indifference for political and civic ardor?

At the same time we are confronted, as a nation, with the gravest and most inspiring possibilities of history. Every impression influences type. Will these conditions of childhood result in the balanced temperament, the just outlook, the regal endowments necessary

for spiritual control? The only right we have to bring children into the world, is to add to the spiritual force of the universe. Populations are not nations, mere creatures are not significant, and uninspired children are but a kind of spawn.

Pertness and irreverence are our national disgrace. Thinking men and women are convinced that brilliant ability in the way of business does not necessarily make men or corporations honest, nor does public office make men incorruptible to private privilege; professional standing in art or literature is not always accompanied by high moral character; and we are confronted, not only with conditions of labor among the poorer classes that are appalling, not only with luxury and idleness in the wealthier ranks, but by the reasons for these conditions, and by problems which, reaching out to all classes, seem to concern the generic life of man.

Even the scientific study and application of the psychology of childhood, valuable as it is, does not of itself produce strong character. Parents, teachers, pastors, and all

those interested in the higher development of children are beginning to ask : How can we meet modern civilization with weapons which shall guard our children from the darts of sin? How can we strengthen them for the physical strain of life, — for their private duties, and their public responsibilities? How can we bring up our children in spiritual health? — to that sane outlook over life which is not worn by worry, nor unbalanced by sorrow; which is undiscouraged by difficulty, and unspoil by victory; which can meet life with quiet nerves, a sense of humor, a sense of majesty, and a realization of spiritual opportunity?

Let us begin an old, and yet new programme. Let us believe that the relation of the soul to God is the most important thing in life. The foundations of the spiritual life lie deep in prayer and reverie. Leisure, culture, and meditation have social uses, as well as the jumping hurry of doing. If we do truly thus believe, we shall plan our business, our professional interests, our household hours, our companionships, our reading, our amusements, and our public service in the light of

this belief, and shall not apparently try to invoke, at one moment, the help of the divine spirit, and at another to breathe forth indifference, worldliness, or antagonism toward God. Can we lift our children higher than our own ideals? Can we lift them at all, if we do not work out our ideals in some practical way?

Let us give our children a positive religious training. Let our religious teaching be definite and continuous. If we wish to drive a nail into the wall, we do not say: Oh, let the wall alone. When those boards are older, the spike will go in of itself. Nor do we give it one or two desultory raps with a hammer, looking elsewhere as we pound. We choose the exact spot where the nail is to go, and with deliberate strokes, and an eye on the nailhead, pound it firmly, until it is fixed in the desired spot,—then clinch it. If we wish truths to lodge in a child's soul, we need not expect that some haphazard chance of life will place them there, nor suppose that they will become fixed as we wish them to, without a definite purpose on our part, and persistent effort.

Still less would we expect a garden to grow,

if, on looking over a tract of ground, we should say: I shall have roses and apples there by and by. Not that I have ever planted rose-slips there, or set out fruit-trees,—I do not believe in forcing a crop that way,—but in a few years roses and fruit-trees will probably spring up there of their own accord.

We cannot *make* our children spiritual, any more than we can *make* a garden grow. But we know that if we will plant good seed in good soil, and rightly tend it, by and by the desired plant will appear. Life springs, though we know not how.

But what shall we plant? What spiritual flowers and fruit do we wish to cultivate in our children? What shall we sow broadcast, to be quickened of God? Let us decide, first of all, whether or not we wish them to bring forth the fruits of a distinctively Christian life. Let us next ask ourselves whether we are willing to put into the spiritual care of our children the time, strength, money, love, and patience necessary. If so, let each of us now take a sheet of paper and mark down on it the traits that we sincerely wish to develop

in our children. On another sheet let us mark the traits that our children now actually have through their heredity, temperament, or present environment.

We shall at once perceive that childhood is a thing of beginnings, of promise; but a social work second only to the creation of life is now before the conscientious parent, upon whom is laid the task of fashioning a new generation, and preserving greatness, heroism, and idealism for the race. Only God can bring up a child. Nothing will bridge the abyss of the actual and the ideal, except faith, hope, love, work, and the immediate help of divinity.

We also find that we must fling ourselves into the task. Apathy never awakens enthusiasm. Prayer, not inattention, wins. And yet what thunders at us, even above the general roar of American life, is that parents who apparently wish to guide their child aright, themselves chase every phantom of the world, and surround themselves with influences antagonistic to a faithful Christian life. Later, these very parents mourn that their children do not display the inspirational traits of humanity.

