

Meadow Brook

BY
MARY J. HOLMES

(Sunny Bank Farm)

CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)

That night I made up my mind to be an "old maid." Nobody would ever want me, I knew; I was so homely; and with calm resignation I thought how much good I would do in the world, and how I would honor the sisterhood. Very slowly the morning light came struggling in through the windows, rousing the weary passengers, who, rubbing their red-rimmed eyes, looked around to see who their companions were. So carefully had I kept my face hidden from view that Ada had no suspicion whatever of my presence. At Canandaigua, stepping out upon the platform in front of the depot, I looked anxiously around for Herbert, but he was not there. I found my way to the public parlor, which for a few moments I occupied alone. I had just removed my dusty bonnet, and was brushing my tangled hair, when the door opened and I stood face to face with Ada Montrose. I simply nodded, as I would to any stranger, and went on with my toilet, while throwing herself upon the sofa, she exclaimed, "Dear me, how tired I am! Do you live here?"

"Of course not," I answered. "I am on my way to visit my sister Anna, whom you perhaps remember."

She turned very red, and replied by asking if I were in the train which had just passed.

"Yes," I answered, "I occupied the seat behind you and your husband—is it not?"

Affecting to be a little embarrassed, she said, "Not my husband—yet. He came on to Boston to accompany me home, and wishing to see a friend of his who lives here, we have stopped over one train."

I was on the point of asking her about my aunt, when the door again opened and there stood before us a slovenly looking man, attired in a slouched hat, gray coat, and huge cowhide boots. So complete was the metamorphosis that neither of us recognized him, until he had exclaimed: "Ada! How came you here?" Then we knew it was Herbert Langley. He was rather disconcerted at being seen by Ada in such a plight, and after a little he stammered out an apology, saying he was a farmer now, and lived in the country, and of course could not be expected to dress as he used in the city.

"How is your wife, Mr. Langley?" asked Ada in a mocking, deferential tone. Instantly the whole expression of Herbert's face was changed, and there was a look of tenderness and pride in his eyes as he advanced toward Ada, and whispered in her ear something which I did not understand. Whatever it was, it made her blush, as she replied, rather sneeringly, "Of course I congratulate you."

It was a cold, raw, autumnal day. The roads were horrible, and as we plowed through the thick mud I took my first lesson in genuine homesickness, which, in my opinion, is about as hard to bear as love-sickness. It was in vain that Herbert pointed out to me the many handsome farm houses which we passed, expatiating upon the richness and fertility of the soil, and telling me how greatly superior in everything New York was to New England. I scarcely heard him, for even though in all Massachusetts there was naught save the rocky hills and sterile plains, it was my home, and from that spot the heart cannot easily be wrenched.

Rockland is a large, wealthy town, while scattered through it are two or three little villages, each bearing a distinct name, by which they are known abroad. First, there was Laurel Hill, famed as the residence of certain families who were styled proud and aristocratic. Next came the "Center," with its group of red houses, and its single spire, tall, straight and square. Lastly came Plattville, by far the largest village in Rockland, and the home of all the "isms" in the known world. To the south of Plattville is a small lake, renowned for its quiet beauty, and the picturesque wilderness of its shores. Bounded on three sides by high hills, its waters sleep calmly in the sunlight of summer, or dash angrily upon the sandy beach, when moved by the chill breath of winter.

On the brow of one of the high hills stood the home of my sister. It was a huge, wooden building containing rooms innumerable, while even the basement was large enough to accommodate one or more families. Being the first frame house erected in the town, it was of course looked upon with considerable interest, and as if to make it still more notorious, it bore the reputation of being haunted.

"Come this way, Rosa," said Herbert, as I entered the narrow "entry" so common in old-fashioned houses; and following him, I was soon ushered into a large square room, where a bright wood fire was blazing. In one corner of the room was a bed, and on it lay Anna, who, the moment she saw me, uttered a cry of joy. "Have you told her?" she asked of Herbert, when the first pleasure of our meeting was over.

