THE HOME
EDUCATION SERIES

VOLUME 2

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

CHARLOTTE MASON

'Home Education' Series

VOLUME II.

Parents and Children

By

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Parents and Children

CHAPTER I

THE FAMILY

'The family is the unit of the nation.'—F. D. MAURICE.

Rousseau succeeded in awaking Parents.—It is probable that no other educational thinker has succeeded in affecting parents so profoundly as did Rousseau. *Emile* is little read now, but how many current theories of the regimen proper for children have there their unsuspected source? Everybody knows—and his contemporaries knew it better than we—that Jean Jacques Rousseau had not enough sterling character to warrant him to pose as an authority on any subject, least of all on that of education. He sets himself down a poor thing, and we see no cause to reject the evidence of his *Confessions*. We are not carried away by the charm of his style; his 'forcible feebleness' does not dazzle us. No man can say beyond that which he *is*, and there is a want of grit in his philosophic theories that removes most of them from the category of available thought.

But Rousseau had the insight to perceive one of those patent truths which, somehow, it takes a genius to discover; and, because truth is indeed prized above rubies, the perception of that truth gave him rank as a great teacher. Is *Jean Jacques* also among the prophets? People asked, and ask still; and that he had thousands of fervent disciples amongst the educated parents of Europe, together with the fact that his teaching has filtered into many a secluded home of our own day, is answer enough. Indeed, no other educationalist has had a tithe of the influence exercised by Rousseau. Under the spell of his teaching, people in the fashionable world, like that Russian Princess Galitzin, forsook society, and went off with their children to some quiet corner where they could devote every hour of the day, and every power they had, to the fulfilment of the duties which devolve upon parents. Courtly mothers retired from the world, sometimes even left their husbands, to work hard at the classics, mathematics, sciences, that they might with their own lips instruct their children. 'What else am I for?' they asked; and the feeling spread that the bringing-up of their children was the one work of primary importance for men and women.

Whatever extravagance he had seen fit to advance, Rousseau would still have found a following, because he had chanced to touch a spring that opened many hearts. He was one of the few educationalists who made his appeal to the parental instincts. He did not say, 'We have no hope of the parents, let us work for the children!' Such are the faint-hearted and pessimistic things we say to-day. What he said was, in effect, 'Fathers and mothers, this is your work,

and you only can do it. It rests with you, parents of young children, to be the saviours of society unto a thousand generations. Nothing else matters. The avocations about which people weary themselves are as foolish child's play compared with this one serious business of bringing up our children in advance of ourselves.'

People listened, as we have seen; the response to his teaching was such a letting-out of the waters of parental enthusiasm as has never been known before nor since. And Rousseau, weak and little worthy, was a preacher of righteousness in this, that he turned the hearts of the fathers to the children, and so far made ready a people prepared for the Lord. But alas! having secured the foundation, he had little better than wood, hay, and stubble to offer to the builders.

Rousseau succeeded, as he deserved to succeed, in awaking many parents to the binding character, the vast range, the profound seriousness of parental obligations. He failed, and deserved to fail, as he offered his own crude conceits by way of an educational code. But his success is very cheering. He perceived that God placed the training of every child in the hands of two, a father and a mother; and the response to his teaching proved that, as the waters answer to the drawing of the moon, so do the hearts of parents rise to the idea of the great work committed to them.

Though it is true, no doubt, that every parent is conscious of unwritten laws, more or less definite and noble according to his own status, yet an attempt, however slight, to codify these laws may be interesting to parents.

The Family a Commune.—'The family is the unit of the nation.' This pregnant saying suggests some aspects of the parents' calling. From time to time, in all ages of the world, communistic societies have arisen, sometimes for the sake of co-operation in a great work, social or religious, more recently by way of protest against inequalities of condition; but, in every case, the fundamental rule of such societies is, that the members shall have all things in common. We are apt to think, in our careless way, that such attempts at communistic association are foredoomed to failure. But that is not the case. In the United States, perhaps because hired labour is less easy to obtain than it is with us, they appear to have found a congenial soil, and there many well-regulated communistic bodies flourish. There are failures, too, many and disastrous, and it appears that these may usually be traced to one cause, a government enfeebled by the attempt to combine democratic and communistic principles; that is, to dwell together in a common life, while each does what is right in his own eyes. A communistic body can thrive only under a vigorous and absolute rule.

