

Written for this Paper.

THE POWER OF SENTIMENT.

In an essentially utilitarian age men sneer at sentiment; they laugh at that in which there is no immediate or apparent profit, until things and feelings once deemed praiseworthy and priceless are relegated to the background, as in the main unworthy of consideration, if they interfere with modern ideas or demands. Habits and customs, thoughts and sentiments which were sacred to the fathers are set aside or destroyed with as little compunction as the housewife exhibits when she brushes aside the dust or cobwebs from her cherished home.

Religion in some form, having some manifestation, was once deemed the essence of family life, and the Sabbath was its day of expression. No obstacle save death was of force enough to interfere with or supplant the duties of church and worship, nor did visitors but rarely divert a family from the healing and sanctifying influences of this benign and universal spirit. However much of this may now exist church-going and Sabbath-keeping are not considered of great importance by society high or low. In quiet villages as a show of respectability it may more or less prevail, but the heartiness, the wholehearted enjoyment of other days, would be looked upon by many as Puritanism, fanaticism, or as a "being righteous overmuch!"

Upon a similar precarious foothold rests the old, loving, clinging sentiment of home. Today one place is as good as another; persons move, change localities, as they change their clothing. The power of associated ideas has become a feeble thing compared with the giant grip of years gone by, when every nook and corner wore a loving aspect to the soul; when every room had its sad or joyous memories which were more dear than gold, and so blended were they and interwoven into the very fabric of life, that to leave a locality so loaded with these treasured associations was like tearing up a tree by its roots, after it had stood, grown and become part of its surroundings, blending in the summer's sun and amid the chills of winter with the local elements and becoming strong and hale thereby.

Men's thoughts concerning their native land are modified also by this changing and indifferent mood. Excuses are plentiful as leaves in autumn; necessity, opportunity, advantages are magnified on the one hand, and the difficulties and trials of the other are in thought invested with sterner features than they ever were. The extravagant impulses of political delirium are at times contagious, and new-found liberty of action and expression is in such striking contrast with the generally quiet, orderly, conservative home methods, that impetuous manhood with unwonted and exuberant zeal rushes into the new conditions "as the wild horse into battle."

Nevertheless, religion, home and native land retain their power over the hearts of many. Sentiment never becomes a dead letter to them, nor is it shorn, because of change or surroundings or temptation, of the witchery of early years. There might have been in each unpleasant or unsatisfactory

things or thoughts, but these faded as the years flit by; they are washed by the waters of willing forgetfulness into the sea of everlasting oblivion, while the brighter, better, loving memories and pleasant associations take on a luster more than earthly, for they are preserved and glorified by the best and purest and richest thought.

This sentiment would surround itself with a reproduction of its ideal, in the building of a home, the planting of a tree, the cultivation of flowers, and the society of birds and animals which were once a well blended enjoyment and a delight. Hence we know of a gentleman who reproduced the very counterpart of his German home in Salt Lake City; mayhap its interior and appointments have more show of opulence, science and art than the one long left; its outer form is hardly so weather-stained and old, but every loving look sends memory back again, while the gent of wealth and soul of sentiment see in newness and freshness only the sanctified original. We knew another who was a lover of trees; the grand and stately specimens under which he played in early years were here an ever-present dream, and time enabled him years afterward to import or grow some of the varieties which for ages have made the English rural landscape a picture once seen never to be forgotten. A friendly and sympathetic tree raiser sent to him from the East some specimens of the English Royal Oak, but during an enforced absence from home and consequent lack of attention, with change of climate, they withered and died, to the intense regret of the appreciative receiver.

Many of our English sisters cherish today among their household treasures, some flower or plant which is dear to them from association in the memories of their early years. We have seen the pleasant smile or keener interest of tears over a violet, a daisy, a buttercup, or a cowslip, all long since known and sought for in the hegetows and meadows of their native land; and to yet or tend a slip of geranium, gilly flower, stock or other simple flower common in every village garden at home, was to possess a prize indeed.

The strong-minded may look upon this as simple, and some would want to bide their heads from others if conscious of such sentiment as this. But trifling as these things may appear, they are loved as it were, yet justified or absent, in no way does it recommend this lack of sensibility, taste, refinement or association with an influential past.

The pride and glory of the mother country rests in part upon her colonizing power, but as her millions have swarmed from the parent hive and gone out to redeem the waste places of the earth, it has been creditable to the souls of some of these colonists that they carried with them pleasant memories, and exhibited amid strange surroundings longings for the familiar things of scenes far, oh, far away. Nor with an understanding of the tenacious character of that class need we wonder that a certain restlessness ensued which none seemed able to explain. Most had come from the agricultural districts and probably many of

them had been aided by the government in their exodus from home. The cause of this strange void was not long unperceived; they had been used to the open fields and the companionship of birds, the song of the lark, the thrush and blackbird had been the music of their toil; the robin and the comfit, the finches and the wren, the plover and the partridge had been to them what other things are to the denizens of the city, although it has been said that "a touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

When the attention of the British government was called to this feeling, which involved patriotism and the thought and love of home, the magnanimity of authority was so aroused to the situation that a man-of-war was specially fitted for bird life which were gathered in variety and numbers from the fields and hedges of England, and transported to the colonies where this sentimental depression existed. The effect was magical. As these messengers from home fitted from place to place they carried the spirit of peace and content, until when acclimation and increase followed, the spirit of unrest died out, and that homesick feeling was satisfied, which will never be known to their native posterity.

Circumstances and experience prove that even the boldest sentiment, that of religion, which is at the base of all true progress, and alone allies men to the heavens, may by lack of culture or by false culture fail of its beneficent work. The cares of life, the pressure of surroundings, a little natural indolence, can obliterate or stunt the growth of this sentiment which in some is but half-hardy or an exotic. In the early days, as now, there are degrees of love, appreciation and interest. There are thousands in Utah who went their ten or fifteen miles to meeting on Sabbath in the old world, but we have known those who from habit were fairly regular in the city, though when they went to live in "the big field" and were outside of observation, found it quite a task to get to meeting at all. A spirit of indolence came first, and then indifference, which acted and reacted upon the family until none cared for Sabbath, or meeting, or religion. Sentiment languished until pleasure became the prevailing idea, and all were weaned by moving, as if strength of character and determination were unknown.

Sad indeed is the condition of an individual or community, when a forcing process has to be resorted to, to arouse enthusiasm for home or country; sad when the love of surroundings and regard for nature's products in flowers and trees and birds is deemed a weakness and a folly; sad indeed when home life is deprived of the alluring revelations and force of religious thought. Sad is the condition of a city when sentiment is set at naught, for things which are deemed more profitable, fashionable, manly or essential. But blest is that people or nation who in the love of beauty, order, appreciation, count nothing "common or unclean," which ministers in quiet ways, by gentle things, so as to take man from the whirl and strife, the turmoil and contention of modern times, into that arcadium of