

RUINED AT HOME.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

It is at home that the ruin of the soul begins.

"At home!" We hear the response in tones of pained surprise or indignant denial from many voices. "It is a hard saying—and cruel!"

It may hurt like a blow many sad hearts; but if it is true—what then?

"It is not true! I can point you to a dozen cases within my own range of observation to disprove the assertion—to young men who have gone astray in spite of the careful training and good example of religious homes—in spite of all the best of mothers and wisest of fathers could do."

Yes; we hear such things said every day; but feel certain there is an error somewhere—a defect in your observation. Were you in the homes of these young men from the beginning? Were you familiar with their early training? Did you observe the personal bearing of their parents toward them—know their walk and conversation? If not, then you are not competent, with your instances, to disprove our assertion.

A small error at the beginning of a series of calculations in applied mechanics, may lead to a great disaster; the slight variation from a right line at the beginning will throw a projectile hundreds of yards away from its object. It is in the little things at home; the almost unnoted departures from order and good government; the neglects arising from parental self-indulgence; the weakness of love that fails to nip a fault in the bud; and many other things that might be instanced, which turn the young feet into ways of life that, as the years go by, lead farther and farther from safety and happiness.

The Bible, experience, and reason, all declare that the future of a child depends upon his early training. If this is bad, the chances are nearly all against him.

"But," we hear it said, "children raised under the worst of influences often make good and useful men."

The cases are exceptional, and stand out in strong contrast with the rule. And so we go back to what was declared in the beginning, that the ruin of a soul begins at home. How many instances crowd upon the memory! Let us take a few at this time for their lesson and their warning.

Not long ago, in one of our principal cities, an almost broken-hearted mother parted from her son in the court-house, and was taken fainting to her home, while he was thrust into a van and conveyed to prison. His crime was stealing. Society held up its hands in pity and amazement, for the young man's father and mother were highly respectable people, and good church members, as the saying is. The father's business reputation stood high. People said of him: "His word is as good as his bond." And yet his son was a condemned thief. He had stolen from his employer.

Did the ruin in this case begin at home? Yes. It was at home that the son learned to be dishonest; and he learned it from his mother! Let us rehearse a few of the lessons, in precept and example, that were given to the boy. We begin when he was just five years of age. He was standing by his mother—we will call her Mrs. Omdorff, and the boy Karl—when the boy heard her say to his aunt, in a tone of satisfaction: "Barker has cheated himself. Here are four yards of ribbon instead of three. I asked for three yards, and paid for only three; but this measures full four yards."

The boy listened, and waited for what was to come next. He loved his mother and trusted in her.

"What are you going to do about it?" inquired the aunt.

"Keep it, of course," answered Mrs. Omdorff. "Barker will never be the wiser. He makes enough out of us, dear knows!" And she rolled the ribbon about her fingers.

Karl was a little surprised. It did not seem like his mother; nor in agreement with what she had often said to him about truth and honesty. But he had faith in her, and was sure she could do nothing wrong. His Aunt Ruth, of whom he was very fond, and who had great influence over him, was a weak woman in some respects, and much more inclined to take the current of other's opinions, than to give herself the trouble of opposition. Her innate sense of honor was a little disturbed at her sister's view of the case; but she failed to say the right words that were in her thoughts, and which, if spoken, might have helped the boy to see what was just and right.

A day or two afterward, Karl heard his mother say: "I saved a car ticket this morning."

"How?" inquired her sister.

"The conductor forgot to ask for it."

"Why didn't you give it to him, mamma?" asked Karl.

"It was his business to look after his passengers," replied Mrs. Omdorff, who felt rather uncomfortable at this question from her little boy. "It will teach him a lesson."

Karl thought a moment, and then said: "But he won't know any thing about it."

"Oh, you're too sharp!" exclaimed his mother, with a laugh. "I wasn't talking to you, anyhow."

"Little pitchers have big ears," said Aunt Ruth, echoing her sister's laugh.

And so the matter was pushed aside, neither mother or aunt imagining that the bright and beautiful boy they both loved so tenderly had re-

ceived a lesson in dishonesty not soon to be forgotten.

"I do believe," said Mrs. Omdorff, long afterward, as she sat counting over some money, "that Poole has given me the wrong change."