A favourite dream of socialism is—or was until the idea of collectivism obtained—that each State of Europe should be divided into an infinite number of small self-contained communes. Now, it sometimes happens that the thing we desire is already realised had we eyes to see. The family is, practically, a commune. In the family the undivided property is enjoyed by all the members in common, and in the family there is equality of social condition, with diversity of duties. In lands where patriarchal practices still obtain, the family merges into the tribe, and the

head of the family is the chief of the tribe—a very absolute sovereign indeed. In our own country, families are usually small, parents and their immediate offspring; with the attendants and belongings which naturally gather to a household, and, let it not be forgotten, *form part of the family*. The smallness of the family tends to obscure its character, and we see no force in the phrase at the head of this chapter; we do not perceive that, if the unit of the nation is the natural commune, the family; then, is the family pledged to carry on within itself all the functions of the State, with the delicacy, precision, and fulness of detail proper to work done on a small scale.

The Family must be Social.—It by no means follows from this communistic view of the family that the domestic policy should be a policy of isolation; on the contrary, it is not too much to say that a nation is civilised in proportion as it is able to establish close and friendly relations with other nations; and that, not with one or two, but with many; and, conversely, that a nation is barbarous in proportion to its isolation; and does not a family decline in intelligence and virtue when from generation to generation it 'keeps itself to itself'?

The Family must serve Neighbours.—Again, it is probable that a nation is healthy in proportion as it has its own proper outlets, its colonies and dependencies, which it is ever solicitous to include in the national life. So of the nation in miniature, the family: the struggling families at 'the back,' the orphanage, the mission, the necessitous of our acquaintance, are they not for the sustenance of the family in the higher life?

The Family must serve the Nation.—But it is not enough that the family commune maintain neighbourly relations with other such communes, and towards the stranger within the gates. The family is the unit of the nation; and the nation is an organic whole, a living body, built up, like the natural body, of an infinite number of living organisms. It is only as it contributes its quota towards the national life that the life of the family is complete. Public interests must be shared, public work taken up, the public welfare cherished—in a word, its integrity with the nation must be preserved, or the family ceases to be part of a living whole, and becomes positively injurious, as decayed tissue in the animal organism.

The Divine Order for the Family as regards other Nations.—Nor are the interests of the family limited to those of the nation. As it is the part of the nation to maintain wider relations, to be in touch with all the world, to be ever in advance in the great march of human progress, so is this the attitude which is incumbent on each unit of the nation, each family, as an integral part of the whole. Here is the simple and natural realisation of the noble dream of *Fraternity*: each individual attached to a family by ties of love where not of blood; the families united in a federal bond to form the nation; the nations confederate in love and emulous in virtue, and all, nations and their families, playing their several parts as little children about the feet and under the smile of the Almighty Father. Here is the divine order which every family is called upon to fulfil: a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and, therefore, it matters infinitely that every family should realise

the nature and the obligations of the family bond, for as water cannot rise above its source, neither can we live at a higher level than that of the conception we form of our place and use in life.

The Family should (a) learn Languages; (b) show Courtesy abroad.—Let us ask the question: Has this, of regarding all education and all civil and social relations from the standpoint of the *family*, any practical outcome? So much so, that perhaps there is hardly a problem of life for which it does not contain the solution. For example: What shall we teach our children? Is there one subject that claims our attention more than another? Yes, there is a subject or class of subjects which has an imperative *moral* claim upon us. It is the duty of the nation to maintain relations of brotherly kindness with other nations; therefore it is the duty of every family, as an integral part of the nation, to be able to hold brotherly speech with the families of other nations as opportunities arise; therefore to acquire the speech of neighbouring nations is not only to secure an inlet of knowledge and a means of culture, but is a duty of that higher morality (the morality of the family) which aims at universal brotherhood; therefore every family would do well to cultivate two languages besides the mother tongue, even in the nursery.

