

## **Facts and arguments on the transmission of intellectual and moral qualities from parents to offspring.**

### **Contributors**

National Library of Medicine (U.S.)

### **Publication/Creation**

New York : Wiley & Putnam, 1843.

### **Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/h3fr6tmn>

### **License and attribution**

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by the National Library of Medicine (U.S.), through the Medical Heritage Library. The original may be consulted at the National Library of Medicine (U.S.) where the originals may be consulted.

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

HQ  
F142  
1843

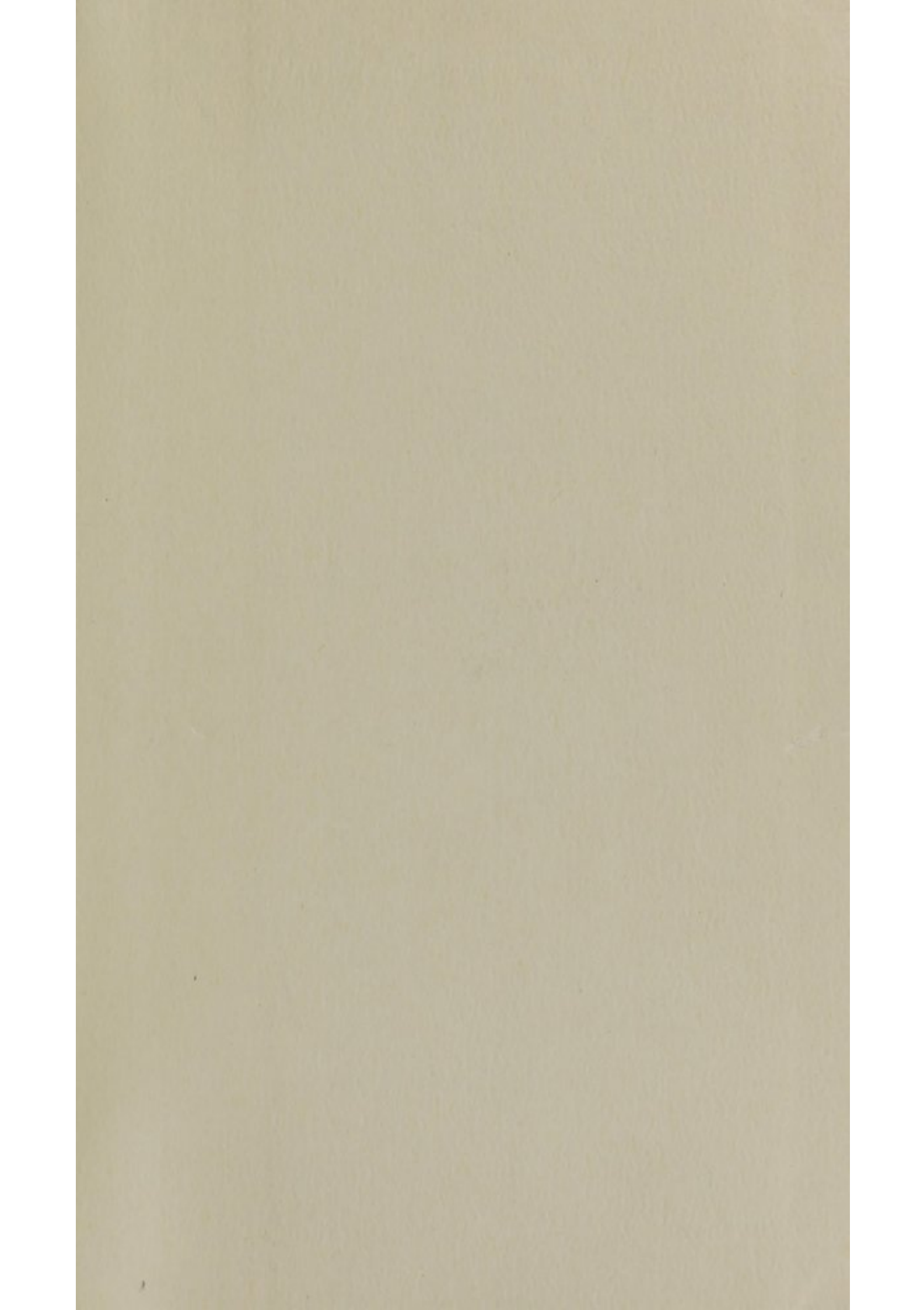
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



FOUNDED 1836

---

WASHINGTON, D.C.





THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

500 N. 5TH ST. NEW YORK, N. Y.

1897

# FACTS AND ARGUMENTS

ON THE

TRANSMISSION

OF

INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL QUALITIES,

FROM

PARENTS TO OFFSPRING.

---

"Nature's laws are simple; but when known, explain with clearness the most complicated appearances."

"No truth is altogether barren; that which appears at first sight simple and trivial, often conceals the key to much treasure."

ANON.

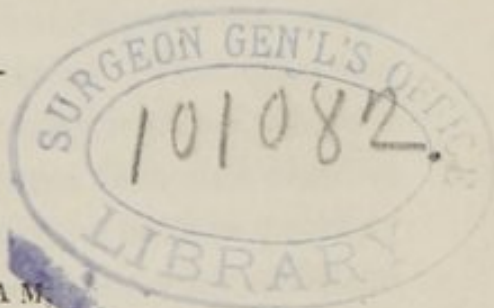
---

NEW YORK:

WILEY & PUTNAM.

---

1843.



HQ  
F142  
1843

---

[Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1843, by  
WILEY & PUTNAM, in the Clerk's office of the Southern District  
of the State of New York.]

---

---

D. Murphy, Printer, 384 Pearl-street.

## INTRODUCTION.

---



THE theory which this work endeavours to establish, was not taken up suddenly and thrown out hastily, but is the result of long and mature reflection, and a well grounded *induction from history, from observation, and from experience.*

THE attention of the writer was early attracted to the subject, by observing the diversity of disposition and mental capability among the companions of her youth. Some of whom appeared to be so happily constituted, that the acquirement of knowledge, and the conscientious performance of their social duties afforded a constant source of pleasure and delight. In others, purity and goodness were so perfectly innate, that no bad example could effect, nor evil influence corrupt them : whilst others were so dull and stupid, that it was impossible to teach them any thing more than the mere rudiments of education. Some again, were so obstinate and vicious, that no punishment could deter, nor council persuade them from evil courses. The question naturally suggested itself, 'how or why is this?' Surely it cannot be a mere matter of chance, that one child is born a knave or a fool, and another, a perfect prodigy of sense and goodness? And when those very children were observed to pass unchanged from youth to manhood, in the path of the reckless, the selfish, and the



sensual, marked by misery and ruin ; whilst the quiet, diligent, reflective student, became the high-minded, useful, and honored member of society—the inquiry, ‘ how or why is this ? ’ assumed still greater importance. The descent of hereditary qualities only answers the question in part ; for the different dispositions, and degrees of mental activity, found in children of the same parents, again involved the subject in mystery and doubt. To endeavour to solve this problem in nature, has constituted the life-work of the authoress : and if she has failed to elucidate the subject—if her observations were founded in error, or her conclusions not warranted, she hopes that the publication of her work will lead to the further investigation of this momentous subject—the transmission of intellectual and moral qualities, from parents to offspring.

A deep conviction of the truth and importance of this theory, and the many benefits that would flow from a knowledge of its principles, and an obedience to its laws, renders the publication, in the estimation of the writer, a solemn duty ; hoping, that thereby, the attention of her countrywomen will be directed to the subject, and their feelings enlisted in the great cause of humanity—the improvement of the human race. For, if they believe in this theory, and act upon that belief, (which implies the practice of all the christian virtues,) they assuredly will accomplish the high mission assigned to them by the Creator, and also, attain that degree of intellectual and moral perfection, for which they are by nature so eminently designed.

“ Let a person of the most ordinary capacity,” says a British writer, “ once acquire a sincere and lasting inte-



rest in any thing capable of affording exercise to the understanding, and see how that *interest will call forth faculties never previously observed in him*. This is one reason why, periods of scepticism, though they may produce extraordinary individuals, are seldom rich in the general stock of persons of talent. For, in an age of strong convictions, the second and third rate of talents, being combined with earnestness, grow up and attain full development and fructify; but in an age of uncertainty, none but the first order of intellects are able to lay for themselves so firm and solid a foundation of what they believe to be truth, as they can build upon afterwards in full self-reliance, and stake the repose of their consciences upon without anxiety. The people of second rate talents *feel sure of nothing, therefore they care for nothing, and by an inevitable chain of consequences accomplish nothing.*"

The truth of the preceding observation is illustrated in the history of our own country. Columbus, from his knowledge of navigation, and from his study of the natural sciences, was led to believe that there was another continent on the other side the globe. To discover the truth of this belief, he sacrificed all his worldly interests, and suffered extreme anxiety and distress, in wandering from court to court in Europe, in search of those capable of assisting him in his great undertaking. He was looked upon as an enthusiast and his theory rejected, until he came before Isabella of Spain. Her strong mind and quick perception at once saw the probability of it, even after it had been coldly and sneeringly treated by the learned men and courtiers about the throne. Disregarding the selfish suggestions

of the mean spirits of that age, she made this noble declaration:—"I will assume the undertaking for my own crown of Castile, and I am ready to pawn my jewels to defray the expences of it, if the funds in the treasury should be found inadequate!"

Again, our pilgrim fathers, through a firm faith in truths of the Protestant religion, were enabled to resign their home and country, and commit themselves and their families to the dangers of the mighty deep, an uncongenial clime and a wilderness of savages. They were sustained through unparalleled sufferings and privations, by an elevating belief in the all protecting power of the Almighty. A deep conviction of the equal and inalienable rights of man, impelled the descendants of the pilgrims to oppose tyranny and oppression, and assert and attain that independence of which the present generation are enjoying the fruits. And there is a deep-rooted belief in the hearts of all the friends of humanity of the present age, that if our wise constitution were administered by heads as clear and hearts as pure and disinterested as those who framed it, we might look forward to no remote period, and behold all the civilized nations of the world remodeled, by the example of the prosperity, happiness, and virtue attained by an enlightened people, under a free government!

When we reflect upon the privileges which we enjoy, and the liberal institutions conferred on us by the diligent, self-denying, prudent habits, and pious liberality of those who preceded us, is it not incumbent on us to do all in our power to promote the happiness and well being of future generations? And how can this be done more effectually than by transmitting to them



sound constitutions and virtuous inclinations? That this is practicable, the writer trusts in the following pages to shew: and also, that it is a power and duty that devolves principally upon the mother, for the due performance of which she ought to be held responsible, at least, by public opinion.

“Minds,” says Madam Roland, “which have any claims to greatness, are capable of divesting themselves of all selfish considerations; they feel that they belong to the whole human race, and their views are directed to posterity alone.” With such minds our country abounds; they only require to perceive the true interest of their offspring, to be enabled to devote the best energies of their lives to promote it. —“I firmly believe,” says the Rev. Timothy Flint, “that if this world is ever regenerated, it will be by the power and influence of woman.”

THE HISTORY OF THE  
CITY OF BOSTON  
FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT  
TO THE PRESENT TIME  
IN TWO VOLUMES  
BY NATHANIEL BENTLEY  
OF THE BOSTON BAR  
VOL. I.  
BOSTON: PUBLISHED BY  
J. B. ALLEN, 1822.

THE HISTORY OF THE  
CITY OF BOSTON  
FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT  
TO THE PRESENT TIME  
IN TWO VOLUMES  
BY NATHANIEL BENTLEY  
OF THE BOSTON BAR  
VOL. I.  
BOSTON: PUBLISHED BY  
J. B. ALLEN, 1822.

# FACTS AND ARGUMENTS

ON THE

## TRANSMISSION

OF

## INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL QUALITIES

FROM

PARENTS TO OFFSPRING.

---

EVERY century, since the revival of literature, appears to be have been occupied in discovering and establishing some new and important truth.—The power and application of steam in physics, and discovery and confirmation of phrenology in metaphysics, have been the principal objects of interest of the present century. The former has multiplied power to an incalculable extent, and almost annihilated time and space; whilst the latter has had so much prejudice to contend against, that it has scarcely advanced further than to disclose to man the nature and extent of his talents, and the sources of his sentiments, passions, and impulses. But to what great and important results this science is destined to lead, time only can unfold. It has, however, already made known to those who will see by its light, not only the certainty, but also the means of perpetuating talent and virtue from parent to offspring. This subject, possibly, will occupy the attention of the twentieth century; and so general is the belief in



the omnipotence of education, that it may require a whole century to establish its truth. For there are many persons, even in this enlightened age, who believe with Helvetius, that all men are born with equal mental capacities, and that education and circumstances develope genius or stifle it. "To which opinion," says Carlyle, "I should as soon agree as to this other, that an acorn might, by favorable or unfavorable influence of soil or climate, be nursed into a cabbage, or the cabbage-seed into an oak.—Nevertheless, I, too, acknowledge the all but omnipotence of early culture and nurture; hereby we have either a doddard dwarf-bush, or high-towering wide-shadowing tree; either a sick yellow cabbage or an edible, luxuriant, green one."

Mr. Goodrich, in his work on education, says, "For my own part, I believe there are great discoveries yet to be made on this subject, hacknied as it may seem, and these are doubtless to result from a more thorough understanding of childhood. I would, therefore, commend the study of children, not to the parent alone, but to all, as they are an interesting and important theme of philosophical inquiry. The chemist delves deep in search of hidden acids and alkalies; the botanist climbs to the top of the Alps or the Andes, in pursuit of rare flowers; the mineralogist plunges into caverns, and treads the dizzy edge of the precipice in his eager chace after new minerals. I refer the reader to a more fruitful source of the wonderful and the beautiful, the study of childhood." And may not this, the most neglected of all studies, if properly

pursued, lead to discoveries of greater importance than mere improvement in education?

Too frequently the discouraging conviction is forced upon the mind of the most competent teacher, that his best efforts are thrown away; and that it is impossible to make any abiding impression on the undeveloped brain of his weak-minded vacillating pupil. He, therefore, perceives a much greater necessity for improving the natural disposition and capability of children, for acquiring knowledge, than for any improvement in the mode of imparting it. And when he observes the ease and facility with which the the naturally strong-minded and energetic imbibe learning, he is confirmed in his opinion, and deeply regrets the carelessness and indifference of parents on this most important subject.

Talent, or genius, is now universally admitted to be a natural gift or congenital. How important then, to ascertain the manner by which it can be perpetuated? "The variable talents of the mind," says Dr. Good, "are as propagable as the various features of the body—how, or by what means, we know not, but the fact is incontrovertible. Wit and dulness, genius and idiotism, run in direct streams from generation to generation; and hence the moral characters of families, of tribes, and of whole nations." Yet, that there are fixed laws which govern the transmission of intellectual and moral qualities, is less safe to doubt, than that such laws have been discovered.

In the biography of eminent men, great care has generally been taken to show at what school or col-



lege they were educated, under what able professor, and the particular course of study pursued. Yet how unimportant are these facts, when we reflect, that a vast number of men, of only common capacities, pass through the same college, under the same able professors, and pursue the same course of study, without having been raised above mediocrity? The inference then is, that the biographer must go farther back than education, to elicit the true cause which produced this pre-eminence in the subject of his memoir. And to what glorious results might not such inquiry lead, probably to the important result—of the mental and physical improvement of the whole human race. And he who can establish the practicability of such improvement, will have bestowed upon the world the choicest legacy genius ever bequeathed to humanity.\*

When we look back upon the last hundred years, and there behold the great truths which have been discovered and established by wisdom and science, both in the material and the immaterial world, who will presume to prescribe bounds to the future investigations of the human intellect, and say, “thus far shalt thou go, but no further?” Particularly if it be true, “that the great and wise Creator gave man his peculiar reasoning faculties for the purpose that uni-

---

\* “He who can convince the world of the importance of the laws of hereditary descent, and induce mankind to conduct themselves accordingly, will do more good to them, and contribute more to their improvement, than all institutions and all systems of education.”—(*Spurzheim's Views of Education.*)

versally, and as well *here as elsewhere*, he might acquire the direction of events, by discovering the laws regulating their successions."

In the seclusion of his study, from his observation of men, and from his own consciousness, man endeavours to explain the phenomena of the diversity of human intellect; by which means he often involves the subject in a more inextricable maze than he found it. Whereas, if, instead of the closet and the forum, he were to go into the nursery, and study nature at her fountain-head, endeavouring to trace to the true cause, the diversity of disposition and character he found there, he would be much more likely to arrive at the truth than by any other method. He must, however, take the mother to his council, for she only can explain that which to the observer would appear a mystery;—not a trait of character, not a propensity, not a peculiarity of any kind, but the mother knows, or ought to know, how it originated.

Where is the parent who has indured the heart-burning occasioned by the waywardness of children, or the agony of soul, suffered by their constant pursuit in vicious courses, with the conviction continually forcing itself on his mind, that evil and not good is innate in them, that would not have hailed as a messenger from heaven, a voice which could have warned him how to avoid much of this misery? Yet there is such a voice audible throughout all animated nature—else this world were not the creation of an all-wise omnipotence.



Mr. Combe says, that if the same amount of knowledge and care which has been taken to improve the domestic animals, had been bestowed upon the human species, during the last century, there would not have been so great a number of moral patients for the lunatic asylums and the prisons, as there are at present. That the human species are as susceptible of improvement as the domestic animals, who can deny? Then, is it not strange, that man, possessing so much information on this subject, and acknowledging the laws which govern such matters, should lose sight of those laws in perpetuating his own species? Yet, how extremely short-sighted is that individual, who, in forming a matrimonial connection, overlooks the important consideration of the quality of the physical and mental constitution which his children will be likely to inherit? (a) And also, that a great portion of the happiness or misery of his future life, will depend upon the conduct of those children; and, again, that their manifestations, whether good or evil, will be the effect of the mental, moral and physical organization which they inherit.\* The time is fast approaching when men will pay more attention to this subject, for it is certain, that the acknowledged utility of the science of phrenology, is taking deep root, by which these matters can be tested; the parent will, consequently, no longer be pitied for the immoral conduct

---

\* "The laws of hereditary descent should be attended to, not only with respect to organic life, but also to the manifestations of mind, since these depend on the nervous system. There are many examples on record, of certain feelings, or intellectual



of his child, but the child will rather be commiserated for having inherited active animal propensities, accompanied by deficient moral and reflecting organs.

Impressed with the importance of these views, the natural dispositions and capabilities of children, whether inherited or produced by favorable or unfavorable circumstances, (operating on the parents previous to the birth,) became to the writer a subject of the deepest interest. From observation, it appeared, that

---

powers, being inherited in whole families. Now, if it be ascertained that the hereditary condition of the brain is the cause, there is a great additional motive to be careful in the choice of a partner in marriage. No person of sense can be indifferent about having selfish or benevolent, stupid, or intelligent children.

An objection may be made against the doctrine of hereditary effects resulting from the laws of propagation, viz: that in large families there are individuals of very different capacities.

This observation shows at least that the children are born with different dispositions, and it proves nothing against the laws of propagation. The young ones of animals that propagate indiscriminately, are very different; but when the races are pure, and all conditions attended to, the nature of the young can be determined beforehand. As long as the races of mankind are mixed, their progeny must vary extremely. But let persons of determinate dispositions breed in and in, and the races will become distinct. Moreover, the condition of the mother is commonly less valued than it ought to be. It is, however, observed, that boys commonly resemble their mother, and girls their father; and that men of great talents generally descend from intelligent mothers. But as long as eminent men are marrying to partners of inferior capacities, the qualities of the offspring must be uncertain. The Arabs seem to understand the great importance of females, since they do not allow to sell females to foreigners, and note the nobility of their horse after the females."—(*Spurzheim's View of Education.*)



the first children of very young mothers, whatever sprightliness they might evince from a high flow of animal spirits, were generally deficient in strength of intellect and stability of character. How, indeed, could it be otherwise, when the parents had spent the first years of married life in a career of dissipated amusements, in which the cultivation of the mind had been totally neglected ; neither reading, rational conversation, or reflection had been practised to exercise and strengthen it ? What wonder then, that the minds of their offspring should resemble the first-born of Jacob, the luckless Reuben, who, “unstable as water, was doomed never to excel.”

In biography, it may also be observed, that those men most conspicuous for native strength of mind, were not generally the first-born of their parents.—Dr. Franklin was the fifteenth child of his father and the eighth of his mother ; Benjamin West was the tenth child of his parents ; the mother of Dr. Samuel Johnson was past forty at the period of his birth ; and the mother of Washington was twenty-eight years of age when her illustrious son was born. We might also cite the names of Lord Bacon, Fenelon, Sir William Jones, and Baron Cuvier, who were born after their parents had attained the full maturity of their physical and mental powers.

The world is greatly indebted to the “Constitution of Man,” by George Combe, for the first clear views and forcible illustrations on the hereditary transmission of qualities. Mr. Combe, however, draws one conclusion, which admits of much doubt, as to its

truth and justness. He assumes, that the particular turn or tone of mind is given at the moment of conception. This opinion is in direct opposition to the experience of many strong-minded observing mothers, who have recognized in their children, the same sentiments in which they indulged, and the peculiar habits which they had practised, during the whole period of their pregnancy. To such testimony, the most ingenious hypothesis must give way; and from such evidence it must be inferred, that the brain of the unborn-child is powerfully influenced by the thoughts and sentiments of its mother; and that the particular organs which her habits and pursuits bring into the greatest activity, become most prominently developed in the brain of her child.(b) Hence, it ought to be an object of the first importance with every woman about to become a mother, to exercise her mental perceptions, reasoning faculties, and moral sentiments, to their full extent—to cultivate kind feelings and noble aspirations—to indulge in no pursuits unworthy of a rational immortal being—and to ascertain and live in accordance with the laws instituted by the Creator for the preservation of health—so that her child may be perfect in mental, moral and physical organization.\*

In the life of Napoleon, we learn that his mother was for some months previous to his birth, sharing the fortunes of war with her husband, in constant

---

\* "The innate constitution, which depends upon both parents, and the state of the mother during pregnancy, is the basis of all future developement."—(*Spurzheim's View of Education.*)



peril and danger, and passed much of her time on horseback :—any person accustomed to this mode of riding, must acknowledge, that it causes exciting, aspiring emotions. What conveys to the mind of man a greater consciousness of power than to be raised, as it were, above earth, and direct at will, an animal so much his superior in physical strength? There we can have the causes that produced a mind like Napoleon's. The active and health inspiring habits of his mother, gave him a strong constitution and great physical powers of endurance, while the excitement induced by constant exposure to danger and peril, conduced to an activity of intellect highly favorable in producing corresponding qualities in the mind of her unborn-child. And behold, the first manifestation of the young Napoleon, were pride, an indomitable spirit, a passion for warlike pursuits; these being innate and constantly exercised, increased to such a degree, that nothing short of the subjugation of a world could bound his ambition.\*

---

\* We almost universally, in looking at any state of society, take it as we find it, without inquiring into the causes why it is as it is. If men and women are moral and intelligent, we accept them so, and are gratified; if they are ignorant and immoral, we lament over their condition, without ever allowing our minds to revert to the cause why they are thus. Historians, in giving the character of any age, describe men as they are, as political and civil revolutions have made them, as great national calamities or enterprises have made them, as indolence or industry have made them, as vice or virtue have made them; but, except in rare instances, they never describe men *as women have made them*. This the primary source of individual and of national



The authoress is perfectly aware that the above theory is not new, and that it has been advanced by many writers, in a general way, from Tacitus down to the present time. Sir James Mackintosh, in speaking of the great genius of Count D'Alban, says, "his mother, though in a humble station, was a woman of superior mind. All great men have had able mo-

---

character, is left untouched. True, we are sometimes informed in regard to a character conspicuous for moral or intellectual greatness, that he "owed much to his mother."

In our own country we have a venerable example of a mother being honored by a whole nation for the good work she had done, in rearing a great man to be also a good one. No republican can pass the tomb of Washington's mother without feeling the heart warm with gratitude towards her. See how much has sprung from this single example of female influence. Had Washington inherited the same talents with less moral purpose; had his better feelings not been trained and stimulated by the action of a highly moral and intellectual mind upon them, he might have proved himself equally well skilled in the field, and able in the council, but where would have been the philanthropy, benevolence and justice, that hushed the voice of ambition the moment a people's freedom was won, and made him reject with indignation, the glitter of an offered crown? Where would have been that love of his fellow men that drew him from the retirement he so much coveted and enjoyed, and made him willingly resume the toils of public life which led him to spare no efforts to place around the freedom of his country every guard that could protect it from the inroads of the ambitious and unprincipled?

"Contrast this son and mother with two other individuals, bearing the same relation to each other, who, like these, have long since gone to the final home of man. This mother, highly intellectual, highly spirited, highly intelligent and accomplished, but destitute of those high moral qualities which win our love



thers." Biography furnishes sufficient examples to prove the truth of this opinion. Those examples, however, require to be brought forward and forced upon general observation, for this is a theory that will require manifold and striking facts to establish it, as it will have to contend with the pride and prejudice of the unreflecting.(c)

---

though linked with humbler powers of mind—this mother transmitted to her son all the powers of her intellect, and the intense spirit of her character, but she had no moral excellence to implant them; she had none to cherish in his childhood. Out at a military review but a few days before his birth; in camp during many months previous: surrounded with, and enjoying all the pomp and circumstance of war—familiarized with, and reconciled to its horrors and anguish—it is no wonder that her son was born with an appetite for blood; no wonder that during his life, the continent of Europe was made one vast altar, on which human sacrifice was offered to the ambition of a Napoleon.

"Have such facts no interest for female minds? Do we see nothing in them to arouse our noblest ambition—to stir the soul to noble execution? Shall the voice of ages appeal to us in vain? Shall reason continue to urge her claim upon us only to be denied? Shall duty plead in vain with us? Have the happiness of our children and of society no weight in our minds, compared with the follies of fashion, and the momentary pursuit of pleasure? Are our patriotism and philanthropy worthless, as they are asserted to be? If not, let us prove it by showing that we can cast away trifles when they interfere with the discharge of our duty. If not, let us show that we are women, worthy of being the mothers of a free nation."—(*Mrs. E. W. Farnam.*)

CHAPTER II.

---

It will be seen in the following extract from "Falk's Life of Goethe," how frequently the result of this theory has been observed; yet it appears to have been observed as a mere phenomenon of nature, and dismissed with an idle exclamation of wonder. Hence the principles which might have been deduced from it, for the improvement of future generations have been overlooked.

"It has often been remarked, that great and eminent men receive from their mothers, even before they see the light, half the mental disposition and other peculiarities of character by which they are afterwards distinguished." "Thus in Goethe's character we find a most sensitive shrinking from all intense impressions, which by every means, and under every circumstance of his life, he sought to ward off from himself. We find the same peculiarity in his mother, as we shall see from the following curious and characteristic traits. They were related to me by a female friend who was extremely intimate with her at Frankfort."



“Goethe’s mother, whenever she hired a servant, used to make the following condition : “ You are not to tell me anything horrible, afflicting, or agitating, whether it happened in my own house, in the town, or in the neighborhood. I desire, once for all, that I may hear nothing of the kind. If it concerns me I shall know it soon enough ; if it does not concern me, I have nothing whatever to do with it. Even if there should be a fire in the street in which I live, I am to know nothing of it till it is absolutely necessary that I should.”

After relating many other striking peculiarities, (more amiable than the above,) of the mind and character of Goethe’s mother, in which her son exactly resembled her, Falk adds : “ Those who were at all acquainted with Goethe’s person and manners will instantly agree with me, that much of this amiable temper, and of this vein of *naïve* humor, which nothing in life or death could subdue, flowed in full tide from her veins into his. We shall give further proof of this hereafter from the history of his early years, as well as of his more serious moods, from the latter.”

If such facts as this had been more generally observed and carefully reported, principles might have been deduced from them of vital importance to mankind, and that which at present is advanced as a theory, might have long since been established as a truth.

Yet it may be said, “ Is not this an absurd theory in giving so much power to the mother and considering the father of so little importance ? ” But if it be an absurdity, it has been practised to the full



extent heretofore, in the opposite direction, without having been noticed. The father, however, is of the utmost importance ; for does not his conduct influence the thoughts and feelings of his wife ? And can he not, by the softening influence of kindness and affection mould her to his will, or to whatever her natural capability will admit ? We often see children inheriting not only the form and features, but the intellect, also, of the father. And this most frequently occurs in families where the husband is in the habit of spending much of his time in the society of his wife ; treating her with delicacy and respect ; calling into exercise the highest attributes of her nature, and is enshrined in her heart as the model of all excellence and goodness. Possibly, her ardent desire that her children should resemble their father, in part, produces the effect.

So, also, may the evil dispositions inherited from the parents, be accounted for. The bad passions of the wife may be roused into activity by the injustice, cruelty, or neglect of her husband ; so that her unborn child may be afflicted by their baneful influence. That this was the case with Lord Byron, no unprejudiced mind can doubt, who is acquainted with the history and character of his parents. With that of his father, we will not sully these pages ; but of his mother, Dr. Madden says : “ Little is known of the early history of Mrs. Byron, but quite enough of the extraordinary violence of her temper, and its effects upon her health after any sudden explosion of her choler, to warrant the belief that some cerebral



disease occasioned that degree of excitability which is quite unparalleled in the history of any lady of sane mind." On one occasion, we are told by Moore, that "at the Edinburgh Theatre she was so affected by the performance, that she fell into violent fits, and was carried out of the theatre screaming loudly." Madden also says, "that Byron was the child of passion, born in bitterness

And nurtured in convulsions."

All the elements of domestic discord were let loose upon his youth—a home without a tie to bind his affections to its hearth—a mother disqualified by the phrenzied violence of her temper for the offices of a parent; and if he would escape from the recollection of that violence, no father's fondness to fall back upon, and no virtue coupled with his memory to make the contemplation a pleasure to his child."

