

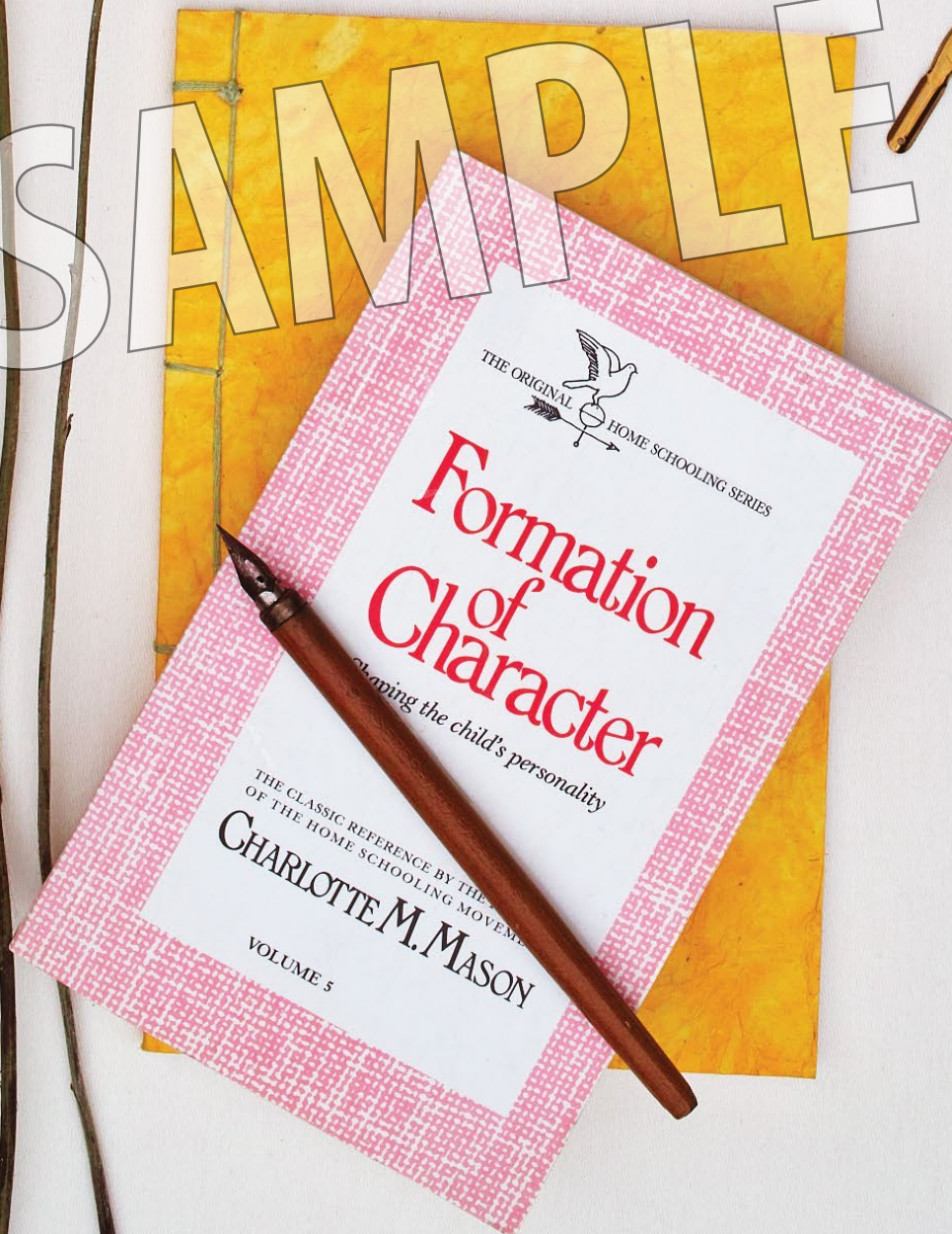
Simply Charlotte Mason presents
Charlotte Mason's Original Home Schooling Series
Authorized Version • Wide-Margin Study Edition

Formation of Character

Volume 5



SAMPLE



“Education in morals the young people must get at home, or not at all. The chief of their duties is the duty they owe to their parents: from this stem, all other duties, to kindred, commonwealth, and neighbours, branch out.”

—Charlotte Mason

Formation of Character delves into shaping the child's personality through incidental, rather than structured, education and circumstances. In this collection of mainly living stories you will gain wisdom for many areas of everyday life, including

- dealing with temper tantrums;
- helping a child learn to pay attention and focus;
- curbing sulking and pouting or the cold-shoulder treatment;
- handling a child who repeatedly lies or forgets what he has been told;
- getting the most out of holidays and vacation times;
- guiding graduated children still living at home.



Read the entire Original Home Schooling Series by Charlotte Mason with confidence. Collect all of the authorized volumes, with accurate replicas of the original pages, available from Simply Charlotte Mason.

Volume 1: Home Education
Volume 2: Parents and Children
Volume 3: School Education
Volume 4: Ourselves
Volume 5: Formation of Character
Volume 6: A Philosophy of Education

Simply
Charlotte Mason
.com

Charlotte Mason's Original Home Schooling Series
Authorized Version

Volume 5
Formation of Character

by Charlotte M. Mason

Charlotte Mason's Original Home Schooling Series

Volume 1: Home Education

Volume 2: Parents and Children

Volume 3: School Education

Volume 4: Ourselves

Volume 5: Formation of Character

Volume 6: A Philosophy of Education

This Simply Charlotte Mason edition presents authentic and accurate page replicas of the complete text of Charlotte Mason's work as originally published.

Formation of Character (Volume 5)

Originally published as *Some Studies in the Formation of Character* in 1906

By Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd.,
London, England

This edition © 2017 Simply Charlotte Mason

All rights reserved. However, we grant permission to make printed copies or use this work on multiple electronic devices for members of your immediate household. Quantity discounts are available for classroom and co-op use. Please contact us for details.

Cover Photo: Richele Baburina

Cover Design: John Shafer

ISBN 978-1-61634-328-6 printed book (with notes column)

ISBN 978-1-61634-329-3 electronic download (with notes column)

ISBN 978-1-61634-389-7 electronic download (without notes column)

Published by

Simply Charlotte Mason, LLC

930 New Hope Road #11-892

Lawrenceville, Georgia 30045

simplycharlottomason.com

Printed by PrintLogic, Inc.

Monroe, Georgia, USA

A Note from Simply Charlotte Mason

It is our privilege to be entrusted with the task of preserving and providing Charlotte Mason's original writings. Many inferior versions exist, but you can rest assured that you hold in your hands authentic and accurate page replicas of the complete text of Charlotte Mason's work as originally published.

We present them with pleasure and with gratitude for all who have played a part in the rich history behind them. The material on the following pages will give you a peek into that history.

Foreword to the Simply Charlotte Mason Edition by Dean Andreola	iv
<i>In which the mantle is passed to Simply Charlotte Mason to publish this authorized version</i>	
Endorsement by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay	vi
<i>On the occasion of Charlotte Mason's writings being rediscovered</i>	
Introduction to the <i>Original Home Schooling Series</i> by Dean and Karen Andreola . .	vii
<i>In which Charlotte Mason's original writings come to the United States</i>	
Foreword to the <i>Original Home Schooling Series</i> by John Thorley	ix
<i>In which a brief biography of Charlotte Mason and her work is given</i>	
Preface to the Home Education Series	xiii
<i>In which Charlotte Mason gives her reasons for writing the series</i>	
Preface to Formation of Character	xxiii
<i>In which Charlotte Mason explains her objectives for Volume 5: Formation of Character</i>	
Contents to Volume 5: Formation of Character	xxvii

Foreword to the Simply Charlotte Mason Edition

by Dean Andreola

It is with much gratitude to Simply Charlotte Mason that I pen a foreword to this edition of *The Original Homeschooling Series*.

In 1987 Karen and I were privileged to carry rare copies of Miss Charlotte Mason's writings home with us from England. Our dream was to see Miss Mason's books back in print for the benefit of future generations. The dream became a reality. We kept this six-volume series (you now hold in your hand) in print for 25 years; but book printing alone was not enough to start a movement. My incredibly shy wife became both herald and champion for Miss Mason's ideas—ideas that would lead to a modern revolution in education and child training.

During those ground-breaking pioneering years, Karen plowed ahead with countless hours of study and research, often in the wee hours of the night, after the children were tucked into bed. Charlotte Mason gave Karen a vision for what a delightful education could look like. Day by day, Charlotte Mason's principles took root in our homeschool. Karen was invited to share her modern interpretation of Miss Mason's ideas at conferences and in magazine articles, with topics such as: living books, narration, habit, mother culture, and the atmosphere of home. This was the beginning of what was becoming known as "The Charlotte Mason Approach." Karen collected and published her ideas in *A Charlotte Mason Companion*—one of the first how-to books written and widely read in the homeschool world. As a result, Miss Mason's philosophy of education also took root in many hearts and homes, creating a movement that has spread across the nation and around the world.

The 21st century has brought changes in the way people access, read, and store books. The demand for printed books has diminished while the demand for ebooks has increased. Sadly, we are no longer able to continue our printing of *The Original Homeschooling Series*. Yet thanks to kindred spirits at Simply Charlotte Mason, we have been able to pass the baton, so to speak, and partner with them to see *The Original Homeschooling Series* safely back in print. I say "safely back in print" because this edition is complete, unabridged, and unedited.

It is true to the books we carried home on the plane so many years ago—and so, in keeping with the philosophy of Miss Mason herself.

Now it is your turn to discover afresh the delights of a lifestyle of learning. It is your turn to discover Charlotte Mason.

Dean Andreola

Co-Founder, Charlotte Mason Research Company

CharlotteMason.com

MotherCulture.com

SOMETIMES treasures of unique value are unearthed while rummaging in the past. Charlotte Mason was a distinguished British educator at the turn of the century, whose work had a wide and lasting influence. At that time many of the upper-class children were educated at home, and Mason's insights changed their lives. Her ideas were also brought to life in many schools (mostly private), which gave the children an unusual and rich start in their education and development.