He replied in the negative, whereupon she brought up from under a pile of pillows, covers, blankets and sheets a little, tiny, red-faced, wrinkled thing to which she said I was aunt! I knew then why Ada congratulated Herbert, and mentally chiding myself for my stupidity, I took the bundle of cambric and flannel in my arms, while Anna said, "We call him Jamie Lee, and we think he looks like you."

Wearing with my ride, I asked permission to retire early; whereupon Dame Watson, the nurse, volunteered to show me the way to my room. Up the narrow stairs, which cracked at every step, and on through one gloomy room after another, she led me until, at last, we came to a chamber, lighter and more airy, which, she said, my sister had papered, painted and fitted up for me.

It took but a few days for me to discover that Herbert was exceedingly popular at Breeze Hill, as the neighborhood in which he lived was called. His free, easy manners had won for him many friends, and made him almost too much for society. At least, I used to think so during the long winter evenings, when I sat with her baby upon her lap,

listening for the footsteps of her husband, who, at some neighbor's fireside, was cracking the merry joke and quaffing the sparkling cider, which, at Breeze Hill, was considered essential to hospitality. And all this time Herbert professed to be strictly temperate; and when, about the middle of March, a traveling lecturer held forth in the old log school house, thundering his anathemas against the use of all spirituous liquors, Herbert was the most zealous of all his listeners.

Knowing this, I was greatly surprised, after our return home, to see the drinker go up to the sideboard and drink off, at one draught, a goblet of the port wine which had been ordered for Anna. She saw it, too, and for an instant her face was pressed against that of her sleeping boy; and when next the lamp-light fell upon it, I saw there traces of tears, while a faint smile played around her mouth, as she said, "I am afraid, Herbert, your audience would hardly think your theory and practice agree, could they see you now?"

The words were ill-timed, for they awoke the young man's resentment, and with a flushed brow he retorted angrily, that "if porter were good for her, it was for him; he saw no difference between a drinking woman and a drinking man; except, indeed, that the former was the most despicable."

The next morning the bottles of porter were gone from the sideboard; but out in the orchard, where the grass of an early spring was just starting into life, they lay shattered in a hundred pieces. Would, oh, would that she, the life of little more than a year, could thus easily have broken the habits of him she loved better than her life! But it could not be; and all through the bright spring days she drooped, and faded, and struggled hard to keep from me the fatal truth.

At last Aunt Charlotte wrote to me, asking to be assured of her son's safety; and then poor Anna begged me not to tell that the wine cup was his companion at noon, his solace at night, and his comfort at night. Yielding to her entreaties, I answered evasively; and thus the shock, when it came to that mother's heart, was harder far to bear, from the perfect security she had felt. At Sunny Bank, too, they little dreamed how their absent daughter wept and prayed over her fallen husband, who, day after day, made rapid strides down the road to death.

CHAPTER XIV.

The long summer days had merged in autumn, whose hazy breath floated like a misty veil over the distant hills. Here and there busy hands and feet were seen gathering in the autumnal stores. On Herbert's farm, however, there was a look of decay. The yellow corn and golden pumpkins were yet in the field; the apples lay in heaps upon the ground; the gates swung loosely in the wind; while the horses, uncared for and unfed, neighed piteously in their stalls. Alas! their master was a drunkard! Anna was a drunkard's wife, and mine a drunkard's home! It was no longer a secret there, and the young men sighed to think how he had fallen. Night after night we sat up for him, my sister and I lifting him from the threshold across which he would fall, and bearing him to his bed, where we would lay him beside his innocent son, whose blue eyes often opened with wonder at being thus disturbed.

About this time I went back to Sunny Bank for a few weeks to be present at the bridal of my oldest sister, Anna, too, was urged to accompany me; but she declined, extorting from me a promise that if it were possible I would not divulge the real state of things. "Tell them I am happy, and do not regret what I have done," said she, as she followed me down to the gate.