From Dr. Madden's account of Mrs. Byron, it would seem that Lord Byron inherited the poetic temperament from his mother; and in the following brief description of some of his innate characteristics, there can be clearly traced a combination of the vices of both his parents.\* "Never," says Macaulay, "had any writer so vast a command of the whole eloquence of scorn, misanthropy and despair. That

---

\* Yet that these could have been modified and subdued by a wise education and careful moral culture, no one will doubt.—Perhaps the most striking illustration of the all but omnipotence of early culture, is shown in the lives and characters of Rev. Timothy Dwight and Aaron Burr. These gentlemen were



Marah was never dry. No art could sweeten, no draughts could exhaust its perennial waters of bitterness. Never was there such variety in monotony as that of Byron. From maniac laughter to piercing lamentation, there was not a single note of human anguish of which he was not master. Year after year, and month after month, he continued to repeat, that to be wretched is the destiny of all; that to be eminently wretched, is the destiny of the eminent; that all the desires by which we are cursed lead alike to misery—if they are not gratified, to the misery of disappointment; if they are gratified, to the misery of satiety. His principal heroes are men who have arrived by different roads to the same goal of despair, who are sick of life, who are at war with society, who are supported in their anguish only by an unconquerable pride, resembling that of Prometheus on the rock, or Satan in the burning marl; who can master their agonies by the force of their will, who, to the last, defy the whole powers of earth and heaven. He always described himself as a man of the same kind, with his favorite creations; as a man whose heart had been withered, whose capacity for happiness was gone,

---

cousins; their mothers were the daughters of President Edwards, and are said to have inherited much of the uncommon powers of their father; from which it may be inferred that the great mental capability of their sons was also inherited; and, that the difference in their moral characters arose from the circumstance that the former grew up under the judicious care of an affectionate and pious mother, whilst the latter lost both of his parents in infancy. This also shows the power of the mother in shaping the future character of her child.

and could not be restored ; but whose invincible spirit dared the worst that could befall him here or hereafter."

Macaulay also says, that "from the poetry of Lord Byron his youthful admirers drew a system of ethics, compounded of misanthropy and voluptuousness, a system in which the two great commandments were, to hate your neighbor and to love your neighbor's wife." Here again were manifested the violent and bitter temper of his mother, and the sensual propensities of his father. The enthusiastic admirers of Lord Byron will perhaps consider this an unjust and unreasonable view of the character of the poet, and an attack on the sacred attributes of genius itself. But let us beg of them not to confound the glare of an ignis-fatuus, shining only to delude, with the heavenward aspirations of a Milton or a Cowper, whose aim was to exalt, to enlighten, and to spiritualize mankind.

An invaluable moral for the instruction of youth is to be drawn from the abrupt, fitful, and desponding life of Lord Byron, when placed in opposition to the long, happy, and useful one of William Wilberforce. And if "the philosophy of history is experience teaching by example," then is it not the duty of the mother to point out these examples to her children? Showing them how poor a gift is intellect, even the most transcendent, when unaccompanied by moral sentiments, and how happy the life, and how honored the memory of that being, who, with a self-denying, christian spirit, seeks to glorify his Creator by doing good to his creatures.



In the following extract from an article in the *Foreign Quarterly*, on the Life and Works of Baron Cuvier, we find the fact also noticed, that great men have generally been the sons of women of superior understanding. "His parents were not in easy circumstances, his father being a half-pay officer, who, after forty years' service, was unable to afford to his son more than the common advantages of a provincial school education. At fifty years of age he had married a young and accomplished woman, who became the mother of George Cuvier, and by whom his early years were guarded with affectionate and judicious care. Her more than parental solicitude for his mental improvement, justifies us in adding the instance of Cuvier to the many examples of distinguished men who, perhaps, owed a considerable share of their greatness to the attainments and character of a mother of superior understanding. History presents us with numerous instances of this nature; and they seem the more curious when contrasted with an equally well established fact, that the children of very eminent men have seldom been distinguished for ability, and have frequently proved either feeble in mind, or of precocious talents and a fragile unenduring frame. In many families rendered illustrious by one great name, the father and grandfather of the distinguished member of the family were men of good understandings without being brilliant;\* but after the

---

\* This was the case in the family of Dr. Franklin. If, however, the theory we have advanced be correct, it requires no hypothesis, in this instance, to explain why, "after the great

great man, the line has immediately and sensibly declined. The physiological hypothesis may be, that the offspring of men devoted to the pursuit of fame in arduous paths, are necessarily of imperfect organization; or that there is some law, which, permitting an ascending scale of intellect to render families eminent in a generation, checks the vain aspirations after perpetuity of influence, by withdrawing the gift when it has reached a certain elevation, leaving the proud edifice of their fame, which once they flattered themselves would reach to the heavens, a mere unfinished monument. However this may be, Cuvier's mother was worthy to bear such a son.—

She watched over his infirm infancy with the tenderest care, and she saw and directed the developement of his wonderful faculties. "The joys of parents," says Bacon, "are secret;" and great, although it may have been unexpressed and inexpressible, must have been the joy of such a mother watching such a son. He was singularly diligent and thoughtful, and when no more than ten years old, was not only a delighted reader of Buffon, but faithfully copied all the plates, and colored them according to the directions which he had read. Accustomed as we are to speak of Cuvier as the great interpreter of nature, it is a pleasure to read that his affection for this admirable parent

---

man, the line immediately and sensibly declined." For, if Dr. Franklin had married into a family as conspicuous for native strength of understanding as that of his own father's and mother's, it is more than probable that his immediate descendents would not have been added to the general rule above noticed,



was cherished by him to the latest period of his life ; and that nothing gave the great philosopher and harassed minister more delight, than when some friendly hand had placed in his apartment the flowers which his mother had taught him in his youthful days to love."

It is truly astonishing how rapidly mental philosophy has advanced, since it has been decided that the brain is the organ of the mind. And this decision is of more recent date than many persons probably imagine. Even Dr. Lawrence found it necessary to demonstrate this fact in his lectures on the Natural History of Man, delivered in 1828, in London. The mental philosopher now has something tangible and useful on which to exercise his reflections. Accordingly, he finds the talents of individuals to increase in the ratio of their perfection in this organ, from the most imperfect in the idiot, to the most perfect in the man of transcendent genius. "And as certain knowledge obtained through some of its convolutions," says a medical writer, "is perfect in some persons, it follows that an individual having a brain perfectly developed and symmetrically formed in all its parts, would be capable of, and might acquire perfect knowledge in all its departments." Of the truth of this remark, Cuvier is an example : "For," continues the reviewer, "his vast and diversified undertakings prove that he possessed a brain of the most perfect organization, as much as its ample developements, and the depth of its convolutions, and the absolute weight of its cerebral lobes. His habits of life show that his su-

periority to other men arose from the most diligent employment of his time, of every possible interval that could be taken from public business, from social duties, and from needful rest. But so limited was the time that he could absolutely command, that we see beyond dispute, that no mere plodding industry could have effected what he performed, and that the rapidity of his mental operations was no less wonderful than their power." Thus we learn that Cuvier possessed a fine nervous temperament, and a superior organized brain; and this it was that marked him from the crowd of aimless and undistinguished men, enabled him to unfold to an admiring world the more profound mysteries of nature, ensured to him personal safety in the political convulsions through which he passed, and conferred immortality on his name. Hence the importance of the inquiry, how and by what means can such qualities be perpetuated? And this question is of more importance to parents than is generally suspected. For, a child possessing the above temperament and organization, if properly cultivated and directed, will become a quiet observer of nature, reflective and studious, himself a delightful companion, and an object of interesting contemplation, as one of the most perfect works of a beneficent Creator. Whereas, a child of the opposite temperament and organization, which is the *vital* and *animal*, is perfectly restless and selfish, ever seeking his own gratification in opposition to every principle of justice and duty, is difficult to govern or to instruct, and of this class are those



“who bring the gray hairs of their parents with sorrow to the grave.” “Meantime,” says Kepler, “*the strong are born of the strong, and the good of the good*. What we find in nature ill-prepared, let us endeavor to correct.”

### CHAPTER III.

---

It is to the theory which we have attempted to illustrate in the preceding pages, that we must have recourse to account for, and explain the singular combinations of talent and error which is exhibited in the biography of many eminent individuals. Among these, we notice in strong relief, the character of that most eccentric of monarchs, James I., of England, and VI., of Scotland. Various causes, not necessary to be enumerated here, have combined to produce much misconception in regard to the true character of this personage. We annex a sketch from a master hand, forcible, graphic, and true; one who has rarely, if ever, been equalled in this species of portraiture.

Macaulay, in tracing the struggle for political and religious liberty of the sixteenth century, thus speaks of Elizabeth, and her successor, James. "The conduct of the extraordinary woman who then governed England, is an admirable study for politicians who live in unquiet times. It shows how thoroughly



she understood the people whom she ruled, and the crisis in which she was called to act. What she held, she held firmly; what she gave, she gave graciously. She saw that it was necessary to make a concession to the nation, and she made it, not grudgingly, not tardily—not as a matter of bargain and sale—not, in a word, as Charles the First would have made it, but promptly and cordially. Before a bill could be framed, or an address presented, she applied a remedy to the evil of which the nation complained. She expressed, in the warmest terms, her gratitude to her faithful Commons for detecting abuses which interested persons had concealed from her. If her successors had inherited her wisdom with her crown, Charles the First might have died of old age, and James the Second would never have seen St. Germain.

“She died, and her kingdom passed to one who was, in his own opinion, the greatest master of kingcraft that ever lived; who was, in truth, one of those kings whom God seems to send for the express purpose of hastening revolutions. Of all the enemies of liberty whom England has produced, he was at once the most harmless and the most provoking. His office resembled that of the man who, in a Spanish bull-fight, goads the torpid savage to fury by shaking a red rag in the air, and now and then throwing a dart sharp enough to sting, but too small to injure. The policy of wise tyrants has always been to cover their violent acts with popular forms. James was always obtruding his despotic theories on his

subjects without the slightest necessity. His foolish talk exasperated them infinitely more than forced loans or benevolences would have done. Yet, in practice, no king held his prerogatives less tenaciously. He neither gave way gracefully to the advancing spirit of liberty, nor took vigorous measures to stop it; but retreated before it with ludicrous haste, blustering and insulting as he retreated. The English people had been governed for nearly a hundred and fifty years by princes who, whatever might have been their frailties or vices, had all possessed great force of character, and who, whether loved or hated, had always been feared. Now, at length, for the first time since the day when the sceptre of Henry the Fourth dropped from the hand of his lethargic grandson, England had a king whom she despised:

“The follies and vices of the man increased the contempt which was produced by the feeble policy of the sovereign. The indecorous gallantries of the court, the habits of gross intoxication in which even the ladies indulged, were alone sufficient to disgust a people whose manners were beginning to be strongly tinctured with austerity. But these were trifles. Crimes of the most frightful kind had been discovered; others were suspected. The strange story of the Gowries was not forgotten. The ignominious fondness of the king for his minions, the perjuries, the sorceries, the poisonings, which his chief favorites had planned within the walls of his palace; the pardon which, in direct violation of his duty and of his word, he had granted to the mysterious threats of a



murderer, made him an object of loathing to many of his subjects." "This was not all. The most ridiculous weaknesses seemed to meet in the wretched Solomon of Whitehall—pedantry, buffoonery, garrulity, low curiosity, the most contemptible cowardice. Nature and education had done their best to produce a finished specimen of all that a king ought not to be." And this king was the son of Mary, queen of Scots, who, in the twenty-third year of her age, married her first cousin, a youth of nineteen.

This marriage was not the dictate of state policy, but a transitory passion produced in the queen by the outward graces of Darnley. The alliance, according to Mr. Combe, promised any thing except intellectual or moral offspring.\* Keith gives the following account of Mary's youthful husband. "He was one of the tallest and handsomest young men of the age; he had a comely face and a pleasant countenance; a most dextrous horseman, and exceedingly well skilled in all gentle exercises; prompt and ready for all games and sports; much given to the diversions of hawking and hunting; to horse racing and music, especially playing on the lute; he could speak and write well, and was bountiful and liberal enough.—

---

\* "When two parties marry very young, the eldest of their children generally inherit a less favorable developement of the moral and intellectual organs than those produced in more mature age. The animal organs in the human race are, in general, most vigorous in early life, and this energy appears to cause them to be most readily transmitted to offspring." Mr. Combe also shows the deteriorating effects of marriages between blood

To balance these good natural qualifications, he was much addicted to intemperance, to base and unmanly pleasures; he was haughty and proud, and so very weak in mind as to be a prey to all that came near him; he was inconstant, credulous and facile, unable to abide by any resolution; capable of being imposed upon by designing men; and could conceal no secret, let it tend ever so much to his own welfare or detriment."

The beauty, grace, and accomplishments of Mary, have been dwelt upon by the historian and the novelist; but from her conduct in life, it cannot be inferred that she possessed either strength of understanding or purity of heart. For proof of this, we refer the reader to the notes on this subject in Hume's History of England. After examining these statements, the unprejudiced mind must ascribe the strong tendency to sensuality in James to both his parents; whilst his partial idiocy and nervous trembling at the sight of naked steel, was caused, doubtless, by the terror which his mother experienced at the brutal murder of Rizzio in her presence, a few months previous to his birth.\*

---

relations; which is now too well established to be doubted. Yet, regardless of the importance of this knowledge, it is a common practice of the novel writer, to create a passion between youthful cousins, and then have the folly to call their union a happy consummation of the story.

---

\* "So palpable, indeed, is the connection between the mother's state and the constitution of the future child, that the philosopher, Hobbes, unhesitatingly ascribed his own excessive



Yet is it not humiliating to reflect, that from an union of two young persons, the aim and end of whose existence appeared to be the gratification of their selfish passions, should procreate a race of kings who were to involve their country in revolution and bloodshed for nearly a century? Let us not, however, question the mysterious ways of Providence; for who can tell how much the present prosperity of this country is indebted to the weak and wicked race of the Stuarts, whose licentiousness and folly so disgusted the most virtuous and high-minded portion of their subjects, that many of them, to escape from the effects of it, emigrated to America; and to their intellectual, moral, and energetic posterity, is to be mainly attributed the present prosperity and happiness of the country.\*

In approaching our own times, another remarkable case presents itself—the son of Napoleon. The private character of both Maria Louisa and her son,

---

timidity and nervous sensibility to the fright in which his mother lived before he was born, on account of the threatened invasion of the Spanish Armada, and which affected her to such a pitch on the news of its actual approach, as to bring on premature birth.”—(*Combe on Infancy*, p. 65.)

\* Those who have doubts on this subject, and also upon the transmission of moral qualities, should inform themselves respecting the state of society in New South Wales; a community of the same Anglo-Saxon origin as this country; but whose progenitors were of a very different moral character from the ‘Pilgrim Fathers.’ Hence the difference between the present state of society in the two countries.

afford a lamentable instance of the direct descent of strong propensities and weak intellect, unaccompanied by moral sentiments. The scandalous chronicle of the court of Parma, and the well-known habits of the duke of Reichstadt, furnish sufficient evidence that the mother's nature prevailed in the offspring; and that the father's anticipations of the future greatness of the new-born heir to his monarchy, never could have been realized.

Napoleon was once told, "Sire, the education of your son should be watched over with great attention; he must be educated so that he may replace you."\* "Replace me," he answered, "I could not replace myself; I am the child of circumstances." True; and he might have added, the child of a very different mother, whose energetic mind was effected by circumstances very dissimilar from those which

---

\* A very different opinion of the power of education is held by Dr. James Johnson, who says, "To expect a good crop of science or literature from some intellects, is about as hopeless as to expect olives to thrive on the craggy summit of Ben Nevis, or the pineapple to expand amid the glaciers of Grindewalde. Yet from these sterile regions of mind, the hapless pedagogue is expected, by parents, to turn out Miltons, Lockes and Newtons, with as much facility as a gardener rises brocoli or cauliflower from the rich alluvial grounds about Fulham! It is in vain for poor Syntax to urge in excuse, that

"Non ex aliquovis ligno fit Mercurius."

This is only adding insult to injury, in the eyes of parents, who consider that any hint of imperfection in the offspring, is, by innuendo, a reproach cast upon themselves."



operated on the mother of the young king of Rome. Maria Louisa, was of an inert, lymphatic temperament; her habits indolent, luxurious, and sensual; and in every respect the opposite of Letitia Romilini, the mother of Napoleon. "The circumstances," says Dr. Combe, "in which the brightest order of minds most frequently appear, are, where the father is healthy and active, and the mother unites an energetic character with vigorous bodily health, or with some *high and sustaining excitement animating all her mental and bodily functions*. The mother of Bonaparte was of this description; and the mothers of most of the celebrated men will be found to have been more or less distinguished for similar characteristics; and accordingly, how often in the biographies of men of genius do we remark, that it was the mother who first perceived and fanned the flame that burst into after brightness?"

The union of two, each having an excess of the propensities, will result in an increased malignity of evil passions in their descendants. Such is the record of that distinguished family of ancient Rome, which ended in the monster Nero. Julia, the daughter of Augustus Cæsar, and the great grandmother of Nero, was a woman of dissolute conduct, libidinous passions, and abandoned infamy. Her daughter Agrippina, possessed an uncontrollable and violent temper; and was insatiably ambitious of power. For her own aggrandizement she was ever ready to sacrifice the interests, or even the lives of her children. Her only redeemable quality was chastity; and, although



Germanicus, "the worthiest son of the worthiest parents," was her husband, her children appear to have inherited her fierce disposition. Caligula, that emperor of Rome, who wished the Roman people had but one neck, that he might, at a blow, destroy the whole race, was one of them, and Agrippina, of infamous memory, the mother of Nero, was another. The paternal grandfather of Nero was Lucius Domitius Ænobarbus, a man of impetuous temper, violent, proud, extravagant and cruel. The life of his son, Cneius Domitius, was a series of evil deeds; he married his cousin Agrippina, and used to remark, "that from himself and Aggripina, nothing good or valuable could come." They were the parents of Nero, whose name is now another word for the most savage cruelty.

Again, at a more recent period, we find a family in which the vices of the parents assumed an increased degree of malignity in the offspring—the Borgia family, of whom pope Alexander VI., and his infamous son and daughter, Cæsar and Lucrezia, were members, whose vices and crimes surpassed in atrocity, all those who preceded them.

They are thus spoken of by a writer of the present day. "The unholy trio—pope Alexander VI., who had gained the chair of St. Peter by the most unblushing simony, his daughter Lucrezia, and his son Cæsar—was a choice assemblage, who had assumed a right to indulge in all the odious want of faith of miserable modern intriguers, as well as in all the odious excesses and nameless vices of a Nero and a



Tiberius :—indeed, it is doubtful, whether the worst character in Suetonius would not have paused awhile before he associated with Cæsar Borgia.”

The lives of Catherine De Medici, the talented the profligate, the cruel, and her equally sensual and vicious sons, are as forcible examples of the descent of hereditary vices, as that of Henry IV. of France, and his ancestors are of hereditary virtues.

The illustrious Margaret, queen of Navarre, and her equally strong-minded and virtuous husband, Henry D'Albert, were the grand parents of Henry IV., the most beloved and honored of all the French monarchs. His mother, Jane D'Albert, ranks high among women distinguished for their great and good qualities. She possessed a strong and vigorous understanding, a cultivated mind, and an acquaintance with the languages. She left several compositions, both in prose and verse. D'Aubine, speaking of Jane, queen of Navarre, says, “She possessed a manly mind, an elevated capacity, and a magnanimity of soul proof against all the storms of adversity.” De Thou, concurs in these eulogiums on her talents and greatness of mind. A son and daughter survived her; the former, the celebrated Henry IV. was the most amiable and illustrious of the French monarchs; the latter, Catherine of Navarre, emulated the example of her mother, and preserved a prudent and exemplary conduct in the midst of a corrupt court; and was tenderly esteemed by her brother.

## CHAPTER IV.

---

THESE views, however, can be carried out and demonstrated by facts of a more agreeable nature than the preceding, and more creditable to humanity. Facts which clearly point out the certainty and manner of perpetuating desirable, intellectual, and moral qualities. The history of our own country affords innumerable examples in proof of this. Probably the most extensive one may be found in the family of President Edwards.

“The number of great men,” says his biographer, one of his descendants, “who have produced great and permanent changes in the character and condition of mankind, and stamped their own image on the mind of succeeding generations, is comparatively small; and even of that small number, the great body have been indebted for their superior efficiency, at least in part, to extraneous circumstances, while very few can ascribe it to the simple strength of their own intellect. Yet, here and there an individual can be found, who, by his mere mental energy, has changed



the course of human thought and feeling, and led mankind onward in that new and better path which he had opened to their view.

“Such an individual was Jonathan Edwards.—Born in an obscure colony in the midst of a wilderness, and educated at a seminary just commencing its existence; passing the better part of his life as the pastor of a frontier village, and the residue as an Indian missionary in an humble hamlet, he discovered and unfolded a system of the Divine moral government, so new, so clear, so full, that while at its first disclosure it needed no aid from its friends, and feared no opposition from its enemies, it has at length constrained a reluctant world to bow in homage to its truth.

“The Reverend Timothy Edwards, the father of President Edwards, was born at Hartford, May 14, 1669, and pursued his studies preparatory to his admission to college, under the Rev. Mr. Glover, of Springfield, a gentleman distinguished for his classical attainments. In 1687, he entered Harvard College, at that time the only seminary in the colonies, and received the two degrees of Bachelor, and Master of Arts, on the same day, July 4th, 1691, one in the morning, the other in the afternoon: an uncommon mark of respect paid to his extraordinary proficiency in learning. After the usual course of theological study, at that time more thorough than it was during the latter half of the following century, he was ordained to the Gospel ministry in the east parish of Windsor, in Connecticut, in May, 1694. Six months after his



ordination, and in the twenty-sixth year of his age, Mr. Edwards was married to Esther Stoddard, daughter of the Rev. Solomon Stoddard, aged twenty-two.

“The management not only of his domestic concerns, but of his property generally, was intrusted to the care of Mrs. Edwards, who discharged the duties of a wife and mother with singular fidelity and success. *In strength of character she resembled her father*, and, like him, she left behind her in the place where she resided for seventy-six years, that “good name which is better than precious ointment.” On a visit to East Windsor, in 1823, I found a considerable number of persons advanced in years, who had been well acquainted with Mrs. Edwards; and two, upwards of ninety, who had been pupils of her husband. From them I learned that she received a superior education in Boston, was tall, dignified and commanding in her appearance, affable and gentle in her manners, and was regarded as surpassing her husband in native vigor of understanding. They all united in speaking of her as possessed of remarkable judgment and prudence, of an exact sense of propriety, of extensive information, of a thorough knowledge of the scriptures and of theology, and of singular conscientiousness, piety, and excellence of character. By her careful attention to all his domestic concerns, her husband was left at full liberty to devote himself to the proper duties of his profession. Like many of the clergy of that early period in New England, he was well acquainted with Hebrew literature, and was regarded as a man of more than usual



learning, but was particularly distinguished in the Greek and Latin classics. In addition to his other duties, he annually prepared a number of pupils for college, there being at that time no academies or public schools endowed for this purpose. One of my informants, who pursued his preparatory studies under him, told me, that on his admission to College, when the officers had learned with whom he had studied, they remarked to him that there was no need of examining Mr. Edwards's scholars.

“He was, for that period, unusually liberal and enlightened with regard to the education of his children; preparing not only his son, but each of his daughters, also, for college. In a letter bearing date August 3, 1711, while absent on the expedition to Canada, he wishes that Jonathan and the girls may continue to prosecute the study of Latin; and in another of August 7, that he continue to recite his Latin to his elder sisters. When his daughters were of the proper age, he sent them to Boston to finish their education. Both he and Mrs. Edwards were exemplary in their care of their religious instruction, and as the reward of their parental fidelity, were permitted to see the fruits of piety in them all during their youth.”

Such were the parents of President Edwards; and their virtues were not wanting in his posterity, for he married a woman of superior mind and attainments, and his descendants, and those of his sisters, are distinguished for talent and virtue among the literati of the Eastern States. And many of them, down to



the seventh generation, experience the ennobling emotions of hereditary excellence, and feel a purer pride in the contemplation of the wisdom and virtue of their ancestors, than the European, who can trace back his genealogy from century to century, and boast of having the blood of kings and conquerors in his veins.

If, in biography generally, the same care had been taken to ascertain and describe the characters of the *parents* of great men, the *sources* of talent and genius would not so long have remained doubtful. The general indifference, however, of man to this subject is truly surprising, when we consider the importance which he gives to the pedigree of his horse and dog. The Newmarket jockey, when he has a fine horse to run or to dispose of, does not merely show by whom he was trained, and his manner of training, but produces a long and well authenticated pedigree. And, in this particular, he is greatly inferior to the untutored son of the Desert, the otherwise ignorant Arab; whose greatest anxiety is to obtain purity of descent, in this, his most valuable treasure; well knowing, through the experience of ages, that the high qualities of which the noble animal is capable, are only to be looked for where this condition has been strictly observed.

Patrick Henry is another distinguished instance in proof of mental and moral qualities being hereditary. The families of both his parents were eminent for talent and virtue; but it would appear that the peculiar powers of oratory for which he was



so remarkable, were derived from the maternal line.

“He was,” says Mr. Wirt “the orator of nature; and such a one as nature might not blush to avow. If the reader shall still demand how he acquired those wonderful powers of speaking which have been assigned to him, we can only answer, that they were the gift of Heaven—the birthright of genius.”

“It has been said of Mr. Henry, with inimitable felicity, that ‘he was SHAKESPEARE and GARRICK combined’! Let the reader then imagine the wonderful talents of those two men united in the same individual, and transferred from the scenes of fiction to the business of real life, and he will have formed some conception of the eloquence of Patrick Henry. In a word, he was one of those perfect prodigies of nature of whom very few have been produced since the foundation of the earth was laid.”

“Mrs. Henry, the widow of Col. Syme, as we have seen, and the mother of Patrick Henry, was a native of Hanover county, and of the family of the Winstons. She possessed, in an eminent degree, the mild and benevolent disposition, the undeviating probity, the correct understanding, and easy elocution by which that ancient family has been so long distinguished. Her brother William, the brother of the present Judge Winston, is said to have been highly endowed with that peculiar cast of eloquence for which Mr. Henry became, afterward, so justly celebrated. Of this gentleman, I have an anecdote from a correspondent, which I shall give in his own words: “I have often heard my father, who was intimately



acquainted with this William Winston, say, that he was the greatest orator whom he ever heard, Patrick Henry excepted; that during the last French and Indian war, and soon after Braddock's defeat, when the militia were marched to the frontier of Virginia against the enemy, this William Winston was the lieutenant of a company; that the men who were indifferently clothed, without tents, and exposed to the rigour and inclemency of the weather, discovered great aversion to the service, and were anxious, and even clamorous to return to their families, when this William Winston, mounting a stump, addressed them with such keenness of invective, and declaimed with such force of eloquence, on liberty and patriotism, that when he concluded, the general cry was, 'Let us march on; lead us against the enemy!' and they were now willing, nay, anxious to encounter all those difficulties and dangers which, but a few moments before, had almost produced a mutiny."

"Patrick Henry, the second son of John and Sarah Henry, and one of nine children, was born on the 29th of May, 1736, at the family seat, called Studly, in the county of Hanover, and colony of Virginia. His parents, though not rich, were in easy circumstances; and in point of personal character, were among the most respectable inhabitants of the colony."

"His father, Col. John Henry, was a native of Aberdeen, in Scotland. He was, it is said, a first cousin of David Henry, who was the brother-in-law and successor of Edward Cave, in the publication of that celebrated work, *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, and



himself the author of several literary tracts: John Henry is also said to have been a nephew, in the maternal line, to the great historian, Dr. William Robertson. He came over to Virginia, in quest of fortune, some time prior to the year 1730, and the tradition is, that he enjoyed the friendship and patronage of Mr. Dinwiddie, afterward the Governor of the colony. By this gentleman, it is reported, that he was introduced to the elder Colonel Syme, of Hanover, in whose family, it is certain, that he became domesticated during the life of that gentleman; after his death he intermarried with his widow, and resided on the estate which he had left. It is considered as a fair proof of the personal merit of Mr. John Henry, that, in those days, when offices were bestowed with peculiar caution, he was the Colonel of his regiment, the principal surveyor of the county, and for many years the presiding magistrate of the county court. His surviving acquaintances concur in stating that he was a man of liberal education; that he possessed a plain but solid understanding; and lived a life of the most irreproachable integrity, and exemplary piety."

"Thus much," continues Mr. Wirt, "I have been able to collect of the parentage and family of Mr. Henry; and this, I presume, will be thought quite sufficient, in relation to a man, who owed no part of his greatness to the lustre of his pedigree, but was in truth the sole founder of his own fortunes." Yet, according to the new mental philosophy, the pedigree of Mr. Henry was most illustrious; inasmuch



as the aristocracy of talent and virtue, the true nobility of nature, is superior to that of wealth and blood.

The following beautiful description of Mr. Henry in private life, displays a striking contrast with the pursuits and habits of the present generation ; whose every effort appears to be directed to the acquisition of wealth, of political power, or the gratification of the selfish sentiments in some of their protean forms.

“Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the other parts of his character, in this, the concurrence is universal: that there never was a man better constituted than Mr. Henry to enjoy and adorn the retirement on which he had now entered. Nothing can be more amiable, nothing more interesting and attaching, than those pictures which have been furnished from every quarter, without one dissenting stroke of the pencil, of this great and virtuous man in the bosom of private life. Mr. Jefferson says, that “he was the best humored companion in the world.” His disposition was indeed all sweetness—his affections were warm, kind and social—his patience invincible—his temper ever unclouded, cheerful and serene—his manners plain, open, familiar and simple—his conversation easy, ingenuous and unaffected, full of entertainment, full of instruction, and irradiated with all those light and softer graces, which his genius threw, without effort, over the most common subjects. It is said that there stood in the court, before his door, a large walnut tree, under whose shade it was his delight to pass his summer evenings, surrounded by his affectionate and happy family, and by a circle of



neighbors who loved him almost to idolatry. Here he would disport himself with all the careless gayety of infancy. Here, too, he would sometimes warm the bosoms of the old, and strike fire from the eyes of his younger hearers, by recounting the tales of other times; sketching with the boldness of a master's hand, those great historic incidents in which he had borne a part; and by drawing to the life, and placing before his audience, in colours as fresh and strong as those of nature, the many illustrious men in every quarter of the continent, with whom he had acted a part on the public stage. Here, too, he would discourse with all the wisdom and all the eloquence of a Grecian sage, of the various duties and offices of life; and pour forth those lessons of practical utility, with which long experience and observation had stored his mind. Many were the visitors from a distance, old and young, who came on a kind of pious pilgrimage, to the retreat of the veteran patriot, and found him thus delightfully and usefully employed—the old to gaze upon him with long remembered affection and ancient gratitude—the young, the ardent, the emulous, to behold and admire with swimming eyes, the champion of other days, and to look with a sigh of regret upon that height of glory which they could never hope to reach. Blessed be the shade of that venerable tree—ever hallowed the spot which his genius has consecrated!”

Washington and Franklin are further illustrations of the direct descent of superior moral and intellectual qualities. It is, however, much to be regretted, that



the two principal biographies of Washington contain so few particulars respecting his ancestors. It is principally from sources independent of those two works, that we learn the character of his parents. All accounts of them are highly favorable as regards virtue, integrity, and strength of understanding.

The life of Dr. Franklin, by Jared Sparks, contains a full account of his ancestors, both in the paternal and maternal line. His mother was the *youngest* of nine children of Peter Folger, a man of talent, worth, and consideration; whose numerous descendants sustained a high character for strength of mind, versatility of talent, probity, and honor; whilst not only his father, but also his father's brothers, were remarkable for strength of understanding, and excellence of character. Dr. Franklin gives the following description of his parents.

"I suppose you may like to know what kind of a man my father was. He had an excellent constitution, was of a middle stature, well set, and very strong. He could draw prettily, and was skilled a little in music. His voice was sonorous and agreeable, so that when he played on his violin, and sung withal, as he was accustomed to do after the business of the day was over, it was extremely agreeable to hear. He had some knowledge of mechanics, and, on occasion, was very handy with other tradesmen's tools. But his great excellence was his sound understanding, and his solid judgment in prudential matters, both in private and public affairs. It is true he was never employed in the latter, the numerous family



he had to educate, and the straitness of his circumstances, keeping him close to his trade ; but I remember well his being frequently visited by leading men, who consulted him for his opinion in public affairs, and those of the church he belonged to ; and who showed great respect for his judgment and advice.

“He was also much consulted by private persons about their affairs, when any difficulty occurred, and frequently chosen an arbiter between contending parties. At his table he liked to have, as often as he could, some sensible friend or neighbor to converse with, and always took care to start some ingenious or useful topic for discourse, which might tend to improve the minds of his children. By this means he turned our attention to what was good, just and prudent, in the conduct of life ; and little or no notice was ever taken of what related to the victuals on the table ; whether it was well or ill dressed, in or out of season, of good or bad flavor, preferable to this or that other kind of thing ; so that I was brought up in such a perfect inattention to those matters, as to be quite indifferent what kind of food was set before me. Indeed, I am so unobservant of it, that to this day I can scarce tell a few hours after dinner, of what dishes it consisted. This has been a great convenience to me in travelling, where my companions have been sometimes very unhappy for want of a suitable gratification of their more delicate, because better instructed tastes and appetites.

“My mother had likewise an excellent constitution ; she suckled all her ten children. I never knew either my father or mother to have any sickness, but that of which they died ; he at eighty-nine, and she at eighty-five years of age. They lie buried together at Boston, where I some years since placed a marble over their grave, with this inscription :

JOSIAH FRANKLIN,

and

ABIAH, his wife,

Lie here interred.

They lived lovingly together in wedlock,  
fifty-five years ;

And without an estate, or any gainful employment,  
By constant labor and honest industry,  
(With God's blessing,)

Maintained a large family comfortably ;  
And brought up thirteen children and seven grandchildren  
Respectably.

From this instance, reader,  
Be encouraged to diligence in thy calling,  
And distrust not Providence.

He was a pious and prudent man,  
She a discreet and virtuous woman.

Their youngest son,  
In filial regard to their memory,  
Places this stone.



## CHAPTER V.

---

It is a common axiom, that "exceptions prove rules;" there are many apparent exceptions to this theory; which are, however, more apparent than real. The following paragraph from Miss Sedgwick's late work, appears to be one of them.

Madame De Stael's experience is against the theory of the transmission of genius by the mother. Her son, by De Rocca, now living in Paris, is said to be an excessively ridiculous person, silly and affected, and what is worse, rich and avaricious. The world has been much amused with a story of his having jumped out of a window from mere fright. Is it not strange, that a son of Madame De Stael and De Rocca, (a man of known valour) should have neither intellect nor bravery?"

A son being so unlike either parent, appears to be an anomaly in nature; and "apparent anomalies are mere finger posts pointing to where things lie of which we remain ignorant; and when such intimation is received with philosophic meekness, it invariably

guides to important discovery." With the aid of phrenology and the theory under consideration, the excessive timidity of the son of Madame De Stael, may be accounted for.

Accordingly, if he were born with a large organ of cautionness, and small organs of combativeness and firmness, accompanied with deficient reflecting faculties, he would be a coward by nature, were his father Julius Cæsar himself. And also, if there were any circumstances acting on, and exciting the organ of cautiousness in the mother previous to the birth of the child, that action would tend to develop a similar organ in the head of her son. In examining the life of Madame De Stael, we find the preceding to have been the fact; for De Rocca, to whom she was fondly attached, and in whose life her existence appeared to be bound up, was suffering under extreme ill health, on account of which, his wife lived in a constant state of fear and agitation. Under such circumstances, the domestic and selfish sentiments would be brought into greater activity than the intellectual faculties, and of course would result in a character similar to that given by Miss Sedgwick to young De Rocca.

It is also well known, that there is a large class of women, of whom Madame De Stael was one, who are so entirely occupied by their own pursuits and pleasures, that they are much averse to having children. And it may be observed, that those unwelcome children are generally pitiable specimens of humanity. There is a beautiful superstition among the



Irish, "that those children who are received from the Almighty as blessings, prove to be so, and that those who are not received as such, turn out the contrary." This belief, doubtless, was the result of observation and experience; for a child whose birth has been looked forward to with pleasure, has had the advantage of the exercise of the superior organs of the parents—and vice versa. This view of the subject, can perhaps, be best illustrated by an example.

The lovely Louisa M——, noted by the writer, among her intimate friends, as remarkable for her good sense and kindness of disposition, married at the age of twenty-five, a man of superior abilities, enjoying the advantages of an ample fortune and the best society. Their residence was charmingly situated, overlooking a noble river, great extent and variety of country, and surrounded by many beautiful objects of nature. The interior arrangements comprehended all that was desirable in the way of literature and the arts; noted also, as the abode of hospitality and the kindest feelings. Thus situated, their children were born under the most happy influences, were beautiful, bright, and some of them highly talented. At the age of thirty-eight, the mother ceased bearing children, and felt happy at the thought of being at length free from the confinement attending the cares of infancy. This state of things continued a few years, but was unexpectedly changed by symptoms of pregnancy. This was a most unwelcome prospect for one who had entered

into the dissipation of fashionable life, and was determined, in future, to enjoy and not suffer. Various means were resorted to, to avoid the approaching calamity, but were unsuccessful. After much discontent and repining, a girl was born, inheriting a large portion of the unhappy, repining, and bitter temper, which possessed the mother for months previous to her birth.

The attempt to violate the laws of the creator, in this instance, has been most signally punished; for in the perverse, rebellious spirit, and cloudy brow of her unhappy daughter, the mother now recognises, the temper in which she so imprudently indulged during her pregnancy.

On no other principle than that on which this theory is founded, can the great diversity of character found in children of the same parents be accounted for.

A family, in which the authoress was extremely intimate, presents members as dissimilar as it is possible to conceive. The parents have passed through many strange vicissitudes, and their children born under different states of mind and circumstances, show the effect of them in the strongest light. The father was a man of talent, but had, until the age of forty, made pleasure his pursuit, and lived only for himself. At that period, having inherited a fine estate, which he wished to transmit to his posterity, he reformed and married.

Although a highly educated man, Mr. A——, appeared to possess no knowledge whatever of the conditions necessary to be fulfilled, in order to insure



a healthy and strong-minded progeny; (*d*) and was guided in his choice more by the animal propensities and selfish sentiments, than by enlightened intellect. His dissipated life having brought him in contact with women of loose morals, had induced a mistrust of those who lived much in society; he, therefore, chose what he termed "an unsophisticated child of nature;" but in fact, an immature, half-educated girl of sixteen. Immediately after his marriage he retired to his estate, remotely situated, the neighbourhood of which contained very few inhabitants with whom his refined and cultivated taste could assimilate. His active temperament and versatility of talent, however, found sufficient excitement in improving his newly acquired property, in frequent excursions to the metropolis, and in anticipating the birth of an heir, whom his ardent imagination invested with the beauty and grace of its mother, and the talents and enthusiasm of its father; to whose dawning intellect he proposed devoting his leisure hours, his scholastic lore, and his knowledge of the world.

But alas! all those bright anticipations were doomed to bitter disappointment. For his youthful wife, having few tastes and pursuits in common with her husband, was necessarily left much alone; her mental faculties being little exercised, her physical system immature, the brain of her child was imperfectly developed, and his system weakly organized; hence the efforts of his father to bestow upon him a liberal education were fruitless; and after years of anxiety, vexation, and mortification, the unhappy



father was constrained to admit the mental imbecility of his son.

Not wishing to identify this family, I must pass over a number of its members whose dispositions and characters were strongly marked by the circumstances and sentiments that preceded their births. I would, however; remark, that a number of them are daughters, who, instead of inheriting the beauty and grace of their mother, are decidedly plain in person and not agreeable in manners. This discordance in nature can only be accounted for by the unhappy frame of mind induced by the disagreeable situation of the mother; who was, in her country residence cut off from all social intercourse, and neglected by her husband; causes, it must be admitted, sufficient to destroy the equanimity of any temper, and to produce a fretful and repining state of mind; and those unharmonious feelings appear to have been transferred, not only to the dispositions, but to the countenances also of her children.\*

Mr. A——, at length growing weary of the monotony of country life, sold his estate and returned to

---

\*The Margravine of Anspach observes, that “when a female is likely to become a mother, she ought to be doubly careful of her temper; and in particular, to indulge in no ideas that are not cheerful, and no sentiments that are not kind. Such is the connection between mind and body, that the features of the face are moulded commonly into an expression of the internal disposition; and is it not natural to think that an infant, before it is born, may be effected by the temper of its mother?”—(*Memoirs, Vol. II, Chap. VIII.*)



the city. This was a most fortunate event for the children born afterwards. For, having become the inmate of an intellectual and highly educated family, whose house was frequented by much good society, the mind of Mrs. A——, expanded and strengthened, all her faculties being called into harmonious exercise, her physical system having acquired maturity, she became almost a different person, and her children born subsequently were superior, in every respect, to those who preceded them.

One of the last of those children appeared, even from infancy, to be most delightfully constituted; was a source of comfort and hope to his parents, an object of affection and pride to his brothers and sisters, and perfectly happy in himself. Nor did the bright promises of his youth disappoint his friends, for his parents gave him a careful moral and intellectual education, and now arrived at manhood, he reflects honour upon all connected with him, and is a source of pleasure and happiness to all who know him. But to whom, alas! for early marriages, his eldest brother affords a lamentable contrast.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE following historical facts, furnish further evidence to establish the great probability of a transmission of intellectual and moral qualities; when these qualities are united in the parents, and have descended through several generations.

Lord Bacon is universally admitted to have possessed the most powerful intellect of any man that has appeared upon the earth. Both of his parents belonged to that class of society from which have emanated such men as Milton, Sir Thomas More, Lord Burleigh, Oliver Cromwell, John Hampden, and a host of other great minds. His maternal grandfather, Sir Anthony Cook, became eminent in the whole circle of the arts, being a thorough master of the Latin and Greek languages, an exact critic and philologist; and equally skilled in poetry, history, and the mathematics. He was, at the same time, adorned with singular piety and goodness, preferring contemplation to active life. He managed his family with such prudence and discretion, that Lord Seymour, standing by one day when this gentleman



chid his son, said, "some men govern their families with more skill than others do kingdoms," and there-upon commended him to the government of his nephew, Edward VI. Such the majesty of his looks and gait, that awe governed; such the reason and sweetness, that love obliged all his family—a family equally afraid to displease so *good* a head, and to offend so *great*. He had five daughters, whose education he superintended himself; and thinking that *women are as capable of learning as men*, he instilled that into his daughters at night, which he had taught the Prince during the day. If he was great and happy in himself, he was greater and happier in his daughters. "His first care was to give them a true sense of religion, and his next to inure them to submission, modesty and obedience.

"Their book and pen were their recreation; the music and dancing-school, the court and city, their accomplishment; the needle in the closet, and housewifery in the hall and kitchen, their business. They all married splendidly and happily; and in their marriage they were guided more by the reason of their father than by his will; and were directed rather by his counsel than led by his authority." "Their classical acquirements," says Macauley, made them conspicuous even among the women of fashion of that age. Anne, the mother of Francis Bacon, was distinguished both as a linguist and as a theologian. She corresponded in Greek with Bishop Jewel, and translated his *Apologia* from the Latin so correctly, that neither he nor Archbishop Parker could suggest



a single alteration. She also translated a series of sermons on Fate and Free-will, from the Tuscan of Bernardo Ochino." "Her parental care of her two sons, Anthony and Francis, two of the most extraordinary men of her time, or, indeed, of any time, is, possibly, the best test of her powers, which was deeply felt by Francis, who in his will says: "For my burial, I desire that it may be in St. Michael's church, near St. Alban's—there was my mother buried." In Birch's *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, the extraordinary vigilance used by Lady Anne in superintending their conduct long after they were adults, may be seen."

"Sir Nicholas Bacon," continues Macauley, "was no ordinary man; but the fame of the father was thrown into shade by that of the son." "Sir Nicholas Bacon," says Lloyd, was a man full of wit and wisdom. He had the deepest reach of any man at the council-table; the knottiest head to pierce into difficulties; the most comprehensive judgment to surmount the merits of a case; the strongest memory to recollect all the circumstances at one view; the greatest patience to debate and consider, and the clearest reason to urge anything that came in his way in the courts of chancery. His favor was eminent with his mistress, and his alliance strong with her statesmen. He was Lord Keeper of the Great Seal during the time of Elizabeth. He was, in a word, father of his country, and of Sir Francis Bacon."

With these unquestioned truths before us, it requires neither a physiological nor a metaphysical



hypothesis, to account for the great mental abilities of Lord Bacon. But we see, beyond a doubt, that those abilities were a legitimate inheritance, and owed their superior strength to the *not common occurrence* of the union of great intellectual culture and attainments in *both* of his parents. Let us here revert to what seems more than a coincidence, and strongly in support of the argument of a transmission of the experience and acquirements of the parents. The biographer of Sir Nicholas Bacon, the father of the philosopher, informs us, that by his first marriage he had six children; those, and the mother who bore them, passed into oblivion, leaving no trace except the record "They were." Sir Nicholas again married, and we presume his mature judgment made a wiser choice. He obtained Anne, one of the highly educated daughters of Sir Anthony Cook, before mentioned, and mark the result: Anthony and Francis, two of the most extraordinary men of their time, or of any time, were the issue of this fortunate union; the latter born when the father had attained the mature age of fifty, and the mother thirty-two, the prime of womanhood. And when we note the circumstance that the fathers of Dr. Franklin, Dr. Johnson, Sir William Jones, Cuvier, Fenelon, and many other eminent men, were about the same age, and also, that their mothers were in the meridian of life, surely such facts ought not to be looked upon as mere coincidences, but rather the result of some certain law of nature. When we reflect that order and law pervade



all nature, both animate and inanimate, from the geometrical lines in the flake of snow, to the striated formation of the earth we inhabit—from the three millions of animalculæ contained in a single drop of water, to man, the most perfect work of the Creator—is it not the height of presumption to suppose that the mind of a Bacon, or an idiot, a Melancthon, or an Alexander VI., was the result of chance, or produced by some unaccountable freak of nature, independent of the immutable principles of *cause* and *effect*?

“It is quite true,” as Locke has said, “that the human mind (as well as its material organ, the brain,) is devoid of innate ideas, and like a blank sheet of paper, at birth. All ideas, all knowledge, must be subsequently acquired through the medium of the senses and reflection. But it does not follow, that because all the sheets are blank, they are all equally well calculated for *acquiring* knowledge. Far from it. Some of them are like thick Bath post, others like thin foolscap—and many of them resemble common blotting paper, incapable of retaining or exhibiting any distinct or legible impression. The mind and its organ being, in fact, a “*rudis indigestaque moles*.” This part of the subject, in fine, may be summed up in a very few words, though it has occasioned interminable discussions among metaphysicians. *The qualities of our minds, or of the material organs of our minds, are hereditary, or born with us.*\*

---

\* Johnson's Economy of Health.



Admitting the truth of this opinion, and then referring to the facts last noticed, the legitimate conclusion arrived at, is, that early marriages cannot be too much deprecated, for reasons analogous throughout all organized nature, and well known to the physiologist and the moralist. Those who are unacquainted with these reasons will find them clearly elucidated in the writings of George and Andrew Combe.

If, however, fathers would more generally follow the example of Sir Anthony Cook, and pay greater attention to the education of their daughters, giving them solid and useful attainments, rather than light and showy accomplishments, and extend their education to a later period in life, the evil of early marriages would be very materially lessened; and the good effects of marriages entered into at a mature age, would be seen in the mental, moral, and physical improvement of succeeding generations.

Elizabeth, of England, and Mary, of Scotland, are striking examples of the effects of the two preceding modes of education on the life and conduct of women of equal natural abilities, and similar conditions.—The youth of Elizabeth was passed in retirement, study and contemplation. “The literary instruction,” says Mackintosh, “which she had received from Roger Ascham, had familiarized her mind in her sixteenth year, with the two ancient languages. Latin she acquired from the complete perusal of Cicero and Livy, the greatest prose writers of Rome. She compared the philosophical works of Plato with the abridgments of a Grecian philosophy by which Cicero



instructed and delighted his fellow-citizens ; and she would be taught by Ascham how much the orations of Demosthenes, which she read under his eye, surpassed those of the great masters of Roman eloquence. She is mentioned by her preceptor, as at the head of the lettered ladies of England, excelling even Jane Grey and Margaret Roper." Thus, at the age of twenty-five, with a mind expanded by knowledge, and a heart softened by adversity, she was called to the Throne ; and her reign was the most prosperous, distinguished and happy, of any that preceded or followed it.

The youth of Mary, Queen of Scots, on the contrary, until her nineteenth year, was passed in the gay, frivolous and licentious court of Catharine de Medicis. Her education was confined to personal accomplishments, which had the effect, as intended by her mother-in-law, of rendering her trifling, selfish, and sensual, and we behold her, at the age of twenty-five, the deserted wife of her third husband, flying from her justly incensed and scandalized subjects, to seek protection and aid from a kinswoman whose counsel she had rejected, whose womanly feelings she had wantonly outraged, and on whose good name her violent death, according to popular opinion, was destined to throw an indelible stain. Yet, we cannot but perceive the injustice of this opinion, when we reflect upon the high estimation in which the patriotic act of Brutus is held for sacrificing his two sons to the political liberty of his country. A higher and holier cause, that of religious liberty and the Refor-



mation, called for the death of Mary. Nineteen years of imprisonment, had not served to subdue her intriguing spirit; she had become the rallying-point for the Catholics, who had perpetrated the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and were deluging Europe in innocent blood; hence her restoration would have served as a signal for re-lighting the fires of Smithfield; and while her death-warrant was drawn up and subscribed by the clergy and laity in power, the whole odium of its execution, is unjustly thrown upon Elizabeth.

That the inspired author of *Paradise Lost*, inherited the qualities of his mind from his parents, cannot be doubted; for Mitford says, "His mother was a woman of incomparable virtue and goodness, and exemplary in her liberality to the poor.\* And his father was a person of a superior and accomplished mind, and was greatly distinguished for musical talents. He saw the early promises of genius in his son, and encouraged them by a careful and liberal education."

---

\* If there be in the character, not only sense and soundness, but virtue of a high order, then, however little appearance there may be of talent, a certain portion of wisdom may be relied upon most implicitly; for the correspondencies of wisdom and goodness are manifold; and that they will accompany each other, is to be inferred, not only because men's wisdom makes them good, but also because their goodness makes them wise. Questions of right and wrong are a perpetual exercise of the faculties of those who are solicitous as to the right or wrong of what they do or see; and a deep interest of the heart in those questions, carries with it, a deeper cultivation of the understanding, than can be easily effected by any other excitement to intellectual activity."—(*Taylor's Statesman*, p. 30.)



Milton, however, did not repay this obligation to his parents, by carefully and liberally educating his own offspring. Johnson says, "What we know of Milton's character in domestic relations, is, that he was severe and arbitrary. His family consisted of women; and there appears in his books something like a Turkish contempt for females, as subordinate and inferior beings. That his own daughters might not break the ranks, he suffered them to be depressed by a mean and penurious education."

Milton had children only by his first wife, Mary, Ann, and Deborah. Ann, though deformed, married a master-builder, and died of her first child. Mary died single. Deborah married Abraham Clark, a weaver of Spitalfields. She had seven sons and three daughters; but none of them had any children, except her son Caleb, and her daughter Elizabeth. Caleb went to Fort St. George in the East Indies, and had two sons, of whom nothing is now known. Elizabeth married Thomas Foster, a weaver, in Spitalfields, and had seven children, who all died. She kept a petty grocer's or chandler's shop, first in Halloway, and afterwards in Cock-lane, near Shoreditch Church. She knew little of her grandfather, and that little was not good. She told of his harshness to his daughters, and his refusal to have them taught to write. In 1750, April 4, "Comus" was played for her benefit. She had so little acquaintance with diversion or gayety, that she did not know what was intended, when a benefit was offered her."

Thus we see what ignorance, poverty and degradation, Milton entailed on his posterity, by his con



temptuous opinion of females, and by not educating his daughters; thereby enabling them to sustain their proper place in society as the daughters of a man who was by birth a gentleman, by education a learned scholar, and by nature, one of the greatest poets the world ever produced.

It is, however, very probable, and much more grateful to our feelings to conclude, that the daughters of Milton were incapable of receiving a superior education, rather than it should have arisen from a want of parental care in the poet. That they were undutiful and unkind, careless of their father when blind, and deserted him in his old age, we have the authority of Milton himself. Therefore, it is very possible that his contemptuous opinion of females, grew out of the *stupidity, dulness and undutiful conduct* of his own wife and daughters. This inference, at least, appears legitimate, from the following extracts from his life and writings:

“In his thirty-fifth year Milton married Mary, the daughter of Mr. Powell, a Justice of the Peace in Oxfordshire. After an absence of little more than a month, he brought his bride to town with him, and hoped, as Johnson observes, to enjoy the advantages of conjugal life; but spare diet, and hard study, and a house full of pupils, did not suit the young and gay daughter of a cavalier. She had been brought up in a very different society; so, after having lived for a month a philosophic life, after having been used at home to a great house, and much company and joviality, her friends, possibly at her own desire, made



earnest suit to have her company for the remaining part of the summer, which was granted upon a promise of her return at Michaelmas. When Michaelmas came, the lady had no inclination to quit the hospitality and delight of her father's mansion for the austerer habits and seclusion of the poet's study."

"Milton sent repeated letters to her, which were all unanswered; and a messenger, who was despatched to urge her return, was dismissed with contempt. He resolved immediately to repudiate her on the ground of disobedience; and to support the propriety and lawfulness of his conduct, he published 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce.'"

"There is one passage in this treatise, in which Milton clearly points to himself, and to the presumed causes of his unhappiness. 'The soberest and best governed men,' he says, 'are least practised in these affairs; and who knows not that the *bashful muteness of a virgin may oftentimes hide all the unloveliness and natural sloth which is really unfit for conversation?* Nor is there that freedom of access granted or presumed, as may suffice to a perfect discerning until too late; when any indisposition is suspected what more usual than the persuasions of friends, that acquaintance, as it increases, will mend all? And lastly, is it not strange that many who have spent their *youth chastely, are, in some things, not so quick sighted, while they haste too eagerly to light the nuptial torch?* Nor is it, therefore, for a modest error, that a man should forfeit so great a happiness, and no charitable means to relieve him. Since they



who have lived most loosely, by reason of their bold accustomings, prove most successful in their matches, because their wild affections, unsettling at will, have been so many divorces to teach them experience. Whereas the sober man, honoring the appearance of modesty, and hoping well of every social virtue under that veil, may easily chance to meet with a mind to all other due conversation inaccessible, and to the more estimable and superior purposes of matrimony useless—and almost lifeless; and what a solace, what a fit help such a consort would be through the whole life of a man, is less pain to conjecture than to have experience.’ He speaks again, of a mute and spiritless mate;’ and again, “if he shall find *himself bound fast to an image of earth and phlegm*, with whom he looked to be the co-partner of a sweet and gladsome society.” “These observations will, I think,” continues Mitford, “put us in possession of his wife’s ‘fair defects,’ and the causes of the separation.” They also establish the fact, that she was of decided lymphatic temperament; (e) of which the physiologist says, “If the temperament of the mother be lymphatic, the tendency of nature is to transmit this quality, with all its concomitant *heaviness, dulness, and inertness to the offspring*; and those individuals are incapable, in the struggle of life, of making head against difficulties and opposition, and are, generally, unfortunate. One of the great causes why men of talents frequently leave no gifted posterity, is, that they form alliances with



women of low temperament, in whose inert systems their vivacity is extinguished; and, on the other hand, the cause why men of genius often descend from fathers in whom no trace of ethereal qualities can be discovered, is, that those men were the fortunate husbands of women of high temperament, and fine cerebral combinations, who transmitted these qualities to their offspring."

The prosperity and happiness which a wise education insures to woman, and through her to posterity, is illustrated in the different destinies of the daughters of Milton and those of Sir Anthony Cook; of whom there is a further account in the life of Lord Burleigh.

"For the *improvement of his children*, as well as his domestic happiness, Burleigh was chiefly indebted to his wife, the daughter of Sir Anthony Cook, a lady highly distinguished for her mental accomplishments."

"The plan of female education, which the example of Sir Thomas More had rendered popular, continued to be pursued among the superior classes of the community.\* Sir Anthony Cook bestowed the most careful education on his five daughters, and all of them rewarded his exertions, by becoming not only proficient in literature, but *distinguished for their excellent demeanor as mothers of families*. Lady

---

\* It is from this cause, doubtless, that the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were so prolific in men of talent and genius; for in the posterity of those well-educated women, will be found the names of the great and good men of whom England is so justly proud.



Burleigh was adorned with every quality which could excite love and esteem; and many instances are recorded of her piety and beneficence. She had accompanied her husband through all the vicissitudes of his fortune, and, an affectionate union of forty three years, rendered the loss of her the severest calamity of his life."

## CHAPTER VII.

---

THE daughter of Neckar, is another brilliant example of the direct influence of cultivated intellect in both parents. Madam De Stael Holstein, was the grand-daughter of a Swiss clergyman, a man of superior mind and attainments, who bestowed on his daughter, an intellectual and moral cultivation, rare in that age and country. The youthful girl accompanied Madam Vermenue to Paris, in the singular capacity of Latin teacher to her son; there she became known and appreciated for her taste and acquirements. Her fine qualities inspired the historian Gibbon, with a tender passion, which, however, does not appear to have been reciprocated; for, in 1765, she became the wife of the great, though much abused, financier. Her heart, says her biographer, was not less carefully cultivated than her head; and on her husband's elevation to power, she used his influence and fortune only for purposes of benevolence. She had many associates among men of letters, particularly Thomas, Buffon, and Marmontel, and is the author of several literary productions.



Distinguished authors have pronounced Madam De Stael the first female writer of any age or country. It is certain, that since Rosseau and Voltaire, no French author has displayed equal energy, and variety. Remarkable for her quick perception of character, and her brilliant conversational powers, she elicited the admiration of her hearers, by her ingenuity and acuteness in metaphysical speculations. These attributes were undoubtedly derived from her mother; while from her father she inherited a masculine understanding and a great fondness for political discussion. "She is perhaps," says an English writer, "the only woman who can claim admission to an equality with the first order of manly talent. She was one whom listening senates would have admired, as though it had been a Burke, a Chatham, a Fox, or a Mirabeau. She was one whom legislators might consult with profit. She was one whose voice and pen, were feared, and because feared, unrelentingly persecuted by the absolute master of the mightiest empire that the world has witnessed since the days of Charlemagne."

The two following extracts from different authors, show how little the talents of Madam de Stael were the result of education. "In her childhood she was bandied about between opposite systems. Her mother was a pedantic disciplinarian, her father, the celebrated Neckar, was in the other extreme indulgent. Under the rule of the former, she was crammed with learning to the injury of her health; and when the authority of the latter prevailed, she was, for some



years suffered to be idle, feed her imagination, write pastorals, and plain romances. With an exuberant bouyancy of childish spirit, she was scarcely ever a child in intellect. One of the games of her childhood was to compose tragedies, and make puppets to act them. Before twelve, she conversed with the intelligence of a grown person, with such men as Grimm and Marmontel. At fifteen, she wrote remarks on the *Esprit des Lois*; at sixteen, she composed a long anonymous letter to her father on the subject of his *Compt. Rendu*; and Raynal had so high an opinion of her powers, that he wished her to write for his work, a paper on the Edict of Nantz." "Her lively spirit found much more satisfaction in the society of her father, than in that of her mother. His character, in fact, was much more like her own, and he better understood how to act on her mind. His affection for her was mingled with a father's pride, and she was enthusiastically fond of him, while her respect for him bordered on veneration. Neckar, however, never encouraged her to write, as he disliked female writers, and had forbidden his wife to occupy herself in that way, because the idea of disturbing her pursuits when he entered her chamber was disagreeable to him. To escape a similar prohibition, his daughter, who early began to write, accustomed herself to bear interruption without impatience, and to write standing, so that she might not appear to be disturbed in a serious occupation by his approach."