Again; a fair young Englishwoman was staying with her mother at a German *Kurhaus*. They were the only English people present, and probably forgot that the Germans are better linguists than we. The young lady sat through the long meals with her book, hardly interrupting her reading to eat, and addressing no more than one or two remarks to her mother, as

—'I wonder what that mess is!' or, 'How much longer shall we have to sit with these tiresome people?' Had she remembered that no family can live to itself, that she and her mother represented England, *were* England for that little German community, she would have imitated the courteous greetings which the German ladies bestowed on their neighbours.

The Restoration of the Family.—But we must leave further consideration of this great subject, and conclude with a striking passage from Mr Morley's Appreciation of *Emile*. "Education slowly came to be thought of in connection with the family. The improvement of ideas upon education was only one phase of the great general movement towards the restoration of the family, which was so striking a spectacle in France after the middle of the century. Education now came to comprehend the whole system of the relations between parents and their children, from earliest infancy to maturity. The direction of such wider feeling about those relations tended strongly towards an increased closeness in them, more intimacy, and a more continuous suffusion of tenderness and long attachment."

His labours in this great cause, 'the restoration of the family,' give Rousseau a claim upon the gratitude and respect of mankind. It has proved a lasting, solid work. To this day, family relations in France are more gracious, more tender, more close and more inclusive, than they are with us. They are more expansive too, leading to generally benign and friendly behaviour; and so strong and satisfying is the family bond, that the young people find little necessity to' fall in love.' The mother lays herself out for the

friendship of her young daughters, who respond with entire loyalty and devotion; and, Zola notwithstanding, French maidens are wonderfully pure, simple, and sweet, because their affections are abundantly satisfied.

Possibly 'the restoration of the family' is a labour that invites us here in England, each within the radius of our own hearth; for there is little doubt that the family bond is more lax amongst us than it was two or three generations ago. Perhaps nowhere is family life of more idyllic loveliness than where we see it at its best in English homes. But the wise ever find some new thing to learn. Though a nation, as an individual, must act on the lines of its own character, and we are, on the whole, well content with our English homes, yet we might learn something from the inclusiveness of the French family, where mother-in-law and father-in-law, aunt and cousins, widow and spinster, are cherished; and a hundred small offices devised for dependants who would be in the way in an English home. The result is that the children have a wider range for the practice of the thousand sweet attentions and self-restraints which make home life lovely. No doubt the medal has its obverse; there is probably much in French home life which we should shrink from; nevertheless, it offers object-lessons which we should do well to study. Again, where family life is most beauteous with us, is not the family a little apt to become self-centred and self-sufficient, rather than to cultivate that expansiveness towards other families which is part of the family code of our neighbours?

CHAPTER II

PARENTS AS RULERS

The Family Government an Absolute Monarchy.—Let us continue our consideration of the family as the nation in miniature, with the responsibilities, the rights, and the requirements of the nation. The parents represent the 'Government'; but, here, the government is ever an absolute monarchy, conditioned very loosely by the law of the land, but very closely by that law more or less of which every parent bears engraved on his conscience. Some attain the levels of high thinking, and come down from the Mount with beaming countenance and the tables of the law intact; others fail to reach the difficult heights, and are content with such fragments of the broken tables as they pick up below. But be his knowledge of the law little or much, no parent escapes the call to rule.

The Rule of Parents cannot be Deputed.—Now, the first thing we ask for in a ruler is, 'Is he able to rule? Does he know how to maintain his authority?' A ruler who fails to govern is like an unjust judge, an impious priest, an ignorant teacher; that is, he fails in the essential attribute of his office. This is even more true in the family than in the State;

the king may rule by deputy; but, here we see the exigeant nature of the parent's functions; he can have no deputy. Helpers he may have, but the moment he makes over his functions and authority to another, the rights of parenthood belong to that other, and not to him. Who does not know of the heart-burnings that arise when Anglo-Indian parents come home, to find their children's affections given to others, their duty owing to others; and they, the parents, sources of pleasure like the godmother of the fairy tale, but having no authority over their children? And all this, nobody's fault, for the guardians at home have done their best to keep the children loyal to the parents abroad.