Nearly a hundred years later, a changing society often leaves us disappointed with its tangled, worn-out, and narrow practices in education. We chart a "falling capital" in the product that matters most: the life education and character of our children. Is it not the moment to look at some of the roots? To start again?

At last, after hundreds have searched for these original texts, these seminal books are back in print. Harvard University has Charlotte Mason's books; now, at last, you can too!

These writings will give important priorities and guidelines to parents, teachers, and schools. I believe that once again we need to think of all of life, our culture and heritage, so that our children may be nurtured with the nutrients of life and not sawdust. Welcome back, my dear valued mentor, Charlotte Mason! Our children need you as never before.

Susan Schaeffer Macaulay

director of L'Abri Fellowship, Switzerland, and
author of *For the Children's Sake: Foundations of
Education for Home and School* (Crossway Books)

Introduction to the *Original Home Schooling Series*

It was amidst a maze of opinions and conflicting points of view on child education that we were introduced to the life and work of Charlotte Mason.

While working for a literature mission in England, my wife, Karen, and I were home schooling our children. Child raising and schooling at home developed into a stressful and draining process for the whole family. Even after reading much on the subject of child raising and education we still seemed to lack direction. We discussed our dilemma with a coworker. She shared a book with us by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay called *For the Children's Sake*. This book hit close to home in many areas that concerned us. It was an introduction to the works of Charlotte Mason, and this whetted our appetites to learn more about Miss Mason's teachings.

Working in publishing, we thought it would be a simple matter to track down some of these books, especially in England where they were originally published many years ago. However, it took us many months searching secondhand bookshops, libraries, and book search services to find out that her books are not available anymore. They have not been published in a complete six volume set for over eighty years. When we had given up hope of finding them, we were informed about the Charlotte Mason College at Ambleside in the Lake District near Keswick, England. Through the kindness and cooperation of the principal, Dr. John Thorley, the college's copies of these rare books were loaned to us from their archives for this special edition of Charlotte Mason's Home Schooling Series.

This series is unique among other child-raising books because of its broad subject matter and amount of detailed study. Mason's teachings stress that both home and school education should be a learning and growing process for the child, parent, and teacher alike. Reading her works, we discover a great deal about ourselves and realize that we must continue to understand and educate ourselves if we wish to have success in educating our children.

Charlotte Mason is a bright light in the art of illuminating a child's mind. Her ideas are practical; they identify problems and offer well-tested and creative solutions. She gives us sweeping visions of what education could and should be and grave warnings about the neglect and abuse of our responsibility and authority.

Although she wrote generations ago, Mason boldly challenges us today. Many parents seem lost in their own homes, and many teachers and children are floundering in our educational systems. These systems are still seeking to educate our children without any parental and biblical influence; they prepare our youth for examinations and not *life!*

Recent books and magazine articles have referred to Charlotte Mason with information obtained from secondary sources. Now, to a new generation, Charlotte Mason speaks for herself in this brilliant, original series.

May these books offer hope and life to parents, teachers, and children, as Charlotte Mason said, "For the Children's Sake!"

Dean and Karen Andreola
Franklin, Tennessee

Foreword to the *Original Home Schooling Series*

Charlotte Mason founded her “House of Education” in Ambleside, in the heart of the English Lake District, in 1892. “It is far from London,” she wrote at the time, “but in view of that fact there is much to be said in its favour. Students will be impressed with the great natural beauty around them, will find a country rich in flowers, mosses and ferns. They will learn to know and love the individuality of great natural features—mountain pass, valley, lake and waterfall.” The “House of Education” is now the principal’s house, “Springfield,” and I am writing this foreword in the room that was Charlotte Mason’s own living room. I look out of the window and can confirm all its attractions.

Charlotte Mason came to Ambleside when she was nearly fifty, and the college was to be the main focus of her life’s work from then until her death in 1923. Hers was no simple success story. Her early childhood is obscure, and she seems never to have wished to elucidate it. She was probably brought up by her father, a Liverpool merchant who, it seems, went bankrupt and then died when Charlotte was still in her teens. Aided by friends of her family, Charlotte became a pupil teacher in Birkenhead and then attended a training college for teachers in London from 1860 to 1861. After qualifying, she taught in an infant school in Worthing, Sussex, until 1873. She then obtained a post on the staff of Bishop Otter Teacher Training College, Chichester, where she lectured in elementary school teaching method. The college was in the forefront of educational thinking in its dedication to the principle of education for

all—including girls. W. E. Forster's Education Act of 1870, which provided for elementary schools to be set up across the country, was still fresh and needed trained teachers to implement the promises. The Bishop Otter College certainly influenced Charlotte Mason's thinking, but, for reasons that are difficult now to disentangle, in 1878 Charlotte felt dissatisfied with her work, left the college, and went to live with friends in Bradford in Yorkshire.

Apparently with financial help from these friends (she was certainly never rich), Charlotte began to write. In 1880 she published a series of books on the geography of England, which were well received. But it was her book *Home Education*, published in 1886, that sparked off the most interest. In it one can certainly see the influence of other educational thinkers of the nineteenth century, particularly the child-centered views of Pestalozzi and the artistic ideas of John Ruskin. What Charlotte Mason added was a practical, down-to-earth perspective that showed how one could actually set about and *do* it. Her style and her exposition were homely, both in the sense that she wrote in an easy, intelligible way, and in the sense that she stressed the influence and responsibility of the home. She also wrote from a firmly held evangelical perspective.

The book turned out to be a kind of educational "Dr. Spock" avidly bought by women anxious to ensure the best possible upbringing for their offspring. The need was real, especially among middle-class women of modest means. Education was a subject of much debate and discussion, which had led to the Education Act of 1870, though the reality of primary education all too often was but the palest reflection of Pestalozzi, Ruskin, or even W. E. Forster. Many concerned parents, perhaps more particularly concerned mothers, were looking for something better. Charlotte Mason's *Home Education* offered it. It explained how parents could—and should—provide their children with a broad, stimulating, even exciting education, far removed from the common diet of so many elementary schools of the day.

The book sold well and in influential circles. Very soon the Parents National Education Union (PNEU) was established,

with the bishop of London as its first president. Miss Beale, a formidable protagonist in the fight for women's education, was an early member of the organization, as was Anne Clough, the founder of Newnham College, Cambridge. Branches were set up in many major towns and cities, and by 1890 the organization had its own monthly magazine, "The Parents Review," edited by Charlotte Mason herself. Charlotte had quickly become a leading authority on early childhood.

In 1891 Charlotte came to live in Ambleside. A friend of her student days, Selina Healey, had lived in Ambleside, and Charlotte had visited her and had gotten to know the Lake District well. She loved the area, particularly the quiet town of Ambleside. When she moved into Springfield, she was sure she had found the ideal place to train governesses for young children.

So, in January 1892, the House of Education was established. There were four students. Two years later, with thirteen students, the college moved into Scale how, a beautiful Georgian house across the main road from Springfield on a hill amid the trees with fine views of the town and of Loughrigg across the Rothay valley.

Charlotte saw children as thinking, feeling human beings, as spirits to be kindled and not as vessels to be filled. And she demonstrated how it could be done. She believed all children were entitled to a liberal education based upon good literature and the arts. These were in her own day radical thoughts and practices, certainly not just confined to Charlotte Mason, but few of her contemporaries had the sheer practicality that she displayed. The practicing school attached to the House of Education took in local children with no payment; Charlotte firmly believed that her liberal education ideas were applicable to all children regardless of class, status, or ability, and she put her ideas into practice, as she always did.

The college flourished, never larger than fifty students in Charlotte's own lifetime but with a reputation out of proportion to its size. By the 1920s the PNEU had established several schools as well as a correspondence school, run from Ambleside, which sent out lesson notes and advice on educational matters to parents and governesses.

Charlotte died on January 16, 1923; by then she was the object of deep veneration within the movement. She was buried in the churchyard at Ambleside, close to the graves of W. E. Forster and the Arnold family. Educationists flourished—and died—in Ambleside.

The college and the correspondence school continued on the same site until 1966, when the PNEU (now with the added title of “World Education Service”) moved to new premises in London and absorbed the correspondence school. PNEU/WES has continued to provide full syllabuses and educational advice to PNEU affiliated schools in the UK and in many countries abroad where English-medium schools have been established. But much of its work is still with parents, mainly with those parents living abroad who need to educate their children at home. The principles established by Charlotte Mason over a hundred years ago are still the guiding principles of all the work of PNEU/WES. They have proved themselves through the many changes in syllabus content and educational demands of the twentieth century.

Meanwhile, the college has undergone its own development. Until 1960 it continued as an independent teacher training institution, but then transferred to the control of the then Westmorland Local Education Authority, and at the same time took over the Kelsick site on Stockghyll Lane, the town’s former secondary school. In 1968 the college changed its validating university from Manchester to the newly founded University of Lancaster, some thirty-five miles from Ambleside. Local government reorganization in 1970 resulted in the absorption of Westmorland into the new county of Cumbria. On April 1, 1989, after fifteen years of fruitful partnership with Cumbria, the college became an independent corporation.

John Thorley
Principal
Charlotte Mason College

Preface to the 'Home Education' Series

THE educational outlook is rather misty and depressing both at home and abroad. That science should be a staple of education, that the teaching of Latin, of modern languages, of mathematics, must be reformed, that nature and handicrafts should be pressed into service for the training of the eye and hand, that boys and girls must learn to write English and therefore must know something of history and literature; and, on the other hand, that education must be made more technical and utilitarian—these, and such as these, are the cries of expedience with which we take the field. But we have no unifying principle, no definite aim; in fact, no philosophy of education. As a stream can rise no higher than its source, so it is probable that no educational effort can rise above the whole scheme of thought which gives it birth; and perhaps this is the reason of all the 'fallings from us, vanishings,' failures, and disappointments which mark our educational records.