Truth, courage, justice, patience, magnanimity, industry, loyalty, mental vigor, talent, energy, mercy, honesty, chastity, earnestness, decision of character, chivalry, tenderness, sympathy, moral heroism, filial and conjugal affection, reverence, and spiritual intensity, all have a reason for being, and a means of development. Why do we not foster these lovely qualities, if we really desire that they should live and grow?

Next, let us set down on another sheet of paper an outline of the religious education that we propose to give our children before they are, say, ten years of age. Ought not children of ten to have a general familiarity with the whole Bible, a connected idea of Biblical history, and of its heroic figures, and a memoriter knowledge of the Ten Commandments, many passages of Scripture, the Creed, and the church catechism? Ought not such children to have read and enjoyed "Pilgrim's Progress," and other sterling religious books? Ought they not to know many of the great hymns of the church, — words and music? Ought they not to know the outline of the lives of

at least ten or twelve of the church reformers, and to have an idea of the way in which Christendom is organized in denominations and religious societies? Ought they not to be familiar with the lives of ten or twelve of the historic missionaries of the church, knowing the country in which they labored, the class of people chiefly reached, and the main things which civilization owes to their work? Ought they not to know something of the pictures, sculpture, and architecture of great religious art? Ought they not to have an idea of the long struggle for religious liberty and human freedom?

Any teaching of doctrine should be as clear as the teaching of a lesson in history or mathematics. The study of religious truth should never be made easy or maudlin, but should demand thought and attention. Ought not children of ten to understand something of the meaning of law, and the way in which law reaches from the nursery to the moral order of the universe? Ought they not to have an idea of God, of the Trinity, of the life and work of Christ, of the influence of the Spirit,

and of the meaning of sin, of conversion, of providence, of duty, of divine sovereignty, of personal accountability, and of immortality? Ought they not to have been thrilled by the heroic Christian virtues? Ought they not to have been drilled in the showing forth of practical piety, — in the self-restraint, unselfishness, courage and fidelity of the Christian life? Above all, ought not a child of this age to be definitely and positively a Christian child?

Where do we get our idea that *all* human beings should be dragged from waywardness to God? If they ever get away from Him, they must return; but the natural process should be an unfolding of the spirit Godward, and there are children who have never had a moment's consciousness of alienation. From Him they came, and His they are.

The Sabbath-school, however helpful, cannot, in an hour a week, produce this type of education. School systems cannot at present carry it out. Its foundations must be laid in the home, and it must be maintained with daily vigor and thoroughness. It is a brave person

who will dare give any suggestions, but one or two simple points may perhaps be noted.

First, the Sabbath must be at once removed from worldly care, business, and mere idleness or pleasure. Stately and supreme, it rises above earth's turmoil, and calls to reverence and devotion. If those splendid hours that are meant to be the soul's best heritage are given to worship and the spiritual care of childhood, there will come a blessing that will be not only domestic, but national. For much of the present-day hysterics and insanity are due, from a strictly medical point of view, to our lack of rest, insight, and repose. Seven-day business eats out nerve and brain. But inspiration is tonic, and a well-ordered Sabbath is the utmost refreshment of nature.

Again, the Bible is the fundamental textbook. Modern education wastes a great deal of time. A child may be taught at home to read directly from the Bible (of course a Bible with pictures), and it may be made his earliest story-book. After the first few primer words have been learned, one of the simple Bible stories or parables may be read to a child, and

he may then be allowed to pick out the words of the text, reading a very little at a time, and going over the same verses for some consecutive days. By this method, a child learns to read with great rapidity. After drill in his Bible work, he can read any book, and all the time otherwise spent on less literature has been gained, with the additional point that he has learned to love the Bible, which, with its fascinating pictures, stories, and strangely beautiful wording, is his first introduction to the world of letters. And this earliest familiarity and affection he will not only never outgrow, but his style will be marked with vigor and fine imagery.

“Pilgrim’s Progress” may be made attractive by buying a large copy with good pictures, mounting it, if necessary, on a music-stand, and for the first year, with very young children, reading only as far as where the burden rolls off at the foot of the Cross. When he gets to be five or six years old, a child will beg for the rest of the story, and will read it, or wish it read to him, many times over, for, to an imaginative child, it is a story of endless interest.