Causes which lead to the Abdication of Parents.—Here is indicated a rock upon which the heads of families sometimes make shipwreck. They regard parental authority as inherent in them, a property which may lie dormant, but is not to be separated from the state of parenthood. They may allow their children from infancy upwards to do what is right in their own eyes; and then, Lear turns and makes his plaint to the winds, and cries—

> 'Sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
> To have a thankless child!'

But Lear has been all the time divesting himself of the honour and authority that belong to him, and giving his rights to his children. Here he tells us why; the biting anguish is the '*thankless*' child. He has been laying himself out for the thanks of his children. That they should think him a fond father has been more to him than the duty he owes them; and in proportion as he omits his duty are they

oblivious of theirs. Possibly the unregulated love of approbation in devoted parents has more share in the undoing of families than any other single cause. A writer of to-day represents a mother as saying—

"'But you are not afraid of me, Bessie?'

"'No indeed; who could be afraid of a dear, sweet, soft, little mother like you?'"

And such praise is sweet in the ears of many a fond mother hungering for the love and liking of her children, and not perceiving that words like these in the mouth of a child are as treasonable as words of defiance.

Authority is laid down at other shrines than that of popularity. Prospero describes himself as,

> 'all dedicate
> To study, and the bettering of my mind.'

And, meantime, the exercise of authority devolves upon Antonio; is it any wonder that the habit of authority fits the usurper like a glove, and that Prospero finds himself ousted from the office he failed to fill? Even so, the busy parent, occupied with many cares, awakes to find the authority he has failed to wield has dropped out of his hands; perhaps has been picked up by others less fit, and a daughter is given over to the charge of a neighbouring family, while father and mother hunt for rare prints.

In other cases, the love of an easy life tempts parents to let things take their course; the children are good children, and won't go far wrong, we are told; and very likely it is true. But however good the children be, the parents owe it to society to make them better than they are, and to bless the world with people, not merely good-natured and well-disposed, but good of set purpose and endeavour.

The love of ease, the love of favour, the claims of other work, are only some of the causes which lead to a result disastrous to society—the *abdication of parents*. When we come to consider the nature and uses of the parents' authority, we shall see that such abdication is as immoral as it is mischievous. Meantime, it is well worth while to notice that the causes which lead parents to resign the position of domestic rulers are resolvable into one—the office is too troublesome, too laborious. The temptation which assails parents is the same which has led many a crowned head to seek ease in the cloister—

> 'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown,'

even if it be the natural crown of parenthood.

The Majesty of Parenthood.—The apostolic counsel of 'diligence' in ruling throws light upon the nature and aim of authority; it is no longer a matter of personal honour and dignity; authority is for use and service, and the honour that goes with it is only for the better service of those under authority. The arbitrary parent, the exacting parent, who claims this and that of deference and duty because he is a parent, all for his own honour and glory, is more hopelessly in the wrong than the parent who practically abdicates; the majesty of parenthood is hedged round with observances only because it is good for the children to 'faithfully serve, honour, and humbly obey' their natural rulers. Only at home can children be trained in the chivalrous temper of 'proud submission and dignified obedience'; and if the parents do not inspire and foster deference, reverence, and loyalty, how shall these crowning graces of character thrive in a hard and emulous world?

