

A house is made of bricks & beams.

One good mother is worth a hundred schoolmasters. In the home she is “loadstone to all hearts, and loadstar to all eyes.” An educated mother can skillfully make use of her spare time, as she has better time management skills. She is more than an individual. She is actually an institution. She has a variety of roles. At the end, “the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world”, but that kind of empowerment only education provides.

Imitation of her is constant – imitation, which is likened to “a globe of precepts.” But example is far more than precept. It is instruction in action. It is teaching without words, often exemplifying more than tongue can teach. In the face of bad example, the best of precepts are of but little avail. The example is followed, not the precepts. Indeed, precept at variance with practice is worse than useless, inasmuch as it only serves to teach the most cowardly of vices – hypocrisy. Even children are judges of consistency, and the lessons of the parent who says one thing & does the opposite, are quickly seen through.

By imitation of acts, the character becomes slowly & imperceptibly, but at length, decidedly formed. The several acts may seem in themselves trivial; but so are the continuous acts of daily life. Like snowflakes, they fall unperceived; each flake added to the pile produces no sensible change, and yet the accumulation of snowflakes makes the avalanche. So do repeated acts, one following another, at length become consolidated in habit, determine the action of the human being for good or for evil, and, in a word, form the character.

It is because the mother, far more than the father, influences the action & conduct of the child, that her good example is of so much greater importance in the home. It is easy to understand how this should be so. The home is the woman’s domain – her kingdom, where she exercises entire control. Her power over the little subjects she rules there is absolute. They look up to her for everything. She is the example & model constantly before their eyes, whom they unconsciously observe & imitate.

The home is the true school of courtesy, of which the mother is the best practical instructor. “Without woman,” says the proverb, “men were but ill-licked cubs.” Philanthropy radiates from the home as from a centre. The wisest & the best have not been ashamed to own it to be their greatest joy & happiness to sit “behind the heads of children” in the inviolable circle of home. A life of purity & duty there is not the least effectual preparative for a life of public work & duty. The one who loves their home will not the less fondly love & serve his

A home is made of hopes & dreams.

country. But while homes, which are the nurseries of character, may be the best of schools, they may also be the worst. Between childhood & manhood how incalculable is the mischief which ignorance in the home has the power to cause! Between the drawing of the first breath and the last, how vast is the moral suffering & disease occasioned by incompetent mothers & nurses! Commit a child to the care of a worthless ignorant woman, and no culture in after-life will remedy the evil you have done. Let the mother be idle & vicious; let her home be pervaded by petulance & discontent, and it will become a dwelling of misery – a place to fly from, rather than fly to.

A house bereft of love & affection can offer nothing more than worry & anxiety. A house where there is no goodwill, where the spouses behave like wild animals, where there is constant strife amongst the inhabitants, is not visited by the angels. The children whose misfortune it is to be brought up there, will be morally dwarfed & deformed – the cause of misery to themselves & others.

Here are some characteristics of the children in the Child-Centered home: 1. Interrupt adults when they are talking. 2. Use manipulation & rebellion to get their way. 3. Dictate family schedule (meal times, bedtimes). 4. Take precedence over the needs of the spouse. 5. Have an equal or overriding vote in all decision making matters. 6. Demand excessive time & attention from parent to the detriment of the other responsibilities of the parents. 7. Escape the consequences of their irresponsible behaviour. 8. Speak to parents as though they were peers. 9. Be the dominant influence in the home. 10. Be coddled (rather than disciplined) out of a bad mood.

Contrast that with children in the God-centered home: 1. To joyfully serve others. 2. To cheerfully obey parents the first time. 3. To not interrupt parents who are speaking to each other. 4. To understand they will not always get their own way. 5. To work their schedule around their parents’ schedule. 6. To have input into family decisions but not necessarily an equal vote. 7. To understand that God has given their parents other responsibilities in addition to meeting their needs. 8. To suffer the consequences of their sinful & irresponsible behavior. 9. To not speak to parents as though they were peers but honour them as spiritual authorities. 10. To esteem others as more important than themselves. 11. To fulfill various household chores. 12. To protect themselves from bad influences. 13. To not divide parents over disciplinary issues. Read that home constitution to your children. **May our homes be sanctuaries of peace & rest.**

The first & most important school of Character



The focal point of a home should be prayer... Sad...that today every home’s focal point is entertainment; that huge LED TV...

Charity begins at home; charity of speech, charity of manner, above all, charity of thought. **And these all take rank before charity of dollars.** Where these **sweet** influences arise & pervade the home, **there is a point of contact of earth & heaven;** and where they are wanting, **there are the confines of hell.**

It is in the home that every human being receives their **best** moral training, or their **worst**; for it is there that they imbibe those principles of conduct which endure through adulthood, and cease only with life. It is a common saying that “Manners make the person;” and there is a second, that “Mind makes the person;” but truer than either is a third, that **“Home makes the person.”** For the home-training includes not only manners & mind, but character. It is mainly in the home that the heart is opened, the habits are formed, the intellect is awakened, and character moulded **for good or for evil.** From that source, be it pure or impure, issue the principles & maxims that govern society. **Law itself is but the reflex of homes.** The tiniest bits of opinion sown in the minds of children in private life afterwards issue forth to the world, and become its public opinion; for nations are gathered out of nurseries, **and they who hold the leading-strings of children exercise a greater power than those who wield the reins of government.**

From the home as a center emanate those influences – be they small or great – that make for civilization; and the ethics of family life, the knowledge of harmonious relationship, is fundamental in social science.