Those of us, who have spent many years in pursuing the benign and elusive vision of Education, perceive

PREFACE TO THE 'HOME EDUCATION' SERIES

that her approaches are regulated by a law, and that this law has yet to be evoked. We can discern its outlines, but no more. We know that it is pervasive; there is no part of a child's home-life or school-work which the law does not penetrate. It is illuminating, too, showing the value, or lack of value, of a thousand systems and expedients. It is not only a light, but a measure, providing a standard whereby all things, small and great, belonging to educational work must be tested. The law is liberal, taking in whatsoever things are true, honest, and of good report, and offering no limitation or hindrance save where excess should injure. And the path indicated by the law is continuous and progressive, with no transition stage from the cradle to the grave, except that maturity takes up the regular self-direction to which immaturity has been trained. We shall doubtless find, when we apprehend the law, that certain German thinkers—Kant, Herbart, Lotze, Froebel—are justified; that, as they say, it is 'necessary' to believe in God; that, therefore, the knowledge of God is the principal knowledge, and the chief end of education. By one more character shall we be able to recognise this perfect law of educational liberty when it shall be made evident. It has been said that 'The best idea which we can form of absolute truth is that it is able to meet every condition by which it can be tested.' This we shall expect of our law—that it shall meet every test of experiment and every test of rational investigation.

Not having received the tables of our law, we

PREFACE TO THE 'HOME EDUCATION' SERIES

fall back upon Froebel or upon Herbart; or, if we belong to another School, upon Locke or Spencer; but we are not satisfied. A discontent, is it a divine discontent? is upon us; and assuredly we should hail a workable, effectual philosophy of education as a deliverance from much perplexity. Before this great deliverance comes to us it is probable that many tentative efforts will be put forth, having more or less of the characters of a philosophy; notably, having a central idea, a body of thought with various members working in vital harmony.

Such a theory of education, which need not be careful to call itself a system of psychology, must be in harmony with the thought movements of the age; must regard education, not as a shut-off compartment, but as being as much a part of life as birth or growth, marriage or work; and it must leave the pupil attached to the world at many points of contact. It is true that educationalists are already eager to establish such contact in several directions, but their efforts rest upon an axiom here and an idea there, and there is no broad unifying basis of thought to support the whole.

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread; and the hope that there may be many tentative efforts towards a philosophy of education, and that all of them will bring us nearer to the *magnum opus*, encourages me to launch one such attempt. The central thought, or rather body of thought, upon

PREFACE TO THE 'HOME EDUCATION' SERIES

which I found, is the somewhat obvious fact that the child is a *person* with all the possibilities and powers included in personality. Some of the members which develop from this nucleus have been exploited from time to time by educational thinkers, and exist vaguely in the general common sense, a notion here, another there. One thesis, which is, perhaps, new, that *Education is the Science of Relations*, appears to me to solve the question of a curriculum, as showing that the object of education is to put a child in living touch with as much as may be of the life of Nature and of thought. Add to this one or two keys to self-knowledge, and the educated youth goes forth with some idea of self-management, with some pursuits, and many vital interests. My excuse for venturing to offer a solution, however tentative and passing, to the problem of education is twofold. For between thirty and forty years I have laboured without pause to establish a working and philosophic theory of education; and in the next place, each article of the educational faith I offer has been arrived at by inductive processes; and has, I think, been verified by a long and wide series of experiments. It is, however, with sincere diffidence that I venture to offer the results of this long labour; because I know that in this field there are many labourers far more able and expert than I—the 'angels' who fear to tread, so precarious is the footing!

But, if only *pour encourager les autres*, I append a short synopsis of the educational theory advanced

PREFACE TO THE 'HOME EDUCATION' SERIES

in the volumes of the 'Home Education Series.' The treatment is not methodic, but incidental ; here a little, there a little, as seemed to me most likely to meet the occasions of parents and teachers. I should add that in the course of a number of years the various essays have been prepared for the use of the Parents' Educational Union in the hope that that Society might witness for a more or less coherent body of educational thought.

"The consequence of truth is great ; therefore the judgment of it must not be negligent."

WHICHCOTE.

1. Children are born *persons*.
2. They are not born either good or bad, but with possibilities for good and evil.
3. The principles of authority on the one hand and obedience on the other, are natural, necessary and fundamental ; but—
4. These principles are limited by the respect due to the personality of children, which must not be encroached upon, whether by fear or love, suggestion or influence, or undue play upon any one natural desire.
5. Therefore we are limited to three educational instruments—the atmosphere of environment, the discipline of habit, and the presentation of living ideas.
6. By the saying, EDUCATION IS AN ATMOSPHERE, it is not meant that a child should be isolated in what may be called a 'child environment,'

PREFACE TO THE 'HOME EDUCATION' SERIES

especially adapted and prepared; but that we should take into account the educational value of his natural home atmosphere, both as regards persons and things, and should let him live freely among his proper conditions. It stultifies a child to bring down his world to the 'child's' level.

7. By EDUCATION IS A DISCIPLINE, is meant the discipline of habits formed definitely and thoughtfully, whether habits of mind or body. Physiologists tell us of the adaptation of brain structure to habitual lines of thought—*i.e.*, to our habits.

8. In the saying that EDUCATION IS A LIFE, the need of intellectual and moral as well as of physical sustenance is implied. The mind feeds on ideas, and therefore children should have a generous curriculum.

9. But the mind is not a receptacle into which ideas must be dropped, each idea adding to an 'apperception mass' of its like, the theory upon which the Herbartian doctrine of interest rests.

10. On the contrary, a child's mind is no mere *sac* to hold ideas; but is rather, if the figure may be allowed, a spiritual *organism*, with an appetite for all knowledge. This is its proper diet, with which it is prepared to deal, and which it can digest and assimilate as the body does foodstuffs.

11. This difference is not a verbal quibble. The Herbartian doctrine lays the stress of education—the preparation of knowledge in enticing morsels, presented in due order—upon the teacher. Children

PREFACE TO THE 'HOME EDUCATION' SERIES

taught upon this principle are in danger of receiving much teaching with little knowledge; and the teacher's axiom is, 'What a child learns matters less than how he learns it.'

12. But, believing that the normal child has powers of mind that fit him to deal with all knowledge proper to him, we must give him a full and generous curriculum; taking care, only, that the knowledge offered to him is vital—that is, that facts are not presented without their informing ideas. Out of this conception comes the principle that,—

13. EDUCATION IS THE SCIENCE OF RELATIONS; that is, that a child has natural relations with a vast number of things and thoughts: so we must train him upon physical exercises, nature, handicrafts, science and art, and upon *many living* books; for we know that our business is, not to teach him all about anything, but to help him to make valid as many as may be of—

'Those first-born affinities
That fit our new existence to existing things.'

14. There are also two secrets of moral and intellectual self-management which should be offered to children; these we may call the Way of the Will and the Way of the Reason.

15. *The Way of the Will.*—Children should be taught—

- (a) To distinguish between 'I want' and 'I will.'
- (b) That the way to will effectively is to turn our

PREFACE TO THE 'HOME EDUCATION' SERIES

thoughts from that which we desire but do not will.

- (c) That the best way to turn our thoughts is to think of or do some quite different thing, entertaining or interesting.
- (d) That, after a little rest in this way, the will returns to its work with new vigour.

(This adjunct of the will is familiar to us as *diversion*, whose office it is to ease us for a time from will effort, that we may 'will' again with added power. The use of suggestion—even self-suggestion—as an aid to the will, is to be deprecated, as tending to stultify and stereotype character. It would seem that spontaneity is a condition of development, and that human nature needs the discipline of failure as well as of success.)

16. *The Way of the Reason.*— We should teach children, too, not to 'lean' (too confidently) 'unto their own understanding,' because the function of reason is, to give logical demonstration (*a*) of mathematical truth; and (*b*) of an initial idea, accepted by the will. In the former case reason is, perhaps, an infallible guide, but in the second it is not always a safe one; for whether that initial idea be right or wrong, reason will confirm it by irrefragable proofs.

17. Therefore children should be taught, as they become mature enough to understand such teaching, that the chief responsibility which rests on them as persons is the acceptance or rejection of initial ideas.

PREFACE TO THE 'HOME EDUCATION' SERIES

To help them in this choice we should give them principles of conduct and a wide range of the knowledge fitted for them.

These three principles (15, 16 and 17) should save children from some of the loose thinking and heedless action which cause most of us to live at a lower level than we need.

18. We should allow no separation to grow up between the intellectual and 'spiritual' life of children; but should teach them that the divine Spirit has constant access to their spirits, and is their continual helper in all the interests, duties and joys of life.

The 'Home Education' Series is so called from the title of the first volume, and not as dealing, wholly or principally, with 'Home' as opposed to 'School' education.

Preface

IN editing *Home Education* and *Parents and Children* for the 'Home Education' Series, the introduction of much new matter made it necessary to transfer a considerable part of the contents of those two members of the series to this volume, *Some Studies in the Formation of Character*.

I have used the current phrase 'formation of character' because it *is* current, and therefore convenient; but, to show that I recognise the fallacy it contains, I venture to quote the following (very inadequate) definition:—"His character—the efflorescence of the man wherein the fruit of his life is a-preparing—character is original disposition, modified, directed, expanded by education, by circumstances; later, by self-control and self-culture; above all, by the supreme agency of the Holy Spirit, even when that agency is little suspected and as little solicited";¹ that is to say, character is not the outcome of a formative educational process; but inherent tendencies are played upon, more or less incidentally, and the outcome is character.

I should like to urge that this incidental play of education and circumstances upon personality is our

¹ *Parents and Children*.

PREFACE

only legitimate course. We may not make character our conscious objective. Provide a child with what he needs in the way of instruction, opportunity, and wholesome occupation, and his character will take care of itself: for normal children are persons of good will, with honest desires toward right thinking and right living. All we can do further is to help a child to get rid of some hindrance—a bad temper, for example—likely to spoil his life. In our attempts to do this, our action should, I think, be most guarded. We may not interfere with his psychological development, because we recognise that children are persons, and personality should be far more inviolable in our eyes than property. We may use direct teaching and command, but *not* indirect suggestion, or even the old-fashioned ‘influence.’ Influence will act, of course, but it must not be consciously brought to bear.

But we may make use of certain physiological laws without encroaching on personality, because, in so doing, we should affect the instrument and not the agent. The laws of habit and, again, the tendency of will-power to rhythmic operation should be of use to us, because these are affected by brain-conditions and belong to the outworks of personality. The little studies in Part I. indicate ways of helping a child to cure himself of tiresome faults.