Madam De Stael's passion for writing would, therefore, appear to be innate, and the result of the mother's disposition and habits previous to her birth. If so, we may infer, that the want of this habit in the American mother, has given rise to the accusation, that the daughters of America exhibit little or no bias for literature. This is, perhaps, true, as far as their attempts have been directed to the useful and enduring. Yet, the pages of our light periodicals have brought forward, within a few years, a host of votaries for fame—students of nature in the closet, possessing brilliant imaginations and refined tastes. But how small a portion of this fair company have devoted their energies in a way to produce an abiding impression on the rising generation, or to suggest one train of thought, useful or improving? It may be answered, that the public taste requires of the caterers, this constant abuse of the mind and imagination, in constructing wonderful, absurd, and fanciful stories, which are too frequently as devoid of truth and nature, as of any sound principle of action. It should, however, be remembered, that this species of composition requires but little reflection or study, and is liable to produce in the reader a distaste for the more solid and substantial fruits of observation and experience.

Some European writer has said, that the papers of the Spectator had done more to improve the morals and manners of the English, than all the preaching of an hundred years had done previously. If this observation be correct, the inference is, that there is a



vast field of usefulness open to the essayist. And who is more fitted by nature for this office than woman? Her nice moral perception is eminently calculated to detect evil influences, and her sympathetic and benevolent nature to discover and apply the antidote. I would, therefore, suggest, for the further consideration of my countrywomen, the good effects that might result from essays written in the manner of the papers of the Spectator; the aim of which should be to inculcate pure principles of virtue and integrity—to enforce on the attention of parents, the necessity of a more thorough moral and physical training for youth—to warn the young and inexperienced of the dangers to their health, happiness, and peace of mind, by which they are constantly surrounded, and to cultivate in them a distaste for ostentation, display, and mere sensual pleasures.

It is therefore, highly probable, that if the women of this country would give up many of the vain and idle pursuits which now occupy so much time and attention, and devote that time to self-culture, particularly to writing on useful and improving subjects, the latter portion of the nineteenth century would be as prolific in men of genius in America, as the same part of the eighteenth century, was of this class in England. (*f*)



## CHAPTER VIII.

FROM the vast body of evidence not yet adduced, I will select a few more examples showing the degree in which mental strength accumulates when united in the parents and transmitted to them by preceding generations. Sir William Jones, the most profound scholar of his time, was a striking example in proof of transmitted talents; and so perfectly innate were those talents, that, at the age of fifteen, his teacher, Dr. Thackeray said, that "he was a boy of so active a mind, that if he were left naked and friendless on Salisbury Plain, he would, nevertheless, find the road to fame and riches."

The following warm-hearted tribute of affection and respect, from the pen of the bishop of Cologne, bears testimony to the early indications of superior qualities of both the head and heart of Sir William Jones. "I knew him" (he writes) "from the early age of eight or nine, and he was always an *uncommon boy*. Great abilities and great particularity of thinking, fondness for writing verses and plays of vari-



ous kinds, and a degree of integrity and manly courage, of which I remember many instances, distinguished him even at that period. I loved and revered him, and though one or two years older than he was, was always instructed by him from my earliest age. In a word, I can only say of this amiable and wonderful man, that he had more virtues and less faults than I ever yet saw in any human being; and that the goodness of his head, admirable as it was, was exceeded by that of his heart. I have never ceased to admire him from the moment I first saw him; and my esteem for his great qualities, and regret for his loss, will only end with my life."

"His father was the celebrated philosopher and mathematician, William Jones, who so eminently distinguished himself in the commencement of the last century. He was born in the year 1680, in Anglesey. His parents were yeoman, or little farmers, on that island, and he there received the best education which they were able to afford, but the industrious exertion of vigorous intellectual powers supplied the defects of inadequate instruction, and laid the foundation of his future fame and fortune. From his earliest years, Mr. Jones discovered a propensity to mathematical studies, and having cultivated them with assiduity, he began his career in life by teaching mathematics on board of a man of war, and in this situation he attracted the notice and obtained the friendship of Lord Anson. In his twenty-second year, Mr. Jones published a treatise on the art of navigation, which was received with great approba-



tion. He was present at the capture of Vigo in 1702, and having joined his comrades in quest of pillage, he eagerly fixed upon a bookseller's shop as the object of his depredation; but finding in it no literary treasures, which was the sole plunder that he coveted, he contented himself with a pair of scissors, which he frequently exhibited to his friends, as a trophy of his military success, relating the anecdote by which he gained it. He returned with the fleet to England and immediately afterward established himself as a teacher of mathematics in London, where, at the age of twenty-six, he published his *Synopsis Palmariorum Matheoses*, a decisive proof of his early and consummate proficiency in his favourite science."

"The private character of Mr. Jones was respectable, his manners were agreeable and inviting, and these qualities not only contributed to enlarge the circle of his friends, whom his established reputation for science had attracted, but also to secure their attachment to him."

"Amongst others who honoured him with their esteem, I am authorised to mention the great and virtuous Lord Hardwicke. Mr. Jones attended him as a companion on the circuit, when he was chief justice; and this nobleman, when he afterwards held the great seal, availed himself of the opportunity, to testify his regard for the merit and character of his friend, by conferring upon him the office of Secretary for the Peace. He was also introduced to the friendship of Lord Parker, (afterwards president of the Royal Society) which terminated only with his death;



and amongst other distinguished characters in the annals of science and literature, the names of Sir Isaac Newton, Halley, Mead, and Samuel Johnson, may be enumerated as the intimate friends of Mr. Jones. By Sir Isaac Newton, he was treated with particular regard and confidence, and prepared with his assent, the very elegant edition of small tracts, on the higher mathematics, in a mode which obtained the approbation, and increased the esteem of the author for him."

"After the retirement of Lord Macclesfield to Sherborne Castle, Mr. Jones resided with his lordship as a member of his family, and instructed him in the sciences. In this situation he had the misfortune to lose the greatest part of his property, the accumulation of industry and economy, by the failure of a banker; but the friendship of Lord Macclesfield diminished the weight of the loss, by procuring for him a sinecure place of considerable emolument. The same nobleman, who was then teller of the exchequer, made him an offer of a more lucrative situation; but he declined the acceptance of it, as it would have imposed on him the obligation of more official attendance than was agreeable to his temper, or compatible with his attachment to scientific pursuits."

"In this retreat he became acquainted with Miss Mary Nix, the youngest daughter of George Nix, a cabinet-maker in London, who, although of low extraction, had raised himself to eminence in his profession, and from the honest and pleasant frankness of his conversation was admitted to the tables of



the great, and to the intimacy of Lord Macclesfield. The acquaintance of Mr. Jones with Miss Nix terminated in marriage, and from this union sprang three children, the youngest of whom, the late Sir William Jones,\* was born in London, on the eve of the festival of St. Michael, in the year 1746; and a few days after his birth was baptized by the Christian name of his father. The first son George, died in his infancy, and the second child, a daughter, Mary, who was born in 1736, married Mr. Rainsford, a merchant, retired from business in opulent circumstances.

Mr. Jones survived the birth of his son William but three years. He was attacked with a disorder which the sagacity of Dr. Mead, who attended him with the anxiety of an affectionate friend, immediately discovered to be a polypus in the heart, and wholly incurable. This alarming secret was communicated to Mrs. Jones, who from an affectionate but mistaken motive, could never be induced to discover it to her husband, and on one occasion, displayed a remarkable instance of self-command and address in the concealment of it. A well-meaning friend who knew his dangerous situation, had written

---

\* This is another instance in proof that maturity of age in the parents, is favorable to the developement and activity of the higher mental and moral organs in the offspring. Mr. Jones was sixty-three years of age when his youngest son was born. It is, however, to be regretted, that there is no account of the age of his wife at that period; but that she was middle-aged, may be inferred from the fact that her second child was born ten years previous to her last, the illustrious Sir William Jones.



to him a long letter of condolence, replete with philosophic axioms on the brevity of life. Mrs. Jones who opened the letter, discovered the purport of it at a glance, and being desired by her husband to read it, composed in a moment, another letter so clearly and rapidly, that he had no suspicion of the deception, and this she did in a style so cheerful and entertaining, that it greatly exhilarated him. He died soon after, in July, 1749, leaving behind him a great reputation and moderate property.

The care of the education of William now devolved upon his mother, who in many respects, was eminently qualified for the task. Her character, as delineated by her husband with somewhat of mathematical precision, is this, "That she was virtuous without blemish—generous without extravagance—frugal, but not niggardly—cheerful, but not giddy—close, but not sullen—ingenious, but not conceited—of spirit, but not passionate—in her friendship trusty—to her parents dutiful—and to her husband, ever faithful, loving and obedient. She had, by nature, a strong understanding, which was improved by his conversation and instruction. Under his tuition she became a considerable proficient in algebra; and with a view to qualify herself for the office of preceptor to her sister's son, who was destined to a maritime profession, made herself perfect in trigonometry and the theory of navigation. Mrs. Jones, after the death of her husband, was urgently and repeatedly solicited by the Countess of Macclesfield, to remain at Sherborne Castle; but having formed a plan for the education of her son, with an unalterable determination



to pursue it, and being apprehensive that her residence at Sherborne might interfere with the execution of it, she declined accepting the friendly invitation of the Countess, who never ceased to retain the most affectionate regard for her.

“In the plan adopted by Mrs. Jones for the instruction of her son, she proposed to reject the severity of discipline, and to lead his mind insensibly to knowledge and exertion by exciting his curiosity, and directing it to useful objects. To his incessant importunities for information on casual topics of conversation, which she watchfully stimulated, she constantly replied, *read and you will know*—a maxim to the observance of which he always acknowledged himself indebted for his future attainments. By this method, his desire to learn, became as eager as her wish to teach; and such was her talent for instruction, and his facility in retaining it, that in his fourth year he was able to read distinctly and rapidly, any English book. She particularly attended, at the same time, to the cultivation of his memory, by making him learn and repeat some of the popular speeches of Shakspeare, and the best of Gay’s fables. His faculties gained strength by exercise, and during his school vacations, the sedulity of a fond parent was without intermission exerted to improve his knowledge of his own language. She also taught him the rudiments of drawing, in which she excelled.”

“If, from the subsequent eminence of Sir William Jones,” observes the biographer, “any general con-



clusion should be eagerly drawn in favour of early tuition, we must not forget to advert to the *uncommon talents, both of the pupil and the teacher.*"

The following extract not only corroborates the truth of the transmission of mental and moral qualities, but with the preceding, bears testimony to the power and influence which a strong minded mother has in forming the character of her son.

"The mother of Mr. Guizot was left a widow with two sons, the elder of whom had only begun his seventh year, when her husband was led to the block. She showed herself worthy of the excellent and honourable man who had been separated from her, and of the examples of *goodness and greatness she found written in the history of her own family*—for she then commenced the austere practice of those severe and painful duties, which her friends saw her so religiously accomplish, amidst all the trials and dangers by which her path was beset during her passage through this life. Notwithstanding the public interest which was felt for her at Nismes and the neighbourhood, and the public anxiety for the fate of her sons, she tore herself away from all these mitigations of her sorrows, and proceeded to Geneva, because she felt that the education of her sons, required this sacrifice at her hands."

"From his first entrance into these schools, the young Francis took an honourable and even distinguished rank, and the most brilliant success crowned his assiduity and perseverance. It would be puerile



when writing the memoirs of such a man as Guizot, to render an account of all the academic honours conferred upon him as the reward for diligence and progress: but when he left the classes in 1815, success had been so marked and transcendant, that his professors did not hesitate to predict for him a brilliant career."

"Having accomplished the object she proposed by her residence at Geneva, Madame Guizot returned with her sons to Languedoc, there to fulfil, on her part, those filial duties to her then aged parents, which she knew so well how to perform. Her son left the maternal home soon afterwards, and proceeded to Paris to study the principles of law and justice. On quitting his beloved parent he took with him, however, her stern and inflexible love of truth and virtue—and had no other object in residing at Paris but to prepare for the future and important duties of an active life."

## CHAPTER IX.

THERE is not, perhaps, a more forcible illustration of the truth of the transmission of qualities, to be found in history, than that presented by the Wesley family. The same deep devotional feeling, the same active, energetic intellect, and the same readiness to sacrifice worldly interest for conscience-sake, may be traced back through four generations.

The conspicuous place given to the mother of the founder of the Methodists, in the biography of her son, is worthy of observation ; so, also, is the important part which she acted in her family, and the care which she bestowed on the moral training of her three highly talented sons. In many biographies, the mother of the great man is not even mentioned—in those of Charles Fox and Edward Burke, for instance. In the latter, however, it is observed as a remarkable coincidence, that Pitt, Fox and Burke, were all younger sons. “Coincidences,” it might also be said, “are mere finger-posts, pointing to where things lie of which we remain ignorant.” And



when as much attention has been devoted to mental as to physical science, coincidences will become more rare, and the laws will be recognized, by which similar results are produced. It may, however, require yet, ages of observation and experience to confirm this simple truth; that the children born in the full maturity of the physical and mental constitution of the parents, are superior in every respect to those who preceded that condition.

“The founder of the Methodists,” says Mr. Southey, “was emphatically of a good family, in the same sense wherein he himself would have used the term. Bartholomew Wesley, his great grandfather, studied physic, as well as divinity, at the university, a practice not unusual at that time: he was ejected, by the act of uniformity, from the living of Allington, in Dorsetshire; and the medical knowledge, which he had acquired from motives of charity, became then the means of his support. John, his son, was educated at New Inn Hall, Oxford, in the time of the Commonwealth; he was distinguished not only for his piety and diligence, but for his progress in the oriental tongues, by which he attracted the particular notice and esteem of the then vice-chancellor, John Owen, a man whom the Calvinistic dissenters still regarded as the greatest of their divines. If the government had continued in the Cromwell family, this patronage would have raised him to distinction. He obtained the living of Blandford, in his own county, and was ejected from it for non-conformity; being thus adrift, he thought of emi-



grating to Maryland, or to Surinam, where the English were then intending to settle a colony; but reflection and advice determined him to take his lot in his native land. There, by continuing to preach, he became obnoxious to the laws, and was four times imprisoned: his spirits were broken by the loss of those he loved best, and by the evil days; he died at the early age of three or four and thirty; and, such was the spirit of the times, that the Vicar of Preston, in which village he died, would not allow his body to be buried in the church. Bartholomew was then living, but the loss of this, his only son, soon brought his gray hairs, with sorrow, to the grave.

“This John Wesley married a woman of good stock, the niece of Thomas Fuller, the church historian, a man not more remarkable for wit and quaintness, than for the felicity with which he clothed fine thoughts in beautiful language. He left two sons, of whom Samuel, the younger, was only eight or nine years old at the time of his father's death. The circumstances of the father's life and sufferings, which have given him a place among the confessors of the non-conformists, were likely to influence the opinions of the son; but happening to fall in with bigoted and ferocious men, he saw the worst parts of the dissenting character. Their defence of the execution of King Charles, offended him; he separated from them; and, because of their intolerance, joined the church which had persecuted his father. This conduct, which was the result of feeling, was approved by his ripe judgment, and Samuel Wesley



continued through life a zealous churchman. The feeling which urged him to this step must have been very powerful, and no common spirit was required to bear him through the difficulties which he brought upon himself; for, by withdrawing from the academy at which he had been placed, he so far offended his friends, that they lent him no further support; and in the latter years of Charles II., there was little disposition to encourage proselytes who joined a church which the reigning family were endeavoring to subvert. But Samuel Wesley was made of good mould; he knew, and could depend upon himself; he walked to Oxford, entered himself at Exeter college as a poor scholar, and began his studies there with no larger a fund than two pounds sixteen shillings, and no prospect of any future supply. From that time, till he graduated, a single crown was all the assistance he received from his friends. He composed exercises for those who had more money than learning; and he gave instruction to those who wished to profit by his lessons; and thus by great industry, and great frugality, he not only supported himself, but had accumulated the sum of ten pounds fifteen shillings, when he went to London to be ordained. Having served a curacy there one year, and as chaplain during another on board a king's ship, he settled upon a curacy in the metropolis, and married Susannah, daughter of Dr. Annesley, one of the ejected ministers.

“No man was ever more suitably mated than the Elder Wesley. The wife whom he chose, was, like



himself, the child of a man eminent among the non-conformists; and, like himself, in early youth, she had chosen her own path; she had examined the controversy between the Dissenters and the Church of England, with conscientious diligence, and satisfied herself that the schismatics were in the wrong. The dispute, it must be remembered, related wholly to discipline; but her inquiries had not stopped there, and she had reasoned herself into Socinianism from which she was reclaimed by her husband. She was an admirable woman, of highly improved mind, and of a strong and masculine understanding, an obedient wife, an exemplary mother, and a fervent christian."

A further account of this high-minded, excellent woman, and her equally talented and pious husband, may be found in Southey's life of her son, the first of the Methodists.

Dr. Doddridge was another remarkable instance of the direct descent of superior moral and intellectual qualities. His family, on the paternal side, through successive generations, produced lawyers, judges, and divines, of eminent talent and true piety. His mother was the daughter of the Rev. John Bourman, a native of Prague, in Bohemia, who, in consequence of religious persecution, was placed in a situation where there was no alternative but to adjure the Protestant faith, or to secure religious freedom by emigration. "This latter painful expedient he had the virtue and resolution to embrace; although it imposed the loss of his early associations, separa-



ted him from the friends of his youth, and deprived him of a considerable estate, when he was beginning to enjoy it, being then just of age." "After having spent a considerable time in Gotha, in Saxony, and in the neighboring states, he came to England about the year 1646, with ample testimonials from many of the principal German divines; and, in consequence of these recommendations, was so fortunate as to be appointed to the mastership of a grammar school, at Kensington, upon Thames; a situation affording that opportunity for useful retirement that was congenial to his feelings; and where he died about the year 1668, leaving an only daughter, then of very tender age."

"This orphan was married to Daniel Doddridge, before alluded to, and bore him *twenty* children.—Such, however, was the fatality which reigned in this large family, that at the birth of the *twentieth*, there was only one other child, a daughter, surviving. This last child, who became Dr. Doddridge, was, from the circumstances of his birth—his mother having been in the utmost peril for a period of thirty-six hours—so destitute of every appearance of vitality, that the attendants felt convinced that it was actually dead, and put it aside, accordingly; one of them, however, soon afterwards, chancing to cast a glance upon the infant, fancied that she perceived a feeble heaving of the chest; and moved with pity, took upon herself the apparently futile task of its resuscitation. The pious care was providentially rewarded; for, while she continued to cherish it, a faint



moaning became audible, evincing that the babe was indeed alive; and thus, apparently by an accident, was that voice called into action, on whose eloquent accents thousands afterwards hung with hushed delight, while their hearts grew warm with the holy love of God!"

"This child was called Philip, after his uncle; and, as the last hope of his parents, who had probably mourned the loss of many sons, was tended with the most indulgent care. Nor were they deficient in more important duties, as Dr. Doddridge observes in a letter to Mr. Wilbraham, when alluding to the period of his infancy: "I was brought up in the early knowledge of religion by my pious parents, who were, in their character, very worthy of their *birth* and education; I well remember that my mother taught me the history of the Old and New Testament before I could read, by the assistance of some blue Dutch tiles in the chimney-place of the room where we commonly sat; and the *wise* and *pious* reflections she made upon these stories, were the means of enforcing such good impressions on my heart, as never afterwards wore out."\*

Amongst the numerous examples which might be brought forward to illustrate the theory of transmission and inheritance, particularly through the maternal line, are the lives of Bishop Hall, Rev.

---

\* Dr. Doddridge lost both his parents at the early age of thirteen years; it may, therefore, be inferred that his mental organization was particularly constituted to receive and to retain good impressions.



John Newton, Herbert, Hooker, and Philip Henry. Nor should we forget the examples contained in the bible; especially those of Samuel and Timothy; the latter of whom, "from a child had known the Holy Scriptures," inheriting "that unfeigned faith which had dwelt first in his grandmother Lois, and in his mother Eunice."

## CHAPTER X.

---

GENIUS, when manifested in the poorer class, is regarded with wonder, and too generally supposed to be like the Nazarite locks of Sampson, an especial gift of heaven, bestowed upon the individual; and not the result of a happy organization, the effect of kindly influences exercised at the commencement, and during the infancy of the possessor. Could the circumstances attendant on these advents be truly ascertained, the miracle would be explained, and the parent might hope that, by surrounding his offspring with similar causes, to bestow upon them the power of exhibiting similar effects. Thus, the case of the poet Burns—whose mental efforts have been regarded with wonder and delight by the Saxon world, generally—and whose powers, considering his origin, have been thought most wonderful—is liable to the following explanation :

“The mother of Burns was a native of the county of Ayr; her birth was humble, and her personal attractions moderate; yet, in all other respects, she was a remarkable woman. She was blessed with



singular equanimity of temper ; her religious feelings were deep and constant ; she loved a well regulated household ; and it was frequently her pleasure to give wings to the weary hours of a chequered life by chanting old songs and ballads, of which she had a large store. In her looks she resembled her eldest son ; her eyes were bright and intelligent ; her perception of character, quick and keen. She lived to a great age, rejoiced in the fame of the poet, and partook of the fruits of his genius."

The following extracts show the excellent character of the father of Burns, and the care which he bestowed on the education and moral culture of his children. "Amid all these toils and trials, William Burns remembered the worth of religious instruction, and the usefulness of education in the rearing of his children. The former task he took upon himself, and, in a little manual of devotion still extant, sought to soften the rigor of the Calvinistic creed into the gentler Arminian. He set, too, the example which he taught. He abstained from all profane swearing and vain discourse, and shunned all approach to levity of conversation or behaviour. A week-day, in his house, wore the sobriety of a Sunday ; nor did he fail in performing family worship in a way which enabled his son to give to the world that fine picture of devotion, the 'Cotter's Saturday Night.'"

"The education of Burns was not over when the school-doors were shut. The peasantry of Scotland turn their cottages into schools ; and when a father takes his arm-chair by the evening fire, he seldom



neglects to communicate to his children whatever knowledge he possesses himself. Nor is this knowledge very limited; it extends, generally, to the history of Europe, and to the literature of the island; but more particularly to the divinity, the poetry, and, what may be called, the traditionary history of Scotland. An intelligent peasant is intimate with all those skirmishes, sieges, combats and quarrels, domestic or national, of which public writers take no account. Genealogies of the chief families are quite familiar to him. He has by heart, too, whole columns of songs and ballads; nay, long poems sometimes abide in his recollection; nor will he think his knowledge much, unless he knows a little about the lives and actions of the men who have done most honor to Scotland. In addition to what he has on his memory, we may mention what he has on the shelf. A common husbandman is frequently master of a little library; history, divinity and poetry; but most so, the latter compose his collection. Milton and Young are favorites; the flowery meditations of Hervey, the religious romance of the Pilgrim's Progress, are seldom absent; while of Scottish books, Ramsay, Thompson, Ferguson, and now Burns; together with songs and ballad-books innumerable, are all huddled together, soiled with smoke, and frail and tattered by frequent use. The household of William Burns was an example of what I have described; and there is some truth in the assertion, that, in true knowledge, the poet was, at nineteen, a



better scholar than nine-tenths of our young gentlemen when they leave school for the college."

The great number of literary and scientific men which Scotland has produced, when compared with her sister kingdoms, is, to many reflecting minds, matter of surprise and wonder. The preceding account of the general literary taste and acquirements of the people, together with the following opinion of one of the most original thinkers of the age, may furnish an explanation; and at the same time support the theory of transmission and inheritance contended for in these pages.

"A country where the entire population is, or even once has been, laid hold of, filled to the heart with an infinite religious idea, has made a step from which it cannot retrograde. Thought, conscience—the sense that man is denizen of a universe, creature of an eternity, has penetrated the remotest cottage, to the simplest heart. Beautiful and awful, the feeling of a heavenly behest, of duty God-commanded overcanopies all life. There is an inspiration in such a people; one may say in a more special sense, "the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." Honor to all the brave and true; everlasting honor to the brave old Knox, one of the truest of the true! That in the moment while he and his cause, amid civil broils, in convulsion and confusion, were still but struggling for life, he sent the schoolmaster forth to all corners, and said, "Let the people be taught: this is but one, and, indeed, an inevitable,



and, comparatively, inconsiderable item in his great message to men. His message, in its true compass, was, Let men know that they are men; created by God, responsible to God; who work in any meanest moment of time what will last through eternity. It is, verily, a great message. Not ploughing and hammering machines, not patent digesters, (never so ornamental,) to digest the produce of these; no, in no wise; born slaves neither to their fellow-men, nor of their appetites; but men! This great message Knox did deliver with a man's voice and strength; and he found a people to believe him. Of such an achievement we say, were it to be made once only, the results are immense. Thought, in such a country, may change its form, but it cannot go out; the country has attained *majority*; thought, and a certain spiritual manhood, ready for all work that man can do, endures there. It may take many forms: the form of hard-fisted, money-getting industry, as in the vulgar Scotchman, the vulgar New Englander; but, as compact, developed force, and alertness of faculty, it is still there: it may utter itself as the colossal scepticism of a Hume, (beneficent, this, too, though painful, wrestling Titan-like, through doubt and inquiry, towards new belief;) and again, in some better day, it may utter itself in the inspired melody of a Burns; in a word, it is, and continues in the voice and the work of a nation of hardy, endeavoring, considering men, with whatever that may bear in it, or unfold from it. The Scotch national character originates in many circumstances; first of all, is the Saxon stuff there



was to work on ; but next, and beyond all else except that, in the Presbyterian Gospel of John Knox."

The following extract from Washington Irving's *Life of Margaret Davidson*, shows the direct descent of peculiar characteristics from mother to child.

"The narrative will be found almost as illustrative of the character of the mother as of the child ; they were singularly identified in tastes, in feelings, and pursuits ; tenderly entwined together by maternal and filial affection, they reflected an inexpressibly touching grace and interest upon each other by this holy relationship, and, to my mind, it would be mar-  
ring one of the most beautiful and affecting groups in the history of modern literature, to sunder them.

"This maternal instruction, while it kept her apart from the world, and fostered a singular purity and innocence of thought, contributed greatly to enhance her imaginative powers, for the mother partook largely of the poetical temperament of the child ; it was, in fact, one poetical spirit ministering to another."

Again, in Alexander Young's discourse on the life and character of Dr. Bowditch, he relates having visited the town where the Doctor was born, and the testimony he there received in favor of the excellent character of his mother. "This testimony, in substance, is, that he was a likely, clever, thoughtful boy ; learning came natural to him ; he did not seem like other children, but much better ; and that his mother was a beautiful, cheerful, good-natured woman. Her children took after her, and she had a peculiar way of guarding them against evil."



"These," continues Mr. Young, "I testify to be their very words, as I pencilled them down at the time. And they show, I think, very clearly, the influence of the mother's mind and heart upon the character of her son. Of that mother, in after-life and to its close, he often spoke in terms of the highest admiration and the strongest affection, and in his earnest manner would say—my mother loved me—idolized me—worshipped me."

The closest students of natural philosophy admit, that, notwithstanding the splendid discoveries already made in the natural sciences, there are unsolved problems enough in nature, to task the ingenuity and industry of all future ages. It is not, however, sufficient that the inquirer into the hidden mysteries of nature, rests satisfied when he has discovered that a certain effect is produced by a certain cause. Should he not investigate further, and endeavor to ascertain what produced the cause also? For example, a child is found to be short-sighted—he looks into its organ of vision, and there perceives a dilated *pupil*, occasioned by a want of contractibility in the *iris*, or an unusual convexity of the *cornea*, or a great depth of the *aqueous* humor, either of which causes short-sightedness. But what caused these defects in the eye, whether congenital, or produced by habit, he has not yet been able to discover.

From the greater number of short-sighted persons found in cities, than in the country, and from this defect being more common among students, than those of active habits, it might be inferred that it



was acquired by sedentary and studious pursuits, and by not sufficiently exercising and strengthening the organs of sight in youth. Short-sightedness is, however, frequently congenital, and inherited; but when it appears in a family for the first time, should not the cause be looked for in the habits of the mother? May not her sedentary pursuits, and close attention to minute and near objects, such as fine needle-work, embroidery, &c. have caused this defect in the organ of vision of her unborn child?

Two early friends of the authoress, of very dissimilar characters, married about the same time, and their children have partaken strongly of the peculiarities of their mothers. One of whom was of a dull, sluggish nature, and as much averse to mental as to personal activity. Her conscience appeared quite at ease if her fingers were employed, even in the most trifling occupation, and the less mental effort her work required, the more pleasing it was to her.—Whilst thus employed, she frequently beguiled the time by carolling sentimental songs and ballads. The phrenological developements of her eldest daughter, correspond perfectly with the habits and pursuits of the mother during her pregnancy. Tune large—domestic sentiments, and animal propensities large—reflective organs moderate—perceptive ones small—quite deficient in the organ of weight, and very near-sighted. That the two last defects were caused by the personal inactivity of the mother, and by her sight being constantly confined to small and near objects,



appears the more probable as her last children's organs of weight and vision were perfect, she having removed to the country and been obliged to perform the active duties of her family.