God has made for you in your homes a place of rest...

It is in the order of nature that domestic life should be preparatory to social, and that the mind & character should first be formed in the home. There the individuals who afterwards form society are dealt with in detail, and fashioned one by one. From the family they enter life, and advance from childhood to citizenship. Thus the home may be regarded as the most influential school of civilization. For civilization mainly resolves itself into a question of individual training; and according as the respective members of society are well or ill-trained in youth, so will the community which they constitute be more or less humanized & civilized.

Muhammad (p) said that every child is born with an ability to become close to God, but a bad environment might cause them to drift away. The training of any person, even the wisest, cannot fail to be powerfully influenced by the moral surroundings of their early years. They come into the world helpless & absolutely dependent upon those about them for nurture & culture. From the very first breath that they draw, their education begins. A mother asked a religious person when she should begin the education of her child, then four years old, he replied: "If you have not begun already, you have lost those four years. From the first smile that gleams upon an infant's cheek, your opportunity begins." But

even in this case the education had already begun; for the child learns by simple imitation, without effort, almost through the pores of the skin. "A fig tree looking on a fig tree becomes fruitful," says the Arabian proverb. And so it is with children; their first great instructor is example. However apparently trivial the influences which contribute to form the character of the child, they endure through life.

The child's character is the nucleus of the man's; all after-education is but superposition; the form of the crystal remains the same. Thus the saying of the poet holds true in a large degree, "The child is father of the man;" or, as Milton puts it, "The childhood shows the man, as morning shows the day." Those impulses to conduct which last the longest and are rooted the deepest, always have their origin near our birth. It is then that the germs of virtues or vices, of feelings or sentiments, are first implanted which determine the character for life.

The child is, as it were, laid at the gate of a new world, and opens its eyes upon things all of which are full of novelty & wonderment. At first it is enough for it to gaze; but by-and-by they begin to see, to observe, to compare, to learn, to store up impressions & ideas; and under wise guidance the progress which he makes is really wonderful. Between the ages of eighteen & thirty months, a child learns more of the material world, of their own powers, of the nature of other bodies, and even of their own mind & other minds, than they acquire in all the rest of their life. The knowledge which a child accumulates, and the ideas generated in its mind, during this period, are so important, that if we could imagine them to be afterwards obliterated, all the learning at a university, would be as nothing to it, and would literally not enable its object to prolong its existence for a week.

It is in childhood that the mind is most open to impressions, and ready to be kindled by the first spark that falls into it. Ideas are then caught quickly & live lastingly. Thus a Muslim child is said to receive, their first bent towards Quranic literature from the mother's & grandmother's recitations in their hearing long before they themselves had learned to read. Childhood is like a mirror, which reflects in after-life the images first presented to it. The first thing continues forever with the child. The first joy, the first sorrow, the first success, the first failure, the first achievement, the first misadventure, paint the foreground of their life. All this while, too, the training of the character is in progress – of the temper, the will, and the habits—on which so much of the happiness of human beings in after-life depends.

Although a person is endowed with a certain self-acting, self-helping power of contributing to their own development, independent of surrounding circumstances, and of reacting upon the life around them, the bias given to their moral character in early life is of immense importance. Place even the highest-minded philosopher in the midst of daily discomfort, immorality, and vileness, and they will insensibly gravitate towards brutality. How much more susceptible is the impressionable & helpless child amidst such surroundings! It is almost impossible to rear a kindly nature, sensitive to evil, pure in mind/heart, amidst coarseness, discomfort, and impurity.

Thus homes, which are the nurseries of children who grow up into men & women, will be good or bad according to the power that governs them. Where the spirit of love & duty pervades the home – where head & heart rule wisely there – where the daily life is honest & virtuous – where the governing is sensible, kind, loving, then may we expect from such a home an issue of healthy, useful & happy beings, capable, as they gain the requisite strength, of following the footsteps of their parents, of walking uprightly, governing themselves wisely & contributing to the welfare of those about them.

On the other hand, if surrounded by ignorance, coarseness, and selfishness, they will unconsciously assume the same character, and grow up to adult years rude, uncultivated, and all the more dangerous to society if placed amidst the manifold temptations of what is called civilized life. "Give your child to be educated by a slave," said an ancient Greek, "and instead of one slave, you will then have two." The child cannot help imitating what they see. Everything is a model – of manner, of gesture, speech, habit, character. "For the child," says Richter, "the most important era of life is that of childhood, when they begin to colour & mould themselves by companionship with others. Every new educator effects less than his predecessor; until at last, if we regard all life as an educational institution, a circumnavigator of the world is less influenced by all the nations he has seen than by his nurse." Models are therefore of every importance in moulding the nature of the child; and if we would have fine characters, we must necessarily present before them fine models. Now, the model most constantly before every child's eye is the Mother.

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