I am diffident about offering Part IV. of this volume, because, though the public is wonderfully patient with writers who ‘adorn the tale,’—half the books we read are about other books,—I am not sure of equal for-

PREFACE

bearance towards an attempt to 'point the moral.' But, indeed, we read in such a hurry, are satisfied with such slight and general impressions, that the leisurely investigation of educational hints thrown out by great authors might well be of use to us. If, in the few following studies, the reader fail to find what Wordsworth calls the "authentic comment," why, he will be provoked into making the right comment for himself, and so the end will be gained.

I should like, in this fifth volume of the 'Home Education' Series, to acknowledge my indebtedness to Miss Elsie Kitching for the constant interest she has thrown into the work, and her always intelligent collaboration as amanuensis.

CHARLOTTE M. MASON.

AMBLESIDE,
October 1906.

Contents

PART I

SOME STUDIES IN TREATMENT

(WEISSALL'S FOLLOWING)

	PAGE
	I
THE PHILOSOPHER AT HOME	3
	II
INCONSTANT KITTY	24
	III
UNDER A CLOUD	33
	IV
DOROTHY ELMORE'S ACHIEVEMENT	41
	V
CONSEQUENCES	68
	VI
MRS SEDLEY'S TALE	77
	VII
ABILITY	89
	VIII
POOR MRS JUMEAU!	98
	IX
"A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU!"	109

CONTENTS

PART II

PARENTS IN COUNCIL

	PAGE
I	
WHAT A SALVAGE!	121
II	
WHERE SHALL WE GO THIS YEAR?	131
III	
THE A-B-C-DARIANS	136
IV	
"DIE NEUE ZEIT BEDARF DER NEUEN SCHULE" (A SCHOOL- MASTER'S REVERIE)	144
V	
A HUNDRED YEARS AFTER (AT THE CLOUGHS' DINNER-TABLE, SEPT. 10, 1990)	158

PART III

CONCERNING YOUTHS AND MAIDENS

I	
CONCERNING THE SCHOOLBOY AND SCHOOLGIRL	176
The Relations between School Life and Home Life—School Discipline and Home Training.	
School, a new Experience — Examinations — The Play- ground — School Government — Girls' Schools — Home Training, Intellectual—Moral—The Awkward Age — Re- ligious Training—Home Culture, Books—Letter-writing— Reading aloud—The book for the Evening Lecture—Poetry as a Means of Culture—Table-talk—Æsthetic Culture.	

CONTENTS

	PAGE
II	
CONCERNING THE YOUNG MAIDENS AT HOME	235
Young Maidenhood—The Formation of Character and Opinions.	
Culture of Character—Liberty and Responsibility—Conduct—Pleasure and Duty—Opinions—Pursuits and Occupations—Objects in Life : Value of Special Training.	

PART IV

“It is written”

SOME STUDIES IN THE EVOLUTION OF CHARACTER

I	
TWO PEASANT BOYS	273
II	
A GENIUS AT “SCHOOL”	299
III	
PENDENNIS OF BONIFACE	364
IV	
“YOUNG CROSSJAY”	388
V	
BETTER-THAN-MY-NEIGHBOUR	401
VI	
A MODERN EDUCATOR ; THOMAS GODOLPHIN ROOPER	419

CONTENTS

APPENDIX

	PAGE
A FEW BOOKS DEALING WITH EDUCATION	431
<i>Pastor Agnorum, 431—School and Home Life, 433—Thoughts on Education, 434—Vittorino da Feltre and other Humanist Educators, 435 — Educational Studies and Addresses, 437—Religious Teaching in Secondary Schools, 438 —Special Reports on Educational Subjects, 441-446—Ideals of Culture, 446—Ethics of Citizenship, 447—A Survey of English Ethics, 448—Knowledge, Duty, and Faith, 449.</i>	

Part I
Some Studies in Treatment
(Weissall's Following)

I

THE PHILOSOPHER AT HOME

“ HE has *such* a temper, ma'am ! ”

And there, hot, flurried, and generally at her wits' end, stood the poor nurse at the door of her mistress's room. The terrific bellowing which filled the house was enough to account for the girl's distress. Mrs Belmont looked worried. She went up wearily to what she well knew was a weary task. A quarter of an hour ago life had looked very bright—the sun shining, sparrows chirping, lilac and laburnum making a gay show in the suburban gardens about; she thought of her three nestlings in the nursery, and her heart was like a singing-bird giving out chirps of thanks and praise. But that was all changed. The outside world was as bright as ever, but she was under a cloud. She knew too well how those screams from the nursery would spoil her day.

There the boy lay, beating the ground with fists and feet; emitting one prodigious roar after another, features convulsed, eyes protruding, in the unrestrained rage of a wild creature, so transfigured by passion that even his mother doubted if the noble countenance and lovely smile of her son had any existence beyond her fond imagination. He eyed

4 STUDIES IN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

his mother askance through his tumbled, yellow hair, but her presence seemed only to aggravate the demon in possession. The screams became more violent; the beating of the ground more than ever like a maniac's rage.

"Get up, Guy."

Renewed screams; more violent action of the limbs!

"Did you hear me, Guy?" in tones of enforced calmness.

The uproar subsided a little; but when Mrs Belmont laid her hand on his shoulder to raise him, the boy sprang to his feet, ran into her head-foremost, like a young bull, kicked her, beat her with his fists, tore her dress with his teeth, and would no doubt have ended by overthrowing his delicate mother, but that Mr Belmont, no longer able to endure the disturbance, came up in time to disengage the raging child and carry him off to his mother's room. Once in, the key was turned upon him, and Guy was left to "subside at his leisure," said his father.

Breakfast was not a cheerful meal, either upstairs or down. Nurse was put out; snapped up little Flo, shook baby for being tiresome, until she had them both in tears. In the dining-room, Mr Belmont read the *Times* with a frown which last night's debate did not warrant; sharp words were at his tongue's end, but, in turning the paper, he caught sight of his wife's pale face and untasted breakfast. He said nothing, but she knew and suffered under his thoughts fully as much as if they had been uttered. Meantime, two closed doors and the wide space between the rooms hardly served to dull the ear-torturing sounds that came from the prisoner.

All at once there was a lull, a sudden and complete cessation of sound. Was the child in a fit?

“Excuse me a minute, Edward;” and Mrs Belmont flew upstairs, followed shortly by her husband. What was her surprise to see Guy with composed features contemplating himself in the glass! He held in his hand a proof of his own photograph which had just come from the photographers. The boy had been greatly interested in the process; and here was the picture arrived, and Guy was solemnly comparing it with that image of himself which the looking-glass presented.

Nothing more was said on the subject; Mr. Belmont went to the City, and his wife went about her household affairs with a lighter heart than she had expected to carry that day. Guy was released, and allowed to return to the nursery for his breakfast, which his mother found him eating in much content and with the sweetest face in the world; there was no more trace of passion than a June day bears when the sun comes out after a thunderstorm. Guy was, indeed, delightful; attentive and obedient to Harriet, full of charming play to amuse the two little ones, and very docile and sweet with his mother, saying from time to time the quaintest things. You would have thought he had been trying to make up for the morning's fracas, had he not looked quite unconscious of wrong-doing.

This sort of thing had gone on since the child's infancy. Now, a frantic outburst of passion, to be so instantly followed by a sweet April-day face and a sunshiny temper that the resolutions his parents made about punishing or endeavouring to reform him passed away like hoar-frost before the child's genial mood.

6 STUDIES IN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

A sunshiny day followed this stormy morning; the next day passed in peace and gladness, but, the next, some hair astray, some crumpled rose-leaf under him, brought on another of Guy's furious outbursts. Once again the same dreary routine was gone through; and, once again, the tempestuous morning was forgotten in the sunshine of the child's day.

Not by the father, though: at last, Mr Belmont was roused to give his full attention to the mischief which had been going on under his eyes for nearly the five years of Guy's short life. It dawned upon him—other people had seen it for years—that his wife's nervous headaches and general want of tone might well be due to this constantly recurring distress. He was a man of reading and intelligence, in touch with the scientific thought of the day, and especially interested in what may be called the physical basis of character—the interaction which is ever taking place between the material brain and the immaterial thought and feeling of which it is the organ. He had even made little observations and experiments, declared to be valuable by his friend and ally, Dr Weissall, the head physician of the county hospital.

For a whole month he spread crumbs on the window-sill every morning at five minutes to eight; the birds gathered as punctually, and by eight o'clock the "table" was cleared and not a crumb remained. So far, the experiment was a great delight to the children, Guy and Flo, who were all agog to know how the birds knew the time.

After a month of free breakfasts: "You shall see now whether or no the birds come because they see the crumbs." The prospect was delightful, but, alas!

this stage of the experiment was very much otherwise to the pitiful childish hearts.

“Oh, father, *please* let us put out crumbs for the poor little birds, they are so hungry!” a prayer seconded by Mrs Belmont, met with very ready acceptance. The best of us have our moments of weakness.

“Very interesting ;” said the two savants; “nothing could show more clearly the readiness with which a habit is formed in even the less intelligent of the creatures.”

“Yes, and more than that, it shows the automatic nature of the action once the habit is formed. Observe, the birds came punctually and regularly when there were no longer crumbs for them. They did not come, look for their breakfast, and take sudden flight when it was not there, but they settled as before, stayed as long as before, and then flew off without any sign of disappointment. That is, they came, as we set one foot before another in walking, just out of habit, without any looking for crumbs, or conscious intention of any sort—a mere automatic or machine-like action with which conscious thought has nothing to do.”

Of another little experiment Mr Belmont was especially proud, because it brought down, as it were, two quarries at a stroke ; touched heredity and automatic action in one little series of observations. Rover, the family dog, appeared in the first place as a miserable puppy saved from drowning. He was of no breed to speak of, but care and good living agreed with him. He developed a handsome shaggy white coat, a quiet, well-featured face, and betrayed his low origin only by one inveterate habit ; carts he took no notice of, but never a carriage, small or

8 STUDIES IN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

great, appeared in sight but he ran yelping at the heels of the horses in an intolerable way, contriving at the same time to dodge the whip like any street Arab. Oddly enough, it came out through the milkman that Rover came of a mother who met with her death through this very peccadillo.

