

and powerful, there is no opinion left for parent, educator or guardian in deciding the destiny of a child, or of a person deciding his own destiny. If I am subject to the uncontrollable influence of my ancestors' lives and actions, I am not so completely responsible for mine own life and actions. I am not to be punished for evil, nor to receive credit or reward for good, for these may be the working of forces, powers and influences which do not emanate from me, and which I do not control.

But, my friends, it is just in this that the statement is made too strong and broad. What heredity gives is not actual conditions, but tendency to, disposition to certain lines of thought or physical weakness. Physicians will tell you that one does not inherit a disease so much as a tendency toward that disease, a pathological condition, which makes the reception of that disease easy, but that by care and watchful diligence the disease may be warded off. Wm. F. Round and J. C. Jones, men connected with the penal institutions of the State of New York, testify to the fact that it is not the children of criminals that make up the bulk of their charges. They even make the statement from knowledge, from experience, that all other conditions being equal, the child of a criminal has as good a chance in the race of life as the child of the average citizen.

While in the process of building character, heredity plays a strong and important part, yet there is another influence no less strong and no less important and that is environment. This means not only the physical conditions surrounding the child, and the training given directly to it, but, as well the powerful influence, which daily example and speech of its parents, relatives, companions, playmates and associates, unconsciously yet surely exert.

It is true "blood will tell." It is true that successive generations of culture, refinement, education and wealth, will be reproduced in the gentility of offspring, and that oppositely, successive generations of debased and impure life will have their inevitable effect for evil, yet training and habit of life may in one generation destroy the one or counteract the other. My friends, you have no conception of the influence of the words used, or the ac-

tions that may be done, by you under the spur of sudden impulse, the expressions you may let fall in thoughtless moments of anger or excitement. The influence of each one may be imperceptible, but they altogether have their effect, as the continued dropping of water will wear away the hardest stone.

Therefore, friends, with double weight hang the blessings and the curses before you. Obedience to the Law of God will bring the one, disobedience, the other, for yourself, for your children and your children's children. The history of Israel emphasizes, beyond all power of contradiction, how true are these words. That Israel has survived conditions and environments, which would have completely annihilated others, has been, because the blessings of temperate, moderate and chaste life had been transmitted from generation to generation. The very ostracism that drove them from the midst of other peoples was their salvation, for it drove them from ignorance and lust and riotous life, into the safe refuge of peaceful, earnest and nobler existence. What our fathers have given to us, let us give to our children. Ours is the heritage of faithful and earnest obedience to the law and unshrinking hearkening to the voice of God. Let us bequeath that legacy, undiminished, unto those who come after us. Remember your actions to-day may affect the thought and actions of generations yet unborn. In years still to come will be gathered the fruits of the seed you now are sowing. Will it be for evil or for good? Will you be recalled with honor, or with shame?

The blessing and the curse lie before you. Choose!

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