It is perhaps a little difficult to maintain an attitude of authority in these democratic days, when even educationists counsel that children be treated on equal terms from the very beginning; but the children themselves come to our aid; the sweet humility and dependence natural to them fosters the gentle dignity, the *soupçon* of reserve, which is becoming in parents. It is not open to parents either to lay aside or to sink under the burden of the honour laid upon them; and, no doubt, we have all seen the fullest, freest flow of confidence, sympathy, and love between parent and child where the mother sits as a queen among her children and the father is honoured as a crowned head. The fact that there are two parents, each to lend honour to the other, yet free from restraint in each other's presence, makes it the easier to maintain the impalpable 'state' of parenthood. And the presence of the slight, sweet, undefined feeling of dignity in the household is the very first condition for the bringing-up of loyal, honourable men and women, capable of reverence and apt to win respect.

Children are a Public Trust and a Divine Trust.—The foundation of parental authority lies in the fact that parents hold office as deputies; and that in a twofold sense. In the first place, they are the immediate and personally appointed deputies of the Almighty King, the sole Ruler of men; they have not only to fulfil his counsels regarding the children, but to represent his Person; his parents are as God to the little child; and, yet more constraining thought, *God is to him what his parents are*; he has no power to conceive a greater and lovelier personality than that of the royal heads of his own home; he makes his first approach to the Infinite through them; they are

his measure for the highest; if the measure be easily within his small compass, how shall he grow up with the reverent temper which is the condition of spiritual growth?

More; parents hold their children in trust for society. 'My own child' can only be true in a limited sense; the children are held as a public trust to be trained as is best for the welfare of the community; and in this sense also the parents are persons in authority with the dignity of their office to support; and are even liable to deposition. The one State whose name has passed into a proverb, standing for a group of virtues which we have no other word to describe, is a State which practically deprived parents of the functions which they failed to fulfil to the furtherance of public virtue. No doubt the State reserves to itself virtually the power to bring up its own children in its own way, with the least possible co-operation of parents. Even to-day, a neighbouring nation has elected to charge itself with the training of its infants. So soon as they can crawl, or sooner, before ever they run or speak, they are to be brought to the 'Maternal School,' and carefully nurtured, as with mother's milk, in the virtues proper for a citizen. The scheme is as yet but in the experimental stage, but will doubtless be carried through, because the nation in question has long ago discovered—and acted consistently upon the discovery—that what you would have the man become, that you must train the child to be.

Perhaps such public deposition of parents is the last calamity that can befall a nation. These poor little ones are to grow up in a world where the name of God is not to be named; to grow up, too, without

the training in filial duty and brotherly love and neighbourly kindness which falls to the children of all but the few unnatural parents. They may be returned to their parents at certain hours or after certain years; but once alienation has been set up, once the strongest and sweetest tie has been loosened and the parents have been publicly delivered from their duty, the desecration of the home is complete, and we shall have the spectacle of a people growing up orphaned almost from their birth. This is a new thing in the world's history, for even Lycurgus left the children to the parents for the first half-dozen years of life. Certain newspapers commend the example for our imitation, but God forbid that we should ever lose faith in the blessedness of family life. Parents who hold their children as at the same time a public trust and a divine trust, and who recognise the authority they hold as *deputed* authority, not to be trifled with, laid aside, or abused—such parents preserve for the nation the immunities of home, and safeguard the privileges of their order.

The Limitations and Scope of Parental Authority.—Having seen that it does not rest with the parents to use, or to forego the use of, the authority they hold, let us examine the limitations and the scope of this authority. In the first place, it is to be maintained and exercised solely for the advantage of the children, whether in mind, body, or estate. And here is room for the nice discrimination, the delicate intuitions, with which parents are blessed. The mother who makes her growing-up daughter take the out-of-door exercise she needs, is acting within her powers. The father of quiet habits, who discourages society for his young people, is considering

his own tastes, and not their needs, and is making unlawful use of his authority.

Again, the authority of parents, though the deference it begets remains to grace the relations of parents and child, is itself a provisional function, and is only successful as it encourages the *autonomy*, if we may call it so, of the child. A single decision made by the parents which the child is, or should be, capable of making for itself, is an encroachment on the rights of the child, and a transgression on the part of the parents.

Once more, the authority of parents rests on a secure foundation only as they keep well before the children that it is deputed authority; the child who knows that he is being brought up for the service of the nation, that his parents are acting under a Divine commission, will not turn out a rebellious son.