Here was an opportunity. The point was, to prove not only that the barking was automatic, but that the most inveterate habit, even an inherited habit, is open to cure.

Mr Belmont devoted himself to the experiment: he gave orders that, for a month, Rover should go out with no one but himself. Two pairs of ears were on the alert for wheels; two, distinguished between carriage and cart. Now Rover was the master of an accomplishment of which he and the family were proud: he could carry a newspaper in his mouth. Wheels in the distance, then, "Hi! Rover!" and Rover trotted along, the proud bearer of the *Times*. This went on daily for a month, until at last the association between wheels and newspaper was established, and a distant rumble would bring him up—a demand in his eyes. Rover was cured. By-and-by the paper was unnecessary, and "To heel! good dog!" was enough when an ominous falling of the jaw threatened a return of the old habit.

It is extraordinary how wide is the gap between theory and practice in most of our lives. "The man who knows the power of habit has a key wherewith to regulate his own life and the lives of his household, down to that of the cat sitting at his hearth." (*Applause.*) Thus, Mr Belmont at a scientific gathering. But only this morning did it dawn upon him that, with this key between his fingers, he was letting

his wife's health, his child's life, be ruined by a habit fatal alike to present peace, and to the hope of manly self-control in the future. Poor man! he had a bad half-hour that morning on his way Citywards. He was not given to introspection, but, when it was forced upon him, he dealt honestly.

"I must see Weissall to-night, and talk the whole thing out with him."

"Ah, so; the dear Guy! And how long is it, do you say, since the boy has thus out-broken?"

"All his life, for anything I know—certainly it began in his infancy."

"And do you think, my good friend"—here the Doctor laid a hand on his friend's arm, and peered at him with twinkling eyes and gravely set mouth—"do you think it possible that he has—er—*inherited* this little weakness? A grandfather, perhaps?"

"You mean me, I know; yes, it's a fact. And I got it from my father, and he, from his. We're not a good stock. I know I'm an irascible fellow, and it has stood in my way all through life."

"Fair and softly, my dear fellow! go not so fast. I cannot let you say bad things of my best friend. But this I allow; there are thorns, bristles all over; and they come out at a touch. How much better for you and for Science had the father cured all that!"

"As I must for Guy! Yes, and how much happier for wife, children, and servants; how much pleasanter for friends. Well, Guy is the question now. What do you advise?"

The two sat far into the night discussing a problem on the solution of which depended the future of a noble boy, the happiness of a family. No wonder

IO STUDIES IN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

they found the subject so profoundly interesting that 'two' by the church clock startled them into a hasty separation. Both Mrs Belmont and Mrs Weissall resented this dereliction on the part of their several lords ; but these ladies would have been meeker than Sarah herself had they known that, not science, not politics, but the bringing up of the children, was the engrossing topic.

Breakfast-time three days later. Scene, the dining-room.

NURSE *in presence of* MASTER *and* MISTRESS.

" You have been a faithful servant and good friend, both to us and the children, Harriet, but we blame you a little for Guy's passionate outbreaks. Do not be offended, we blame ourselves more. Your share of blame is that you have worshipped him from his babyhood, and have allowed him to have his own way in everything. Now, your part of the cure is, to do exactly as we desire. At present, I shall only ask you to remember that, Prevention is better than cure. The thing for all of us is to take precautions against even one more of these outbreaks.

" Keep your eye upon Guy ; if you notice—no matter what the cause—flushed cheeks, pouting lips, flashing eye, frowning forehead, with two little upright lines between the eyebrows, limbs held stiffly, hands, perhaps, closed, head thrown slightly back ; if you notice any or all of these signs, the boy is on the verge of an outbreak. Do not stop to ask questions, or soothe him, or make peace, or threaten. Change his thoughts. That is the one hope. Say quite naturally and pleasantly, as if you saw nothing, ' Your father wants you to garden with him,' or, ' for a game

of dominoes'; or, 'Your mother wants you to help her in the store-room,' or, 'to tidy her work-box.' Be ruled by the time of the day, and how you know we are employed. And be quite sure we *do* want the boy."

"But, sir, please excuse me, is it any good to save him from breaking out when the passion is there in his heart?"

"Yes, Harriet, all the good in the world. Your master thinks that Guy's passions have become a habit, and that the way to cure him is to keep him a long time, a month or two, without a single outbreak; if we can manage that, the trouble will be over. As for the passion in his heart, that comes with the outer signs, and both will be cured together. Do, Harriet, like a good woman, help us in this matter, and your master and I will always be grateful to you!"

"I'm sure, ma'am," with a sob (Harriet was a soft-hearted woman, and was very much touched to be taken thus into the confidence of her master and mistress), "I'm sure I'll do my best, especially as I've had a hand in it; but I'm sure I never meant to, and, if I forget, I hope you'll kindly forgive me."

"No, Harriet, you must not forget any more than you'd forget to snatch a sharp knife from the baby. This is almost a matter of life and death."

"Very well, sir, I'll remember; and thank you for telling me."

Breakfast time was unlucky; the very morning after the above talk, Nurse had her opportunity. Flo, for some inscrutable reason, preferred to eat her porridge with her brother's spoon. Behold, quick as a flash, flushed cheeks, puckered brow, rigid frame!

12 STUDIES IN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

"Master Guy, dear," in a quite easy, friendly tone (Harriet had mastered her lesson), "run down to your father; he wants you to help him in the garden."

Instantly the flash in the eye became a sparkle of delight, the rigid limbs were all active and eager; out of his chair, out of the room, downstairs, by his father's side, in less time than it takes to tell. And the face—joyous, sparkling, full of eager expectation—surely Nurse had been mistaken this time? But no; both parents knew how quickly Guy emerged from the shadow of a cloud, and they trusted Harriet's discretion.

"Well, boy, so you've come to help me garden? But I've not done breakfast. Have you finished yours?"

"No, father," with a dropping lip.

"Well, I'll tell you what. You run up and eat your porridge and come down as soon as you're ready; I shall make haste, too, and we shall get a good half-hour in the garden before I go out."

Up again went Guy with hasty, willing feet.

"Nurse" (breathless hurry and importance), "I must make haste with my porridge. Father wants me *directly* to help him in the garden."

Nurse winked hard at the fact that the porridge was gobbled. The happy little boy trotted off to one of the greatest treats he knew, and that day passed without calamity.

.

"I can see it will answer, and life will be another thing without Guy's passions; but do you think, Edward, it's *right* to give the child pleasures when he's naughty—in fact, to put a premium upon naughtiness, for it amounts to that?"

“You’re not quite right there. The child does not know he is naughty; the emotions of ‘naughtiness’ are there; he is in a physical tumult, but wilfulness has not set in; he does not yet *mean* to be naughty, and all is gained if we avert the set of the will towards wrong-doing. He has not had time to recognise that he is naughty, and his thoughts are changed so suddenly that he is not in the least aware of what was going on in him before. The new thing comes to him as naturally and graciously as do all the joys of the childish day. The question of desert does not occur.”

.

For a week all went well. Nurse was on the alert, was quick to note the ruddy storm-signal in the fair little face; she never failed to despatch Guy instantly, and with a quiet unconscious manner, on some errand to father or mother; nay, she improved on her instructions; when father and mother were out of the way, she herself invented some pleasant errand to cook about the pudding for dinner; to get fresh water for Dickie, or to see if Rover had had his breakfast. Nurse was really clever in inventing expedients, in hitting instantly on something to be done novel and amusing enough to fill the child’s fancy. A mistake in this direction would, experience told her, be fatal; propose what was stale, and not only would Guy decline to give up the immediate gratification of a passionate outbreak—for it *is* a gratification, that must be borne in mind—but he would begin to look suspiciously on the “something else” which so often came in the way of this gratification.

Security has its own risks. A morning came when Nurse was not on the alert. Baby was teething and

14 STUDIES IN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

fractious, Nurse was overdone, and the nursery was not a cheerful place. Guy, very sensitive to the moral atmosphere about him, got, in Nurse's phrase, out of sorts. He relieved himself by drumming on the table with a couple of ninepins, just as Nurse was getting baby off after a wakeful night.

"Stop that noise this minute, you naughty boy! Don't you see your poor little brother is going to sleep?" in a loud whisper. The noise was redoubled, and assisted by kicks on chair-rungs and table-legs. Sleep vanished and baby broke into a piteous wail. This was too much; the Nurse laid down the child, seized the young culprit, chair and all, carried him to the farthest corner, and, desiring him not to move till she gave him leave, set him down with a vigorous shaking. There were days when Guy would stand this style of treatment cheerfully, but this was not one. Before Harriet had even noted the danger signals, the storm had broken out. For half an hour the nursery was a scene of frantic uproar, baby assisting, and even little Flo. Half an hour is nothing to speak of; in pleasant chat, over an amusing book, the thirty minutes fly like five; but half an hour in struggle with a raging child is a day and a night in length. Mr and Mrs Belmont were out, so Harriet had it all to herself, and it was contrary to orders that she should attempt to place the child in confinement; solitude and locked doors involved risks that the parents would, rightly, allow no one but themselves to run. At last the tempest subsided, spent, apparently, by its own force.

A child cannot bear estrangement, disapproval; he must needs live in the light of a countenance smiling upon him. His passion over, Guy set himself labo-

riously to be good, keeping watch out of the corner of his eye to see how Nurse took it. She was too much vexed to respond in any way, even by a smile. But her heart was touched; and though, by-and-by when Mrs Belmont came in, she did say—"Master Guy has been in one of his worst tempers again, ma'am: screaming for better than half an hour"—yet she did not tell her tale with the *empressement* necessary to show what a very bad half-hour they had had. His mother looked with grave reproof at the delinquent, but she was not proof against his coaxing ways.

After dinner she remarked to her husband, "You will be sorry to hear that Guy has had one of his worst bouts again. Nurse said he screamed steadily for more than half an hour."

"What did you do?"

"I was out at the time doing some shopping. But when I came back, after letting him know how grieved I was, I did as you say, changed his thoughts and did my best to give him a happy day."