Karl was in the room, and heard her remark.

"Let me see," she added, going over the money again. "Two and a half, three, four and a half, four and three quarters. It's a fact, I gave him a ten-dollar bill, and here are four and three quarters change."

"What did the goods amount to?" asked her sister.

"There were eleven yards of muslin at eighteen. That is a dollar and ninety-eight cents. Two yards of silk at a dollar and a half, and an eighth of a yard of velvet, one dollar; making just five dollars and ninety-five cents. If it had come to six dollars my right change would have been four. But he has given me four and three quarters."

Then in a tone of satisfaction, she added: "I'm that much richer, you see, Ruth."

Her sister smiled; but did not utter the disapproval that was in her heart. Karl listened and took it all in. A little while afterward, Mrs. Omdorff got up and rang the bell, saying as she did so, with a short, gurgling laugh that seemed ashamed of itself: "I guess we'll have a little ice cream—at, at, at Poole's expense."

Aunt Ruth only shook her finger, and said, feebly: "Oh, that's too bad!"

But Karl was not able to see whether she approved or disapproved. The ice cream was sent for and enjoyed by the child. While the sweet taste was yet on his tongue, he heard his mother say: "I'm very much obliged to Poole for this treat—it's delicious!"

It is strange that the boy's perception of right and wrong should be obscured? or that, in a day or two afterward, he should come in from the street with an orange in his hand, and on being questioned about it, reply: "A woman let it fall from her basket, and I picked it up. She didn't see it drop, mamma."

"But why didn't you call after her?" asked Aunt Ruth.

"Cause I didn't want to," answered the child. "She dropped it. I didn't knock it oil."

Mrs. Omdorff was not satisfied with the conduct of her child; and yet she was amused at what she called his 'cuteness, and laughed instead of reprimanding him for an act that was in spirit a theft.

So the child's education for crime was begun—his ruin initiated. The low moral sense of his mother was perpetually showing itself in some disregard for other's rights. A mistake made in her favor was never voluntarily corrected; and her pleasure at any gain of this kind was rarely concealed. "He cheated himself," was a favorite saying, heard by Karl almost every week; and as he grew older, he understood its meaning more clearly.

Mrs. Omdorff was a man of higher integrity than his wife; and just in dealing to the smallest fraction—"Poohish about little things—more nice than wise," as she often said, when he disapproved of her way of doing things, as was sometimes the case. Mrs. Omdorff had learned to be guarded in her speech when he was at home; and so he remained in ignorance of the fatal perversion going on in the mind of his child.

As the boy grew up his father's supervision became more direct. He was careful about his associates, and never permitted him to be away from home without knowing where and with whom he was. He knew but too well the danger of evil association; and guarded his boy with jealous solicitude.

Alas! he dreamed not of the evil influences at home; never imagined that the mother was destroying in her son that nice sense of honor without which no one is safe; nor that she had taught him to disregard the rights of others; to take mean advantages; and to appropriate what did not belong to him whenever it could be done with absolute certainty of concealment.

We do not mean to say that such were the direct and purposed teachings of the mother. She would have been horror-stricken at the mere suggestion. But she had so taught him by example. In heart she was not honest; and in many of her transactions she was as much a thief as if she had robbed a till. Retaining what belongs to another, simply because it has come into our hands by mistake, is as much a theft in its spirit as purposed stealing; and the fine lady who keeps the change to which she is not entitled, or the yard of ribbon measured to her in error, is just as criminal as the sneak thief who gets into her hall through a neglected door and steals her husband's overcoat. The real quality of an act lies in the intent.

It is any wonder that amid such home influences, the boy did not show, as he advanced toward maturity, a high sense of honor? That he should be mean, and selfish, and dishonest in little things? "As the twig is bent the tree's inclined." Evil seed will produce evil fruit.

Society punished and execrated the unhappy young man, and pitied his wretched mother; little dreaming that by her hand his prison doors had been opened.

Another instance of the baleful influence that may exist at home is to be found in the ruin of a young man who recently died in one of the lowest and vilest haunts of the city. He had been well educated, and grew to manhood with a fine sense of honor. His mother was a woman of rare culture, and beloved by every one in the circle where she moved. All the moral sentiments of her son had been carefully fostered and developed, and when he reached manhood no one showed a fairer promise.