Al! who can fathom the depths of woman's love, and what punishment shall be sufficient for him who wantonly tramples upon it? I wondered if I should ever love as she did. Involuntarily the doctor rose up before me—a drunkard, and I his wife, and from my inmost soul I answered, "Rather death than that!" Then (though I blushed as I did so, I fancied myself the wife of "the dark man," and he a drunkard. "Yes, I could bear that," I said; and just there the car door opened and the subject of my meditations stood before me. There was no mistaking him. The same tall, manly form, the piercing eyes, the coal black hair, and the same deep cut between the eyebrows. I knew him in a moment, and an exclamation of surprise escaped my lips. The seats were nearly all occupied, and as he passed down the aisle, my readers, I trust, will pardon me if I did gather up the skirt of my dress and take my traveling bag upon my lap, while I myself sat nearer to the window, looking out in order to hide my face.

"Is this seat occupied, miss?" said a heavy voice, which seemed to come from some far-off region.

"No, sir," I answered, timidly, without venturing to turn my head, until I felt myself uncomfortably crowded; then I looked around, and behold! the dark stranger was sitting behind me near the door, while at my side was a man of mammoth dimensions, with immense mustache, watery eyes and a brandy breath flavored with tobacco.

He was exceedingly loquacious, and for several hours piled me with questions as to my own name, my parents, my grandparents, my brothers, my sisters, our standing in the world, our religion and our politics. At length, just as it was growing dark, he gathered up his huge proportions, and to my great joy bid me adieu.

About nine o'clock we stopped for refreshments, and on re-entering the cars, I found to my joy that the dark stranger's seat was appropriated. This time the fates were propitious, for after looking around him awhile, the stranger asked permission to sit by me. It was quite dark where we sat, and the night lamp burned but dimly, so he did not once obtain a full view of my face. He proved a most agreeable and attentive companion, opening and shutting the window

just as often as I evinced an inclination to have him, holding my satchel in his lap, placing his own traveling trunk at my feet for a footstool, and offering me his fur-lined overcoat for a pillow. At almost every station, too, he asked "if I wished for anything," but I did not, except indeed to know whether he was yet the husband of Ada Montrose. At last he made some remark about the country through which we were passing, and I replied that "I believed it was not the first time he had been over that road, as, if I mistook not, I saw him in the cars with his wife the year before."

The wrinkle in his forehead grew deeper, and his face flushed as he said, quickly, "I do not remember of meeting you before, though I was here last fall, but not with my wife, for I have none. It was my ward, Miss Montrose."

Nothing could have given me more satisfaction than this announcement, for if Ada were his ward, it explained, in a measure, his attentions to her; and as I cast stolen glances at him, I felt more and more convinced that there could be no affinity between him and the haughty, imperious girl to whom he was guardian. It seemed to me a very short time ere he arose, and offering me his hand, said he must go, adding, "We shall undoubtedly meet again, as I occasionally travel this way."

It was nearly noon of the next day when I reached Sunny Bank, where I found my father at the depot, waiting to receive me. I found them all busied with the preparations for Juliet's wedding, which took place within a week after my return, I officiating as bridesmaid. After Juliet had left us for her new home, in an adjoining town, there ensued at our house a season of lonely quiet, in which we scarcely knew whether to laugh or to cry. There is always something sad in the giving up of a daughter to the care of another, and so my parents found it, particularly my father, who, broken in spirit and feeble in health, was unusually cast down.

During my journey back to Rockland I did not again meet with the swarthy, although I looked for him at every station. I had expected Herbert to meet me, but he was not there. I was just wondering what I should do in case he failed to come, when my attention was attracted toward a tall, athletic looking young man who was inspecting my trunk, which stood upon the platform. He fixed upon me a pair of singularly handsome hazel eyes, while at the same time there swept over me a strange, undefined feeling as if somewhere, in a dream, perchance, I had met that glance before.

"Are you Miss Lee?" he asked, and the tones of his voice thrilled me like an echo of the past.

I replied in the affirmative; and without once taking his eyes from my face, he said, "I am Henry Watson, Mr. Langley's hired man. He sent me for you, and the wagon is at the other door."