The other youthful mother was blessed with a most happy, joyous temper, and possessed of mental and personal activity in a high degree—passionately fond of dancing, walking, riding on horseback, and all other exercises requiring action, skill, and grace. She was a perfect economist of her time, allowing no portions of it to be wasted; her household was regulated with order, neatness, and taste. By her habit of early rising, she was enabled to arrange all her domestic matters before breakfast; after which, she usually occupied herself with plain needle-work, while her husband read aloud the morning papers. She would then accompany him in a walk of three miles to his office; and on her return, devote the remainder of the morning to pursuits congenial to a highly cultivated literary taste; and thus, on her husband's return to dinner, she had something new, interesting, and amusing, to read or relate to him. A portion of the afternoon was generally devoted to exercise in the open air, or, the weather not permitting, to a game of battle-door, or the graces at home; or to chess, reading, and needlework. Born under such pleasant influences, the children were sprightly, active, and graceful,—perfect emanations of joy; their perceptions quick—their sensibilities acute—their understanding vigorous; no lesson a



task, no duty a burden. 'Their father was a man of sense and feeling, who perfectly understood the influence of the mother's mind, during the period of pregnancy, on the temper and disposition of her child; therefore, never allowed her feelings to be disturbed, irritated, or annoyed. Hence, the sweetness, docility, and tractability of their children; and hence their dissimilarity to those first mentioned; whose parents allowed no such influence, nor would give themselves any trouble or thought about the matter; and their children were perfect clods of dulness, ill-temper, and stupidity.

Another remarkable instance of the effect of the habits and pursuits of the mother on her offspring, came under the immediate observation of the writer.

Mrs. A—, was a melancholy instance of strength of mind perverted to selfish ends. Ambitious of power and influence, she was unscrupulous in the means by which they were obtained. Owing to her plausibility and pertinacity, she once was elected to an office of trust in a benevolent society, of which she was a member. This was a situation of great temptation to one in whose head the selfish sentiments predominated, as the event proved. For, at the expiration of the year, she was dismissed under the imputation of having appropriated a portion of the funds of the society to her own use.—During the year in which she held this office, Mrs. A—, gave birth to a daughter, whose first manifestations were acquisitiveness and secretiveness in

excess, or a propensity to theft. That the great development and activity of those organs in the head of the child, were the effect of the dishonest practices of the mother, previous to her birth, there can be but little doubt. Such facts require no comment. The inference to be deduced from them is so palpable, that 'those who run may read.'



CHAPTER XI.

---

INSANITY, the most dreadful of all the diseases to which mankind is subject, has been a cause of interminable discussion. Innumerable also, have been the theories formed to account for it. That of Dr. Rush, which placed it in the blood, was, perhaps, nearer the truth than any other, formed without the aid of phrenology. When, however, we reflect upon the light which phrenology throws on this subject, it is no longer a matter of astonishment, that without its aid, no definite conclusion ever was arrived at respecting the source of this dire disease.

Dr. Rush discovered that copious bleeding relieved the paroxysms of the insane, and on dissecting those subjects he always found indications of a high state of inflammation in the brain; from which he inferred that the disease had its source in the blood.

The phrenologists on the contrary, show that insanity is caused by the over exercise of some of the passions or sentiments of the mind; and that this undue action causes a determination of blood to some

of its organs, leaving others in a state of complete apathy. This information, however, would be of little importance, did it not accompany a system of prevention and cure which generally proves successful. Experience shows, that by exciting other organs, and thereby withdrawing the excess of blood from those which are overcharged, the balance is restored, the mind recovers its tone, and resumes a healthful action. Thus, for instance, when acquisitiveness, cautiousness, combativeness, or destructiveness, the organs most frequently disordered, are manifested in excess, and derangement ensues, it becomes the duty of the friends of the sufferer, to excite as early as possible, the observing and reasoning faculties, by the stimulus of change of air and scene—of society and employment—of diet and habits. Recourse should also be had to the shower bath, and whatever else might add to the comfort and well being of the sufferer. These are the remedies substituted by the phrenologist, for the cruel practices of the lonesome cell, the iron chain, the straight jacket, and the discipline of the prison.

The following statistical observations, show the effect which different employments and conditions in life, have in producing lunatics and idiots.

In 1829, Sir A. Halliday made a report of lunatics and idiots in England and Wales. The lunatics were 6800, and the idiots 5741, to which he adds for places not returned 1,500, making in all 14,000. The paupers of them are estimated at 11,000.



In twelve counties in England, where the population is employed in agriculture, the proportion of the insane are, to the general population, as 1 in 820, and the idiots are 1 to 490; while in twelve counties, where the population is employed in trade and manufacturing, the insane are only as 1 to 1,200.\*

---

\* "Fatuity, from old age, cannot be cured, but it may be prevented, by employing the mind in reading and conversation, in the evening of life. Dr. Johnson ascribes the fatuity of Dean Swift to two causes:—1st, to a resolution made in his youth, that he would never wear spectacles, from the want of which he was unable to read, in the decline of life; and—2d, to his avarice, which led him to abscond from visitors, or deny himself to company, by which means he deprived himself of the only two methods by which new ideas are acquired, or old ones renovated. His mind, from these causes, languished from the want of exercise, and gradually collapsed into idiotism, in which state, he spent the close of his life, in a hospital, founded by himself, for persons afflicted with the same disorder, of which he finally died."

"Country people, who have no relish for books, when they lose the ability of working, or of going abroad, from age or weakness, are very apt to become fatuitous, especially as they are too often deserted in their old age by the younger branches of their families, in consequence of which, their minds become torpid, from the want of society and conversation. Fatuity is more rare in cities than in country places, only because society and conversation can be had in them upon more easy terms; and it is less common in women than men, because they seldom survive their ability to work, and because their employments are of such a nature as to admit of their being carried on at the fire side, and in a sedentary posture. The illustrious Dr. Franklin, exhibited a striking instance of the influence of reading, writing and conversation, in prolonging a sound and active state of all the faculties of the mind. In his eighty-fourth year, he discovered no one mark of the weakness and decay usually observed in the minds of persons at that advanced period of life."



In seven counties in North Wales there is 1 idiot to 120, and 1 lunatic to 850 inhabitants; these are agricultural counties. And, says an English writer, "There is a general impression that, in agricultural districts, where the people work hard, and where females are employed in labour, the violent exertion required in this occupation produces distortion of the body, and may very materially affect the growth and development of the brain, and even the form of the cranium *in utero*. It is well known that females are obliged to work during the whole of their pregnancy, and there can be no doubt of the injury which such occupation must have on the offspring."

This opinion is very correct, but it leaves much that is important to the subject unsaid. Of the 14,000 idiots and lunatics in England and Wales; 11,000 are of the pauper class. In England, the paupers receive very little education, and in Wales, it is believed, still less; this may account for the increased number of idiots in the latter country. The agricultural peasantry, male and female, of those countries, are not called upon for any more mental effort than their fellow labourer, the ox or the ass." "If," says Mr. Coombe, "we exercise our muscles too severely, or too long, we drain off the whole nervous energy of our bodies by our arms and legs, and the brain then becomes incapable of thinking, and the nerves incapable of feeling, so that dulness and stupidity seize on our mental powers." From this dulness and stupidity in the parents, proceed the undeveloped brain of the idiot child, or the unequally balanced one of the lunatic.



The easy labour and speedy delivery of women of the lower classes and of the Indian race, have occasioned much discussion among physiologists. The true cause, I apprehend, will be found in the want of size and development in the heads of their children.

In the statistical tables of Europe, lately published in Paris, it is shown that there are three male children still-born to two females. This result certainly cannot be the effect of chance, but must have some physical cause; and this cause doubtless is the superior size of the heads of male children. For it is well known that the human head, male and female, vary as materially in form and size at birth, as at maturity; and also, that difficult and protracted labour, when the presentation is natural, and there is no distortion of the pelvis,\* is caused by the large and firm skull of the foetus.

---

\* Distortions of the spinal-column, and the bones of the pelvis, are more common among females of the middling and higher classes, than is generally suspected. This dangerous condition of the system is frequently caused by tight lacing in early youth, when the bones are soft and yielding; the viscera of the abdominal region being pressed down on those unconsolidated bones, they give way under the unnatural weight, and distortion is the result. The writer is acquainted with a family of four sisters, born of healthy parents, of course inheriting good constitutions. The eldest was adopted, when quite young, by a rich relation, and educated at a fashionable boarding-school, where little attention was paid to the laws of health. Want of fresh air and exercise, the excitement of going too early into society, late hours, and tight lacing, soon undermined her constitution, and produced a lateral curvature of the spine. She, nevertheless, married



There is an editorial note, in Croker's edition of Boswell's Johnson, which, with the aid of phrenology, sheds much light on this subject. It is stated in the text, that the mother of Johnson, had, at his birth, a very difficult and dangerous labour, and that he was born almost dead. To which Croker adds, that Addison, Lord Lyttleton, Voltaire, and many other eminent men, were born almost dead. That this peculiarity should have attended the birth of so many gifted individuals, cannot be considered accidental; but rather an evidence of a more powerful organization, resulting from an unusual development of the brain, the organ of the mind.

The truth of the preceding views has been corroborated by much testimony, and was forcibly presented to my attention by the circumstances attending the birth of two children which came under my immediate observation. The mother of one of them was about eighteen years of age, of a phlegmatic temperament, indolent habits, and educated for display. She was occupied during the whole period of her pregnancy, in paying and receiving visits of ceremony, in practising music, embroidery, and other fashionable accomplishments, and in endeavouring to attain the reputation of a superior taste in dress;

---

young, and has had numerous offspring. But each parturition was attended with excruciating suffering and imminent peril; nor has she ever given birth to a living child. The three other sisters, whose education and habits were more in accordance with nature, have each a large family of healthy children, born without difficulty or danger.



her reading was limited and confined to works of imagination. She had neither inclination nor comprehension for any thing more profound than is to be met with in the pages of the New-York Mirror, or the Parlour Visitor. Her child was born at the full time, but so brief and easy was the labour, that neither physician nor nurse was present. It was plump and fat enough, but with a head diminutive in size and soft in quality.

Years have not altered those conditions; the child in intellect is below mediocrity, and the man will be the same. In the other instance, the mother was past forty years of age, of an energetic temperament, active habits and self-educated. For some months previous to the birth of her fifth child, she had become a convert to the belief in the transmission of mental and moral qualities. To test the truth of this belief, she exercised her own mental powers to their full extent. She attended the lectures of the season, both literary and scientific; read much, but such works only as tend to exercise and strengthen the reasoning faculties, and improve the judgment. The domestic and foreign reviews, history, biography, &c. She was also engaged in the active duties of a large family, in which she found full scope for the exercise of the moral sentiments, but never allowed any thing to disturb the equanimity of her temper. When her time came, she was in labour two days; all her suffering, however, was forgotten at the birth of a son, with a head of the finest form, firmest quality and largest size—with the reflecting organs



of a Bacon, and the moral ones of a Melancthon.— A head, in short, on which nature had written in characters too legible to be misunderstood, strength, power, and capability, and of whom it is already said, “He is the youngest of his family, but will soon become its head.”

But it may be said, the number of women is small, who would be willing to encounter the extra pains and perils of child birth induced by the training of the last example. To such we can only say, that when they discover the minds of their children to be “unstable as water,” with scarcely understanding enough to distinguish good from evil, and not firmness of character sufficient to pursue any steady course through life, in the anxiety and unhappiness which such conduct occasions, they must reap the punishment of their own want of moral and physical courage at the time when the exercise of those qualities would have transmitted them to their offspring. It is, however, my firm conviction, that if women would study the structure of their own bodies, and the functions of its different organs, and acquire some knowledge of the principles of obstetrics, they might escape a great portion of the present dangers and sufferings of child birth: but in the present system of female education, that branch of knowledge which would enable them to raise a family of healthy children with success, appears to be most neglected. A friend of the authoress of good understanding, active temperament, and sound constitution, married in middle life, and has had two fine boys; but from her utter ignorance of the organic



laws, lost them both. The birth of the first was attended by protracted and dangerous labour, the child was still-born, but was resuscitated, and was a remarkably healthy and promising infant. His sudden death at the age of thirteen months was attended by very distressing circumstances, under which the mother was sustained by the prospect of the birth of another child in seven or eight months. Meantime, the mental anguish occasioned by the death of the first child could only be alleviated by constant occupation of the mind. She, therefore, undertook an extensive course of historical reading, varied by the study of mental and moral philosophy, to which was added the physiological and moral training of youth. The subject, however, of the most importance at that time,—a knowledge of the proper habits and course of life necessary to ensure a speedy and safe delivery, was forgotten. The sedentary habits induced by study, protracted her time beyond the natural period, and her constant mental exercise developed the brain of the child to an unusual degree; hence, the second labour was more difficult and dangerous than the first. The attendant physician believed, that “nature in a healthy subject was always able to do her own work,” therefore, rendered her no assistance except copious bleeding.—Nature did, indeed, do her own work, but she was so long about it, that a beautiful male child, weighing twelve pounds, was killed in the process. The unfortunate mother was then congratulated on her escape with life, and was advised, if she valued life,



to pray that she might never have any more children, for it was impossible for children with heads as large and as firm as her's, to be born alive. To which she answered, "that life to her had no charms without children, and that she was willing to undergo the same three days suffering, and as much more as it was possible to survive, or even the Cæsarian operation, for the sake of a living child." She immediately procured some books on midwifery, from which she learned, that if she had, for six or eight weeks previously to the expiration of her time, taken much gentle exercise in the open air, lived very abstemiously and strengthened her system by cold baths, nature would have been in a proper condition to have done her own work; or if she required some assistance from her handmaid, art, (which it was possible she might, as this child could not have been called a child of nature, in the same degree as that of the uneducated peasant, or the untutored savage) it was more than probable that a vapor bath might have relaxed the muscles, prevented the cramps and chills, and facilitated the labour to a successful issue, and she might have rejoiced in the birth of a living child.

It may have been observed, that the late dreadful fatality in childbed was confined to the higher classes of society, from which it must be inferred, that it arose from indolent habits and luxurious living.—These tend to produce an over-fulness of the vascular system; to which add fear and anxiety for the result, and no condition can be imagined more fatal at the period of parturition.



The following remarks of Dr. Ryan, should serve to allay all apprehension on this subject :

“ Young, healthful, and well-formed women, who are pregnant for the first time, should entertain no fears, as it very rarely happens at present, that a woman dies in labour, and never afterwards, without imprudence on her part, or on that of the male or female attendant. Besides, there is now no case of labour which can possibly happen, but may be managed and the woman’s life be preserved. It is really lamentable to listen to the expression of fears and apprehensions of young pregnant women, which are generally excited in their minds by ignorant midwives, domestics, and the credulous ; and, indeed, I may add, very generally by mothers and acquaintances. But we cannot be surprised when there is no work in our language for the instruction of the other sex, as regards parturition, pregnancy, confinement after delivery, and the management of new born infants.” “ Fortunately for humanity,” continues Dr. Ryan, “ the medical practitioner can now abridge labour, and save an immensity of suffering, without any operation, but merely by the exhibition of medicine.”

The observations of the same author, respecting the treatment necessary after parturition, are very important :—

“ Most women are extremely sensitive after delivery, and hence they should be kept perfectly quiet, all noise and strong mental emotions, or improper

aliment, either solids or fluids being highly injurious; so great is the nervousness after delivery, that any cause of alarm may induce convulsions or mania, and any kind of improper food or drink, or exposure to cold, excite dangerous fevers or inflammations.—It is an axiom with medical practitioners, that more women die after delivery than during pregnancy and parturition.”



## CHAPTER XII.

---

MUCH has been written by the wise and the good on the influence and responsibility of mothers ; but without producing any permanent effects, if we are to judge from the present standard of morality among the youth of our country. Virtue, however, cannot be learned by listening to precepts, it requires a field of action and constant practice. Many of the works alluded to are written in such general terms, that few individuals can apply the principles which they inculcate to their own particular circumstances. An example, therefore, may carry to the mind of the mother a just conviction of the duty which she owes to society and to her country, to train her children in the paths of virtue, knowledge, and usefulness.

The writer is perfectly aware, that much legislation respecting the rights of property of married women is required, before the mother can be held entirely responsible for the improvement of her offspring. Under the present laws, a married woman is not a morally responsible agent, neither has she



any control over her own property, but is subject to the will and power of her husband; and is too frequently kept in a state of dependence and penury sufficient to repress all her energies, and to render her a nonentity in her own estimation, as well as that of her family. Let her entertain the most liberal and enlightened views with regard to the improvement of her children, and the society in her neighborhood, she has neither the power nor the means of carrying them into effect; but under the iron rule of her husband, and his all grasping spirit of acquisitiveness, is obliged to shrink down into the very depths of nothingness, or live in a constant state of contention and strife.

The subject of the rights of women has been much discussed of late, but without any beneficial effects, because the advocates felt no real interest in the subject; and because they overlook the laws of nature which has assigned to woman her appropriate sphere in the domestic circle, and claimed for her political privileges totally discordant to her nature, her habits, or her inclinations. Whereas, if her rights of property were established upon the true principles of equity and justice—if the property which she inherited could not be taken from her except for debts of her own contracting—if the laws protected that which she accumulated by her own efforts, and assigned to her a portion of that acquired by her husband, for the benefit of her family—knowing that she possessed the power and the means of educating her children, she then would fully appreciate her



responsibility, and might be held accountable for their intelligence, virtue, and integrity.

There are many mothers, who, if they possessed the means of rendering their homes attractive and interesting to their sons, might prevent them from seeking amusement and excitement abroad ; and thereby falling into those sensual excesses, which too frequently lead to a life of remorse and suffering, or to an early grave. The power and influence which a strong-minded mother has over the happiness and prosperity of her sons, is illustrated by the example of a friend of the writer.

Mrs. W—, a woman of much observation and reflection, married at the age of thirty, and in eight years became the mother of four healthy promising boys. Having the misfortune to lose her husband at that period, the responsibility of training and educating her sons devolved entirely upon herself. The importance of this duty she fully appreciated ; for having seen many of the sons of the companions of her youth, grow up to be a disgrace to their families, she felt deeply anxious for the welfare of her own sons, and endeavoured to avoid the causes which had betrayed into error and crime those unfortunate youths, whose unhappy fate she sincerely lamented. Believing that moral, not any more than physical evil, is inherent in human nature, or the result of chance, Mrs. W—, in looking back at the education and habits of those sons of her early friends, could clearly trace the causes of their errors and vices, to the blind indulgence, or to the indifference, neglect, and igno-



rance of their parents. There appeared, however, two important errors in their physical and mental training, more prolific sources of evil than all others. These consisted in luxurious living, and a great amount of unoccupied time. The former, by developing and giving activity to the animal propensities, lead to sensuality and excess; whilst the latter produces a taste for amusement and excitement, and an erroneous estimation of the value of time.

Mrs. W—'s principal object, during the childhood of her sons, was to give them sound constitutions, accompanied by clear and active minds. The first she accomplished by a free use of cold water, fresh air and exercise; and the last by a healthy and temperate diet, consisting chiefly of bread, milk, and fruits. (*h*) She never exacted from her children a blind obedience to her commands, but endeavoured to give them correct views and sound principles of action, based upon a thorough knowledge of the laws of their own nature, in connection with external circumstances. For instance, in explaining the function of the physical organs, she showed them, that there existed a great sympathy between the stomach and the brain; hence, if the former were overloaded, the latter became inert and torpid; the reasoning faculties being thus paralyzed, the human gourmand was reduced to a level with the brute. She also explained to them the reason why animal food was incompatible with the reflective and sedentary habits of a student, because it induced an excess of the vascular system, which produced an irritability and restless-



ness requiring a great amount of muscular action to carry off. She also taught them that they were not created immortal, and endowed with the Divine attribute of reason, to become the mere slaves of sense, or of selfish interests; but that they had a higher mission to fulfil: That of rendering themselves worthy of a more perfect state hereafter—by subduing the sensual, and improving the spiritual portion of their nature—by studying the works of the Creator, as manifesting his wisdom and goodness, in their beauty and harmony—and by promoting the improvement and happiness of their fellow-beings. This she taught them was the end and ought to be the aim of their existence. And to this noble end, she guided and directed them both by precept and example.

In conducting the studies of her children, Mrs. W— endeavoured to render them interesting and agreeable. In this she found little difficulty; for by assisting them to understand that which they had to learn, their lessons became easy and pleasant. Nor did she allow them to burden their memories with words without ideas; but by a little explanation rendered them perfectly familiar with the subject of their studies: And by constantly conversing with them respecting that which they had learned, fixed the important portions of it in their recollection, and thus rendered the knowledge acquired ready and practical.

In the study of history, this sensible mother did not deem it sufficient that her sons were acquainted



with the chronological events in the history of a nation—the genealogy of its rulers—the turns of its different dynasties—or the political, civil, and religious revolutions through which it had passed. She taught them that the most important portion of the history of a nation consisted in its institutions and its laws, in its science, its literature, and its commerce; for therein were to be found the causes, direct or indirect, which modified the character of nations, and decided their destiny. Nor must they overlook the *apparently* minor influences which promote or retard the improvement and happiness of a nation—such as the social condition and moral estimation in which females are held in different countries; and the effects which those influences have in elevating or depressing the character of a people; as illustrated by the British and Ottoman empires. In this manner the study of history was rendered most instructive, and its noblest lessons inculcated.

Mrs. W— avoided wearying the attention of her children by frequent change of study and occupation. To the useful branches generally included in the education of boys, she added music and drawing.—The latter accomplishment gave delightful occupation to those hours of recreation which many children spend in worse than idleness—in acquiring bad habits. The best books of instruction were provided for them, and good models; including casts, drawings, and paintings. With these the pupils required no other instruction except that given by their mother;



who, not satisfied that her sons should become mere copyists, instructed them in the laws of perspective, the beautiful effects of light and shadow, the harmony of colours, and the rules of composition. Thus, by judicious management, this delightful creative art, was rendered so agreeable to the children, that an hour spent in its pursuit was deemed a sufficient reward for proficiency in less pleasant studies.

Equal care and attention was bestowed upon geology, botany, and chemistry. In a small laboratory fitted up for experimenting in the latter science, the young people were frequently delighted by the curious phenomena evolved in interrogating nature—not indeed with new questions, but in compelling her to verify those already asked by masters in the science.

The exercise and recreation necessary for youth, were obtained by music, dancing, battle-door, and chess. Whilst exercise in the open air was amply supplied by frequent botanizing and mineralizing excursions into the country. In those health inspiring excursions, much useful manufacturing and agricultural knowledge was also obtained. The perceptive and reflective organs of the children being thus exercised and strengthened, they were enabled to comprehend the beautiful operations of nature, to see her efforts aided and directed by her hand-maidens, art and science, and made subservient to the necessities of man. Thus trained and instructed, those young lads looked with eyes of understanding upon



things of which the ignorant take no note; they found

— “Tongues in trees, books in the running brook,  
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.”

Blessed with such mental resources, they never will require that excitement which the idle and vacant mind seeks in the intoxicating bowl; nor ever be found in those haunts of dissipation and vice frequented by the neglected sons of the careless and ignorant mother—of whom, it requires not the spirit of prophesy to foretell, that long after they shall have become food for the worms, and their names consigned to oblivion—the others, the knowledge seeking, the self-denying, and the virtuous, shall still be denizens of this beautiful world, in the full enjoyment of all its blessings, the reward of a life led in obedience to the divine laws, both moral and physical—and their names, after illuminating many a bright page of history, shall be handed down to future ages by a virtuous posterity.

When we contrast the past with the present, and reflect upon the great discoveries which are continually being made, both in the material and the immaterial world, does it not suggest a strong desire for ‘length of days,’ that we may see to what all these things tend? Doubtless, it is reserved for this nineteenth century, to develope truths and principles of more importance to mankind than all preceding events, from the beginning of the world to the present time.



Those unacquainted with the true use and value of money, may perhaps, imagine that it would require a large income to educate a family in the manner stated in the preceding. The income of Mrs. W—, however, did not exceed the sum which many families spent annually in ornamental articles of dress, and the luxuries of the table; or the amount which is frequently paid for one year's education of a young lady at a fashionable boarding-school. But limited as her income was, Mrs. W— was enabled with it, to give each of her sons, as he grew up, a liberal education and establish them in a profession. This she accomplished by living much within her income during the childhood of her sons, by order and economy in her household, and by great application and self-denial on her own part. Those precious hours of the day which many mothers trifle away in morning calls, in shopping, in embellishing their persons and houses, and endeavouring to make an appearance above their condition, Mrs. W— spent in improving the minds of her children, in a course of reading which kept her informed of the onward progress of society, and in acquiring suitable knowledge to enable her to discharge with success the duties of a mother, who wished to see her sons act a noble part in life.

The following beautiful extract from one of Mr. Emerson's late lectures on domestic life, contains a correct view of what a household, true to itself, ought to be, to what it too frequently is—the mere abode of sensual enjoyment.



“The redress of our domestic modes is not so hopeless as it seems. Certainly, if we begin by reforming particulars of the present system, correcting a few evils and letting the rest stand, we shall soon give up in despair. For our social forms are very far from truth and equity. But the way to set the axe at the root of the tree, is, to raise our aim. Let us understand, then, that a house should bear witness in all its economy, that human culture is the end to which it is built and garnished. It stands there under the sun and moon, to ends analogous unto and not less noble than theirs. It is not for festivity, it is not for sleep; but the pine and the oak shall gladly descend from the mountains to uphold the roof of men as faithful and necessary as themselves; to be the shelter always open to the good and the true; a house which shines with sincerity, with brows ever tranquil, and a demeanour impossible to disconcert; whose inmates know what they want; who do not ask your house how theirs should be kept. They have aims; they cannot pause for trifles. The diet of the house does not create its order, but knowledge, character, action, absorb so much life and yield so much entertainment, that the refectory has ceased to be so curiously studied. With a change of aim, has followed a change of the scale by which men and things were wont to be measured. Wealth and poverty are seen for what they are. It begins to be seen that the poor are only they who feel poor, and poverty consists in feeling poor. The rich, as we



reckon them, and among them sometimes the very rich in a true scale would be found very indigent and ragged. The great make us feel first of all the indifference of circumstances. They call into activity the higher perceptions, and subdue the low habits of comfort and luxury. But the higher perceptions find their objects every where; only the low habits need palaces and banquets."

## CHAPTER XIII.

---

THE present age appears eminently distinguished by the efforts made to elevate woman in the scale of intellect, and to extend to her the advantages of a more liberal education. It would not, perhaps, be wise to enquire too particularly into the matter, in order to ascertain if it be by the disinterested justice and humanity of man, or by her own efforts, that woman, at length, has a prospect of attaining that degree of moral and mental excellence, for which she was originally designed by the Creator. It must however, be acknowledged, that most of the works lately published, advocating these liberal principles, have been from the pens of women. "If," says one of the 'Lords of the Creation,' "women require more advantages and privileges, they must exert themselves to obtain them, for it is not our interest to move the subject." A short-sighted, selfish sentiment, and evinces as little observation as reflection. It perhaps may not be for the interest of the sensualist, or the mere man of pleasure, who has chosen a



life of celibacy, to cultivate the moral and intellectual faculties of woman, thereby rendering her an unfit minister to his gross appetites. But, to him whose soul is pregnant with holy aspirations of immortality—whose heart swells with gratitude to the all-wise Creator, in contemplating the beauty and harmony of his works, how divine the thought, that he has called into being, and will leave behind him, when he passes from this earth, a virtuous and intelligent posterity, who will assist in bringing about, and partake in that blessed state of perfection and happiness in this world, which the past and present condition of man show he was formed to attain.

It is, therefore, minds whose views are not bounded by the present, and whose visions are not obscured by the thick film of selfishness, but rather illuminated by the effulgent rays of benevolence, that can perceive how nearly their interest is concerned in raising women from the dark abyss of ignorance, sensuality and oppression, and calling into exercise the highest attributes of her nature. Let the gray-headed father, to whose face the blush of shame often mantles for the vices and follies of his children, reflect, if it would not have been for his interest, to have devoted a portion of his time and attention to cultivating and developing the mental and moral faculties of the wife of his youth, and thus obviated that portion of sensual organization which his children inherited from her; for, action is the first principle of nature, and if the higher faculties are not exercised, the animal propen-



sities become the most active, and are thus "most readily transmitted to offspring."

"There is a feeling very generally entertained by literary and scientific individuals, that only those physical and moral qualities need be looked for in a woman which render her a good mother and a domestic housekeeper, and that a cultivated mind is of little importance ;"\* "but," continues Mr. Walker, "this is a great error, not merely because these men, being compelled by their professions to remain much at home, are obliged from having no one to comprehend them, to think alone, but because uneducated women are sure to communicate lower mental faculties to their children."† This author, however, appears rather inconsistent ; for, after admitting the degenerating effects of uneducated mothers, he says of the mental system : "This species of beauty is less proper to woman—less feminine than the pre-

---

\* We often hear fathers say, "Education is of no use to women ; I had much rather my daughters should know how to compound a good pudding than to solve a problem, or to cook a beef-steak properly, than to write an essay." They do not seem to be aware that they are speaking the language of the selfish sentiments, instead of enlightened intellect, and that they are not consulting the happiness and well-being of their daughters, but the gratification of their own animal desires.

