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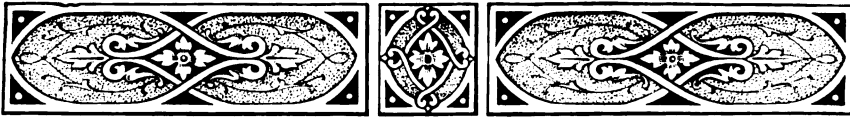
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LIFE'S DOUBLE MINISTRY.

BY REV. J. R. MILLER, D.D.



TWOFOLD influence attends and follows every life. The one is planned and intentional; the other is unpurposed and unconscious. A man lives fifty years of active life in a community, growing from poverty to wealth, and there are two classes of results. There are the build-

ings he has erected, the business he has established and organised, the improvements he has made in the town, and the wealth he has accumulated. These are all purposed results. He lived to do these things. But while he has been toiling and building, with earnest ambition and intense energy, he has day by day been leaving another class of results behind him which were not in his plans, and the columns of which he does not count up when he estimates how much he has made during his life or when he writes his will. These are the things he has done by the words he has spoken in daily intercourse with men, by his manners and dispositions, by his wayside ministries, and through the silent influence of his character and example.

Every life has this double history and leaves this double record. In the ordinary reckoning of the results achieved by men the purposed things only are counted. We say he made a million of money, or we point to the bridges he built, or the cathedrals he planned, or the pictures he painted, or the books he wrote; or we say he travelled so many miles, and preached so many sermons, and made so many visits; and we think we have written his biography. But we have not. There is a part of his biography that is never written, and it is probable that in nearly every life its unconscious, unrecorded, unintended influences aggregate more in the end than its purposed acts.

An artist spends a number of years in a foreign city, studying the works of the great masters, and then with glowing inspiration cuts in the marble the lovely forms of his own thoughts. The figures are packed and sent home. The boxes are carefully opened, and

the pieces of statuary removed to be admired and praised for long years. The artist's ambition is gratified. He rejoices in his success. But hidden in the straw in which the marbles were packed were a number of little seeds; the straw is scattered about the grounds, and the next spring beautiful foreign flowers spring up in the artist's garden. They grow well, and by-and-by in hundreds of gardens they are blooming. The pieces of statuary were the purposed results of the sculptor's years abroad; the lovely flowers exhaling their fragrance in so many spots were but accidental results, unplanned, unintended.

Every good life is constantly scattering just such unconscious influences. A mother works hard all day in her home, keeping her house in order, preparing comforts for her family, watching over her children. She can tell in the evening how many garments she has mended, how many rooms she has swept, and the entire day's history. But all day long she was patient, gentle, kind. She had a bright smile for her children at every turn. She had cheering words and foud attentions for her husband. She had a pleasant welcome for the friends who called. In all these things she was unconsciously scattering seeds that will spring up in sweet flowers in other hearts and lives. Who doubts which of these two ministries is in reality the richer and the more effective? Yet the tired woman does not think of counting these wayside influences and services at all in her retrospect of the day's work. If she could do so it would greatly cheer her and strengthen her for a new day's life when it begins.

We do not realise the importance of this unconscious part of our life ministry. It goes on continually. In every greeting we give another on the street, in every moment's conversation, in every letter we write, in every contact with other lives, there is a subtle influence that goes from us that often reaches further and leaves a deeper impression than the things themselves we were doing at the time. After all, it is life itself, sanctified life, that is God's holiest and most effective

ministry in this world—pure, sweet, patient, unselfish, loving life. It is not so much what we *do* in this world as what we *are*, that tells in spiritual results and impressions. A good life is like a flower, which, though it neither toil nor spin, yet ever pours out a rich perfume, and thus performs a holy ministry.

‘Poor indeed thou must be, if around thee
Thou no ray of light and joy canst throw;
If no silken cord of love hath bound thee
To some little world, through weal or woe;
If no dear eyes thy tender love can brighten,
No fond voices answer to thine own;
If no brother’s sorrow thou canst lighten
By daily sympathy and gentle tone.
Daily struggling, though enclosed and lonely,
Every day a rich reward will give;
Thou wilt find by hearty stirring only,
And truly loving, thou canst truly live!’

There is no place where this unconscious ministry is so potent as in the home. The lessons parents teach their children are not one-thousandth part so important as the life they live before them day after day. This incident has appeared in some of the newspapers:—‘A gentleman, who has a golden-haired little daughter three years of age, took her to church for the first time the other day. At home she causes much amusement by attempts, in cunning baby fashion, to do just as her father does. It was an Episcopal

church, and she sat through the service and sermon with mature gravity and sedateness. It happened to be communion Sunday, and being a communicant, her father went with others toward the chancel, unconscious that his little daughter was following him. As he knelt and bowed his head, she took her place beside him and bowed her head upon her tiny hands.’ The incident illustrates what is going on perpetually in every home. The child is not merely imitating the parents’ acts, but is drinking in their spirit as flowers drink in the morning dew and the sunshine, to reproduce the same in permanent dispositions, tempers, and principles.

How, then, can we give direction and character to this unconscious ministry of our lives? When we do things voluntarily and with purpose, we can give shape to the effects; but how can we guard this perpetual outgoing of unintended influence? Only by looking well to our hearts. It is what we are when we are not posing that we are really; and it is this which counts in this subtle ministry. We must *be*, therefore, in our own inner, secret lives what we want our permanent influence to be. This we can be only by seeking more and more the permeation of our whole being by the loving, indwelling Spirit of Christ.—*Westminster Teacher.*

THE CHILD OF THE SEA; OR, FOR LOVE OF ME.

BY KATHLEEN MARY SMITH, AUTHORESS OF ‘ORPHAN LOTTIE,’ ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LITTLE HOUSE NEAR COVENT GARDEN.



At an early hour Mizpah might be seen threading her way through the busy, crowded streets to the house where Nell lived with her uncle. Holding little Lilian by the hand, lest by any chance they should be separated from one another by the living stream which swept so hurriedly along, the gipsy girl sang as she walked; and little Lilian sang also, while she thanked God with all the strength of her grateful heart. And so at length they reached their destination, just as a neighbouring clock began to warn every one within hearing of its sonorous tones that it was seven o’clock. In answer to Mizpah’s knock the door was opened by Nell, who immediately, on discovering who her visitors were, ran in and brought out her uncle.

‘Come in, come in, you are heartily welcome,’ said Andrew Rivers kindly; ‘my little

Nell told me all about you last night, and how good you were in leading her home,’ he added, addressing himself to Mizpah, who replied hastily—

‘Indeed, sir, it was not much to do; any one else would have done the same, or more.’ But Andrew Rivers smiled and shook his head at this.

‘A few might,’ he said, ‘but not all. However, that does not take from your kindness to my poor blind lamb, and I’ll not forget it quickly. So this is the little lass who is to bear Nell company; and where do you intend to buy your flowers, my dear?’

‘I don’t know, Mr Rivers,’ replied Mizpah; ‘I was thinking of that as I came along this morning.’

Andrew Rivers looked thoughtful for a moment or two. ‘I don’t see,’ he said at length, ‘that you could do better than buy them from me. And do not fear, my dear, but I’ll give you a good bargain, and your choice of the very best in the lot. Now, what do you say to having a look at my garden?’

The garden-plot behind the house was of