But it was not long before a shadow fell across his life. He had learned one thing at home that was destined to work his ruin—he had learned to love the taste of wine.

His father belonged to a class of men who consider wine-drinking as a mark of good breeding. He knew all about wines; and had a weak vanity in being thought a connoisseur. If he had a friend to dinner, he would bring out two or three kinds and discuss them through half the meal. He called the men who were ranging themselves against the terrible evil of intemperance, and seeking to stay its baleful course, "poor fanatics." He talked of pure wines and liquors as harmless, and gave them to his son at suitable times and occasions, moderately; only guarding him by warnings against excess.

But these warnings went for nothing, as appetite increased. At twelve years of age, the boy was content with a single glass of light wine at his dinner. At eighteen he wanted two glasses, and at twenty-one three. By this time he had acquired convivial habits, and often drank freely with other young men of his age. His mother was first to take the alarm; but his father was slow to believe that his son was in danger. The sad truth broke upon him at last in a painful humiliation. At a large party in his own house the young man became so badly intoxicated that he had to be removed from the company.

From that unhappy period, wine was banished from his father's table. But it was too late! The work of ruin had progressed too far. At twenty-seven the wretched young man died, as we have said, in one of the lowest and vilest dens of the city.

We could give many instances like this. Here, at home, is the chief source of that wide-spread ruin by intemperance, that is every year robbing society of thousands upon thousands of young men, who, by education, culture, and social standing are fitted for useful and honorable positions. They are ruined at home. Here they acquire a taste for wine, and here they learn to think and speak lightly of temperance. Not in one case in ten does a young man acquire the taste for drink in a saloon or tavern, but at home—if not in his own home in that of some friend. We fear that the drinking-saloons men set up in their dining and drawing-rooms, and to which they invite the young and old of both sexes, do more to deprave the taste and lead to intemperance, than all the licensed taverns in the land. It is here that the appetite is formed and fostered—here that the apprenticeship to drunkenness is served. Year by year, the sons of our wealthiest and most intelligent and influential citizens are tempted and led astray by the drinking customs of society—ruined at home. How few of the sons of successful men rise to the level their fathers have gained. How many, alas! sink so far below this level that the eyes ache to look down upon them!

Worse than dishonesty and drunkenness, because more hidden and subtle, and more destructive of moral and spiritual life, is that home influence which springs from perverted ideas of marriage and its sanctities. If sons and daughters grow up in a home where the moral sentiments are low; where departures from virtue are spoken of lightly; where prurient gossip and vile scandals are indulged in with manifest pleasure, their corruption is almost certain. Chameleon-like, they will take the hue of what is around them; and when they advance to manhood and womanhood will, in most cases, be found practically false to the high and pure standards of Christian morality.

It is from this corruption at home, growing out of the essential impurity of the sphere in which children are raised, that society is cursed, in each new generation, by unions called marriages, but in which there is no true essential of marriage. Hence come infidelities, divorces and all the evil consequences with which we are too sadly familiar.

Let the sentiment at home be pure and Christian, and the children will grow up pure. Starting, then, on the journey of life, with minds unperturbed by false ideas, and hearts uncorrupted by actual evils, they will be strong for the battle that each must fight ere the natural mind, in which lie the germs of evil that all receive as their inheritance when born, is brought into subjection to the spiritual.

This is the battle that all must fight—the battle between the false and evil things that lie hidden at birth in the natural or lower region of the mind, and which, at maturity, when reason becomes active, assert their power, and strive for mastery over the human soul, and the higher, and purer, and God have their dwelling-place.

Think at what disadvantage they will be in this great and momentous warfare, who have, during childhood and youth, had the lower things of their nature—the false, evil things—stimulated into activity; who come to the verge of manhood and womanhood already corrupted, and with the memory full of what is vile and false, instead of with things pure, and true, and good. Alas for them! If they overcome, it will be after long and fearful struggles, in which the odds will be terribly against them!

Lay it up in your hearts, all ye who love your children and desire their happiness; that it is the home-influence that more than anything else goes to determine their future. If that is healthy and good, all the elements are in their favor; if it is not healthy and good, the chances are all against them.

Large quantities of lambs have been purchased in the neighborhood of Brussels at an average price of \$2.75 each.

