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Not long ago an Ontario youth  
shot and killed a man for which he  
was given a long sentence. He might  
well have been executed for the act  
was unprovoked. At his trial his par-  
ents were puzzled and bewildered. To  
newspaper reporters the father said:  
"We never got to know him. After  
meals he would go out at once and  
there was nothing we could do about  
it."

Evidently he didn't enjoy being at  
home, and that may not have been  
his parents' fault. He found his plea-  
sure elsewhere and seemed to his own  
people almost like a stranger. There  
is no single and complete answer to  
youth delinquency but undoubtedly  
home atmosphere has a good deal to  
do with it. The famous Scottish  
writer, Dr. John Watson better known  
as Ian Maclaren, once said that he  
had never known trouble to break out  
in any family where father and moth-  
er teased and "jollied" the children;  
where there was good-natured banter  
and fun.

Homes vary a great deal and no-  
where more than in the matter of  
social atmosphere. You feel as soon  
as you enter some homes that the  
folks are on good terms with each  
other. They may poke fun at one  
another but there is no mistaking  
their loyalty and devotion. The day  
may come when the boys and girls  
establish new households; they may  
be scattered over the whole continent  
or even divided by oceans but that  
won't make much difference. They  
are so united and knit together in  
spirit that they will share each other's  
joys and sorrows while life lasts.  
It is a privilege and a blessing to  
belong to such a family and when  
the boys and girls become men and  
women, they have memories which  
constitute infinitely more than any  
heritage of money.

In the creation of home atmosphere  
the influence of the parents comes  
first. Whatever defects they display  
are bound to upset the youngster and  
spoil the music. John Ruskin — one  
of the deepest thinkers of the last  
century — never forgot what he owed  
to his home. In counting the bless-  
ings of his childhood he said that  
certain things stood out. He learned  
the meaning of peace. He never once  
heard his father's or mother's voice  
raised in any dispute, nor had he  
ever seen an angry glance or disorder  
of any kind. Later on, when he be-  
came a man, he knew that angry,  
bitter words, and loud voices, did not  
settle anything but rather did in-  
calculable mischief.

A school teacher I know was great-  
ly distressed because of the bad be-  
haviour of two children — a brother  
and sister — in her class. They  
didn't know the meaning of the word  
obedience and they thought it smart  
to defy her, and frustrate her efforts  
to teach. She decided to call on  
their parents and discuss the matter.  
"One visit was enough," she said, "I  
no longer blamed the children. I

found the man and his wife, every-  
thing that parents should not be:  
quarrelsome, deceitful and very pro-  
fane, even in the presence of their  
children."

We hope the percentage of such  
parents is not large. Most of them  
are doing all they can to help the  
youngsters and to give them good  
ideals of living. There are thousands  
of men and women living in this land  
today who went out into the world,  
carrying very little money with them  
but having in their possession some-  
thing of vastly more value; the mem-  
ory of sacrifice and devotion by  
parents who could give them little  
else.

The essayist, Thomas Carlyle, was  
not given to maudlin sentiment but  
he could not speak of his Scotch  
mother without emotion. She could  
not read a line when he was a boy  
but when over seventy she learned  
to read so that she might correspond  
with him. Years after her death,  
Carlyle wrote these lines about her:  
"Oh, pious mother, as kind, good,  
brave and truthful a soul as ever  
lived, your poor Tom is very lame,  
very lonely and broken without you."

No! This question of juvenile delin-  
quency is not easy to solve and  
settle. It is a good deal of a head-  
ache and a heartache. But some at-  
mosphere, such as Ruskin and Car-  
lyle remembered and as millions of  
obscure people recall, is probably the  
best of all correctives.

One of the loveliest stories in the  
Bible is that of Ruth's devotion to  
her mother-in-law, Naomi, with whom  
she had lived and loved: "Entreat me  
not to leave thee, or to return from  
following after thee; for whither thou  
goest, I will go, and where thou lodg-  
est, I will lodge. Thy people shall  
be my people, and thy God my God.  
Where thou diest, I will die and there  
I will be buried."

Today's quotation is by Dr. Thomas  
Chalmers: "The essentials to happi-  
ness are: something to do, something  
to love and something to hope for."

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