"How did you let him know you were grieved?"

"I looked at him in a way he quite understood, and you should have seen the deliciously coaxing, half-ashamed look he shot up at me. What eyes he has!"

"Yes, the little monkey! and no doubt he measured their effect on his mother; you must allow me to say that my theory certainly is *not* to give him a happy day after an outbreak of this sort."

"Why, I thought your whole plan was to change his thoughts, to keep him so well occupied with pleasant things that he does not dwell on what agitated him."

16 STUDIES IN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

"Yes, but did you not tell me the passion was over when you found him?"

"Quite over; he was as good as gold."

"Well, the thing we settled on was to *avert* a threatened outbreak by a pleasant change of thought; and to do so in order that, at last, the *habit* of these outbreaks may be broken. Don't you see, that is a very different thing from pampering him with a pleasant day when he has already pampered himself with the full indulgence of his passion?"

"Pampered himself! Why, you surely don't think those terrible scenes give the poor child any pleasure. I always thought he was a deal more to be pitied than we."

"Indeed I do. Pleasure is perhaps hardly the word; but that the display of temper is a form of self-indulgence, there is no doubt at all. You, my dear, are too amiable to know what a relief it is to us irritable people to have a good storm and clear the air."

"Nonsense, Edward! But what should I have done? What is the best course *after* the child has given way?"

"I think we must, as you once suggested, consider how we ourselves are governed. Estrangement, isolation are the immediate consequences of sin, even of what may seem a small sin of harshness or selfishness."

"Oh, but don't you think that is our delusion? that God is loving us all the time, and it is *we* who estrange ourselves?"

"Without doubt; and we are aware of the love all the time, but, also, we are aware of a cloud between it and ourselves; we know we are out of favour.

We know, too, that there is only one way back, through the fire. It is common to speak of repentance as a light thing, rather pleasant than otherwise; but it is searching and bitter: so much so, that the Christian soul dreads to sin, even the sin of coldness, from an almost cowardly dread of the anguish of repentance, purging fire though it be."

Mrs Belmont could not clear her throat to answer for a minute. She had never before had such a glimpse into her husband's soul. Here were deeper things in the spiritual life than any of which she yet knew.

"Well then, dear, about Guy; must he feel this estrangement, go through this fire?"

"I think so, in his small degree; but he must never doubt our love. He must see and feel that it is always there, though under a cloud of sorrow which he only can break through."

Guy's lapse prepared the way for further lapses. Not two days passed before he was again in a passion. The boy, his outbreak over, was ready at once to emerge into the sunshine. Not so his mother. His most bewitching arts met only with sad looks and silence.

He told his small scraps of nursery news, looking in vain for the customary answering smile and merry words. He sidled up to his mother, and stroked her cheek; that did not do, so he stroked her hand; then her gown; no answering touch, no smile, no word; nothing but sorrowful eyes when he ventured to raise his own. Poor little fellow! The iron was beginning to enter; he moved a step or two away from his mother, and raised to hers eyes full of

piteous doubt and pleading. He saw love, which could not reach him, and sorrow, which he was just beginning to comprehend. But his mother could bear it no longer: she got up hastily and left the room. Then the little boy, keeping close to the wall, as if even that were something to interpose between him and this new sense of desolation, edged off to the farthest corner of the room, and sinking on the floor with a sad, new quietness, sobbed in his loneliness; Nurse had had her lesson, and although she too was crying for her boy, nobody went near him but Flo. A little arm was passed round his neck; a hot little cheek pressed against his curls:

“Don’t cry, Guy!” two or three times, and when the sobs came all the thicker, there was nothing for it but that Flo must cry too; poor little outcasts!

At last bedtime came, and his mother; but her face had still that sad far-away look, and Guy could see she had been crying. How he longed to spring up and hug her and kiss her as he would have done yesterday. But somehow he dared not; and she never smiled nor spoke, and yet never before had Guy known how his mother loved him.

She sat in her accustomed chair by the little white bed, and beckoned the little boy in his nightgown to come and say his prayers. He knelt at his mother’s knee as usual, and then she laid her hands upon his.

“‘Our Father’—oh, mother, mo—o—ther, mother!” and a torrent of tears drowned the rest, and Guy was again in his mother’s arms, and she was raining kisses upon him, and crying with him.

Next morning his father received him with open arms.

"So my poor little boy had a bad day yesterday!"

Guy hung his head and said nothing.

"Would you like me to tell you how you may help ever having quite such another bad day?"

"Oh yes, please, father; I thought I couldn't help."

"Can you tell when the 'Cross-man' is coming?"

Guy hesitated. "Sometimes, I think. I get all hot."

"Well, the minute you find he's coming, even if you have begun to cry, say, 'Please excuse me, Nurse,' and run downstairs, and then four times round the paddock as fast as you can, without stopping to take breath!"

"What a good way! Shall I try it now?"

"Why, the 'Cross-man' isn't there now. But I'll tell you a secret: he always goes away if you begin to do something else as hard as you can; and if you can remember to run away from him round the garden, you'll find he won't run after you; at the very worst, he won't run after you more than *once* round!"

"Oh, father, I'll try! What fun! See if I don't beat him! Won't I just give Mr 'Cross-man' a race! He shall be quite out of breath before we get round the fourth time."

The vivid imagination of the boy personified the foe, and the father jumped with his humour. Guy was eager for the fray; the parents had found an ally in their boy; the final victory was surely within appreciable distance.

"This is glorious, Edward; and it's as interesting as painting a picture or writing a book! What a capital device the race with 'Mr Cross-man' is! It's like 'Sintram.' He'll be so busy looking out for

‘Cross-man’ that he’ll forget to be cross. The only danger I see is that of many false alarms. He’ll try the race, in all good faith, when there is no foe in pursuit.”

“That’s very likely; but it will do no harm. He is getting the habit of running away from the evil, and may for that be the more ready to run when it’s at his heels; this, of running away from temptation, is the right principle, and may be useful to him in a thousand ways.”

“Indeed, it may be a safeguard to him through life. How did you get the idea?”

“Do you remember how Rover was cured of barking after carriages? There were two stages to the cure; the habit of barking was stopped, and a new habit was put in its place; I worked upon the recognised law of association of ideas, and got Rover to associate the rumble of wheels with a newspaper in his mouth. I tried at the time to explain how it was possible to act thus on the ‘mind’ of a dog.”

“I recollect quite well; you said that the stuff—nervous tissue, you called it—of which the brain is made is shaped in the same sort of way—at least so I understood—by the thoughts that are in it, as the cover of a tart is shaped by the plums below. And then, when there’s a place ready for them in the brain, the same sort of thoughts always come to fill it.”

“I did not intend to say precisely that,” said Mr Belmont, laughing, “especially the plum part. However, it will do. Pray go on with your metaphor. It is decided that plums are not wholesome eating. You put in your thumb, and pick out a plum; and that the place may be filled, and well filled, you pop in a—a—figures fail me—a peach!”

“I see! I see! Guy’s screaming fits are the unwholesome plum which we are picking out, and the running away from Cross-man the peach to be got in instead. (I don’t see why it should be a peach though, unpractical man!) His brain is to grow to the shape of the peach, and behold, the place is filled. No more room for the plum.”¹

“You have it; you have put, in a light way, a most interesting law, and I take much blame to myself that I never thought until now of applying it to Guy’s case. But now I think we are making way; we have made provision for dislodging the old habit and setting a new one in its place.”

“Don’t you think the child will be a hero in a very small way, when he makes himself run away from his temper?”

“Not in a small way at all; the child will be a hero. But we cannot be heroes all the time. In sudden gusts of temptation, God grant him grace to play the hero, if only through hasty flight; but in what are called besetting sins, there is nothing safe but the contrary besetting good habit. And here is where parents have immense power over the future of their children.”

“Don’t think me superstitious and stupid; but somehow this scientific training, good as I see it is, seems to me to undervalue the help we get from above in times of difficulty and temptation.”

“Let me say that it is you who undervalue the

¹ To state the case more accurately, certain cell connections appear to be established by habitual traffic in certain thoughts; but there is so much danger in over-stating or in localising mental operations, that perhaps it is safer to convey the practical outcome of this line of research in a more or less figurative way—as, the wearing of a field-path; the making of a bridge; a railway, etc.

22 STUDIES IN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

virtue, and limit the scope of the Divine action. Whose are the laws Science labours to reveal? Whose are the works, body or brain, or what you like, upon which these laws act?"

"How foolish of me! But one gets into a way of thinking that God cares only for what we call spiritual things. Let me ask you one more question. I do see that all this watchful training is necessary, and do not wish to be idle or cowardly about it. But don't you think Guy would grow out of these violent tempers naturally, as he gets older?"

"Well, he would not, as youth or man, fling himself on the ground and roar; but no doubt he would grow up touchy, fiery, open at any minute to a sudden storm of rage. The man who has too much self-respect for an open exhibition may, as you know well enough, poor wife, indulge in continual irritability, suffer himself to be annoyed by trifling matters. No, there is nothing for it but to look upon an irate habit as one to be displaced by a contrary habit. Who knows what cheerful days we may yet have, and whether in curing Guy I may not cure myself? The thing can be done; only one is so lazy about one's own habits. Suppose you take me in hand?"

"Oh, I couldn't! and yet it's your only fault."

"*Only* fault! well, we'll see. In the meantime there's another thing I wish we could do for Guy—stop him in the midst of an outbreak. Do you remember the morning we found him admiring himself in the glass?"

"Yes, with the photograph in his hand."

"That was it; perhaps the Cross-man race will answer even in the middle of a tempest. If not, we must try something else."

“It won’t work.”

“Why not?”

“Guy will have no more rages; how then can he be stopped in mid-tempest?”

“Most hopeful of women! But don’t deceive yourself. Our work is only well begun, but that, let us hope, is half done.”

.
His father was right. Opportunities to check him in mid-career occurred; and Guy answered to the rein. Mr Cross-man worked wonders. A record of outbreaks was kept; now a month intervened; two months; a year; two years; and at last his parents forgot their early troubles with their sweet-tempered, frank-natured boy.