Again, family prayers will be maintained in every representative Christian home. They are highly educational, and may be made an intellectual delight. We err if we are too formal. Let us not think of family prayers as an unvarying formula, but as a progressive form of life. They should be vital and eager, adapted to the age and development of the child, and increasingly intellectual in outlook.

With small children a simple hymn and reading are enough, using the Sunday-school lesson as the basis of the reading, letting the children themselves read it each morning during the week, and taking up each day one or two topics connected with it for explanation. At the close of prayers it does not hurt to play "Onward, Christian Soldiers," or some other stirring music, letting the children march around the house as a part of their devotions, and, if they wish, carrying a flag or a doll-baby! It is not irreverent to be happy, and in this way they associate prayers, not with a stiff exercise in which they must sit up and keep their feet still, but with life, music, energy, motion, and feel instinctively that in

this little service they are keyed to a bright and joyful day.

As they grow older, this form of worship may gradually change and become a season of eager study. The Sunday-school lesson is used only once a week. Whole books of the Bible are undertaken and read through. Revelation has a special charm for children. We all know the story of the little boy who, when called by his mother to do an errand, asked to be let alone for a few moments, until he "finished binding Satan for a thousand years;" and the Angel with a Chain, the Beast, the White Horse, and the New Jerusalem hold the hearts of children with a spell. The Gospels, Isaiah, Ruth, many of the Epistles, Daniel, Jonah, Esther, Genesis and Exodus, and Joshua, all have a special appeal. Next in turn comes a love of the Psalms and the great imagery of Job.

This period, — I am thinking of children between seven and ten, — is the time to introduce church history and missionary biography. If there is not time in the morning hour, it can be done at nightfall, in the precious "chil-

dren's hour." Children from six years of age upward will follow the course of Livingstone on a map with the greatest eagerness. How they enjoy the animals he saw, and how the African names roll out! Paton and Moffat also interest children especially, and they love the life of Florence Nightingale, who began her career by nursing a shepherd's dog. Stanley, Duff, Eliot, Brainerd, Carey, Mackay, Patteson, Crowther, Martyn, Heber, Judson, John Williams, and Hannington are names that children delight to know, as well as the names of Knox, Calvin, Luther, Wesley, Fox, Melancthon, Tyndale, Margaret of Navarre, Huss, Admiral Coligny, Wishart, Coverdale, and others. In reading these heroic lives, and in talking of them, something great seizes upon the life of a child. Such books add to the moral fibre of the child, and are intensely stimulating intellectually, and yet they do not in any way lead to precocious thoughts or feelings.

Cut out from the newspapers, also, incidents displaying human heroism, and speak of them at prayer time. Here and there, as opportunity

offers, can be fitted in talks on great human subjects. Such topics ought never to be forced in a cold way, but should come up naturally from some question, event, or stray bit of reading. Little talks on honor, on chivalry, friendship, love, honesty, devotion to parents, fidelity to conscience, may be woven in so gently that they are not felt to be didactic, and yet so firmly that the ideals inculcated become a part of the child's very being.

Prayers should rise for every emergency of sorrow, illness, trial, temptation, and also in thanksgiving and gratitude for the usual joyful course of life. Let the child learn to look heavenward, not only for succor, but for inspiration. Do not be afraid to pray in a noble and majestic way. Throw imagination, sympathy, and idealism into family prayers. Nothing touches a child more deeply than to be thrilled by its own parent, and the hearth is an altar on which one's ultimate grandeur may be laid.

And let the music at prayer time have a triumphant and martial ring. Prepare the child for victory. Let the young voices thun-

der in the great processions and pæans of the church. Occasionally a word can be said about the authorship of the words or music. Heber's hymns are much more interesting than indefinite stanzas. Buy some of the best oratorios or other church music, and as various selections are rendered by the choir in the church, refer to them at home, and play some of the movements and anthems. In such and other ways, the constructive work of the spirit may be kept before the minds of children. Unconsciously they breathe the atmosphere of great work, and are led to resist inferior standards. Thus the hour for devotion may be made the most ardent of the day.