Mechanically I followed him to the place designated, and then, as if I had been a feather, he took me in his arms and placed me in the wide chair, wrapping the buffalo robes around me. He did not seem to me like a hireling, for his language was good, his manners gentlemanly, and ere we were half way to Breeze Hill I was very much prepossessed in his favor. He was quite talkative, asking me of my parents, of my brothers, and appearing much gratified when I told him how well Charlie was doing as clerk in a dry goods store in Worcester.

"And Mr. Langley is only your cousin by marriage?" he said at last. "Have you any other male cousins?" he asked.

"I had a boy cousin once," I said, "but he is probably dead, for we have not heard from him in six long years."

Forgetful that Mr. Watson was to me an entire stranger, I very briefly told him the story of Cousin Will, who returned not with the vessel which bore him away, and who had deserted the ship at Calcutta. For many days they searched for him in vain, and at last left him alone in that far-off land, where he had probably met an early death.

"He was wild," I explained, "but I liked him very, very much, and cried myself sick when he went away."

Again the stranger's eyes fell upon me with a look I could not fathom. We turned into the long, shady avenue which led up to the house. A wondrous change had been wrought in my absence; for everything around the building wore an air of neatness and thrift, which betokened that there was now a head to manage and direct. Herbert, too, was perfectly sober, while Anna's face was far happier than when I last saw her. The cause of this she explained to me the first moment we were alone. Herbert had signed the pledge! Had become a sober man, and all through the exertions of Mr. Watson, whom she pronounced an angel in disguise. And, truly, his influence over Herbert was wonderful; for never did an anxious mother watch over her sickly child more carefully than Mr. Watson watched over his employer, shielding him from temptation, and gently leading him in the path of rectitude.

Early in April, we received invitations to attend a wedding party at the house of Judge Perkins, whose broad acres and heavy purse of gold had purchased an only daughter, a fair young girl, for his daughter's age. It was to be a splendid affair, and, as a matter of course, I forthwith commenced looking over my wardrobe, and declaring I had nothing to wear. Anna, on the contrary, did not seem at all interested, and when I questioned her for her indifference, she replied, "What if they have wine, and Herbert should drink?"

"They wouldn't have wine," I told her, for Judge Perkins was a staunch temperance man, and it was not probable that he would do anything so inconsistent with his profession.

Ah, would it had been so! Would that the sparkling champagne, the ruby wine, and the foaming ale had not greeted that marriage feast, for then, perchance, one grave at least would not have been made so soon, nor the widow's weeds worn by my sister ere the bloom of youth had faded from her brow.

I saw her cheek pale as we entered the supper room, but when amid the din and uproar which succeeded the drawing of the corks, Herbert stood firm to his pledge, refusing to drink, though urged to do so, the color came back to her face, and her eyes proudly followed her husband, whose easy manners made him a favorite, and who, with ready tact, moved among the guests, doing far more toward their entertainment than the master of the house himself. He was standing near the bride, a beautiful young creature, with a sunny face and radiant smile. Very affable and polite had she been to Herbert, and now as he approached her, she took from the table two goblets of wine, and passing one to

him, said, "Mr. Langley, I am sure, will not refuse to drink with me, the bride?"

To refuse would have seemed unceremonious, and so, with a hasty glance at his wife, he drank the health of the lovely woman, who, in an angel's guise, unconsciously tempted him to ruin. Involuntarily Anna gasped as if for breath, while she started quickly forward to stay the rash act; but she was too late, and with a faint moan of anguish, she turned away to hide her tears. One taste awoke the slumbering demon, and set his veins on fire; and when at midnight Mr. Watson came for us, he took the insensible man in his arms and placed him in the wagon, beside the weeping wife, whose fond hopes were now wrecked forever.

(To be continued.)

WHEN THE STAR ENTERS.

Must Be Applauded, and That Sometimes Makes Trouble.

One of the stage conventions altogether American, says the New York Sun, concerns the "entrance" as it is called. This is the applause that greets the star when he first comes on the stage; and no American actor who can have a say in such a matter would think of accepting a play that did not allow him to come first before the public in some striking fashion that would arouse the audience to an outburst of enthusiasm.