Further, though the emancipation of the children is gradual, they acquiring day by day more of the art and science of self-government, yet there comes a day when the parents' right to rule is over; there is nothing left for them but to abdicate gracefully, and leave their grown-up sons and daughters free agents, even though these still live at home; and although, in the eyes of their parents, they are not fit to be trusted with the ordering of themselves: if they fail in such self-ordering, whether as regards time, occupations, money, friends, most likely their parents are to blame for not having introduced them by degrees to the full liberty which is their right as men and women. Anyway, it is too late now to keep them in training; fit or unfit, they must hold the rudder for themselves.

As for the employment of authority, the highest

art lies in ruling without seeming to do so. The law is a terror to evil-doers, but for the praise of them that do well; and in the family, as in the State, the best government is that in which peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, are maintained without the intervention of the law. Happy is the household that has few rules, and where 'Mother does not like this,' and; 'Father wishes that,' are all-constraining.

CHAPTER III

PARENTS AS INSPIRERS

Children must be born again into the Life of Intelligence

Parents owe a Second Birth to their Children.—M. Adolf Monod claims that the child must owe to his mother a second birth—the first into the natural, the second into the spiritual life of the intelligence and moral sense. Had he not been writing of women and for women, no doubt he would have affirmed that the long travail of this second birth must be undergone equally by both parents. Do we ask how he arrives at this rather startling theory? He observes that great men have great mothers; mothers, that is, blest with an infinite capacity of taking pains with their work of bringing up children. He likens this labour to a second bearing which launches the child into a higher life; and as this higher life is a more blessed life, he contends that every child has a right to this birth into completer being *at the hands of his parents*. Did his conclusions rest solely upon the deductive methods he pursues, we might afford to let them pass, and trouble ourselves very little about this second birth, which parents may, and ofttimes do, withhold from their natural offspring. We, too, could bring forward our con-

trary instances of good parents with bad sons, and indifferent parents with earnest children; and, pat to our lips, would come the *Cui bono?* Which absolves us from endeavour.

Science supports this Contention.—Be a good mother to your son because great men have had good mothers, is inspiring, stimulating; but is not to be received as a final word. For an appeal of irresistible urgency, we look to natural science with her inductive methods; though we are still waiting her last word, what she has already said is law and gospel for the believing parent. The parable of Pandora's box is true to-day; and a woman may in her heedlessness let fly upon her offspring a thousand ills. But is there not also 'a glass of blessings standing by,' into which parents may dip, and bring forth for their children health and vigour, justice and mercy, truth and beauty?

'Surely,' it may be objected, 'every good and perfect gift comes from God above, and the human parent sins presumptuously who thinks to bestow gifts divine.' Now this lingering superstition has no part nor lot with true religion, but, on the contrary, brings upon it the scandal of many an ill-ordered home and ill-regulated family. When we perceive that God uses men and women, parents above all others, as vehicles for the transmission of his gifts, and that it is in the keeping of his law He is honoured—rather than in the attitude of the courtier waiting for exceptional favours—then we shall take the trouble to comprehend the law written not only upon tables of stone and rolls of parchment, but upon the fleshly tablets of the living organisms of the children; and, understanding the law, we shall see with thanksgiving and enlarge-

ment of heart in what *natural* ways God does indeed show mercy unto thousands of them that love Him and keep his commandments.

But his commandment is exceeding broad; becomes broader year by year with every revelation of science; and we had need gird up the loins of our mind to keep pace with this current revelation. We shall be at pains, too, to keep ourselves in that attitude of expectant attention wherein we shall be enabled to perceive the unity and continuity of this revelation with that of the written word of God. For perhaps it is only as we are able to receive the two, and harmonise the two in a willing and obedient heart, that we shall enter on the heritage of glad and holy living which is the will of God for us.