† After the cold, calculating selfishness of the preceding, the following tender and benevolent sentiment, of the most amiable of French philosophers, D'Alembert, appears like an oasis in the desert. "Let us not confine ourselves merely to the advantages society might derive from the education of woman ; let us go farther, and have the justice and humanity not to deny



ceding. It is not the intellectual system, but the vital one (that is, the animal,) which is, and ought to be developed in women." The authoress is acquainted with two brothers of superior abilities, and highly cultivated minds, whose children differ so widely from each other, that it gives rise to much speculation among their friends to account for it. It is generally attributed to the different modes of education and training which they have received; the true cause, however, is to be found in the different characters of their mothers. In one of them, the vital system predominates, in the other, the intellectual. The former, also, has a large back-head, which indicates a predominance of the sentiments and passions over intellect: hence, the great pleasure she finds in social intercourse and fashionable life. To enjoy society, she left her children, when young, to the care of ignorant hirelings; and when they became old enough, they were sent to a boarding-school, from which they were frequently expelled for turbulent and disorderly conduct. For, having inherited the temperament and organization of their mother, study and reflection were to them extremely irksome. The eldest son destroyed himself by dissipation before the age of twenty one; another has

---

them what may sweeten life for themselves as well as for us. How often have we experienced a power in mental culture and the exercise of our talents to withdraw us from our calamities, and to console us in our sorrows; why, then, refuse to the more amiable half of the species, destined to share with us the ills of existence, the solace best fitted to enable them to be endured?"



been sent on a whaling-voyage, while the daughters have formed early and imprudent marriages, in direct opposition to the wishes of their parents. The mother, on the contrary, in whom the intellectual system obtained, found pleasure only in acquiring knowledge, and in imparting it to her children. Her extensive reading, and close observation of life, had early impressed upon her mind the power and influence which the mother holds over the future destiny of her child. They also disclosed to her the constant necessity of guiding and controlling the impetuosity and inexperience of youth. She would not allow her sons to be absent from her for a single day; but assisted in their education herself. She led them, by the most pleasant paths, up the rugged ascent—difficult, at first, and hard to climb; but, when surmounted, full of sweet sounds and pleasant prospects. The eldest son has finished his collegiate studies with honor to himself and to his family, and promises to become an ornament to his country; while his younger brothers are emulating his good conduct. Who could look upon that intelligent, diligent, self-sacrificing mother, and her bright and beautiful boys, observing with what pleasure and facility they acquire knowledge, and the delightful influences it sheds around them, and agree with Mr. Walker, that “the vital system ought to be most developed in woman.”

“Truth crushed to earth will rise again;  
The eternal years of God are her’s—  
But error, wounded, writhes in pain,  
And dies amidst her worshippers.”



The history and writings of Mary Wolstoncraft, illustrate the truth of the preceding lines. There never was, perhaps, any writer, on whom contumely and ridicule have been so lavishly heaped, for having dared to assert and maintain the rights and privileges of woman. Had those rights no foundation in nature, the writings of Mary Wolstoncraft would have been evanescent as the morning dew ; but having been founded upon the everlasting rock of truth, like the beautiful rainbow, they hold out a bright promise for the future. How well that promise has been fulfilled, and how much her principles are esteemed by the liberal and enlightened of the present age, the following extract from the Westminster Review will show :

“ This high-minded woman has created an influence which defies calculation ; she produced that impulse towards the education and improvement of woman, which succeeding writers have developed. No one can have entered a family where her writings, or those of her class, are cherished, without being struck with the effect, and the manifest superiority of the daughters, in point of sincerity, purity and gracefulness of mind. The women of England, before her time, from all we can gather, were coarse, ignorant and sensual—when not debased by actual vices, they were always so by ignorance and narrow-mindedness ; and if they, by any chance, had received an education, it was rendered disgusting in them by its open prostitution to vanity ; and men were justi-



fied in their dislike of "clever women." If a woman were not an insipid "creature of fashion," she was sure to be a well-dressed housekeeper." The effect of women on society is readily felt; the softening of men's ruder natures, the triumph of delicacy and sentiment over sensuality, the paradise of home—these we owe to women, and we know of no more *infallible sign of man's intense vanity and narrow-mindedness, than his objection to the education of women.*"

"The empire of women," says another eloquent foreigner, "is not theirs because men have willed it, but because it is the will of nature. Miserable must be the age in which this empire is lost, and in which the judgments of women are counted as nothing, by men. Every people in the ancient world, that can be said to have had morals, has respected the sex—Sparta, Germany, Rome. At Rome, the exploits of the victorious generals were honored by the grateful voices of *women*; on every public calamity, *their* tears were a public offering to the gods. In either case, their vows and their sorrows were thus consecrated as the most solemn judgments of the State. It is to them that all the great revolutions of the republic are to be traced. By a woman, Rome acquired liberty—by a woman, the Plebeians acquired the consulate—by a woman, when the city was trembling with the vindictive exile at its gates, it was saved from that destruction which no other influence could avert."

The following eloquent appeal in favor of the bet-



ter education of women, is from the pen of the talented and philanthropic Mrs. Jamieson :

“ In these days, when society is becoming every day more artificial, and more complex, and marriage, as the gentlemen assure us, more and more expensive, hazardous and inexpedient, women must find means to fill up the void in existence. Men, our natural protectors, our law-givers, our masters, throw us upon our own resources ; the qualities which they pretend to admire in us—the overflowing, the clinging affections of a warm heart—the household devotion—the submissive wish to please, that feels ‘ every vanity in fondness lost ’—the tender, shrinking sensitiveness which Adam thought so charming in his Eve—to cultivate these, to make them, by artificial means, the staple of the womanly character, is it not to cultivate a taste for sunshine and roses, in those we send to spend their lives in the arctic zone ? We have gone away from nature, and we must, if we can, substitute another nature.

“ Art, literature and science, remain to us. Religion, which formerly opened the doors of nunneries and convents to forlorn women, now mingling her beautiful and soothing influence with resources which the prejudices of the world have yet left open to us, only in the assiduous employment of such faculties as we are permitted to exercise, can we find health and peace, and compensation for the wasted or repulsed impulses and energies more proper to our sex—more natural—perhaps more pleasing to God ; but, trusting in his mercy, and



using the means he has given, we must do the best we can for ourselves and for our sisterhood. The prejudices which would have shut us out from nobler consolation and occupations, have ceased, in great part, and will soon be remembered only as the rude, coarse barbarism of a by-gone age. Let us, then, have no more caricatures of methodistical card-playing, and acrimonious old maids. Let us have no more of scandal, parrots, cats, or lap-dogs—or worse!—these never-failing subjects of derision with the vulgar and the frivolous, but the source of a thousand compassionate and melancholy feelings in those who can reflect! In the name of humanity and womanhood, let us have no more of them.—Coleridge, who has said and written the most beautiful, the most tender, the most reverential things of woman—who understands better than any man, any poet, what I will call the metaphysics of love—Coleridge, as you will remember, has asserted that the perfection of a woman's character is to be characterless. 'Every man,' said he, 'would like to have an Ophelia or a Desdemona for his wife.' No doubt; the sentiment is truly a masculine one; and what was their fate? What would now be the fate of such unresisting and confiding angels! Is this the age of Arcadia? Do we live among Paladins and Sir Charles Grandisons, and are our weakness, and our innocence, and our ignorance, safeguards—or snares? Do we, indeed, find our account, in being 'fine by defect, and beautifully weak?' No, no; women need, in these times, character beyond every-



thing else ; the qualities which will enable them to endure and resist evil ; the self-governed, the cultivated, active mind, to protect and to maintain ourselves. How many wretched women marry for a maintenance ! How many wretched women sell themselves to dishonor, for bread !—and there is small difference, if any, in the infamy and the misery ! How many unmarried women live in heart-wearing dependence ; if poor, in solitary penury, loveless, joyless, unendeared ; if rich, in aimless, pitiful trifling ! How many, strange to say, marry for the independence they dare not otherwise claim ! But the snare paths open to us, the less fear that we should go astray.

“ Surely it is dangerous, it is wicked, in these days, to follow the old saw, to bring up women to be ‘ happy wives and mothers ; ’ that is to say, to let all her accomplishments, her sentiments, her views of life, take one direction, as if for woman there existed only one destiny, one hope, one blessing, one object, one passion in existence ; some people say it ought to be so, but we know it is not so ; we know that hundreds, that thousands of women are not happy wives and mothers—are never either wives or mothers at all. The cultivation of the moral strength and the active energies of a woman’s mind, together with the intellectual faculties and tastes, will not make a woman a less good, less happy wife and mother, and will enable her to find content and independence when denied love and happiness.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

---

M. DE TOCQUEVILLE, in the second part of the *Democracy of America*, says, "Now that I am drawing to a close, after having found so much to commend in the Americans, if I were asked to what I attribute their greatness, I should say, to the superiority of their women." This, certainly, is well merited and just praise; and it ought to have the effect of stimulating the American women to great efforts to sustain the high national character which they have thus attained abroad. These efforts, however, should be directed to the improvement of the rising generation; for by them will the reputation of the present age be either sustained or forfeited.—When we reflect that every age and opinion is produced by that which preceded it, and is responsible only for that which follows it, is it not evident that the present generation must revert to the circumstances, culture, and training, by which their own characters were formed, and then ask themselves, if the same causes are operating upon their children by which only similar characteristics can be produced?



It is much to be feared that the answer will be in the negative; for it must be evident to the most superficial observer, that much more time and attention is devoted to the acquisition of accomplishments, to personal embellishments, and to fashionable amusements, at present than formerly. It is now universally admitted, that these pursuits add neither to the improvement of the heart or of the understanding; therefore, it is not at all probable, that the superior women to whom De Tocqueville alludes, were those only who were trained to make an agreeable figure in society, or who were conspicuous for elegance and taste. For, as his own countrywomen excel in such matters, it would be idle to suppose, that, with his philosophical views of society, this branch of female education comprehended much of that superiority to which he ascribes such great results in this country. Is it not important then, to inquire what influence these pursuits are likely to have upon the rising generation? When we look at the fragile forms and pale complexion of the female youth of large cities, the effect which seems most to be apprehended, is, the deterioration of the species.

The writer had occasion, a short time since, to visit a school for young ladies of some celebrity, in which the general appearance of the want of health was too obvious to be overlooked. A great uniformity of figure was also observed to pervade the whole school, from the assistant-teacher down to the youngest pupil. This uniformity consisted in round shoulders and a slender waist. Is it not astonishing, after all, that has

been said and written on the subject of tight lacing, by the physician and the physiologist, that the habit should so universally prevail? There is, however, one result of tight lacing, which, if generally known, would tend very materially to eradicate the evil. It is, that "among the many evils enumerated by the Germans as attributable to tight-lacing, is, "UGLY CHILDREN." When we look at the high shoulders and awkward figures, the pinched-up features and painful expression of countenance of the weakly organized victims of tight-lacing, we must admit that the observation of the German is founded in truth.

No object in nature is so disagreeable and painful to the physiologist, as the round shoulders and contracted chests of the youth of both sex of the present generation. Disagreeable, because they violate symmetry and beauty; painful, because they are a certain evidence of a feeble organization, and the precursor of a life of disease and suffering.—May not most of our pulmonary complaints, early decay of the teeth, and sallowness of complexion, which are generally attributed to climate, be traced to this wretched habit of stooping, which, when contracted in early childhood, saps to the foundation the sources of health and vitality.

It is evident from the structure of that portion of the human figure in which the lungs are situated, that it was the intention of the Creator, that they should have free and full space to perform their function—the vitalizing of the blood, by which a healthful action



of body and mind is kept up. This position of stooping, therefore, while it contracts the lungs and impedes their action, leaves the system overcharged with sluggish humours, hence the inertness and predisposition to sedentary habits, of round-shouldered young people; who display a melancholy contrast to the gay and joyous spirit of the healthy youth, in whom the very sense of existence is a positive pleasure.

Now who is, or ought to be, accountable for all this mischief? Surely the mother. If, from a similar neglect in childhood, she transmits a feeble constitution to her children, is it not her duty to discover and apply the means to remedy the evil? First, by strengthening and improving the general health by proper exercise and diet. Secondly, by enforcing, with the most rigid discipline, if necessary, an upright position of the body in sitting and in walking. Yet how is this to be accomplished by the unreflecting mother, when she cannot even see, that in the form of the busts of her children, the order of nature is reversed? Instead of a broad well-expanded chest, straight back, and sloping shoulders, they have a narrow hollow chest, high shoulders, and a hemispherically-formed back; which configuration, if it involve no other consequence, is extremely inelegant and ungraceful. And if the mother could appreciate, and would prefer, symmetry and gracefulness of person, to the mere extrinsic embellishments of dress, one tenth part of the time and attention which she bestows upon the latter, might suffice, with a judi-

cious course of gymnastic exercises to attain the former.

So much has been said on the subject of beauty unadorned, that any thing further may appear trite and unnecessary. Yet may there not be some error in the popular opinion of what constitutes beauty?—Many persons think it a mere chance gift of nature, unattainable by cultivation, and exclusively confined to outward perfection in form and feature. But how much more desirable and interesting is that species of beauty which emanates from the mind? The animated and ever varying expression of countenance, that indicates a strong and active intellect, kind and sympathetic feelings, refined and delicate habits, which, when combined with the native charm of youth, give to the possessor an air of purity and loveliness that is almost celestial!

The object of this chapter, however, is, to show the effects which the present inordinate pursuit of accomplishments may have on the rising generation. In the following graphic description of a wise and observant physician,\* the effects which they have already produced in England will be seen.

“Female education is more detrimental to health and happiness than that of the male. Its grasp, its aim, is at accomplishments rather than acquirements; at gilding rather than at gold; at such ornaments as may dazzle by their lustre, and consume themselves in a few years by the intensity of their own bright-

---

\* Dr. Johnson's Economy of Health.



ness, rather than those which radiate a steady light till the lamp of life is extinguished. They are most properly termed *accomplishments*; because they are designed to *accomplish* a certain object—MATRIMONY. That end, or rather beginning, obtained, they are about as useful to their owner as a rudder is to a sheer hulk, moored head and stern in Portsmouth harbour; the lease of a house after the term is expired, or a pair of wooden shoes during a paroxysm of gout.

“The mania for *music* injures the health, and even curtails the lives of thousands and tens of thousands annually of the fair sex, by the sedentary habits which it enjoins, and the morbid sympathies which it engenders. The story of the sirens is no fable. It is verified to the letter!

‘ Their song is death, and makes *destruction* please.

Visit the ball-room and the bazaar, the park and the concert, the theatre and the temple; among the myriads of the young and beautiful, whom you see dancing or dressing, driving or chaunting, laughing, or praying, you will not find *one*—no, not ONE, in the enjoyment of health! No wonder, then, that the doctors, the dentists, and the druggists, multiply almost as rapidly as the pianos, the harps, and the guitars.

“The length of time occupied by music, renders it morally impossible to dedicate sufficient attention to the health of the body or the cultivation of the mind. The *consequence* is, that the corporeal func-

tions languish and become impaired, a condition that is fearfully augmented by the peculiar effects which music has upon the nervous system. The nature and extent of these injuries are not generally known, even to the faculty, and cannot be detailed here. But one effect, of immense importance will not be denied, namely, the length of time absorbed by music, and the *consequent* deficiency of time for the acquisition of useful knowledge in the system of female education. If some of that time which is now spent on the piano, the harp, and the guitar, were dedicated to the elements of science, or at all events, to useful information, as modern languages, history, astronomy, geography, and even mathematics, there would be better wives and mothers than where the mind is *left comparatively* an uncultivated blank, in order to pamper the single sense of hearing! Mrs. Somerville has stolen harmony from the heavens as well as St. Cecilia! The time spent at the piano leaves not sufficient space for the acquirement of that 'useful knowledge,' which strengthens the mind against the vicissitudes of fortune, and the *moral crosses to which female life is doomed*, nor for the healthful exercise of the body, by which the material fabric may be fortified, against the thousand diseases continually assailing it. I would therefore recommend, that one-half of the time spent in music should be allotted to bodily exercise, and to the acquisition of useful and ornamental knowledge, embracing Natural Philosophy; and in short many of the sciences which



man has monopolized to himself, but for which *woman is as fit as the 'lord of the creation!'*”

If the preceding are the consequences of the present mode of female education in England, where the vital system obtains, what must be its effects on the highly nervous temperament of our own fair countrywomen? The melancholy answer will be found in the number of young married women whose names swell the weekly bills of mortality.

It, however, would appear, that the same mental activity and love of the beautiful, which impels to the inordinate pursuit of personal accomplishments is the source of that all-absorbing passion for dress, which is so conspicuous in our highways, by-ways, and saloons. There are, doubtless, many young ladies who would be much mortified were they obliged to confess the amount of time and attention which they devote to acquiring, devising, and forming, mere ornamental articles of dress. Time, which, if spent in a judicious course of reading and reflection, would fill their minds with beautiful and graceful images; open to their view sources of pleasure and happiness of which they could form no previous conception; and render them impervious to the many vexations to which vanity and ostentation are subject. It would, also, make them agreeable companions for men of sense, and in various ways conduce to the benefit and well-being of their own families. For, their knowledge being extended, their judgments exercised and strengthened, they would better under-

stand the method of rendering their homes pleasant and attractive to their fathers and brothers, and thus obviate the necessity for their seeking amusement and recreation at those sources of many evils, the theatre, and the convivial board.

The American women, possibly, are not aware of the numerous privileges which they enjoy, and the evil influences from which they are exempt. Influences to which a large class of the women of Europe are subject; particularly in France, where many of the wives and daughters of the trades-people are confined to the desk or the counter, a great portion of their lives; while in this country they are allowed to remain in the hallowed precincts of domestic privacy. To this wise and humane policy, the Americans are doubtless indebted for their domestic comfort and happiness, as well as for the superior purity of the lives and manners of their women: and so long as this state of things continues, the future prosperity and security of this republic, may, with safety be predicted.

But in order to attain a great and good national character, give the women attainments rather than accomplishments. Point out to them their capabilities and responsibilities. Let them know that they are responsible for the moral character of the rising generation; and also, that it depends upon themselves, whither they become the mothers of wise and virtuous, or foolish and vicious men. For, in the same degree as these qualities are *possessed and exercised by themselves, will their children inherit and practice them.*



The following extract from the life of Washington, shows the power and influence of the mother in forming the character, and consequent *destiny* of her child. "Before he was ten years old he was deprived of the example and guidance of an excellent father; but the judicious economy and prudent affection of his remaining parent provided for him instruction in the useful branches of knowledge, and above all, she trained him to a love of truth, and successfully cultivated that high moral sense which characterised his actions from youth. There is no doubt that to the careful culture bestowed by his affectionate mother, the *goodness* and *greatness* of Washington are to be ascribed. And we will here call the attention of the reader to the fact which bear honorable testimony to the female character, that a large portion of the distinguished men whose names adorn the history of our country, were left to the care of their widowed mother's at a very early age."

"This tells to mothers what a holy charge  
 "Is theirs—with what kingly power their love  
 "Might rule the fountains of the new-born mind;  
 "Warns them to wake at early dawn, and sow  
 "Good seed before the world doth sow its tares.

MRS. SIGOURNEY.

Let the careless indolent mother reflect well upon this, and feel assured, that "nothing great was ever attained with ease," and that the sons of such mothers are never heard of beyond their generation, except for evil. Let, also, the gay votary of fashion remember,

that, "the loftiest, the most angel-like ambition, is the earnest desire to contribute to the rational happiness and moral improvement of others. If she can do this, if she can smooth the path of one fellow-traveler, if she can give one good impression, is it not better than all the triumphs that fashion, wealth, or power ever attain?"



## APPENDIX.

---

(a) An instance of this short-sightedness, which came early under my observation, may serve to warn the inexperienced of my own sex in such matters.

The beautiful Maria B——, was the daughter of a weak-minded, but worldly and ambitious mother; who had reduced her family to a state of dependence, by habits of extravagance and folly; but who hoped to retrieve her fallen fortunes by procuring a wealthy husband for her daughter.

Miss B——'s style of beauty, however, rather addressed itself to the eye than to the understanding. Nevertheless, it was of that striking character which would insure her an alliance with the aristocracy of wealth. From this class she received numerous proposals. Unfortunately, the most eligible one, in point of property, was from the only son of a family, who had intermarried so frequently, and for such a length of time, that its last representative was reduced, almost, to mental imbecility, and was disagreeable in person and repulsive in manners. These, however, were no disqualifications in the estimation of either mother or daughter, so long as their possessor could restore them to fashionable society, and re-establish them in the enjoyment of all those elegancies and luxuries, which, to them, constituted the only pleasure or object of existence.

Were I at liberty to disclose all the misery that sprung from this mis-alliance, surely every woman would pray heaven to

deliver her from the power of a fool. Suffice it, at the age of fifty, Mrs. L—— is a widow, with a family of grown up, unmarried daughters, who, in person, resemble their father; but, having neither talents nor wealth to recommend them, their mother suffers the extreme mortification of seeing the more attractive daughters of her friends early established in life, whilst her own unlovely ones are doomed to a life of celibacy, without mental resources to embellish, or moral qualities to render them honorable members of that community, which contains so many of the brightest ornaments of their sex.

(b) The strongest evidence that the offspring is effected by the mind of the mother, is to be deduced from instances of malformation produced from sudden fright by a disagreeable object, and from marks occasioned by ungratified longings.—This subject, however, has given rise to much contrariety of opinion amongst physicians.\* But so much well authenticated

---

\* "Many people are satisfied that mental impressions made upon the mother may effect the offspring. Others, as Mr. Lawrence, consider it needless to pursue "a question on which all rational persons, well acquainted with the circumstances, are already unanimous" "This belief," he continues, "in the power of the imagination, like the belief in witchcraft, is greater or less, according to the progress of knowledge, which, in truth, differs greatly in different countries and heads. We know that many enlightened women are fully convinced of its absurdity, while *soi-disant* philosophers are found to support it."†

So many extraordinary coincidences, however, both in the human and the brute subject, have come to my knowledge, that I do not hesitate to believe

---

† "We may perhaps be excused," says Dr. Fletcher, "from at once chiming in with the accustomed cant, that the emotions of the mother "*cannot possibly*" have any effect on its organism. We "*cannot possibly*" explain, perhaps, what is the immediate process by which such vitiated secretions have this effect, nor shall we be able to do so, till we know a little more of the *vis plastica* than its numerous appellations; but neither shall we be able, till then, to explain why this effect should be impossible. It is much easier in these matters, to look shrewd and *incredulous-odi-ish*, than to give any good reason for our unbelief; and if the result of process, however well accredited, is not to be believed in, till the nature of the process is satisfactorily explained, we must be content to suspend, for the present, our belief in our own existence."—(*Rudiments of Physiology, Part II. p. 12.*)



proof of the effects of the mother's imagination on her offspring has been accumulated, that the most charitable construction which can be put upon the motives of those who advocate opposing opinions, is, that they hope, by convincing the mother that her apprehensions are groundless, and thus by diverting her thoughts from the contemplation of the subject, to remove the exciting cause, and fortify her mind successfully against the sudden influence of disagreeable impressions. Yet to disguise or pervert a truth in nature, appears like apologizing for a defective law of the Creator. Would it not be more philosophical to inquire for what wise purpose this law of nature was instituted ; and how it can be made subservient to the best interests of mankind ? We know that all the cerebral organs were bestowed upon man for a highly useful and benevolent purpose ; and that their use or abuse depends on the will of the possessor. So, doubtless, this power of the mind, or imagination of the mother on her offspring, was intended by Superior Wisdom, for the

---

the common opinion to be well founded ; and, since I declared in my edition of 1820, my inclination to support the opinion, I find it has many supporters.\* That neither all nor most malformations can be thus explained ; that pregnant women are frequently alarmed without such consequences, even when most dreaded : and that highly ridiculous resemblances are fancied to preceding longings and alarms which were forgotten, or may be well suspected to have

---

\* Sir Everard Home, (Phil. Trans., 1825. p. 75, sqq.) and according to Burdach, who considers the occurrence of monstrosity, from this cause, to be an incontestable fact, (§360) Stark, Schneider, Bechstein, Sachs, Balz, Klein, Carus, Brandis, Voare, and Toone, have given examples in its favor. Baer, whose name will carry weight, relates the following fact :

"A pregnant woman was greatly alarmed at the sight of a lengthened flame in the direction of her native place ; and as she was at a distance from this of fourteen leagues, it was long before she learnt the place of the fire ; and this protracted uncertainty probably acted forcibly upon her imagination, for she afterwards declared she had the figure of the flame constantly before her eyes. Two or three months after the fire, she gave birth to a girl with a red patch on her forehead, pointed, and like an undulating flame.— This still existed at the age of seven years. I relate this fact because I know all the particulars ; for, the individual was my own sister and I heard her complain before her delivery that she had the flame continually before her eyes ; so that we were not obliged, in this case, as in most others, to refer to the past, in order to explain the anomaly."—( *Contribution to Burdach* §359.)

improvement of the race ; and its legitimate use is the influence of favorable circumstances, particularly such impressions as proceed from virtuous principles, and the exercise of highly cultivated mental powers. Whilst its abuse is the result of indulgence in vicious propensities, or other unfavorable influences acting upon a feeble intellect, or an irritable temperament.

"The fact of the improvement of progeny," says Dr. Elliotson, "by the operation of favorable causes upon parents, is highly encouraging. Horace, in his invective ode against the vices of the Romans, says :

"Ætas parentum, pijor avis, tulit  
Nos nequiores, mox daturos  
Progenium vitiosiore : "

"But, as happy circumstances will tend to the production of a better progeny, we have great encouragement to exert all our energies for the improvement of mankind, whatever distress we must feel for our disappointments in individuals of whom we had thought well, and for whom we have done much. Ordinarily, a certain amount only of improvement by education can be effected in an individual. He generally stops at last ; and defies

---

never existed, is incontestible. But, in other matters, when a circumstance may proceed from many causes, we do not universally reject any one, because it is frequently alleged without reason. A diarrhoea will arise from ingesta wrong, in quality or quantity, from cold, cathartic substances, and also from emotion ; and yet emotion has every day, no such effect. The notion is of great antiquity, as it prevailed in the time of Jacob. How those who believe the Divine authority of the bible, can reconcile the success of Jacob's stratagem with their contempt for the vulgar belief, they best can tell.'—(*Human Physiology, by Dr. Elliotson, p. 1117.*)\*

---

\* Dr. Elliotson gives a number of cases, not only of marks, but also of malformations and loss of limbs, which came under his own observation. Many persons, however, say the latter case is impossible ; and ask what becomes of the lost limb ? But they do not observe that the fright, or affecting cause, took place in the early period of gestation, before the limb was developed, and might, therefore, have arrested its growth. So, also, in the case of idiots, when caused by some highly distressing mental agitation, which had the effect of arresting the growth of the brain of the fœtus. This inference, at least, appears probable from the cases on record.



all efforts to advance him farther. Happily, he dies, with all his uneradicable prejudices. His offspring has them not, or not so fixed; and it would seem that the offspring is likely to be still better organized than the parent, through the good influences exerted upon the parent.

“In vegetables and brutes, whatever improvement is made by good management of external circumstances, there is a constant tendency to fall back to the original state. It is the same with us; and the neglect of the physical and mental means of improvement will cause an inferior progeny to be established. But, great as this influence is, and greatly as we ought to rely upon it, that of the breed is far stronger; and, though almost entirely neglected by individuals, should always guide marrying people. No one has spoken better, or more plainly on this point, than Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*.<sup>\*</sup> It is thought that a good cross within the same nation is always desirable, but that a cross between two nations begets offspring superior to either. The importance of crossing an inferior nation with a better, is shown by the great improvement of the Persians, who were, originally, ugly and clumsy, ill-made and rough-skinned, by intermixing with the Georgians and Circassians, the two most beautiful nations in the world. “There is hardly a man of rank in Persia, who is not born of a Georgian or Circassian mother; and even the king himself is commonly sprung, on the female side, from one or the other of these countries.”<sup>†</sup> But when one nation is not surpassed in any particular quality by another, I doubt whether this quality is improved by the cross: the superior race cannot gain, but must lose. Unfortunately, few nations are not inferior in some things, and national crossing is therefore generally useful; for there is less chance of the same defects meeting in the two, than when they marry among themselves. What is excellent in one nation, must be deteriorated by mixture with the low degree of the same in the other. Crossing among nations may be more advantageous, as being more decided, than crossing among individuals of the same nation

---

<sup>\*</sup> Part I. Sec. II.

<sup>†</sup> Lawrence's Lectures.

But without care it may be an evil."—(*Human Physiology*, p. 1139.

The preceding facts and opinions are worthy the attentive consideration of those benevolent but short-sighted individuals who advocate the principles of amalgamation. A practice which, if adopted to any considerable extent, would result in depressing our moral character many degrees below the present standard. This evil, however, is perhaps less serious in a mental point of view, than the baneful practice of intermarrying in an early and immature state, thereby transmitting the faculties imperfectly developed. This practice has been attended with wide-spread and serious detriment to the human family, wherever it has been, for ages, sanctioned by custom: for example, the Chinese nation. All accounts of this singular people unite in describing the oldest existing nation of the earth, as alike distinguished for imbecility of mind, and the practice of early marriages; the common custom being to unite in wedlock at the age of twelve and thirteen years. Contrast their want of energy, powers of reflection, and abject state of servitude, with the Swiss people; that indomitable race, who have preserved their independence for five hundred years, surrounded by despotism. The native of the Cantons, obedient to the law of nature as well as that of his country, seeks the permission of the magistrate when about to unite himself in marriage; and his assent is only accorded when the parties are fitted by nature, age, and circumstances. The consequence of this wise legislation is, a hardy and mature race, capable of every manly effort and endurance.

Some observations on the 1117th page of the work last quoted, shows the importance which Dr. Elliotson gives to maturity and strength of constitution in the parents: and also elucidates a subject, which, to many reflecting minds, appears dark and mysterious. That is, the reason why persons of illegitimate birth generally manifest superior powers. The reasons given are well known, and carefully practised by those desirous of obtaining a fine breed of horses, or other animals, and are in perfect accordance with the theory of transmission and inheritance.



Several of the most intelligent physicians of our city, who, from an extensive practice, have had sufficient proof to form a correct judgment, concur in Dr. Elliotson's views respecting the effects of the mother's imagination on her offspring. The following is one of the communications which the writer received in answer to inquiries on the subject.

" New-York, May 10, 1843.

" MADAM,

" Agreeable to your request, I send you my *Theory* explanatory of the formation of *Nevis Materni*, or the influence of the mind of the mother in determining the developments of the *Fœtus in Utero*.