Authors are compelled to rack their brains for effective ways of introducing the stars. And this custom is known in no other country.

In France and Germany the leading actor enters whenever the action of the play requires it. If it seems to the author more appropriate, he will have the actor on the stage when the curtain rises.

Imagine the American star quietly seated on the stage when the curtain rises in the first act. What a contrast to the usual maneuvering and planning to bring him first into view in a way that will stimulate the audience to the most enthusiastic outbreak!

It is the librettist for the comic opera star who finds his task in this particular most difficult. He is driven to all sorts of stratagems to devise a new means of hurling the star into view. He may shoot him out of an automobile into the middle of the stage or roll him down the steps—any method permissible that brings him strikingly into view.

The task of the playwright is somewhat easier. But he must, under all circumstances, provide an effective entrance if he wants to get another order from a star.

A French play that had been popular for a long time in Paris was never accepted here because the heroine was discovered on the stage when the curtain rose and there was no means of changing the scene, try as the adapters might. She had to be on the stage at that time. So the play went begging, and to this day it has never been acted here, though it would furnish an admirable vehicle for a star. In England there is no such importance placed on the question of the "entrance" as there is here.

Two Compliments.

When the present King of Portugal was a youth of seventeen, he visited London, and there met Sir Edwin Landseer. Being very fond of natural history, the young king was delighted to meet the great animal painter, and said so.

King Carlos spoke English very well, says the author of "Some Eighteenth Century Men of Letters," but like all persons who have learned a language by grammar and dictionary, he used words in an equivocal sense.

"I am so glad to make your acquaintance, Sir Landseer!" he said, with enthusiasm. "I am so fond of beasts!"

Landseer accepted the compliment as it was intended, and always protested that with one exception it was the greatest he had ever received. The "exception" came from a dog-seller who was walking along a London street with a terrier under his arm. Landseer, as always, was attracted by the bright little face.

"His ears are not cropped," he observed.

"No sir," replied the dog-seller. "Landseer says ears ought not to be cropped."

Hairs of the Human Head.

A scientist with a vast amount of patience has counted the hairs of the human head. In fact, not content with counting one head of hair he undertook several. The results of his investigations are curious. Blondes, for instance, have the greatest number and those with red hair the smallest. In no case is there much variation between sexes when the color is the same. Light-haired people have between 140,000 and 165,000 hairs. Brunettes average only about 105,000 hairs. Red-haired people do not have much more than 30,000. This means that red hair is coarser than other shades, but it has the advantage of lasting longer.

As Explained.

Mrs. O'Mulligan—O! want a cake av soap.

Polite Clerk—Do you wish something for toilet purposes, ma'am?

Mrs. O'Mulligan—Indade an' O! don't. O! want it to wash me face an' hands wid.

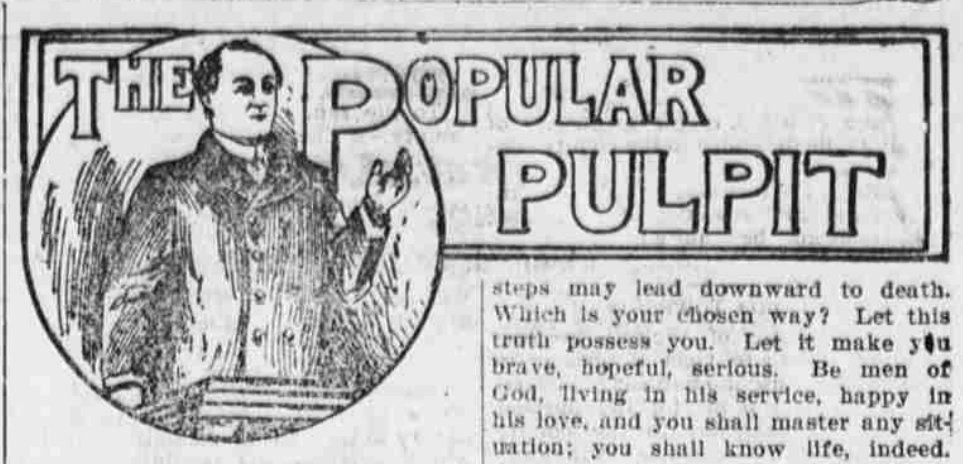
Bound to Occur.