Processes and Methods of this Second Birth. —Let us, for example, consider, in the light of current scientific thought, the processes and the methods of this second birth, which the child claims at the hands of his parents. 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,' is not only a pledge, but is a statement of a result arrived at by deductive processes. The writer had great opportunities for collecting data; he had watched many children grow up, and his experience taught him to divide them into two classes—the well-brought-up who turned out well; and the ill-brought-up who turned out ill. No doubt, then, as now, there were startling exceptions, and—the exception proves the rule.

But, here as elsewhere, the promises and threatenings of the Bible will bear the searching light of inductive methods. We may ask, Why should this be so?

And not content ourselves with a general answer, that this is natural and right; we may search until we discover that this result is inevitable, and no other result conceivable (except for alien influences), and our obedience will be in exact proportion to our perception of the inevitableness of the law.

Dr Maudsley on Heredity.—The vast sum of what we understand by heredity is not to be taken into account in the consideration of this second birth; by the first natural birth it is, that "his father and mother, his grandfather and grandmother, are latent or declare themselves in the child; and it is on the lines thus laid down in his nature that his development will proceed. It is not by virtue of education so much as by virtue of inheritance that he is brave or timid, generous or selfish, prudent or reckless, boastful or modest, quick or placid in temper; the ground tone of his character is original in him, and it colours all the subsequently formed emotions and their sympathetic ideas. . . . The influence of systematic culture upon anyone is no doubt great, but that which determines the limit, and even in some degree the nature, of the effects of culture, that which forms the foundations upon which all the modifications of art must rest, is the inherited nature."

Disposition and Character.—If heredity means so much—if, as would seem at the first glance, the child comes into the world with his character ready-made—what remains for the parents to do but to enable him to work out his own salvation without let or hindrance of their making, upon the lines of his individuality? The strong naturalism, shall we call it, of our day, inclines us to take this view of the objects and limitations of education; and without doubt it is a gospel;

it is the truth; but it is not the whole truth. The child brings with him into the world, not character, but disposition. He has tendencies which may need only to be strengthened, or, again, to be diverted or even repressed. His character—the efflorescence of the man wherein the fruit of his life is a-preparing—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 Ghost, even where that agency is little suspected, and as little solicited.

How is this great work of character-making, the single effectual labour possible to human beings, to be carried on? We shall rest our inquiries on a physiological basis; the lowest, doubtless, but therefore the foundation of the rest. The first-floor chambers of the psychologist are pleasant places, but who would begin to build with the first floor? What would he rear it upon? Surely the arbitrary distinction between the grey matter of the brain and the 'mind' which plays upon it—even as the song upon the vocal chords of the singer—is more truly materialistic than is the recognition of the pregnant truth that the brain is the mere organ of the spiritual part; registering and effecting every movement of thought and feeling, whether conscious or unconscious, by appreciable molecular movement; and sustaining the infinite activities of mind by corresponding enormous activity and enormous waste; that it is the organ of mind which, under present conditions, is absolutely inseparable from, and indispensable to, the quickening spirit. Once we recognise that in the thinking of a thought there is as distinct motion set

up in some tract of the brain as there is in the muscles of the hand employed in writing a sentence, we shall see that the behaviour of the grey nerve-substance of the cerebrum should afford the one possible key to certitude and system in our attempts at education, using the word in the most worthy sense—as its concern is the formation of character.

Having heard Dr Maudsley on the subject of heredity, let us hear him again on this other subject, which practically enables us to define the possibilities of education.

Dr Maudsley on the Structural Effects of 'Particular Life Experiences.'—"That which has existed with any completeness in consciousness leaves behind it, after its disappearance therefrom, in the mind or brain, a functional disposition to its reproduction or reappearance in consciousness at some future time. Of no mental act can we say that it is 'writ in water'; something remains from it, whereby its recurrence is facilitated. Every impression of sense upon the brain, every current of molecular activity from one to another part of the brain, every cerebral action which passes into muscular movement, leaves behind it some modification of the nerve elements concerned in its function, some after-effect, or, so to speak, memory of itself in them which renders its reproduction an easier matter, the more easy the more often it has been repeated, and makes it impossible to say that, however trivial, it shall not under some circumstances recur. Let the excitation take place in one of two nerve cells lying side by side, and between which there was not any original specific difference, there will be ever afterwards a

difference between them. This physiological process, whatever be its nature, is the physical basis of memory, and it is the foundation of the development of all our mental functions.