Choosing a school for a child is almost as difficult as choosing a place for its home. What is its atmosphere?—that spirit of loyalty, attention, discipline, social culture, intellectual energy, and spiritual aspiration which is a curious combination of the influence of the principal, the teachers, the students, the parents, the visitors, the community-standards, and the memory of those who have once been teachers or pupils of the school. The

school and the college never forget — something of every being remains. For years and generations the human personality flits through corridor and hall. Going back to the city or the country schoolhouse, or to Farmington, Exeter, Andover, Groton, Eton, Rugby, Harvard, Pennsylvania, Oxford, Göttingen, Wellesley, Vassar, Williams, Yale, does one not still feel the presence, hear the voice, and kindle with the ardor of the absent and the dead? It is inheritance and tradition that are spiritually upbuilding in the school life of a child, as well as its immediate environment and comrades. If we could lead ourselves to look, not for fashion or prestige, or cost or cheapness, or outward manners, furnishings, or wealth or style, but to the heart of the school, to its core of sincerity, and to the personality of its teachers who should glow with love and life, we would more readily fit our children into the larger ways of civilization, and the divine order of progress. The special value of the public schools is their wonderful fidelity to dreams of patriotism, truth, courage, individual merit, honesty, justice, and the public order.

Choosing a church is more difficult yet. If our children are to be large-minded, their environment must be great. Oh, let us never, by any chance, get into a dull and dragging church! Let us pray for a pastor who shall be a man of fire. Let him kindle the hearts of our children into spiritual flame. May they, in their turn, join the noble company of prophets, martyrs, saints, and seers, and be of the great historic train of those who bear aloft the banner of the Cross, and aid in the world-conquest. May the congregation be orderly, reverent, and eager, and mutually helpful and friendly. May the cause of missions, and all other inspirational causes, be exalted, and the devoted energy of the whole church community be thrown into the most modern and progressive forms of social service.

For after all is said, the church is one of the most potent forces to mould the hearts and minds of men. Silently, tenderly, persuasively, it lays its touch upon the spirit, and I often wonder if we ever rise above our early pastor's dreams. In many a child's heart he sets forever the standards of aspiration and achievement.

As to the companions of a child, we can gather, but we cannot choose. Each child knows its own mate, and no force nor entreaty can change the immutable decree of nature. But we can form a circle that is rational and suitable, not forgetting that sometimes the most golden hearts and manners are within very simple doorways. Perhaps the most interesting phase of a child's life is when the little heart begins to move out into the world, and, among many companions, to pick out the special little friend to love. Here no guidance is too gentle, nor any care too great. Simplicity is the great safeguard. The sophisticated child is always in danger, — the one who knows too early the untruths, the vanities, and perfidies of life, — but a fresh and unspoilt spirit instinctively clings to comradeship of purity and truth.

And in that little child-world, with its boyish fights, and its hot, girlish quarrels, there is in miniature all the rest of life. Now is the time to train for real romance, — to accept the affections as a growing force, to receive confidences, and to lead the fast-developing nature

into great ideals of human love, of honor, of conjugal fidelity, of social stability, and of parental responsibility.

When the hour of romance comes to a boy or girl, it is possible to turn the life into all dark ways of frivolity, sentimentality, caprice, passion, bitterness, and despair, or to lead it gently and truly out into a world of splendor and of power. Even the hurts of love can teach, and nothing is more educative than a regal love-affair. We have mastered one of the most difficult problems if we can succeed in leading a child to look upon human love in its more spiritual aspects,—to think of romance in its more delicate beauty,—to dream of a mate who shall be a mate for the soul. Much of our deeper life is a search for this twin-spirit, and in eternity we shall know why.

But a training for conjugal virtue lies deeper far than this,—in the implanting of traits of patience, forbearance, and a love of justice; in a refinement of spirit that abhors evil thoughts or ways; in that strict acceptance of duty which nowhere wins so little outward glory as in the conjugal estate, but which is

the underlying girder of the social structure. Married life means the shouldering of care, and its happiness and tenderness are to be maintained, not only by fidelity and courtesy, but also by carrying cheerfully the daily task.

A vital peril in American life to-day is the lack of old-fashioned girlhood and boyhood. Our children must be sheltered, not only from the natural elements, such as storm and hail and snow, but from precocity, and from demoralization of soul. Unreal novels, theatre-going, dancing parties, expensive tastes, and unchaperoned roamings for young boys and girls are deadly in their injury to simplicity and innocence. Out-door sports, healthful companionship by the home fireside, good books, simple tastes, and meetings under surroundings that are suitable and friendly must take the place of these exciting amusements, if we are to guard our children's youth and freshness.

Shakespeare's heroines are not jaded, and Wordsworth's women are as dainty as a dream. Tennyson's pictures of girlhood are like a wild rose. Why should youth forfeit sweetness and every girlish grace? Manhood

and womanhood have a commanding virtue wholly lost in apish imitation.