II

INCONSTANT KITTY

“BUT now for the real object of this letter—does it take your breath away to get four sheets? We want you to help us about Kitty. My husband and I are at our wits’ end, and would most thankfully take your wise head and kind heart into counsel. I fear we have been laying up trouble for ourselves and for our little girl. The ways of nature are, there is no denying it, very attractive in all young creatures, and it is so delightful to see a child do as ‘tis its nature to,’ that you forget that Nature, left to herself, produces a waste, be it never so lovely. Our little Kitty’s might so easily become a wasted life.

“But not to prose any more, let me tell you the history of Kitty’s yesterday—one of her days is like the rest, and you will be able to see where we want your help.

“Figure to yourself the three little heads bent over ‘copy-books’ in our cheery schoolroom. Before a line is done, up starts Kitty.

“‘Oh, mother, may I write the next copy—shell? “Shell” is so much nicer than—k n o w, and I’m so tired of it.’

“‘How much have you done?’

“I have written it three whole times, mother, and I really *can't* do it any more! I think I could do—
s h e l l. “Shell” is so pretty!”

“By-and-by we read; but Kitty cannot read—
can't even spell the words (don't scold us, we know it is quite wrong to spell in a reading lesson), because all the time her eyes are on a smutty sparrow on the topmost twig of the poplar; so she reads, ‘W i t h, birdie!’ We do sums; a short line of addition is to poor Kitty a hopeless and an endless task. ‘Five and three make—nineteen,’ is her last effort, though she knows quite well how to add up figures. Half a scale on the piano, and then—eyes and ears for everybody's business but her own. Three stitches of hemming, and idle fingers plait up the hem or fold the duster in a dozen shapes. I am in the midst of a thrilling history talk: ‘So the Black Prince——’ ‘Oh, mother, do you think we shall go to the sea this year? My pail is quite ready, all but the handle, but I can't find my spade *anywhere!*’

“And thus we go on, pulling Kitty through her lessons somehow; but it is a weariness to herself and to all of us, and I doubt if the child learns anything except by bright flashes. But you have no notion how quick the little monkey is. After idling through a lesson she will overtake us at a bound at the last moment, and thus escape the wholesome shame of being shown up as the dunce of our little party.

“Kitty's dawdling ways, her restless desire for change of occupation, her always wandering thoughts, lead to a good deal of friction, and spoil our school-room party, which is a pity, for I want the children to enjoy their lessons from the very first. What do you think the child said to me yesterday in the most

26 STUDIES IN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

coaxing pretty way? 'There are so many things nicer than lessons! Don't you think so, mother?' Yes, dear aunt, I see you put your finger on those unlucky words 'coaxing, pretty way,' and you look, if you do not say, that awful sentence of yours about sin being bred of allowance. Isn't that it? It is quite true; we are in fault. Those butterfly ways of Kitty's were delicious to behold until we thought it time to set her to work, and then we found that we should have been training her from her babyhood. Well,

"If you break your plaything yourself, dear,
Don't you cry for it all the same?
I don't think it is such a comfort
To have only oneself to blame.'

So, like a dear, kind aunt, don't scold us, but help us to do better. Is Kitty constant to anything? you ask. Does she stick to any of the '*many* things so much nicer than lessons'? I am afraid that here, too, our little girl is 'unstable as water.' And the worst of it is, she is all agog to be at a thing, and then, when you think her settled to half an hour's pleasant play, off she is like any butterfly. She says her, 'How doth the little busy bee,' dutifully; but when I tell her she is not a bit like a busy bee, but rather like a foolish, flitting butterfly, I'm afraid she rather likes it, and makes up to the butterflies as if they were akin to her, and were having just the good time she would prefer. But you must come and see the child to understand how volatile she is.

"Oh, mother, *please* let me have a good doll's wash this afternoon; I'm quite unhappy about poor Peggy! I really think she *likes* to be dirty!'

"Great preparations follow in the way of little tub,

and soap, and big apron; the little laundress sits down, greatly pleased with herself, to undress her dirty Peggy; but hardly is the second arm out of its sleeve, than, *presto!* a new idea; off goes Kitty to clean out her doll's house, deaf to all Nurse's remonstrances about 'nice hot water,' and 'poor dirty Peggy.'

"I'm afraid the child is no more constant to her loves than to her play; she is a loving little soul, as you know, and is always adoring somebody. Now it's her father, now Juno, now me, now Hugh; and the rain of warm kisses, the soft clasping arms, the nestling head, are delicious, whether to dog or man. But, alas! Kitty's blandishments are a whistle you must pay for; to-morrow it is somebody else's turn, and the bad part is that she has only room for one at a time. If we could get a little visit from you, now, Kitty would be in your pocket all day long; and we, even Peggy, would be left out in the cold. But do not flatter yourself it would last; I think none of Kitty's attachments has been known to last longer than two days.

"If the chief business of parents is to train *character* in their children, we have done nothing for Kitty; at six years old the child has no more power of application, no more habit of attention, is no more able to make herself do the thing she ought to do, indeed, has no more desire to do the right thing than she had at six months old. We are getting very unhappy about it. My husband feels strongly that parents should labour at character as the Hindoo gold-beater labours at his vase; that *character* is the one thing we are called upon to effect. And what have we done for Kitty? We have turned out a 'fine animal,' and are glad and thankful for that; but that is all; the

child is as wayward, as unsteady, as a young colt. Do help us, dear aunt. Think our little girl's case over; if you can get at the source of the mischief, send us a few hints for our guidance, and we shall be yours gratefully evermore."

“And now for my poor little great-niece! Her mother piles up charges against her, but how interesting and amusing and like the free world of fairy-land it would all be were it not for the *tendencies* which, in these days, we talk much about and watch little against. We bring up our children in the easiest, happy-go-lucky way, and all the time talk solemnly in big words about the momentous importance of every influence brought to bear upon them. But it is true; these naughty, winsome ways of Kitty's will end in her growing up like half the 'girls'—that is, young women—one meets. They talk glibly on many subjects; but test them, and they know nothing of any; they are ready to undertake anything, but they carry nothing through. This week, So-and-so is their most particular friend; next week, such another; even their amusements, their one real interest, fail and flag; but then, there is some useful thing to be learnt—how to set tiles or play the banjo! And, all the time, there is no denying, as you say, that this very fickleness has a charm, so long as the glamour of youth lasts, and the wayward girl has bright smiles and winning, graceful ways to disarm you with. But youth does not last; and the poor girl who began as a butterfly ends as a grub, tied to the earth by the duties she never learnt how to fulfil; that is, supposing she is a girl with a conscience; wanting that, she dances through life whatever befalls—

children, husband, home, must take their chance. 'What a giddy old grandmother the Peterfields have!' remarked a pert young man of my acquaintance. But, indeed, the 'giddy old grandmother' is not an unknown quantity.

"Are you saying to yourself, a prosy old 'great-aunt' is as bad as a 'giddy old grandmother'? I really have prosed abominably, but Kitty has been on my mind all the time, and it is quite true, you must take her in hand.

"First, as to her lessons: you *must* help her to gain the power of attention; that should have been done long ago, but better late than never, and an aunt who has given her mind to these matters takes blame to herself for not having seen the want sooner. 'But,' I fancy you are saying, 'if the child has no faculty of attention, how can we give it to her? It's just a natural defect.' Not a bit of it! Attention is not a faculty at all, though I believe it is worth more than all the so-called faculties put together; this, at any rate, is true, that no talent, no genius, is worth much without the power of attention; and this is the power which makes men or women successful in life. (I talk like a book without scruple, because you know my light is borrowed; Professor Weissall is our luminary.)

"Attention is no more than this—the power of giving your mind to what you are about—the bigger the better so far as the mind goes, and great minds do great things; but have you never known a person with a great mind, 'real genius,' his friends say, who goes through life without accomplishing anything? It is just because he wants the power to 'turn on,' so to speak, the whole of his great mind; he is unable to bring the whole of his power to bear on the subject

30 STUDIES IN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

in hand. 'But Kitty?' Yes, Kitty must get this power of 'turning on.' She must be taught to give her mind to sums and reading, and even to dusters. Go slowly ; a little to-day and a little more to-morrow. In the first place, her lessons must be made *interesting*. Do not let her scramble through a page of 'reading,' for instance, spelling every third word and then waiting to be told what it spells, but let every day bring the complete mastery of a few new words, as well as the keeping up of the old ones.

"But do not let the lesson last more than ten minutes, and insist, with brisk, bright determination, on the child's full concentrated attention of eye and mind for the whole ten minutes. Do not allow a moment's dawdling at lessons.

"I should not give her rows of figures to add yet ; use dominoes or the domino cards prepared for the purpose, the point being to add or subtract the dots on the two halves in a twinkling. You will find that the three can work together at this as at the reading, and the children will find it as exciting and delightful as 'old soldier.' Kitty will be all alive here, and will take her share of work merrily ; and this is a point gained. Do not, if you can help it, single the little maid out from the rest and throw her on her own responsibility. 'Tis 'a heavy and a weary weight' for the bravest of us, and the little back will get a trick of bending under life if you do not train her to carry it lightly, as an Eastern woman her pitcher.

"Then, vary the lessons ; now head, and now hands ; now tripping feet and tuneful tongue ; but in every lesson let Kitty and the other two carry away the joyous sense of—

“‘Something attempted, something done.’

“Allow of no droning wearily over the old stale work—which must be kept up all the time, it is true, but rather by way of an exciting game than as the lesson of the day, which should always be a distinct *step* that the children can recognise.

“You have no notion, until you try, how the ‘now-or-never’ feeling about a lesson quickens the attention of even the most volatile child; what you can drone through all day, you will; what *must* be done, is done. Then, there is a by-the-way gain besides that of quickened attention. I once heard a wise man say that, if he must choose between the two, he would rather his child should learn the meaning of ‘must’ than inherit a fortune. And here you will be able to bring moral force to bear on wayward Kitty. Every lesson must have its own time, and no other time in this world is there for it. The sense of the preciousness of time, of the irreparable loss when a ten minutes’ lesson is thrown away, must be brought home.