Patient—But, doctor, only last week you said I would surely die, and to-day you see I am as well as I ever was.

Doctor—Sir, I never made a mistake in a diagnosis. Your ultimate demise is only a matter of time.

Bust of Sir A. Sullivan.

A bust of Sir Arthur Sullivan will be erected on the Thames embankment facing the Savoy Theater.



THE WRATH OF GOD.

By Rev. J. R. Duryee

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.—John iii, 36.

These are precious, and, at the same time, awful words. They come with the sanction of divine authority and echo the voices of the prophets. They were spoken by John, the herald of Jesus, the Messiah, who confirmed them by his teaching; and their truth is proven by human experience.

Note the term. "Life" means the perfect possession of every power of human nature. This includes the will to use each power. To have a perfect body would be glorious, but none possesses it. When Socrates saw one that seemed complete he cried, "Jove, how beautiful!" We have his enthusiasm. More splendid is the life of the spirit in man, and it is to this these words refer. Each of us knows some one who possesses in rare degree this life; and instinctively feel they are of God. "On God and Godlike men we build our trust." But even these have their faults; only one has ever lived on earth perfect in all things. Imperfection, unless righted, tends to death. We cannot stand still; we fight against the downward tendency, seeking help from such as we think can help us grow better. So we tie ourselves to the physician, the teacher, the friend. Is it not true that the best wish of your best moments is that you may become better? And we have all found that, beyond a certain point, there is no help in man. Once there came unto our world a perfect man, "the Son of God, with power." He gave himself to the work of redeeming men from death to life, and through his spirit, he is a present savior. "He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life."

"Believe," it means more than assent to the statement of the gospel. Faith is willing self-surrender to God. Only thus can his vitality impart itself to us. This is possible for every one. They are self-deceived who think otherwise. All about us are those as ignorant, weak, and hard pressed as you are who, because they open heart and mind to him, are growing better. Are not they who refuse to do this fools and blind?

The condition for every one is obedience. It is so in all relationships. To effect a cure the physician must be obeyed, the teacher must be followed, the friend honored, and if the Redeemer is to save from death to life our part is to honor, follow and obey.

And now, note the alternative: "He that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Perhaps you persuade yourself that this is a visionary statement and are indifferent to it. Remember there is relationship between you and God. He is your "heavenly father." God cannot be indifferent to you. You are and always will be his child. It is the worst blunder one can make to think that God is careless about him.

Do the words, "the wrath of God," seem cruel words? Nevertheless, our human relationships explain them. We are more than inhabitants; we are citizens of New York, having certain inherent rights and obligations. Its laws are the measure of these. If I choose to go contrary to these rules of conduct and commit a crime the wrath of the city, the penalty of infringement of law, is incurred. The convicted criminal is still a part of New York. The same conditions hold in the family life. Does it seem strange that the divine government is illustrated by these analogies? Remember the laws of God are not arbitrary; they are essential to life. Still the problem faces us, how can the God of love ever be wrathful toward his child? Well, undoubtedly the Bible proclaims this, and so does nature. She works by law, and to the obedient is beneficial. Electricity carries your message and moves your cars, but disobey her and she kills you. This is the meaning of applied science. And in the moral world the same principle holds. It is thus in friendship; refuse to love and honor your friend and how her life rebukes you. By and by you hate the goodness which you will not imitate. Judas was cursed by the same friendship that enabled John. A great teacher said: "Men are ruined by their best and dearest friends, not by their indulgent fondness, but by the noble example that is never followed and the noble invitation that is never answered." Experience has taught some of us that this is true.