Ideals of human love and tenderness exist. There is a martial courage that is not afraid to meet the facts of life ; there is a sturdy energy that does not droop in discontent. Read the story of James and Helen Chalmers in New Guinea ; of Robert and Mary Moffat in the wilds of Africa ; of Livingstone and his wife, who was Moffat's daughter ; of John Halifax and the girlhood of his bride. Read "Sesame and Lilies," "Sonnets from the Portuguese," "The Princess," "The Miller's Wife," Jeremy Taylor's sermons on love and marriage ; Emerson's "Friendship," and Spenser's "Epithalamium," and fit the heart for life by biography, poetry, and an occasional really great novel, instead of by the gossip and catch-tale of the hour.

The standards of love are rising every day. Despite the social vexation and unrest of the times, there has never been an age in which men and women so deeply loved each other, in which the chords of their talents and energies responded with so much sweetness to each

other, or vibrated in such unison for world-welfare. To the children of these parents shall we not look for some of the great spiritual triumphs of the race? Conceived in tenderness, born to ideals and world-imagery, trained to social service, dedicated to aspiration and devotion, they are the flower of humanity, and, by God's help, shall in their day and generation reveal a larger world to man.

Economics has two sides. We may firmly teach a child that he must be business-like and self-supporting, and yet greatly err in our training if we do not also teach him that each human being is socially responsible, not only for the honest earning of his income and the well-balanced general investment and expenditure of it, but also for the social burden of poverty, ignorance, or misfortune, which must forever be carried, and as far as possible diminished, by those of normal income-earning power. Giving is a straight duty, but the giving should also be conducted in a scientific way.

All training should provide for growth and adventure. Life is a set-to. Civilization, from

one point of view, is a higher sort of fisticuffs. There are hours when the soul dances like a savage, and there is a trace of prehistoric wildness in all brave spirits. A boy longs to feel life within him as well as to watch it from without, — craves danger, excitement, and new experiences of many kinds; invents jungles and Indian-plays; likes thrills and hair-raising things. Let him get his adventures in right channels, even at some danger. But for this, mothers need an elemental courage. Think of Hannington risking his neck as a boy on the cliffs for the eggs of sea-birds! Coley Patteson in early manhood climbed the Col de Géant, mounting on steps cut by a hatchet for forty or fifty feet up a sheer wall of ice, and descended the mountain on “the worst day ever known there,” in a blinding storm. Later, a youth asks to know the sensations and emotions of the race; leaps into intensity and action; likes turmoils and difficulties; exults in primitive anger and resentment, as well as in the loftiest and most ennobling exaltation. This instinct lies at the root of many a lad’s restlessness in his own

home. It is not that he loves home less, but the universe more. Man is an itinerant and wayfaring animal. He hates to be housed or tied. He is convinced that manhood does not grow up in the parlor, or in any sort of cloister.

Let us point out to our boys the starry and unstained stretches of human experience, wherein the soul of man may roam forever, in undying freedom and delight. Let us stir them to the great heroic actions of the race. There is a celestial ambition, and it is open to each new generation to achieve conquest and remembrance. By daring moral courage, by discovery, invention, insight into beauty, mastery of human problems, by the creation of new works of engineering and of art, by intellectual ideals, by political supremacy, by spiritual service, one may fling his life into adventurous and Godlike helpfulness and joy.

If we invest a child with Christlikeness, we invest the world with a new degree of spiritual power. It is not an idle saying, that if a child be trained in the way in which he should go, when he is old, he will not depart from it. Psychology literally corroborates the thought.