Lost Occupations.

Half a century ago bellows making was a thriving trade. Every house had its pair of bellows, and in every well-furnished mansion there was a pair hung by the side of every fireplace.

Ipswich, in Massachusetts, acquired quite a notoriety all over New England for the elegant and substantial articles of the kind it produced. But as stoves and grates took the place of open fireplaces, and as coal was substituted for wood, the demand for bellows diminished, until the business as a separate trade died out.

The same is true of flint cutting. Flint was once necessary, not only for tinder boxes—and a tinder box was as necessary for every house as a gridiron or a skillet. Every one who looks back to a childhood of forty odd years ago must remember the cold winter mornings when the persistent crack, crack of the flint against the steel, sent up from the kitchen an odor of igniting tinder and sulphur which pervaded the house. I have no more idea what became of the flint producers than of the old man of sorrowful memories, who, three or four times a week, called at our door with brimstone matches for sale at a cent the half dozen bunches. Both have as completely vanished from England and New England as have the Red Indians and the Druids.

Then, again, are gone the pin makers, who, though they have been in their graves this quarter of a century, still figures in lectures and essays to illustrate the advantages of division of labor. Instead of a pin taking a dozen men or more to cut, grind, point, head, polish, and what not, as it used to do, pins are now made by neat little machines at the rate of three hundred a minute, of which machines a single child tends to half a dozen.

Nail making at the forge is another lost industry. Time was, and that in this nineteenth century, when every nail was made on the anvil. Now, from one hundred to one thousand nails per minute are made by machines. The nailer who works at the forge has but a bad chance for competing with such antagonists, and he would have no chance at all were it not that he has no other trade, and is compelled to live in continual hand-grips with poverty.

Belloville is agitating for the organization of a salvage corps, to operate in connection with the fire brigade, their object being the preservation of goods by removing them from buildings on fire.

On Monday, 4th inst., the Council of the Township of McGillivray agreed to submit a by-law granting aid to the London, Huron, and Bruce Railway to the amount of \$10,000. The voting takes place on the 30th of September.

A cargo of 350 tons of rails has been landed at Kincaidine for the Southern extension of the Wellington, Grey and Bruce railway, so that track-laying can now be proceeded with from both ends of the road at the same time.

This is Chicago's way of chronicling deaths in St. Louis: "Those that left St. Louis last week for a better country (no matter which way they went), numbered 232; and of these twenty-one took passage by the cholera line."

A Macon (Ga.) mule made a decided hit in the production of *The Cataract of the Ganges*, on the local stage there recently. The "hit" was made with the mule's dexter hind foot on one of the star performers, resulting in a total eclipse.

EDITORIAL NOTICES are so common that it is almost impossible for an editor to express his honest opinion of the merits of any article without being suspected of interested motives. This fact, however, shall not deter us from saying what we think of a new addition to the Materia Medica to which our attention has been recently directed. We refer to DR. J. WALKER'S CALIFORNIA VINEGAR BITTERS, a remedy which is making its way into more families just now than all the other advertised medicines put together. Its popularity, as far as we can judge, is not based on empty pretention. There seems to be no question about the potency of its tonic and alterative properties, while it possesses the great negative recommendation of containing neither alcohol nor mineral poison. That it is a specific for Indigestion, Biliousness, Constipation, and many complaints of nervous origin, we have reason to know; and we are assured on good authority that as a general invigorant, regulating and purifying medicine, it has no equal. It is stated that its ingredients, (obtained from the wilds of California), are new to the medical world; and its extraordinary effects certainly warrant the conclusion that it is a compound of agents hitherto unknown. If popularity is any criterion, there can be no doubt of the efficiency of the VINEGAR BITTERS, for the sale of the article is immense and continually increasing.

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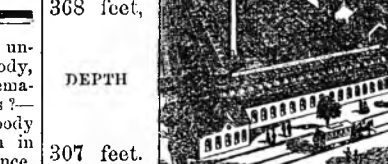
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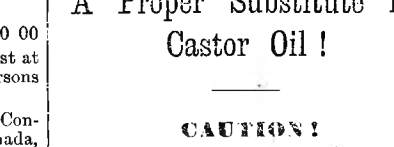
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