“Let your own unaffected distress at the loss of ‘golden minutes’ be felt by the children, and also be visited upon them by the loss of some small childish pleasure which the day should have held. It is a sad thing to let a child dawdle through a day and be let off scot-free. You see, I am talking of the children, and not of Kitty alone, because it is so much easier to be good in company; and what is good for her will be good for the trio.

“But there are other charges; poor Kitty is neither steady in play nor steadfast in love! May not the *habit* of attending to her lessons help her to stick to her play? Then, encourage her. ‘What! The doll’s tea-party over! That’s not the way grown-up ladies

have tea ; they sit and talk for a long time. See if you can make your tea-party last twenty minutes by my watch!' This failing of Kitty's is just a case where a little gentle ridicule might do a great deal of good. It is a weapon to be handled warily, for one child may resent, and another take pleasure in being laughed at ; but managed with tact I do believe it's good for children and grown-ups to see the comic side of their doings.

"I think we err in not enough holding up certain virtues for our children's admiration. Put a premium of praise on every finished thing, if it be only a house of cards. Steadiness in work is a step on the way towards steadfastness in love. Here, too, the praise of constancy might very well go with good-humoured family 'chaff,' not about the new loves, which are lawful, whether of kitten or playmate, but about the discarded old loves. Let Kitty and all of them grow up to glory in their constancy to every friend.

"There, I am sending you a notable preachment instead of the few delicate hints I meant to offer ; but never mount a woman on her hobby—who knows when she will get off again ?"

III

UNDER A CLOUD

YOU wish me to tell you the story of my little girl? Well, to begin at the beginning. In looking back through the pages of my journal I find many scattered notices of Agnes, and I always write of her, I find, as "poor Agnes." Now, I wonder why? The child is certainly neither unhealthy nor unhappy—at least, not with any reason ; but again and again I find this sort of entry :—

" Agnes displeased with her porridge ; says nothing, but looks black all day."

" Harry upset his sister's work-basket—by accident, I truly believe ; but she can't get over it—speaks to no one, and looks as if under a cloud."

I need not go on ; the fact is, the child is sensible of many injuries heaped upon her ; I think there is no ground for the feeling, for she is really very sweet when she has not, as the children say, the black dog on her back.

It is quite plain to me, and to others also, I think that we have let this sort of thing go on too long without dealing with it. We must take the matter in hand. Please God, our little Agnes must not grow up in this sullen habit, for all our sakes, but chiefly for

her own, poor child. I felt that in this matter I might be of more use than Edward, who simply does not understand a temper less sunny and open than his own. I pondered and pondered, and, at last, some light broke in upon me. I thought I should get hold of one principle at a time, work that out thoroughly, and then take up the next, and so on, until all the springs of sullenness were exhausted, and all supplies from without stopped. I was beginning to suspect that the laws of habit worked here as elsewhere, and that, if I could get our dear child to pass, say, six weeks without a "fallen countenance," she might lose this distressing failing for life.

I meant at first to take most of the trouble of this experiment upon myself; but I think men have clearer heads than we women—that is, they can see *both* sides of a question and are not carried away by the one side presented to them. So I said—

"Well, Edward, our little Agnes does not get over her sulky fits; in fact, they last longer, and are harder to get out of than ever!"

"Poor little girl! It is unhappy for her and for all of us. But don't you think it is a sort of childish *malaise* she will soon grow out of?"

"Now, have you not said, again and again, that a childish fault, left to itself, can do no other than strengthen?"

"True; I suppose the fact is I am slow to realise the fault. But you are right. From the point of view of *habit* we are pledged to deal with it. Have you made any plans?"

"Yes; I have been trying to work the thing out on Professor Weissall's lines. We must watch the rise of the sullen cloud, and change her thoughts

before she has time to realise that the black fit is coming."

"You are right ; if we can keep the child for only a week without this settling of the cloud, the mere habit would be somewhat broken."

We had not to wait for our opportunity. At breakfast next day—whether Harry's porridge looked more inviting than her own, or whether he should not have been helped first, or whether the child had a little pain of which she was hardly aware—suddenly, her eyes fell, brows dropped, lips pouted, the whole face became slightly paler than before, the figure limp, limbs lax, hands nerveless—and our gentle child was transformed, become entirely unlovable. So far, her feelings were in the emotional stage; her injury, whatever it was, had not yet taken shape in her thoughts ; she could not have told you what was the matter, because she did not know ; but very soon the thinking brain would come to the aid of the quick emotions, and then she would be sulky of fixed purpose. Her father saw the symptoms rise and knew what they would lead to, and, with the promptness which has often saved us, he cried out—

"Agnes, come here, and hold up your pinafore!" and Agnes trotted up to his side, her pinafore held up very much to receive the morning dole of crumbs for the birds ; presently, she came back radiant with the joy of having given the birds a good breakfast, and we had no more sulky fits that day. This went on for a fortnight or so with fair but not perfect success. Whenever her father or I was present, we caught the emotion before the child was conscious of it, and succeeded in turning her thoughts into some pleasant channel. But poor nurse has had bad hours with

Agnes ; there would sit the child, pale and silent, for hours together, doing nothing because she liked to do it, but only because she must. And, once the fit had settled down, thick and steady as a London fog, neither her father nor I could help in the least. Oh, the inconceivable settled cloudiness and irresponsiveness of that child face !

Our tactics were at fault. No doubt they helped so far as they went. We managed to secure bright days that might otherwise have been cloudy when we happened to be present at the first rise of the sullen mood. But it seemed impossible to bring about so long an abstinence from sullen fits as would nullify the *habit*. We pictured to ourselves the dreary life that lay before our pretty little girl ; the distrust of her sweetness, to which even one such sullen fit would give rise ; worse, the isolation which accompanies this sort of temper, and the anguish of repentance to follow. And then, I know, madness is often bred of this strong sense of injured personality.

It is not a pleasant thing to look an evil in the face. Whether or no "a little knowledge is a dangerous," certainly, it is a trying thing. If we could only have contented ourselves with, "Oh, she'll grow out of it by-and-by," we could have put up with even a daily cloud. But these forecasts of our little girl's future made the saving of the child at *any* cost our most anxious care.

"I'll tell you what, Helen ; we must strike out a new line. In a general way, I do believe it's best to deal with a child's faults without making him aware that he has them. It fills the little beings with a ridiculous sense of importance to have anything belonging to *them*, even a fault. But in this case, I

think, we shall have to strike home and deal with *the cause* at least as much as with *the effects*, and that, chiefly, because we have not effects entirely under our control."

"But, what if there is no cure? What if this odious temper were *hereditary*—our child's inheritance from those who should have brought her only good?"

"The question is not 'How has it come?' but 'How are we to deal with it?'—equally, you and I. Poor things! It's but a very half-and-half kind of matrimony if each is to pick out his or her own particular bundle of failings, and deal with it single-handed. This poor man finds the prospect too much for him! As a matter of fact, though, I believe that failings of mind, body, temper, and what not, are matters of inheritance, and that each parent's particular business in life is to pass his family forward freed from that particular vicious tendency which has been his own bane—or hers, if you prefer it."

"Well, do as you will; I can trust you. What it would be in these days of greater insight to be married to a man who would say, 'There, that boy may thank his mother' for this or the other failure! Of course, the thing is done now, but more often than not as a random guess."

"To return to Agnes. I think we shall have to show her to herself in this matter, to rake up the ugly feeling, however involuntary, and let her see how hateful it is. Yes, I do not wonder you shrink from this. So do I. It will destroy the child's unconsciousness."

"Oh, Edward, how I dread to poke into the little

wounded heart, and bring up worse things to startle her!"

"I am sorry for you, but I think it must be done; and don't you think you are the person to do it? While they have a mother I don't think I could presume to pry too much into the secrets of the children's hearts."

"I'll try; but if I get into a mess you must help me through."

The opportunity came soon enough. It was pears this time. Harry would never have known whether he had the biggest or the least. But we had told Nurse to be especially careful in this matter. "Each of the children must have the biggest or best as often as one another, but there must be no fuss, no taking turns, about such trifles. Therefore, very rightly, you gave Harry the bigger and Agnes the smaller pear."

Agnes's pear was not touched; there the child sat, without word or sob, but all gathered into herself, like a sea-anemone whose tentacles have been touched. The stillness, whiteness, and brooding sullenness of the face, the limp figure and desolate attitude, would have made me take the little girl in my arms if I had not too often failed to reach her in that way. This went on all day, all of us suffering; and in the evening, when I went to hear the children's prayers before bed, I meant to have it out.

We were both frozen up with sadness, and the weary child was ready to creep into her mother's arms again. But I must not let her yet.

"So my poor Agnes has had a very sad day?"

"Yes, mother," with a sob.

"And do you know we have all had a very sad day

—father, mother, your little brother, Nurse—every one of us has felt as if a black curtain had been hung up to shut out the sunshine?”

The child was sympathetic, and shivered at the sight of the black curtain and the warm sunshine shut out.

“And do you know who has put us all out in the dark and the cold? Our little girl drew the curtain, because she would not speak to any of us, or be kind to any of us, or love any of us all the day long; so we could not get into the sunshine, and have been shivering and sad in the cold.”

“Mother, mother!” with gasping sobs; “*not* you and father?”

“Ah! I thought my little girl would be sorry. Now let us try to find out how it all happened. Is it possible that Agnes noticed that her brother’s pear was larger than her own?”

“Oh, mother, how could I?” The poor little face was hidden in her mother’s breast, and the outbreak of sobs that followed was very painful. I feared it might mean actual illness for the sensitive child. I think it was the right thing to do; but I had barely courage enough to leave the results in more loving hands.

“Never mind; don’t cry any more, darling, and we will ask ‘Our Father’ to forgive and forget all about it. Mother knows that her dear little Agnes will try not to love herself best any more. And then the black curtain will never fall, and we shall never again be a whole long day standing sadly out in the cold. Good-night from mother, and another good-night from father.”

The treatment seems to answer. On the slightest

40 STUDIES IN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

return of the old sullen symptoms we show our little girl what they mean. The grief that follows is so painful that I'm afraid we could not go on with it for the sake of the child's health; but, happily, we very rarely see a sulky face now; and when we do we turn and look upon our child, and the look melts her into gentleness and penitence.