

The Mother and her Sons.

AN INCIDENT IN REAL LIFE.
 "Think gently of the erring!
 Ye know not of the power
 With which the dark temptation came,
 In some ungrateful hour.
 Ye may not know how earnestly
 They struggled, or how well,
 Until the hour of darkness came,
 And daily thus they fell."

It affords us no little pleasure to notice cases in which the erring have been won by kindness and benevolence, from the paths of impropriety and sin. Such examples are not only cheering in particular cases, but they are well calculated to stimulate and encourage philanthropy, to induce others to make like efforts for the rescue and reform of the mis-guided, and thus to assist in the restoration of the unfortunate and the wretched, who otherwise would be utterly abandoned and hopelessly lost. How few of us, when passing judgement even upon the vicious, turn for a moment to the contemplation of their early lives, the evils and temptations by which they were surrounded, or ask what in all probability would have been their own conduct under like circumstances?—How few make the necessary allowances for bad examples, ignorance and poverty! We hear that an individual has been arrested for theft, for fraud, for misdemeanor, or some similar violation of the law, and our prejudices are at once excited, and the feeling of mercy is scarcely experienced for a moment. And yet the miserable offender may be, to a certain extent, the victim of circumstances—an evil doer, not from natural inclination to vice, but through bad associations, intemperate parents, vicious guardians and guides. At all events, when the offense is found to be a first one, and when youth and hope are still on the side of the erring, a chance, an opportunity, should be afforded, kind words should be uttered, encouragement for better things should be mingled with gentle admonition, and thus in many cases highly gratifying, heart-cheering results would ensue. We may give an illustration from real life:

Not many years ago, an aged female, miserably clad, presented herself at the house of a professional gentleman, one of the most distinguished of our citizens. She had with her a basket of tapes, thread, and other trifles of the kind. She asked for the gentleman of the house, and on being told that he was absent, inquired for the lady. The latter, on making her appearance, was touched by the miserable aspect of the poor woman; and promptly purchased a few of the articles in her basket. The stranger then begged attention for a moment to a tale of sorrow. She said she had not tasted food since the morning of the preceding day; and worse, she had a helpless son at home, who had been without sustenance of any kind, still longer. But she had come, not so much to ask for bread, as to implore mercy. She had another, an erring, but beloved son in prison, and she desired the husband of the lady to exert himself to procure his discharge. She was told that the gentleman would be at home at a particular hour, when, if so disposed, she might call and feel certain of seeing him. She bowed her thanks, promised to return, and did so accordingly at the time designated.

"Well, my good woman," said the gentleman, "I have heard of your former visit. What do you want me to do for you?"

"Oh! sir, I came to supplicate mercy for my son, who is in prison."

"What is his name?"

"D—"

He shook his head, and said that the young man was in for a very grave charge, and named the offense.

"Oh! sir, he is not the one. You have confounded him with another—another son"—and her voice trembled with the admission.

"What—have you two so sadly circumstanced?"

She burst into tears, and exclaimed, "I have—alas! I have."

"And which do you wish discharged?"

"It is a hard thing for a mother to select between two children. But Charles, sir, is far the less guilty than his brother. He has of late years been my only stay; and not mine, alone, but that of his wretched and invalid brother, whom the ravages of disease have rendered little better than an idiot. Charles has sustained us both, and I firmly believe that his strong desire to procure sustenance for an aged mother and a feeble brother, induced him to commit the theft for which he is now in prison."

"You seem," remarked the gentleman, "not always to have been in the situation in life in which you are now placed."

The Mother—"I once was prosperous, once was happy. But for many years I have drunk the cup of sorrow to its very dregs."

"I received a tolerable education, and possessed a small property. In an evil hour I married the object of my affection. I say an 'evil hour,' for, alas, my husband became dissipated and squandered the means that I brought him, and left me to struggle with poverty as best I could, while he pursued his dissolute and vicious course. His example has been the ruin of his children. Edward followed the footsteps of his profligate father, rather than the council of his unfortunate mother, and strayed far, far from the path of rectitude and honor. Charles was a gentle, amiable disposition, but possessed less intellect than his bold and desperate brother; while Nicholas was rendered by disease, an helpless object of pity, and incapable of taking care of himself. Such, good sir, is the sad story of my family. Such is a brief picture of my position and misfortunes. And therefore it is, that I implore your emergency and assistance in behalf of my misguided child. I believe that he is not naturally vicious, know that he has always treated his mother with affection, and for years has generously shared his scanty pittance with her.—I do not mean, sir, to attempt any justification of his conduct, in the matter for which he has been arrested. But it surely admits of some palliation, when all the facts are taken into view. I hope, sir, that you, animated by some consideration for the misguided and the needy, will regard him rather as an object of commiseration than of punishment. The article he took was of small value, and it was the first time he ever appropriated to his own use what belonged to another. I am old, penniless and wretched. I have no other dependence than this, my unfortunate child. If he should not be discharged from imprisonment, I have no alternate but the almshouse. Surely, sir, public justice has already been satisfied by the punishment that Charles has endured, and you may interfere in his behalf, and with propriety. Once released, and he may reform; and oh! my dear sir, it is that hope alone which renders life an object worth possessing. Could I but see my child restored—could I feel convinced that his feet were once more in the path of rectitude and virtue, I would thank God for his goodness and look forward to death and the grave with resignation."

Some further conversation took place, and the gentleman, touched and melted by the appeal of the mother, promised to make due inquiry into all the circumstances of the case, and if he should find them to correspond with her statement, to exercise all his influence in behalf of her son. The result was favorable. The story of the poor woman was fully verified—Charles was discharged, and was restored to the arms, the heart and the home of the parent who had clung to him with so much tenacity. The meeting was most effecting. The mother wept with excess of joy; while tears also streamed profusely down the cheeks of her son.

"Charles, since his restoration, had been steady, industrious and temperate. He was, she hoped and believed, fully reformed. He was not only able, by rigid frugality, to support himself and mother, but to minister to the comforts and necessities of his afflicted brother." And here she again broke forth in thanks. "Mr. Thompson had not only saved her boy from a life of infamy and wretchedness, but had brightened, as with a beam from Heaven, a house that was dark and desolate."

A tear trembled in the eye of Mr. Thompson, and shaking the hand of the grateful mother, he mentally thanked God for the happy result.

"Speak kindly to the erring!
 Thou may yet lead them back,
 With holy words and tones of love,
 From misery's thorny track.
 Forget not thou has often sinned,
 And sinful yet may be—
 Deal gently with the erring one,
 As God hath dealt with thee!"

To be Remembered.

Three things to love—courage, gentleness, and affection.
 Three things to admire—intellectual power, dignity, and gracefulness.
 Three things to hate—cruelty, arrogance, and ingratitude.
 Three things to delight in—beauty, frankness, and freedom.
 Three things to wish for—health, friends, and a cheerful spirit.
 Three things to like—cordiality, good humor, and mirthfulness.
 Three things to avoid—idleness, loquacity, and flippant jesting.
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