

We Have No Right to Do That Which Influences Others to Do Wrong.

The purpose of argumentative addresses on politics, religion, and other questions of importance, is not alone to produce conviction, but also to move to action those toward whom the arguments have been directed. There are some questions the truth of which we can not well dispute, but our realization of the same is often so indifferent that the effect on character is worse than that of a state of passiveness produced by a lack of conviction.

The question as to whether or not we have a right to do as we like, so long as we keep within the limits prescribed by law, is one that comes to us in many forms. The man who likes his drink affirms that he has a right to spend his money in any way he chooses. The saloon-keeper does not lie, steal nor thief; he exchanges value for value, and is not that lawful? The girl who spends her life in pleasure has or has not the right to use her time as she likes. "There shall be no restrictions to interstate commerce;" hence Iowa can send to Kansas, even though she be a prohibition State, sealed kegs of liquor. Many more cases of this modern form of selfishness are attracting our attention.

I believe that following our own inclination, regardless of the effect upon those about us is wrong. We are all open to influences, evil as well as good. Only the strongest can withstand the temptation to do as others do. It is natural that children seeing their elders derive pleasure from the cup or the gambling table, should wish to try that which gives others pleasure. Girls long to try the life of pleasure which gives their friends so large a measure of enjoyment. Young men wish to share the pleasure of their friends' cigars, billiards and wine suppers. The value of a good example and the harm of an evil one are not fully realized. The environments of our lives determine their course. Water does not rise higher than its level: neither do we rise above the ideals we form from our surroundings in life.

He who gratifies himself at the expense of leading his associates to do wrong, is selfish, even as those whom Christ condemned for not relieving the hunger and thirst of the poor, were. Is it not more selfish to enter into a life as an evil influence than not to enter at all?

The theory of some of Germany's greatest scholars is that we are on a march toward perfect

wisdom and virtue; and that the ignorance and sin in our midst is an indication of the distance we have yet to travel. Does not the true soldier try to prevent obstructions being placed in the line of march? Is he not a traitor if he places them there?

A chief distinction between man and the lower animals is the power of the former to determine right from wrong, and to conduct his life accordingly. While the government provides a code of laws to keep us in bounds, there are other and higher reasons why we should restrain from evil actions. Look back along the line of history and note how much we owe to those who have gone before us. Freedom, civil and religious rights, have been obtained for us at the sacrifice of the lives of others. Not to appreciate their care for us, to leave to our successors a world in which it is even harder to live noble lives than it is now, is the basest ingratitude. To make greater the breach between souls and their creator is a wrong greater than the taking of riches or life.

Let us not think that because our influence sometimes is only an indirect one, that it, consequently is small. There is a subtle influence in manner, in action, in words, and even in dress, refining or degrading the nature of those to whom it extends. It has been said that, if one is so weak as to allow himself to be influenced by things as trivial as those mentioned, his soul is not worth the saving. If true, how sad! Then the inheritance many of us possess is a soul not worth saving. But it is not so. Those so weak are even those God so loved as to give his Son that they might not perish but have everlasting life.

M.

RAILROADS SHOULD BE UNDER NATIONAL CONTROL.

Seventy years ago, a man wishing to make a tour of only the eastern part of the United States, would have been compelled to take, as a means of conveyance, a saddle-horse or a stage-coach, and the trip would have taken him days and months; now he can go to any part of the United States in a much shorter time, and by means of very much better accommodation. This improved mode of traveling is carried on by means of the railroad.

It is interesting to look back and see the wonderful growth of the great railway system. The first railroad in the country was built in 1826.