" It has been for a long time a disputed point, whether the mother had any influence upon the *fœtus in utero*, in causing it to be marked, or in any way deformed, by having any strong impression made upon her mind during gestation; and whether there was any similarity in these marks, or deformities, and the impression under which she labored.

" It is now, however, almost incontestibly proved, and generally admitted, from the number of cases that have occurred, in which the mother has, previous to the birth of the child, described exactly the position and character of the deformity which has afterwards been found to exist; and agree so exactly with her previous description, that it becomes our duty, to enquire into the *causes* that have produced these effects, and ascertain, if possible, the intricate sympathies existing between the mother and child, and the *laws* which govern these sympathies, and see if they cannot be converted to some good account.

" If, for instance, we find, that from some horrid sight, or loathsome object, presented to the female during pregnancy, she becomes impressed with the idea, that at birth, her child will bear this or that particular deformity, and time develops her fears, to have been well grounded, and her suppositions prove true; it is but reasonable to suppose, from analogy, that could we have made an *equally strong impression* of a *different kind*, we would have produced a *different* kind of growth, or formation, *according to the impression under which she labored*.

“ Taking then this principal for granted, which I hope hereafter, to prove true by facts; it becomes our duty to surround the female during pregnancy, with every object which would have a tendency to develope both the *physical* and *mental* frame of the foetus, in the most perfect degree and of the highest order.

“ We all admit, that it is by the *nerves* we receive impressions, that it is through *them* that the *will* is conveyed to the different parts of the system: that the *vessels* are the *executors* of the will; and that secretion, absorption, the different growths, developments, &c., are the *result* of this work carried on, or performed by the *vessels* and *controlled* by the *nerves*; or in other words, the *brain* and *nervous mass*, *superintends*, or *orders*, the *vessels obey these orders*, and the different growths, &c., are the *result* of the work.

“ If then, the *nervous* system, or *controlling* power, be *disturbed*, the *orders* are given *wrong*, the *vessels*, obeying these *wrong* orders, and *acting in compliance with them*, an *unnatural* or *deformed* product, is the *necessary* result.

“ We all admit again, that the child has *not* an *independent* existence, until *extra-uterine* life; neither has it an independent *will*: but it also is dependent upon the mother, is under her control, and must of course, *act in accordance with hers*.

“ If then, the will, thought, impressions, mind, or *controlling* power so to speak, exists entirely in the brain and nervous masses, when endowed with life, (as without them we can receive no impressions:) and if the *vessels* act entirely under the control of these *nerves*; and the different growths, developments, &c., are the *result* of the *action* of *these vessels*—and if the *will* of the *child* is *dependent entirely upon that of the mother*; it follows, as a matter of course, that the *developments* of the *child* being the *result* of the *action* of *its vessels*, which *vessels* are *controlled* by *its nervous system*, and it again entirely dependent on the mother, that these various developments must be in accordance with the various impressions made upon her mind.

“ This, it seems to me, is the most satisfactory explanation of the various morbid developments that have occurred in children born of mothers, who during pregnancy, have labored under some



strong mental impression, as regards their child's deformity, and who have previous to delivery, accurately described the deformity which has afterwards been found to exist.

"Of the proof of this, we need only refer to Dr. Elliotson's work, who gives some well described cases. I am also permitted to refer to Dr. Gilman, Professor of Obstetrics in this city, who can confirm it by a number of cases; and I can corroborate it by one that came under own observation.\*

"If then this explanation be admitted, I think the immense importance of my first position clearly proved, viz., that of surrounding the female during this most interesting period, with every influence, which would have a tendency to produce the most favorable impressions, for the most perfect development of the fœtus, both *physically* and *mentally*.

"Again, it is generally admitted concerning any system, whether nervous, vascular, or muscular, that it is capable of performing function in an exalted or diminished degree, according to its development, as regards strength and activity.

"If then we admit, that by the *exercise* of *organs*, we *increase* their *power* of *performing function*, as is proved by comparing the arm of the blacksmith with that of the writing-master; and also, that the *brain* is the seat of the intellect, or mind, as proved by Acephelus children, who having no brain, are deficient in its God-like attributes; and if the *mental* organs can be *increased* in *power*, *as well* as the *physical*; and if the *child's* organs are developed in *harmony* with the *mother's*, with what vast importance do we find this interesting question surrounded; and what strong appeals from future generations is made upon the fondly expecting to be mother, to exercise both her *physical* and *mental* powers, to their greatest degree, in order that she may be the happy bearer of an offspring, gifted in these essentials for future usefulness, in their highest degree of development, both as regards strength and activity.

---

\* This case, and those referred to in Dr. Elliotson's work, are too distressing and painful in their nature, for insertion in a work intended for the perusal of the most sympathetic and sensitive portion of the sex.

"If these few hasty thoughts shall have a tendency to awaken in mother's an interest in this most interesting, but too long neglected question, the writer will be more than amply repaid by the consciousness of having conferred a boon upon future generations.

LEWIS A. SAYRE."

(c) All sincere inquirers after truth, are truly grateful for every step which has been cleared before them; and for every ray of light shed upon the subject of their inquiry. The following just view of Polygamy, and its effects, contains a decided opinion and illustration in favor of the truth of this theory.

"The increasing wealth of the Hebrews, under the Patriarchal government of Israel, which forwarded its temporal power, was, however, morally counteracted in its influence, by polygamy, the fatal tendency of which was soon discovered in the domestic misery, distracting the family and embittering the days of the fondest and best, as he was the most unfortunate of fathers. The jealousies of the sisters, Rachael and Leah, for supremacy in their husbands' affections, and the contentions of the sons of Bilhah, of Zilpah, produced those dark divisions, which finally ended in the expulsion of Joseph. This event, though it seated the great grandson of Sarah near the throne of the Pharohs, eventually caused the future slavery, during four centuries, of the tribes of Israel, with all the struggles and crimes that ensued. It was polygamy, also, that relaxed the spiritual faith of the Israelites, it was the women of strange tribes, and the demoralizing offspring of such ties, that aided mainly to substitute a superstitious devotion to idols, for the pure theism and simple worship of their fathers.

These many wives of one husband, these numerous servants of one master, these slaves to selfish and to sensual passions, these victims of uneasy sensations, became the future mothers of those ill-organized, stubborn generations, which, in spite of their prophets and their legislators, drew down the reprobation of the 'God of Abraham and of Isaac'—"How long will these people provoke me, and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs I have shown among them."



"Throughout the remainder of this eventful history, the Israelites, indeed, appear perpetually relapsing into rebellion against the visible majesty of their Creator, refusing faith to the evidences of their own senses ; ready under every temptation of discontent or of novelty, to desert, for the idols of other nations, or even for their own creations, the sanctuary of Jehovah. It was thus the violated law of nature re-acted, in virtue of its own wisdom, and that the injustice committed by the selfishness of the master, was avenged in its results by the wrongs, and the consequent perversion of his servant.

"The twelve sons which Jácob had by his four wives, seem respectively to have partaken of the idiosyncrasy of their different mothers. Reuben, the eldest child of the meek and submissive, but unloved Leah, and Joseph and Benjamin, the offspring of the beautiful and too well beloved Rachael, seem alone to have been worthy of the house from which they sprung.

"The envious brothers, who hated Joseph for his virtue, who meditated his murder, sold him to slavery, and nearly broke his father's heart by the tale of his destruction, were such sons and such brothers as oriental despotism produces down to the present day—where woman is still the servant, man the master ; and where polygamy is the ruling institute of the land.

"The child of Jacob's first deep and legitimate love, the son of the wife of his choice, the well-born offspring of a well organized mother, rose superior to the terrible destiny prepared for him by fraternal jealousies and family dissensions ; and the betrayed and persecuted Joseph finally attained to the highest rank and consideration, in the most civilized nation of the earth—in that nation which was to enlighten future ages."\*

(d) "Among the duties incumbent on the human race, in relation to marriage, one is, that the parties to it should not unite before a proper age. The civil law of Scotland allows females to marry at twelve, and males at fourteen ; but the law of nature is widely different. The female frame does not, in general, arrive at its full vigor and perfection, in this climate,

---

\* Woman and her Master, Vol. I. p. 56.

earlier than twenty-two, nor the male earlier than from twenty-four to twenty-six. Before these ages maturity of physical strength and of mental vigor, is not, in general, attained, and the individuals, with particular exceptions, are neither corporeally nor mentally prepared to become parents, nor to discharge, with advantage, the duties of heads of a domestic establishment. Their animal propensities are strong, and their moral and intellectual organs have not yet attained their full developement. Children born of such young parents, are inferior in the size and qualities of their brains, to children born of the same parents when arrived at maturity. Such children, having inferior brains, are inferior in dispositions and capacity. It is a common remark, that the eldest son of a rich family is generally, not equal to his younger brothers in mental ability; and this is ascribed to his having relied on his hereditary fortune for his subsistence, and not exerted himself in obtaining education; but you will find that very generally, in such cases, the parents, or one of them, married in extreme youth, and the eldest child inherits the imperfections of their immature condition.

“The statement of the evidence and consequences of this law, belongs to phisiology; and I can only remark, that if the Creator has prescribed ages, previous to which, marriage is punished by him with evil consequences, we are bound to pay deference to His enactments; and that civil and ecclesiastical laws, when standing in opposition to His, are not only absurd, but mischievous. Conscience is misled by these erroneous human enactments; for a girl of fifteen has no idea that she sins, if her marriage be authorized by the law and the church. In spite, however, of the sanction of acts of Parliament, and of clerical benedictions, the Creator punishes severely if His laws be infringed. His punishments assume the following, among other forms:

“The parties being young, ignorant, inexperienced, and chiefly actuated by passion, often make unfortunate selections of partners, and entail lasting unhappiness on themselves.

“They transmit imperfect constitutions and inferior dispositions to their earliest born children. And



"They often involve themselves in pecuniary difficulties, in consequence of a sufficient provision not having been made before marriage.

"These punishments, being inflicted by the Creator, indicate that His law has been violated ; in other words, that marriage at a too early age, is positively sinful.

"There ought not to be a very great disparity between the ages of the husband and wife. There is a physical and mental condition naturally attendant on each age, and persons whose organs are in corresponding conditions, sympathize in their feelings, judgments and pursuits, and therefore, form suitable companions for each other. When the ages are widely different, this sympathy is wanting, and the offspring also is injured. In such cases, it is generally the husband who transgresses ; old men are fond of marrying young women. The children of such unions often suffer grievously from the disparity. The late Dr. Robert Macnish, in a letter addressed to me, gives the following illustration of this remark : "I know," says he, "an *old* gentleman, who has been twice married. The children of his first marriage are strong, active, healthy people, and their children are the same. The offspring of his second marriage are very inferior, especially in an intellectual point of view ; and the younger the children are, the more is this obvious. The girls are superior to the boys, both physically and intellectually. Indeed, their mother told me she had great difficulty in rearing her sons, but none with her daughters. The gentleman, himself, at the time of his second marriage, was upwards of sixty, and his wife about twenty-five. This shows very clearly, that the boys have taken chiefly off the father, and the daughters off the mother."

"Another natural law in regard to marriage, is, that the parties should not be related to each other in blood. This law holds good in the transmission of all organized beings. Even vegetables are deteriorated, if the same stock be repeatedly planted on the same ground. In the case of the lower animals, a continued disregard of this law is almost universally admitted to be detrimental, and human nature affords no exception to the rule. It is written in our organization, and the consequences of its

infringement may be discovered in the degeneracy, physical and mental, of many nobles and royal families, who have long and systematically set it at defiance. Kings of Portugal and Spain, for instance, occasionally apply to the Pope for permission to marry their nieces. The Pope grants the dispensation; and the marriage is celebrated with all the solemnities of religion. The blessing of Heaven is invoked on the union. The real power of his holiness, however, is here put to the test. He is successful in delivering the king from the censures of the church, and his offspring from the civil consequences of illegitimacy; but the Creator yields not one jot or tittle of His law. The union is either altogether unfruitful, or children miserably constituted in body, and imbecile in mind are produced; and this is the form in which the Divine displeasure is announced. The Creator, however, is not recognized by his holiness, nor by priests in general, nor by ignorant kings, as governing, by fixed laws, in the organic world. They proceed as if their own power were supreme. Even when they have tasted the bitter consequences of their folly, they are far from recognizing the cause of their sufferings. With much self-complacency, they resign themselves to the events, and seek consolation in religion. "The Lord giveth," say they, "and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord;" as if the Lord did not give men understanding, and impose on them the obligation of using it, to discover His laws and obey them; and, as if there were no impiety in shutting their eyes against His laws, in pretending to dispense with them; and, finally, when they are undergoing the punishment of such transgressions, in appealing to Him for consolation.

"It is curious to observe the enactments of legislators on this subject. According to the Levitical law, which we have adopted, 'marriage is prohibited between relations, within *three* degrees of kindred,' computing the generations through the common ancestor, and accounting affinity the same as consanguinity. Among the Athenians, brothers and sisters of the half-blood, if related by the fathers' side, might marry; if by the mothers' side, they were prohibited from marrying. 'The



same custom,' says Paley, 'prevailed in Chaldea; for Sarah was Abraham's half-sister.' 'She is the daughter of my father,' says Abraham, 'but not of my mother; and she became my wife.' Gen. xx. 12. The Roman law continued the prohibition without limits, to the descendants of brothers and sisters."

"Here we observe Athenean, Chaldean, and Roman legislators prohibiting or permitting the same act, apparently according to the degree of light which had penetrated into their own understandings concerning its natural consequences. The real divine law is written in the structure and modes of action of our bodily and mental constitutions, and it prohibits the marriage of all blood relations, diminishing the punishment, however, according as the remoteness from the common ancestor increases, but allowing marriages among relations by affinity, without any prohibition whatever. According to the law of Scotland, a man may marry his cousin german, or his great niece, both of which connections the law of nature declares to be inexpedient; but he may not marry his deceased wife's sister, against which connection nature declares no penalty whatever. He might have married either sister at first, without impropriety, and there is no reason in nature, why he may not marry them in succession, the one after the other has died. There may be reasons of expediency for prohibiting this connection, but I mean to say that the organic laws contain no denunciations against it.

"In Scotland, the practice of full cousins marrying, is not uncommon; and you will meet with examples of healthy families born of such unions, and from these an argument is maintained against the existence of the natural law which we are considering. But it is only when the parents have both had excellent constitutions that the children do not attract attention by their imperfections. The first alliance against the natural laws brings down the tone of the organs and functions, say one degree; the second, two degrees, and the third, three; and perseverance in transgression, ends in glaring imperfections, or in extinction of the race. This is undeniable, and it proves the reality of the law. The children of healthy cousins are not so favorably organized as the children of the same parents, if

married to equally healthy partners, not at all related in blood, would have been. If the cousins have themselves inherited in-different constitutions, the degeneracy is striking, even in their children. We may err in interpreting nature's laws, but if we do discover them in their full import and consequences, we never find exceptions to them.

"Another natural law relative to marriage, is, that the parties should possess sound constitutions. The punishment for neglecting this law is, that the parties suffer pain and misery in their own persons, from bad health, perhaps become disagreeable companions to each other, feel themselves unfit to discharge the duties of their condition, and transmit feeble constitutions to their children. They are also exposed to premature death; and of consequence, their children are liable to all the melancholy consequences of being left unprotected and unguided by parental experience and affection, at a time when these are most needed. The natural law is, that a weak and imperfectly organized frame transmits one of a similar description to offspring; and, the children inheriting weakness, are prone to fall into disease and die. Indeed, the transmission of various diseases founded in physical imperfections, from parents to children, is a matter of universal notoriety—thus, consumption, gout, scrofula, hydrocephalus, rheumatism, and insanity, are well known to descend from generation to generation. Strictly speaking, it is not *disease* which is transmitted, but organs of such imperfect structure, that they are unable to perform their functions properly, and so weak, that they are easily put into a morbid condition by causes which sound organs could easily resist.—(*Combe's Moral Philosophy*, p. 114.)

(e) Hitherto the general opinion has been that the determination of the sex of offspring was a mere matter of chance, dependant on no law of nature, therefore beyond human control.

Dr. Ryan, in his "Philosophy of Marriage," regrets the obscurity in which this subject is involved, and remarks, that in a country where the laws of primogeniture exist, any knowledge which would insure the birth of male heirs, would be of the first



importance, but that no such knowledge does, at present, exist. Yet, more recent observation, and the statistical tables of births show, that the laws which govern this subject, are as certain in their operations as those of any other portion of organized nature; and closer observers of human nature have also discovered that the sex of offspring is determined by the comparative strength of constitution, temperament, age, and habits of the parents.

The following remarks of Mr. Combe, respecting the laws of polygamy, throw much light on this subject:

"It is generally admitted by physiologists that the proportions of the sexes born, are thirteen males to twelve females. From the greater hazards to which the male sex is exposed, this disparity is, in adult life, reduced to equality; indeed, with our present manners, habits and pursuits, the balance among adults, in almost all Europe, is turned the other way, the females of any given age above puberty, preponderating over the males. In some eastern countries, more females than males are born; and it is said that this indicates a design in nature that *there*, each male should have several wives; but there is reason to believe that the variation from the proportions of thirteen to twelve is the consequence of departures from the natural laws. In the appendix to the Constitution of Man, I have published some curious observations in regard to the determination of the sexes, in the lower animals; from which it appears that inequality is the result of unequal strength and age in the parents. In our own country and race, it is observed, that when old men marry young females, the progeny are generally daughters; and I infer that in the eastern countries alluded to, in which an excess of females exists, the cause may be found in the superior vigor and youth of the females;\* the practice of polygamy being con-

---

\* When we reflect upon the degraded condition of the females of those eastern countries—the little intellectual culture which they receive—their indolent, luxurious and sensual habits, another very palpable inference may be arrived at; which is, that the habits of those women are more favorable for producing female, than male offspring.

fined to rich men, who enervate themselves by every form of disobedience to the natural laws, and thereby become physically inferior to the females."

The influence which the comparative age of the [parents has in determining the sex of offspring, is shown by the following table of Professor Hofacker. This table coincides perfectly with those referred to by Mr. Combe.

<i>Age of the Husband.</i>	<i>Age of the Wife.</i>	Number of Boys born for every 100 Girls	
Husband is younger.....	than the wife.....	90	6
Husband is the same age.....	as the wife.....	90	0
Husband is older.....	by from 3 to 6 years.....	103	4
Do. do.....	by from 6 to 9 years.....	124	7
Do. do.....	by from 9 to 18 years.....	143	7
Do. do.....	by from 18 years & upwards	200	0
Husband's age between 24 & 36	wife's between 16 & 26.....	116	6
Do. do.....	wife's between 36 & 46.....	95	4
Husband's age between 36 & 48	wife is younger.....	176	9
Do. do.....	wife is of middle age.....	114	3
Do. do.....	wife is older.....	109	2
Husband's age between 48 & 60	wife of middle age.....	190	0

According to the preceding table, it may be inferred, that the majority of the first children of very young parents would be females; and observation shows this to be the fact. There are, however, many apparent exceptions to this law; but if all the circumstances under which those exceptions occur were known, they would, doubtless, tend to prove the law. Thus, in the case of the present Queen of England, who married at the age of twenty, her husband being several months younger, their first child was a daughter, their second a son; this is an exception to the law under consideration; but when we learn, that only ten months intervened between the births of the children, the contradiction is explained; for, the physical system of the female one month after parturition, being below that of the male, and conception taking place at that time, of course a male child was the result.\*

\* By the last arrival, we learn that the youthful queen has again become a mother; but, as seventeen months has elapsed since the birth of the heir-apparent, the infant is, as might be expected, a daughter.



Strength of constitution and age having been considered, it only remains to notice the effect which the temperament and habits of the parents have in determining the sex of offspring. The effect which a powerful vital or sanguineous temperament has, when possessed by the female, is shown by the following observation and fact. In speaking of the Empress Maria Theresa, Mr. Swinborn remarks, "she has such an internal fever and heat of the blood, that she cannot bear to have the windows closed at any season of the year." Maria Theresa was married at the age of eighteen, her first children were twin girls, and in twenty years she had *twelve* daughters and four sons.

"The lymphatic temperament," says Mr. Combe, "gives the greatest activity to the animal organs;" and it may be observed, that women in whom this temperament obtain, generally have more daughters than sons.

The nervous temperament, on the contrary, is more favorable to greater intellectual activity; and women of this temperament have most sons, and are generally *less prolific* than either of the former temperaments. The cause of this appears to be the greater expenditure of nervous energy through the brain, induced by the superior activity which the nervous temperament gives to that organ. When, however, the husband is of a lymphatic temperament, and the wife bilious and nervous, the progeny will generally be daughters; for, although to the superficial observer, appearances may indicate the contrary, superior strength of constitution is possessed by the wife. And when we reflect that the temperament and habits can be very materially modified and changed, the inference is, that the sex of offspring may, in some degree, be controlled by the will of the parent.

A very pious lady, of a lymphatic temperament, indolent and luxurious habits, married young, and had a large family of daughters; at the birth of each of whom she experienced a severe disappointment, so great was her desire for a son.—"That the Lord would be pleased to grant her a son," she constantly and devotedly prayed, but without effect, until the preceding views were explained to her; and it was suggested,

that if she fasted as well as prayed, she would be much more likely to attain her object. For, as the laws of the Creator were unalterable, it became her duty to ascertain those laws and conform to them; and instead of blindly supplicating the Almighty to grant her request, to change her habits of life, and endeavor to live in accordance with His physical as well as spiritual laws. Being a woman of some original force of character, until spoiled by prosperity, and seeing the truth of this reasoning illustrated in the families of her own acquaintances, she immediately commenced a course of physical and mental training, which, in effect, has made her a wiser, happier, healthier woman, and the mother of a fine promising boy.

Mothers generally prefer the greater number of their children to be sons, knowing that the chances of happiness for women are much less than for men. If, in the present condition of society, the proportion of males to females born were two to one, there would be much less suffering in the world, and married women being more tenderly cherished, would attain to greater age. For, that more of this class die prematurely, from the effects of unkindness and neglect, than are set down in the bills of mortality, there can be but little doubt.

In connection with the preceding observations, a few remarks respecting the causes of sterility may be useful.

There is, probably, no subject on which there is so little general knowledge as that of barrenness or sterility. The principal cause of this want of information is, that the subject has usually been considered of so delicate a nature, that it could not be treated of, with propriety, except in medical works. When, however, we reflect upon the importance of such knowledge to the happiness of a vast number of the most amiable and worthy of our sex, the great and natural desire they have for offspring, the distress and perplexity of mind which they experience by not being able to discover the causes of sterility,—any light on this subject must be most welcome. Those, therefore, who possess this light, but withhold it from mere motives of false delicacy, must be, in the estimation of all truly philosophical minds exceedingly reprehensible.



The authoress does not propose treating this subject at the length of which it will admit, but merely to give a few conclusions, arrived at by much study and observation. She would suggest, that there may be much error in the popular opinion that sterility is more commonly the fault of the female than of the male. For, when we contrast the temperate and chaste habits of the former, with the too frequently intemperate, luxurious, and dissipated lives of the latter, the most superficial knowledge of physiology might point out the error. When, however, knowledge becomes more generally diffused, and parents perceive the necessity and importance of enlightening their children on the vital subject of the laws of health, sterility from this cause, will be less frequent.\*

---

\* Many of our miseries, misfortunes and even crimes, are to be attributed to the misplaced indulgence, or culpable neglect of our parents; and however startling and unpalatable to the unintentionable offenders this maxim of the venerable author of the "Economy of Health," may be, its truth cannot be gainsayed. The censure contained in this remark, so deeply important to the human race, should open the eyes of the thoughtless to a sense of their duty, and to the adoption of every available means, aided by precept and example, to obviate such disastrous results.

Too many of the guardians of youth, using ignorance as a shield, aim to conceal from their charge, all knowledge of the vicious and impure tendencies in our nature. Vain and impotent defence! What is to supply the warning voice, the lessons which could be inculcated by one experienced in the world's ways—who could tear from the front of vice the smiling mask, and point to the haggard features, distorted by pain and misery, as the too sure result of unhallowed indulgences? a sight that would surround the votary with an armour "thrice mailed in proof," which no accidental change of circumstances could endanger, or moment of temptation assail with success. "An admonition from the experienced physician," says the author just quoted, "frequently makes a deeper impression on the mind of headstrong youth, in this respect, than a sermon from the priest." Speaking in regard to the passion of love, Dr. Johnson continues: "Cupid is represented by the ancients as a winged infant, amusing himself with catching butterflies trundling a hoop, or playing with a nymph. These representations are no inappropriate to the character of Love, in the third septemniad. It is then guileless, innocent, ardent and devoted! Would that it always maintained this character! But, alas! like everything in this world, Love itself changes with time, and assumes such a different aspect and temperament, that the poets were forced to imagine two Cupids—one, heaven-born—the other, the offspring of Nox and Erebus—distinguished for riot, debauchery, falsehood and inconstancy! Instead of the bundle of golden arrows, designed to pierce, but not to wound the susceptible heart, we too often see the salve



There is another cause of sterility, more common, perhaps, than the preceding, and more difficult to comprehend; as it occurs with those of the soundest constitutions, who have always led the purest and most exemplary lives. These cases, doubtless, may be explained when we shall have obtained a sufficient knowledge of the laws which constitute the different temperaments, and the rules by which they should be united in the opposite sex. It is a well-known law of nature, that issue follows the union of contrarities. These contrarities, it is found, must not only be male and female, but in the human species, there should also be a difference in the temperaments. And hence it has been noticed by one who has given considerable attention to the subject, that those wives who are of the same

---

quiver surcharged with darts and daggers, dipped in poisons more potent than the UPAS, and destined to scatter sickness and sorrow through every ramification of society—poisonous, both moral and physical—unknown to Greek or Roman, whether philosopher, satirist, or physician; but fearfully calculated to taint the springs of life, and involve the innocent and guilty in one common ruin! From the quivered son of Jupiter, they have little to fear; but oh! let them beware of that other deity, sprung from Nox and Erebus!" The following examples are in support of this view.

Alfred B—, son of the strong-minded and sensible Colonel E—, passed through college with distinguished honor; and it was determined to send him, for a season, to the medical school of the gay city of temptations—the capital of France. Previous to his departure, he had formed an attachment, and became engaged to a young lady of superior talents, accomplishments and beauty. This circumstance was very gratifying to his father, who thought that a virtuous attachment would serve to guard him from forming any improper connections abroad. He, however, did not depend entirely upon this, but enlightened him thoroughly, with regard to all the dangers, temptations and snares, to which an enthusiastic and impetuous youth is exposed, in spending a winter in Paris. Fearful that his injunctions might be forgotten, and being desirous of making an indelible impression on the mind of his son, his father requested him, immediately on his arrival at the French metropolis, to visit an exhibition in wax, representing, with the most perfect truth, the effects of vice in all its stages, in the most horrible and disgusting forms.\* A

---

\* "Let the most thoughtless and dissipated youth," says a young medical writer, "frequently visit the ward of our City Hospital, appropriated to the disease induced by sensual excesses, and he must be deficient, indeed, in reflective powers, if the scenes of suffering and death, there witnessed, does not prove a sufficient warning to deter him from the practice of conduct incurring such a dreadful penalty."



temperament as their husbands, are either sterile, or if they have issue, their children are feeble, and generally very short-lived. When, on the contrary, there is the most marked difference in the temperament of the husband and wife, other things beings equal, we usually find the most numerous and healthy offspring.

From this view of the temperaments, we are enabled to understand that well-established law of nature, which produces sterility and feeble offspring, from the union of blood relations. And also, the reason why a severe fit of illness, a sea-voyage, change of air, habits, and diet, or in fact, any circumstance which would produce a change of temperament, should result in offspring, to those who had been united many years previous to that event.

Another frequent cause of sterility is functional derangement of the uterus, caused by an irritation of the spinal nerves, connected with the ganglia distributed to that organ. This cause, fortunately, is completely within the power of medical skill to remove. There are, doubtless, many cases of sterility from this cause, in which the sufferer thinks that it is the will of the Almighty that she should not have offspring, therefore takes no further thought on the subject. Whereas, if a wise and experienced physician were consulted, the physical derangement might be corrected, and nature assisted to perform her natural function.\*

---

\* "The power which homeopathy exerts over the functions of the uterus, has, in a vast number of instances, been strikingly exemplified; for, by correcting the deranged state of this organ, *sterility*, which had been considered established, has been completely removed."—(*Dunsford's Practical Advantages of Homeopathy*.)

---

view of that revolting exhibition had the desired effect. The youth passed unscathed, surrounded by as many snares as were spread by Calypso and her nymphs, and returned to his country pure in person and mind as he left it, and is at present the happy husband of an adoring and adorable wife, and the proud and affectionate father of a talented, beautiful and healthy offspring.

Mr. L—, was the son of an opulent merchant, who had devoted his life, from early youth, to acquiring wealth. Gratified with success, his next ambition was, that his only son should make a splendid figure in society, and become a distinguished man. With this view, he bestowed upon him the best education that money could procure; that accomplished, he sent him to travel in foreign countries to attain a knowledge of the world, and the highly

(f) "There is no question," says Dr. Elliotson, "that the cultivation of any organ or power of the parent will dispose to the production of offspring improved in the same particular."

"It is well known," says Mr. Walker, "that the whelps of well trained dogs are, almost, at birth, more fitted for sporting purposes than others. The most extraordinary and curious observations of this kind have been made by Mr. Knight, who, in a paper read to the Royal Society, showed that the communicated powers were not of a vague or general kind, but that any particular art or trick acquired by the animals was readily practised by their progeny without the slightest instruction."

