

## WOMAN'S INFLUENCE.

(Extracts from a paper published in  
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It is always understood that a woman's best work is done in the home, and has given rise to the saying, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."

The words spoken by Pharaoh's daughter to the mother of Moses when she unknowingly gave the woman's own child into her charge, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages," seem applicable to each mother still. Does she not get her wages in the knowledge that she has moulded well the character of her child?

Mrs Willard, the mother of Frances Willard, at the age of 87 years, when near the end of a long and beautiful life, after being a successful mother for over 60 years was asked the question, "If you could live your life over again, what would you change in the treatment of your children?" She replied, straight and clearly, "I would blame less and praise more."

The mother of Hudson Taylor was praying for her boy, and although he was 80 miles away from her, he felt her influence, and could get no rest until he became converted. He inherited his mother's strong faith, and afterwards did a tremendous work as a missionary in China.

We who are co-workers with Christ should strive to urge other women to use the power placed in their hands to the best advantage. In New Zealand we have chances not enjoyed by some others. Especially in Prohibition work is this noticeable. If our sex would cast off their apathy and take more interest themselves, besides influencing others—doing, in fact, what is only their duty in the matter—I am fully convinced our land would soon be rid of the liquor evil. Our indifference in the past has retarded the cause of Prohibition, but when I remember that the influence of Frances Willard has spread all over the world, I should like to urge every woman to join the W.C.T.U., enter fully into the work, and strive to influence all these with whom they come in contact to link up with them to prepare for the next elections. Victory could easily be accomplished if we were united and worked enough and

prayed enough. Talk Prohibition all the time; never mind if people do smile about your "pet hobby." It is unwise to postpone all the work for two years, for surely we admit its importance. We have all heard the story of the old Scottish woman who picked up the broken glass to make the road safer for the bairn's feet, but cannot we find one bit of glass ourselves to remove?

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## MODESTY.

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I often hear mothers of the rising generation bewail the lack of modesty in the girls of to-day, and I wonder how much of the lack of this most womanly quality in our young people is the mother's own fault. There used to be a kind of prudish affectation that was mistaken for womanly grace—the kind of thing which expected that a young girl should blush and hang her head when passing youths in the street, or being spoken to by one of the opposite sex, which was as far removed from the real thing as a fungus or toadstool is from an honest mushroom. But this was not true modesty, which is a quality of the spirit, not an acquired habit. But since we desire our girls to display this quality of heart throughout all their life, it is their due that they should in infancy learn nothing that should prevent its growth. One of the first mistakes made, it seems to me, is that of thinking the child is too young to notice what goes on around it, for it is hard to say at what stage in its existence a child's brain will not register things seen to be recalled and thought of later on. Another is the notion that children forget things seen and heard so quickly. They do no such thing, believe me. For which reason it seems to me that children cannot be taught the first principles of decency and purity, of true modesty, in short, too young, if we desire them to practise this virtue when they come to years of discretion. The plan adopted in many homes of bathing three or four children of opposite sexes simultaneously, or in the presence of other people, seems to me to bring its own punishment on the parent who adopts it later on, when she is endeavouring to teach her children to be modest. Again,

how is a child, who watches her mother "changing the baby" by the fire in the sitting-room, where her husband is talking to a guest, to grasp the meaning of reproof when the spirit moves her to stand on her head on the sofa at the same time in the same place. "Naughty, rude little girl, mother will have to slap you," I heard a mother say once in such circumstances, and it trembled on the tip of my tongue to say, "If she does, baby, I think I may have to slap mother for you to balance things." Another mistaken plan is that of allowing brothers and sisters to share rooms long after babyhood is passed. Yet another fatal mistake is the habit of talking before children of grown-up doings without lack of restraint. The children may appear to be playing, or busy with a book, but few children are so lost to their surroundings as to fail to catch the one sentence that was not intended for their ears. If girls in their teens are allowed to read the daily newspapers at will, how are they to be expected to discriminate between what is desirable for them to read and what would be better unknown to them? But the great scheme of teaching virtues is to practice them with diligence personally. The mother who walks abroad in short dress of clinging material, which blows high above her knees at windy corners, cannot well complain if her daughter desires to pursue the violent games in which girls nowadays indulge in wholly inadequate clothing. The school doctors are recently reporting that girls of to-day are insufficiently clothed from the point of view of bodily health, and old-fashioned women like me are making similar reports from the standpoint of modesty. Not that there are no modest girls in these days. Thank God there are, but not in such numbers as there used to be, and it is harder for them to acquire and cultivate this grace than it was in former days. If we want modest, womanly girls, we must ourselves be modest in dress, in actions, in words, and in heart and mind. It is the spirit in which we live our lives, not the precepts we utter in their hearing, that will make the rising generation both boys and girls, the clean-minded, healthy bodied young people that all who truly love them would wish them to be.

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