"That modification which persists, or is retained, in structure after functions, has been differently described as a residuum, or relic, or trace, or disposition, or vestige; or again as potential, latent, or dormant idea. Not only definite ideas, but all affections of the nervous system, feelings of pleasure and pain, desire, and even its outward reactions, thus leave behind them their structural effects, and lay the foundation of modes of thought, feeling, and action. Particular talents are sometimes formed quite, or almost quite, involuntarily; and complex actions, which were first consciously performed by dint of great application, become automatic by repetition; ideas which were at first consciously associated, ultimately coalesce and call one another up without any consciousness, as we see in the quick perception or intuition of the man of large worldly experience; and feelings, once active, leave behind them their large unconscious residua, thus affecting the generation of the character, so that, apart from the original or inborn nature of the individual, contentment, melancholy, cowardice, bravery, and even moral feeling, are generated as the results of particular life-experiences."

Our Age has acquired a great Educational Charter.—Here we have sketched out a magnificent educational charter. It is as well, perhaps, that we do not realise the extent of our liberties; if we did, it may be, such a fervour of educational enthusiasm would seize us that we should behave as did those early Christians who every day expected the coming of

the Lord. How should a man have patience to buy and sell and get gain had it been revealed to him that he was able to paint the greatest picture ever painted? And we, with the enthralling vision of what our little child might become under our hands, how should we have patience for common toils? That science should have revealed the *rationale* of education in our day is possibly the Divine recognition that we have become more fit for the task, because we have come to an increasing sense of moral responsibility. What would it be for an immoral people to discern fully the possibilities of education? But how slow we are! how—

> 'Custom lies upon us with a weight,
> Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!'

A generation has passed away since these words of Dr Maudsley, and many of like force by other physiologists, were published to the world. We have purposely chosen words that have stood the test of time; for to-day a hundred eminent scientific men, at home and abroad, are proclaiming the same truths. Every scientist believes them! And we? We go on after our use and wont, as if nothing had been said; dropping, hour by hour, out of careless hands, seeds of corn and hemlock, of bramble and rose.

Let us run over the charter of our liberties, as Dr Maudsley has summed them up in the passage quoted above.

Some Articles of this Charter.—We may lay the physical basis of memory: while the wide-eyed babe stretches his little person with aimless kickings on his rug, he is receiving unconsciously those first impressions which form his earliest memories; and

we can order those memories for him: we can see that the earliest sights he sees are sights of order, neatness, beauty; that the sounds his ear drinks in are musical and soft, tender and joyous; that the baby's nostrils sniff only delicate purity and sweetness. These memories remain through life, engraved on the unthinking brain. As we shall see later, memories have a certain power of accretion—where there are some, others of a like kind gather, and all the life is ordered on the lines of these first pure and tender memories.

We may lay the foundation for the development of all the mental functions. Are there children who do not wonder, or revere, or care for fairy tales, or think wise child-thoughts? Perhaps there are not; but if there are, it is because the fertilising pollen grain has never been conveyed to the ovule waiting for it in the child's soul.

These are some of the things that—according to the citations we have given from Dr Maudsley's *Physiology of Mind*—his parents may settle for the future man, even in his early childhood:—

His definite ideas upon particular subjects, as, for example, his relations with other people.

His habits, of neatness or disorder, of punctuality, of moderation.

His general modes of thought, as affected by altruism or egoism.

His consequent modes of feeling and action.

His objects of thought—the small affairs of daily life, the natural world, the operations or the productions of the human mind, the ways of God with men.

His distinguishing talent—music, eloquence, invention.

His disposition or tone of character, as it shows itself in and affects his family and other close relations in life—reserved or frank, morose or genial, melancholy or cheerful, cowardly or brave.