---

polished manners of good society. Before leaving the parental roof, the youth received a general injunction to avoid low company, the gaming table, and sharpers, and to associate only with his superiors. These, judging from his own experience, the father thought included all the evils to which his son would be exposed. Thus, with suddenly acquired liberty, and a splendid allowance, without any practical knowledge of the world, nor any noble aim in view, was this inexperienced youth exposed to temptations, requiring the firmest principles of virtue to withstand. The result was, as might be apprehended. After a few years absence, he returned to his home with the loss of health, character, and peace of mind. Could those misfortunes have been confined to the culpable in this case, the evil would have been less; but, unfortunately, the innocent and the virtuous shared the penalty of the guilty. Hoping to retrieve his character and standing in society, after a few months apparent reformation, Mr. L—— made proposals of marriage to an amiable, gentle being, who accepted him upon the supposed truth of the maxim, "that a reformed rake makes the best husband." Like many other of her sex, she proved the fallacy of this maxim by a life of suffering and sorrow. Five children died in infancy, from the dreadful effects of a virulent disease inherited from their father\*. One bright bud of promise, however, lived long enough to entwine itself around the heart of its mother, when its frail constitution was shattered by a simple disease of childhood, and one grave received the innocent sufferer, and the broken-hearted mother.

---

\* That the dreadful disease here alluded to, is one of the forms by which the "sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation," there is but little doubt. The following extract from a lecture, delivered by a distinguished professor in one of our medical colleges, may serve as a warning to inexperienced youth; for how should they know, if the fatal penalty of sin, descending through many generations, has not tainted their constitution, and rendered it susceptible to the condition therein referred to.

"It is my firm impression, and one, too, that I have not failed to impress on the minds of my students ever since I have been a teacher—one that I



"It was impossible to hear that interesting paper without being deeply impressed by it. Accordingly, in taking a long walk afterwards for the purpose of reflecting upon the subject, it forcibly struck me, that the better education of women was of much greater importance to their progeny than is imagined, and in calling on Sir Anthony Carlisle, on my return to speak of the paper and its suggestions, he mentioned to me a very striking corroboration of this conclusion.

"He observed, that many years since, an old schoolmaster had told him that in the course of his personal experience he had observed a remarkable difference in the capacities of children for learning which was connected with the education and aptitude of their parents:—that the children of people accustomed to arithmetic, learned figures quicker than those of diffe-

---

have not hesitated to promulgate in writing and in debate—that most of the constitutional symptoms of syphilis, depend on the inoculation of this disease in a scrofulous constitution. For many years I have had this subject impressed on my mind. I have examined with care, every case of this disease that has occurred in a laborious practice. I have inquired into the previous history and circumstances of the unfortunate beings who have fallen victims to the fell destroyer. I have looked at every case of this disease transplanted into a strumous diathesis, with peculiar attention, and I do not hesitate to assert, that when a scrofulous patient presents himself before me, with even a common chancre, I consider his death-warrant signed and sealed. He may, it is true, linger on a miserable life, disgusting to himself, and loathed by his friends; but even if his life be spared, what is he but a miserable, emaciated, deformed, wretched being, beyond the power of medicine, capable of indulging in no hope, but that of a speedy death; and the early death of such an unfortunate being, is a relief from misery and despair. And who are the victims to this unenviable conjunction? Who are the young men that fall victims to the union of this disease and scrofula? Alas! it is among the young, the talented, the manly.

"Too often have I seen young gentlemen, whose early mental developments, whose just and fair proportions, whose general character for scholarship and accomplishments have rendered them the delight of their friends, the hope of their parents and of their country, cut off by their own imprudence. And those, too; are the very men that are most easily led away, young, ardent and enthusiastic.

"It is for the scrofulous, for the young, for the talented, for the beautiful, that the snare is laid, and many a physician can testify how often they have followed to the grave the blighted hopes of parents, in the persons of those who have, by imprudence and dissipation, wrought out their own destruction."

rently educated persons ; while the children of classical scholars more easily learned Latin and Greek ; and that notwithstanding a few striking exceptions, the natural dulness of children born of uneducated parents was proverbial."

" INTERMARRIAGE."

(g) The following extract from Dr. Beach's " Family Physician," shows the effect which a simple and temperate diet has in preventing and curing disease.

" I am desirous of calling the attention of the reader, and particularly the invalid, to the best methods of preventing disease, as well as of recovering health, when lost or impaired ; and I wish to impress upon their minds, that this consists, principally, in a *well regulated diet* and regimen. It is very natural and very customary, for us to indulge our propensities and appetites till some derangement of our digestive function is the consequence ; and then, instead of avoiding the exciting cause of the evil, we resort to medicine for a remedy, which at best is but a poor substitute. I have heard of a person subject to dyspepsia, who was so fond of indulging his appetite, that he *would have* a good dinner ; and after eating it, he was in the habit of running his finger down his throat and vomiting it up. This excess in a greater or less degree, is indulged in by thousands ; and they would rather suffer the penalty of gluttony, than to practice abstinence or temperance. They will eat and drink whatever their appetites crave, because diseased, then torture their stomachs with drugs or nostrums till their lives are rendered wretched indeed.

" I wish to see a reform in this respect as well as in the habitual use of ardents, as the one is almost as destructive to health as the other. Says Dr. Mott, in one of his lectures, " All who have abused their stomachs will assuredly be brought to an account for it sooner or later. I am not sure," says he, " but more disease and suffering result from intemperance in eating than intemperance in drinking. Hence, there is as much need of a *temperance eating*, as a *temperance drinking* society. From whatever cause the digestive organs become deranged, the



system will exhibit disease in some form or an other," although it may be years before the disease developes or shows itself.

"Happy would it often be," says a writer, "for suffering man, could he see beforehand the punishment which his repeated departure from the laws of physiology or nature is sure to bring on him. But as in the great majority of instances, the breach of law is limited in extent and becomes serious by the frequency of its repetition, rather than by a single act; so is the punishment gradual in its infliction, and slow in manifesting its accumulated effect; and this very gradation and distance of time, at which the full effect is produced, are the reasons why man, in his ignorance, so often fails to trace the connection between his conduct in life and his broken health.

"To the intemperate in eating and drinking the day of reckoning is merely delayed, and there is habitually present a state of repletion which *clogs the bodily functions*, and may lead to some sudden death, by some acute disease, when the individual is apparently in the highest health."

"How many instances might be mentioned to prove this fact. A person who resides next door to me is now very low from the same causes. He had been a butcher by trade; had lived very high and taken very little exercise, which caused great plethora, He was suddenly attacked with a severe disease, and for some days his life despaired of; I anticipated a similar result from his mode of living. Another acquaintance of mine was lately brought to the same condition by indulgence in eating and drinking. One day he commenced working in his garden, and on stooping, the blood rushed to the head, occasioning fatal apoplexy. How frequently do we hear of similar cases from similar causes. A person asked my advice, some time ago, in relation to symptoms arising from improper regimen. I prescribed suitable diet, &c. Afterwards, he informed me that he began to follow my directions; but his wife dissuaded him from it.—She prepared so many good things for him to eat that he could not abstain from them. He continued to violate the laws of nature till he was seized with a fit of palsy or apoplexy, which renders his recovery doubtful. Volumes might be filled with similar cases.

Says a late writer, "Is it not better by a rational exercise of judgment, to preserve health when we have it, than first to lose it, then pay the penalty in suffering and danger, as an indispensable preliminary to its subsequent restoration?" It is known, that as soon as a person applies to a judicious physician for advice, he is put under a proper course of regimen to restore him to health. Now, it must be evident, that the same course which is calculated to restore health, is likewise calculated to prevent disease. To accomplish an object so desireable and important as to prevent disease and to preserve health, I have laid down rules in the following pages, founded upon the laws of physiology, and which, if strictly adhered to, will be the means, not only of recovery, but likewise the preservation of health, and often without the use of medicine.

"It is not easily to be credited," says Cheyne, "what wonderful effects, even in the most desperate and universally condemned-to-death diseases, I have seen produced by an exclusively milk and grain diet; and even these the thinnest and least in quantity, the person could be tolerably easy under from the pain of hunger, and continued for one, two, or more years. Epilepsy totally cured; universal lepers made clean; stone and gravel laid quiet; cancers healed or palliated; ulcerated lungs made sound; and schirrous livers made pervious; and all accomplished by a total, obstinate, and continued milk and grain or coarse flour diet. I firmly believe, and am as much convinced as I am of any natural effect, that water drinking only with a diet of milk, grain, and fruit, duly continued and prudently managed, with proper evacuations, air, and exercise, are the most infallible antidotes for all obstinate diseases of mind and body. This regimen I have for the last twenty years pursued."



## POSTSCRIPT.

---

*Up to the time of these sheets going to press, much and oft-repeated inquiry had not been fruitful in obtaining authentic particulars in regard to the immediate ancestors, particularly the mother of the 'first of men.' This much regretted blank has, at the eleventh hour, been satisfactorily filled, and from the best authority. From Mrs. Hale's Magazine of September, 1831, the annexed extract, rich in its instruction to the young mother, is copied.*

### THE MOTHER OF WASHINGTON.

"The character of woman becomes distinguished much oftener by the reflection of her great and good qualities, in the conduct of those men with whom she is particularly connected or associated, than by the exhibition of any extraordinary achievements in her own person. In the parental relations, particularly, the talents of the female are the transmitted inheritance of her sons; and this seems a wise dispensation of Providence, by which the endowments of the sexes are equalized, and both alike made to participate in the glories of their common nature. Certain it is, that far the greatest number of eminent men have owed their superiority and success to the genius, example, and care of their mothers. These reflections need not make women proud; but they should make mothers emulous to train their children to be useful and good; for by laying such a foundation of excellence in early life, the richest hopes for maturity may be rationally entertained.

"The mother of our illustrious Washington furnishes an example of female excellence, and *its reward*, which is unequalled; and yet the model has been hitherto little known. This neglect has not arisen from any indifference of the American people to the virtues of their patriots; but simply that at the time of the

revolution, the public history of the events were paramount to any private relations ; and the novel, rapid, and successful experiment of our national character has left little opportunity for domestic and individual history. But a different sentiment is beginning to prevail ; the public mind is well-nigh wearied with the monotony of fourth of July orations ; and it is time to turn from the great and brilliant theatre of action, and the well known and glorious performers, to examine the movements behind the scenes, and the humble and unheeded, but effective assistants that then proposed the astonishing exhibition.

“ For the succeeding sketch we are indebted to George W. P. Custis, Esq., (grandson of Mrs. Washington, the wife of General Washington,) of Virginia.

“ The mother of Washington was descended from the very respectable family of Ball, who settled as English colonists, on the banks of the Potomac. Bred in those domestic and independent habits which graced Virginia matrons in the old days of Virginia, this lady, by the death of her husband, became involved in the cares of a young family, at a period when those cares seem more especially to claim the aid and control of the stronger sex. It was left for this eminent woman by a method the most rare—by an education and discipline the most peculiar and imposing, to form in the youth-time of her son, those great and essential qualities which gave lustre to the glories of his after life. If the school savored the more of the Spartan than the Persian character, it was a fitter school to form a hero, destined to be the ornament of the age in which he flourished, and a standard of excellence for ages yet to come.

“ It was remarked by the ancients, that the mother always gave the tone to the character of the child ; and we may be permitted to say, that since the days of old renown, a mother has not lived better fitted to give the tone and character of real greatness to her child, than she whose remarkable life and actions this reminiscence will endeavour to illustrate.

“ At the time of his father's death George Washington was only twelve years of age. He has been heard to say, that he knew little of his father except the remembrance of his person,



and of his parental fondness. To his mother's forming care he himself ascribed the origin of his fortunes and his fame.

"The home of Mrs. Washington, of which she was always mistress, was a pattern of order. There the levity and indulgence common to youth was tempered by a deference and well regulated restraint, which, while it neither suppressed nor condemned any rational enjoyment usual in the spring-time of life, prescribed those enjoyments within the bounds of moderation and prosperity. Thus the chief was taught the duty of obedience which prepared him to command. Still the mother held in reserve an authority which never departed from her, not even when her son had become the most illustrious of men. It seemed to say—'I am your *mother*—the being who gave you life—the guide who directed your steps when they needed a guardian; my maternal affection drew forth your love; my authority constrained your spirit; whatever may be your success or your renown, next to your God, your reverence is due to me!' Nor did the chief dissent from these truths; but to the last moments of his venerable parent, yielded to her will the most dutiful and implicit obedience, and felt for her person and character the highest respect, and the most enthusiastic attachment. The late Lawrence Washington, Esq. of Chotank, one of the associates of the juvenile years of the chief, and remembered by him in his will, thus describes the home of his mother:

" 'I was often there with George, his playmate, schoolmate, and young man's companion. Of the mother I was ten times more afraid than I ever was of my own parents; she awed me in the midst of her kindness, for she was indeed truly kind. And even now, when time has whitened my locks, and I am the grandparent of the second generation, I could not behold that majestic woman without feelings it is impossible to describe. Whoever has seen the awe-inspiring air and manner so characteristic in the father of his country, will remember the matron as she appeared when the presiding genius of her well-ordered household, commanding and being obeyed.'

"Such were the domestic influences under which the mind of Washington was formed: and that he not only profited, but

fully appreciated their excellence and the character of his mother, his behaviour at all times testified. Upon his appointment to the command in chief of the American armies, previously to his joining the forces at Cambridge, he removed his mother from her country residence to the village of Fredericksburg, a situation remote from danger, and contiguous to her friends and relations.

“It was there the matron remained during nearly the whole of the trying period of the revolution. Directly in the way of the news, as it passed from north to south; one courier would bring intelligence of success to our arms, another ‘swiftly coursing at his heels,’ the saddening reverse of disaster and defeat. While thus ebbed and flowed the fortunes of our cause, the mother, trusting to the wisdom and protection of Divine Providence, preserved the even tenor of her life, affording an example to those matrons whose sons were alike engaged in the arduous contest; and showing that unavailing anxieties, however belonging to nature, were unworthy of mothers whose sons were combating for the inestimable rights of man, and the freedom and happiness of the world.

“When the comforting and glorious intelligence arrived of the passage of the Delaware, (December '76,) an event which restored our hopes from the very brink of despair, a number of her friends waited upon the mother, with congratulations. She received them with calmness; observed that it was most pleasurable news, and that George appeared to have deserved well of his country for such signal services. And continued, in reply to the congratulation of patriots, (most of whom held letters in their hands, from which they read extracts.) But, my good sirs, here is too much flattery—still George will not forget the lessons I early taught him—he will not forget *himself*, though he is the subject of so much praise!

“Here let me remark upon the absurdity of an idea which, from some strange cause or other, has been suggested, though certainly never believed, that the mother was disposed to favor the royal cause. Such a surmise has not the slightest foundation in truth. Like many others, whose days of enthusiasm



were in the wane, the lady doubted the prospects of success in the beginning of the war; and long during its continuance feared that our means would be found inadequate to a successful contest with so formidable a power as Britain; and our soldiers, brave, but undisciplined, and ill provided, be unequal to cope with the veteran and well-appointed troops of the king. Doubts like these were by no means confined to a female; but were both entertained and expressed by the staunchest of patriots, and most determined of men. But when the mother, who had been removed to the county of Frederick, on the invasion of Virginia, in 1781, was informed by express, of the surrender of Cornwallis, she raised her hands to heaven, and exclaimed 'Thank God, war will now be ended; and peace, independence, and happiness bless our country.'

"During the war, and indeed during her useful life, up to the advanced age of eighty-two, until within three years of her death, (when an afflictive disease prevented exertion,) the mother set a most valuable example, in the management of her domestic concerns, carrying her keys, bustling in her household affairs, providing for her family, and living and moving in all the pride of independence. She was not actuated by the *ambition for show which pervades lesser minds*; and the peculiar plainness and dignity of her manners became in no wise altered, when the sun of glory arose upon her house. There are some of the aged inhabitants of Fredericksburg, who well remember the matron, as seated in an old fashioned open chaise, she was in the habit of visiting, almost daily, her little farm in the vicinity of the town. When there, she would ride about her fields, giving her orders, and seeing that they were obeyed.

"Her great industry, with the well regulated economy of all her concerns, enabled the matron to dispense considerable charities to the poor, although her own circumstances were always far from rich. All manner of domestic economies, so useful in those times of privation and trouble, met her zealous attention; while every thing about her household bore marks of her care and management, and very many things the impress of her own hands. In a very humble dwelling, and suffering under an



excruciating disease, (cancer of the breast,) thus lived this mother of the first of men, preserving unchanged, her peculiar nobleness and independence of character.

"She was continually visited and solaced by her children, and numerous grand-children, particularly her daughter Mrs. Lewis. To the repeated and earnest solicitations of this lady, that she would remove to her house and pass the remainder of her days, to the pressing intreaties of her son, that she would make Mount Vernon the home of her age, the matron replied, 'I thank you for your affectionate and dutiful offers, but my wants are but few in this world, and I feel perfectly competent to take care of myself.' Her son-in-law, Col. Fielding Lewis, proposed to relieve her of the direction of her affairs: she observed, 'Do you, Fielding, keep my books in order, for your eye-sight is better than mine; but leave the executive management to me.'

"One weakness alone attached to this lofty-minded and intrepid woman; and that proceeded from a most affecting cause.—She was afraid of lightning. In early life she had a female friend killed by her side, while sitting at table—the knife and fork in the hands of the unfortunate girl, were melted by the electric fluid. The matron never recovered from the fright and shock occasioned by this distressing accident. On the approach of a thunder-cloud, she would retire to her chamber, and not leave it again till the storm had passed away.

"She was always pious, but in her latter days her devotions were performed in private. She was in the habit of repairing every day to a secluded spot, formed by rocks and trees near her dwelling, where, abstracted from the world and worldly things, she communed with her Creator in humiliation and prayer.

"After an absence of nearly seven years, it was, at length, on the return of the combined armies from Yorktown, permitted to the mother again to see and embrace her illustrious son. So soon as he had dismounted, in the midst of a numerous and brilliant suite, he sent to apprise her of his arrival, and to know when it would be her pleasure to receive him. And now mark the force of early education and habits, and the superiority of



the Spartan over the Persian school, in this interview of the great Washington with his admirable parent and instructor.—No pageantry of war proclaimed his coming, no trumpets sounded, no banners waved. Alone, and on foot, the marshal of France, the general-in-chief of the combined armies of France and America, the deliverer of his country, the hero of the age, repaired to pay his humble duty to her whom he venerated as the author of his being, the founder of his fortune and his fame. For, full well he knew that the matron would not be moved by all the pride that glory ever gave, nor by all the ‘pomp and circumstance’ of power.

“The lady was alone, her aged hands employed in the works of domestic industry, when the good news was announced, and it was further told that the victor chief was in waiting at the threshold. She welcomed him with a warm embrace, and by the well-remembered and endearing name of his childhood; inquiring as to his health, she remarked the lines which mighty cares and many trials had made on his manly countenance, spoke much of old times and old friends, but of his glory—*not one word!*

“Meantime, in the village of Fredericksburg, all was joy and revelry; the town was crowded with the officers of the French and American armies, and with gentlemen from all the country around, who hastened to welcome the conquerors of Cornwallis. The citizens made arrangements for a splendid ball, to which the mother of Washington was specially invited. She observed, that although her dancing days were *pretty well over*, she should feel happy in contributing to the general festivity, and consented to attend.

“The foreign officers were anxious to see the mother of their chief. They had heard indistinct rumors respecting her remarkable life and character, but forming their judgments from European examples, they were prepared to expect in the mother that glare and show which would have been attached to the parents of the great in the old world. How were they surprised, when the matron, leaning on the arm of her son, entered the room! She was arrayed in the very plain, yet becoming garb worn by



the Virginia lady of the olden time. Her address, always dignified and imposing, was courteous, though reserved. She received the complimentary attentions which were profusely paid her, without evincing the slightest elevation, and at an early hour, wishing the company much enjoyment of their pleasures, observed that it was time for old people to be at home, retired.

"The foreign officers were amazed to behold one whom so many causes contributed to elevate, preserving the even tenor of her life, while such a blaze of glory shone upon her name and offspring. The European world furnished no examples of such magnanimity. Names of ancient lore were heard to escape from their lips, and they observed, that 'if such were the matrons of America, it was not wonderful the sons were illustrious.'

"It was on this festive occasion that General Washington danced a minuet with Mrs. Willis. It closed his dancing days. The minuet was much in vogue at that period, and was peculiarly calculated for the display of the splendid figure of the chief, and his natural grace and elegance of air and manner.—The gallant Frenchmen who were present, of which fine people it may be said, that dancing forms one of the elements of their existence, so much admired the American performance, as to admit that a Parisian education could not have improved it. As the evening advanced, the commander-in-chief, yielding to the gaiety of the scene, went down some dozen couple, in the contra-dance, with great spirit and satisfaction.

"The Marquis de Lafayette repaired to Fredericksburg, previous to his departure for Europe, in the fall of 1784, to pay his parting respects to the mother, and to ask her blessing.

"Conducted by one of her grandsons, he approached the house, when the young gentleman observed, 'There, sir, is my grandmother.' Lafayette beheld, working in the garden, clad in domestic made clothes, and her gray head covered by a plain straw hat, the *mother* of 'his hero!' The lady saluted him kindly, observing—'Ah, marquis! you see an old woman—but come, I can make you welcome to my poor dwelling, without the parade of changing my dress.'

"Much as Lafayette had seen and heard of the matron before, at this interesting interview he was charmed and struck with



wonder. When he considered her great age, the transcendent elevation of her son, who, surpassing all rivals in the race of glory, 'bore the palm alone,' and at the same time discovered no change in her plain, yet dignified life and manners, he became assured that the Roman matron could flourish in the modern day.

"The marquis spoke of the happy effects of the revolution, and the goodly prospect which opened upon independent America, stated his speedy departure for his native land, paid the tribute of his heart, his love and admiration of her illustrious son, and concluded by asking her blessing. She blessed him—and to the encomiums which he had lavished upon his hero and paternal chief, the matron replied in these words: '*I am not surprised at what George has done, for he was always a very good boy.*'

"Immediately after the organization of the present government, the chief magistrate repaired to Fredericksburg, to pay his humble duty to his mother, preparatory to his departure for New-York. An affecting scene ensued. The son feelingly remarked the ravages which a torturing disease had made upon the aged frame of his mother, and thus addressed her:

" 'The people, madam, have been pleased, with the most flattering unanimity, to elect me to the chief magistracy of these United States; but before I can assume the functions of my office, I have come to bid you an affectionate farewell. So soon as the public business, which must necessarily be encountered in arranging a new government, can be disposed of, I shall hasten to Virginia, and—'

"Here the matron interrupted him: 'You will see me no more. My great age, and the disease which is fast approaching my vitals, warn me that I shall not be long of this world. I trust in God I am somewhat prepared for a better. But go, George, fulfill the high destinies which heaven appears to assign you; go, my son, and may that heaven's and your mother's blessing be with you always.'

"The president was deeply affected. His head rested upon the shoulder of his parent, whose aged arm feebly, yet fondly encircled his neck. That brow, on which fame had wreathed

the purest laurel virtue ever gave to created man, relaxed from its lofty bearing. That look, which could have awed a Roman senate in its Fabrician day, was bent in filial tenderness upon the time-worn features of the venerable matron.

“The great man wept. A thousand recollections crowded upon his mind, as memory, retracing scenes long past, carried him back to the paternal mansion, and the days of his youth, and there, the centre of attraction, was his mother, whose care, instructions, and discipline had prepared him to reach the topmost height of laudable ambition—yet how were his glories forgotten while he gazed upon her whom, wasted by time and malady, he must soon part with to meet no more.

“The matron’s predictions were true. The disease which so long had preyed upon her frame completed its triumph, and she expired at the age of eighty-five, rejoicing in the consciousness of a life well spent, and confiding in the promises of immortality to the humble believer.

“In her person, Mrs. Washington was of middle size, and finely formed; her features pleasing, yet strongly marked. It is not the happiness of the writer to remember her, having only seen her with infant eyes. The sister of the chief he perfectly well remembers. She was a most majestic woman, and so strikingly like the brother, that it was a matter of frolic to throw a cloak around her, and place a military hat upon her head, and such was the perfect resemblance, that, had she appeared on her brother’s steed, battalions would have presented arms, and senates risen to do homage to the chief.

“In her latter days, the mother often spoke of her own *good boy*, of the merits of his early life, of his love and dutifulness to herself; but of the deliverer of his country, the chief magistrate of this great republic, she never spoke. Call you this insensibility? or want of ambition? Oh, no! her ambition had been gratified to overflowing. She had taught him to be *good*; that he became *great* when the opportunity presented, was a consequence, not a cause.

“Thus lived and died this distinguished woman. Had she been a Roman dame, statues would have been erected to her



memory in the capital, and we should have read in classic pages the story of her virtues.

“When another century shall have elapsed, and the nations of the earth, as well as our descendants, shall have learned the true value of liberty, the name of our hero will gather a glory it has never yet been invested with; and then will youth and age, maid and matron, aged and bearded men, with pilgrim step, repair to the *now neglected grave* of the mother of Washington.”

---

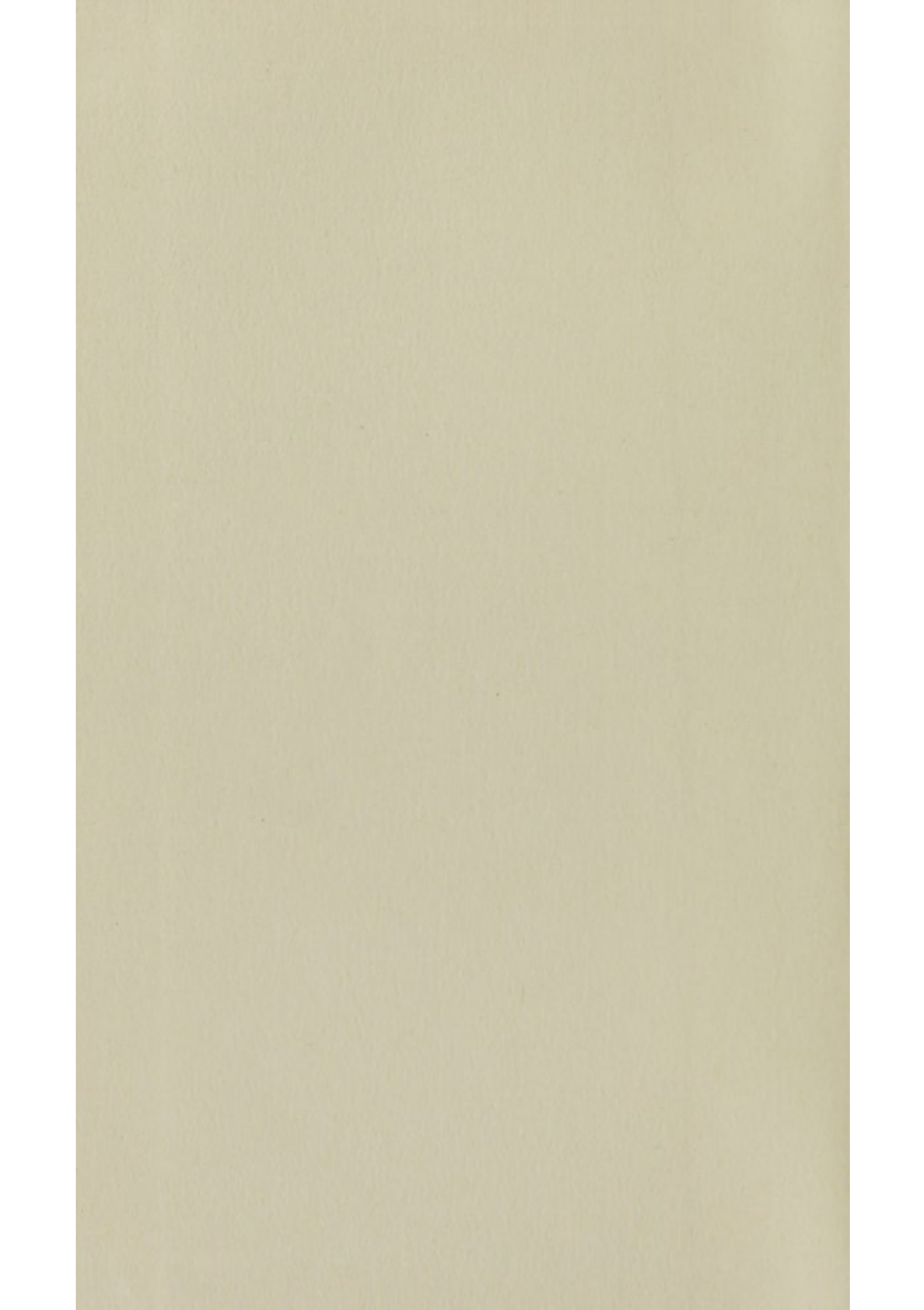
Another distinguished example of the transmission of superior intellectual and moral qualities, has, at the eleventh hour, come to the knowledge of the writer. A late English publication contains the following brief sketch of the parents of Thomas Carlyle, so justly celebrated for the originality and power of his writings.

“Carlyle is a borderer. The village of Ecclefechan, in Annandale, has the honor of giving him birth. From our admiration of the genius of Carlyle, we lately made a pilgrimage to his native village, and learned a few particulars of his early history. His father, who was a creditable yeoman, in comfortable circumstances, was a man of a strong and original mind, of very superior intelligence for his opportunities and station in society, and much respected for his moral worth, and strict, though somewhat awkward honesty.

“By the villagers he seems to have been regarded as quite an oracle; and they still relate many instances of his striking original observations and rich sarcastic wit. His mother, who is still living, and can enjoy with a parent’s pride and pleasure, the celebrity of her distinguished son, is also a very superior, sensible, and pious woman. To this excellent mother he owes much, for the pains and care with which she imbued his youthful mind with the principles of religion, and that love of truth and virtue which characterises his writings; and her solicitude, we [were informed, is well repaid by the more than filial affection of her son, who venerates her with a devotion approaching to idolatry.”

THE END.









NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE



NLM 03203706 7

ARMED FORCES

MEDICAL LIBRARY