I desire above all else to make known God's love. It is a reality, it is the one power that can meet every need of man, and can lift up stained, broken lives into strength, and beauty, and perfectness. I have tried to do this to-day. Only you must face the facts of life and know the truth. God does care for you. He has given you power, scope, above all his spirit, that you may become perfect. Identify your life with that of the Son, love him, learn of him, follow him, and you shall become like him. There are only three steps from earth to heaven—acts, habits, character. These same

steps may lead downward to death. Which is your chosen way? Let this truth possess you. Let it make you brave, hopeful, serious. Be men of God, living in his service, happy in his love, and you shall master any situation; you shall know life, indeed, Amen.

SINNING AGAINST CHILDREN.

By Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.

One of the most needed and one of the most useful of modern benevolent organizations is the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Its object is to protect the victims of parental brutalities or of cruel neglect. Its sphere of action is chiefly among the degraded classes. But there is many a well-fed child in a well-furnished home that is suffering badly from bad management or parental ignorance or false views of parental duty. An immense number of fathers and mothers need to have the solemn caution which Reuben gave to his churlish brothers: "Do not sin against the child." There is no trust in this world more tremendous than the trust of parentage, and none which many persons seem to treat more lightly. Food, clothing, shelter and schooling they provide, but they utterly ignore the fact that the Creator has entrusted to them the most susceptible and receptive creature on earth when he commits to their charge a young immortal. A parent stamps character, and shapes destiny for this world—often for the next. In geological museums you may see some slabs which show the prints of birds' feet or of leaves which were made in the stone when it was once only a liquid pumice. In like manner we can detect the finger-marks and footprints of parental influence upon the character of children when grown to manhood and womanhood. And they are not very ornamental, either.

Children are imitative creatures, and we all know how tendencies to good or evil character spring from parental influence, and the chief element in modern heredity is the force of example. There is a monotonous uniformity in the history of certain Jewish kings. Each one of them "walked in the ways of his father who caused Israel to sin." That word "ways" is very significant. The father made the path and the son walked in it. Just as true is this now as in those olden times. The most difficult cases to reform in inebriate asylums are the victims of hereditary drunkenness. Often when I see a young man bringing disgrace on himself I think "that youth was as much sinned against as sinning." He is walking in the path in which his parents placed him. Thorn bushes never yield grapes, and figs do not grow from thistles. The word "iniquity" signifies something twisted, and the ugly twist is too often given by a father's or a mother's hand. The wrong which the child does is the natural sequence of the wrong done to him by her, by an evil example. By and by comes the retribution when the child once sinned against wrings the parental heart with agony. When you sin against your child you may be pretty sure "that your sin will find you out."

What a piece of open soil to sow teachings in is a young mind! Words uttered by parents sprout. A sneer against the Bible spoken at the table or by the fireside lodges in a boy's memory and helps to make him a sceptic. A great deal of the foolish and cavilling criticism of sermons, in which parents willfully or carelessly indulge when they come home from church, kills the influence of God's message. This may amount to a sin against the Holy Spirit, who inspired the message, and who may be silently working on the mind of some child in that family. The question of how much actual good the best sermon may do is commonly settled on the day of its delivery. Parents often help to settle it. In most cases religious errors are hereditary. Dishonest practices also descend from father to son. Bad books in a parent's hands are very apt to be read by the younger members of the family. And when a father takes his son and daughter to the average theater, the lad is in danger of having passion inflamed by the indecencies of the stage, and the daughter's purity is soiled by the lewd display or the immoral innuendoes. It is bad enough to smutch your own soul, I entreat you, don't sin against your child!

Many a father studies his account books and a mother studies her magazines or receipt books or her visiting lists more than either study the peculiarities of her own children. That boy is scolded into silliness; that other one is ridiculed until he gets desperate; harsh treatment often hardens the heart, and then Pharisaism prays that God will soften it! There is a steady decline in the percentage of conversions reported in the annual statistics of several denominations. How much of this is to be attributed to a decline in home religion God only knoweth. The family underlies both commonwealth and church. All the preaching power of the pulpit will avail but little as long as parents are sinning against their own children.

Mission in Life.—The mission of the preacher is the mission of a man. The mission of the church is the same as that of the public schools. The true aim of each is to lift humanity toward and heavenward.—Rev. Bruce Brown, Disciple, Chicago, Ill.