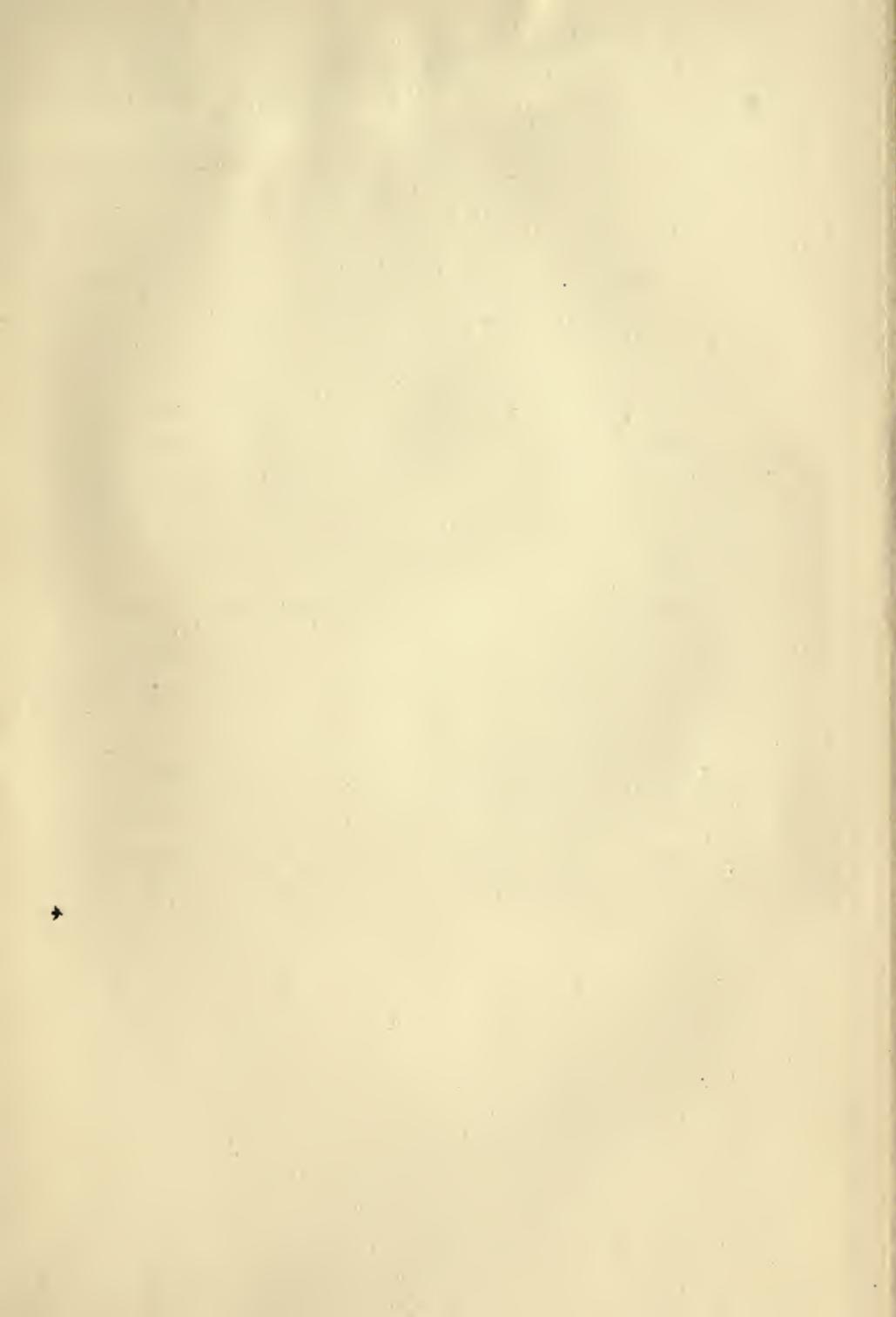
If he be taught the way of reverence, of prayer, faith, obedience, and intellectual and physical energy, he is the richer for all the years to come. The conquest of life is made easier for him; all the forces of habit, love, and will are turned in the way of the divine purpose.

Food, air, sunshine, influence, teaching and surroundings, pass into the life of a child. Far back of his nourishment in infancy is the inheritance which he has from ancestry and tradition, — that reverberation of decision and spirituality which comes from generations who have walked with God. Of all family enthusiasms, and pride of genealogy, this is perhaps the most pardonable, — the delight there is to find, on looking back over a long line of forefathers, that straight down the line there have been representative men and women of faith and power.

And one of the noble ideals of man has been to found a great house which should carry down, from generation to generation, certain family traits and powers; an hereditary line of intellectual and political ascendancy and social prestige, with characteristic manners and traditions. Far down the line of our posterity

there shall really be renewed images of our own selves: the likeness goes eternally on.

The encouragement of all educational work is to perceive that in the long years of history extraordinary things have been accomplished. The daily process of training in virtue and culture seems laborious, but effort is cumulative. By slow accretions of knowledge, character, and aspiration, whole races have risen from savagery or barbarism, and generations of children have grown up to praise God and to serve Him. This lends enthusiasm to one's endeavor. It is our responsibility to have large thoughts for humanity, and to work with fidelity and energy. The very process of spiritual evolution shall carry our work far beyond our own imagination; it may stamp history itself with the image of our dreams.



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