

men, societies and guilds, ragged-schools, navvys, church work, religious work outside the church of all sorts, slum work, rescue work, nursing, needlework, porcelain work, scientific work, work amongst soldiers, sailors, police, etc.

All these mean real hard work, often of a most trying and disagreeable nature. All require to be well done, and many, as in the paid varieties, require long periods of preparation. It has been said that nine-tenths of the world's work is drudgery, it is the quality of the tenth part that makes it divine.

Let us now consider the tools requisite for self-modelling. Most of these can be better and more efficiently used by our parents on us in tender years. The clay has now got tough in condition and set in shape, and there is not a little undoing needed as well as building up. Besides it is always more difficult to mould yourself than to be moulded by another. We are now beyond parental moulding, but not beyond God's hands. Let each one then who undertakes this work reverently ask her Heavenly Father to do that higher part of the work that lies beyond her own powers.

In the formation of habit a girl has a most powerful tool for self-modelling at her disposal. The force of habit is great, and may be so formed as to be difficult to check. Darwin found he had acquired, in common with most men, the habit of starting back at the sudden approach of danger, and no amount of will-power could enable him to keep his face pressed against the plate-glass front of the cage of the cobra in the Zoo while it struck at him, even though he exerted the full force of his will, and his reason told him there was no danger. The Duke of Wellington is credited with the dictum that habit is as strong as ten natures, and certainly when one sees what a soldier will do and is worth in a campaign when seasoned and well drilled, as compared with a raw recruit, he feels that the statement is rather under than over the mark, for he owes all his valour to habit! Habit is formed by the constant repetition of the same thought or act till a well-defined brain-path is formed between the groups of brain-cells concerned in its production. In the graphic language of Dr. Michael Foster, "The will, blundering at first in the maze of the nervous network, gradually establishes (by repetition) easy paths. Whenever this is effected the slightest impulse seems to start the nerve-current along the whole of the associated groups and produces the habitual action. The

nerve-current follows this route not now because it is guided (as at first) by intelligence, but because this route offers the least resistance from habitual use."

Attention in the formation of the habit seems greatly to deepen its impression on the brain, and make it much more easy to establish. A good memory, which is a psychical habit, is thus established by attention.

The easiest time to form habits is in the growing brain in early childhood, notably before fifteen years of age. As, however, my readers have passed this age, let me add that the brain still remains sufficiently plastic till thirty (which is, as we know, amongst women a magic age which continually recedes the nearer you approach it) for the formation of permanent habits. After that age, they are made with much difficulty, and are easily forgotten again, the brain being then better compared to india-rubber than clay. As a rule personal habits are acquired before twenty, professional habits before thirty. The old adage,

If at first you don't succeed,  
Try, try, try again,

simply means: if a thing is too hard to do, establish a habit and you will accomplish it. Habits of thought are as truly and readily formed as habits of body.

Attention may be deliberately manufactured as a habit by the inattentive. The habit of inquiry is easily acquired, and simply means going through life with one's eyes open instead of shut.

In a similar way most moral habits can be formed as mental habits, deliberately, surely, and easily, as compared with any other method. Thus decision, self-control, obedience, self-respect, unselfishness, courtesy, reverence, can one and all be formed by frequent repetition in early life. The knowledge and love of their moral value gives of course the will to form them and greatly helps the process. Habit forms character, or at least a good deal of it. The perfected woman is largely a creature of perfectly formed habits. Up to a certain point our character was formed for us by heredity and education, beyond this it is formed by us by habit.

Many good habits are acquired at school. The habit of steady application; the habit of accurate thought is largely taught by the study of mathematics, and is of great value to girls who are seldom just or accurate, because their feelings and impulses are so strong. In using,

therefore, the tool in self-modelling, the plan is, having grasped the subject (oneself) and the object (one's aim), to fix the mind on the most besetting sin or failure first, and carefully establish a habit that shall overcome it. It is easier to choke out a bad weed by planting a flower that shall overshadow it, than to uproot it. Then take the next most prominent, and so steadily overcome and put to death not the vices and failures as a whole, but in detail, concentrating your forces on each in turn, and establishing in every case a good habit of the corresponding virtue in its place. Observe how scriptural is this principle. "Lay aside the sin that doth most easily beset you," and as regards the cultivation of the corresponding virtue: "Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, etc." "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good," and in each case the vice is to be supplanted by a virtue.

Another powerful tool is the occupation of the mind with what is good. "Whatsoever things are pure, noble, of good repute, etc., think on these things." We get like whatever we are occupied with. We are like photographic plates partly sensitised, that dimly reproduce what they are placed before. Let us have lofty ideals and be ever occupied with them, and our character is then changed. This is a power quite different from that of habit-forming, but the method is equally recognised in Scripture. "We all . . . reflecting as in a mirror" (or sensitive-plate) "the glory of the Lord are changed from glory to glory," or as it has been rendered, "from character to character," "by the Spirit of the Lord."

Another tool is to have good teachers. The best teachers are best; and in self-modelling no second-rate work must be done. The Bible comes first, next all those voices living and dead that are God-sent, and capable of inspiring in us those virtues that we lack.

Coming down at last to the body, we use all and every means to develop it in grace, in strength, in beauty, and in health. And thus the knowledge of ourselves, so far from filling us with fatalism and morbidness, is the sure foundation on which we stand, and seek to build from the unworthy materials at our disposal, by habit, by precept, by example, by good methods, a better woman than she is girl, one whose path is upward and not downward, and whose last word ever is, however high the position she may attain, "Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto Thy name be all glory and praise."

## TAME DOVES.



It is always interesting to note how gentleness shown towards our pet animals and birds will bring out various traits of

character in them.

Curious differences will be observed even between specimens which are of the same age and family and have been treated exactly alike from their earliest years.

A pet creature can only show its true nature when it is brought up so kindly as to be without fear. Alas, how seldom this is the case!

Almost all captive song-birds I have seen, excepting canaries, are sure to flutter more or less when anyone approaches their cage,

and this instinctive effort to escape shows timidity and unhappiness. I confess I could never find any pleasure in keeping a tiny captive which I knew was breaking its little heart in fruitless longings for fresh air and liberty.

To show what thoughtful kindness will do in creating happy confidence, I should like to relate the history of my tame doves, Peace and Patience.

These birds used to belong to a poor woman in our village, her only means of housing them was in a wooden box with a wire front. It was a wonder that they continued to live in such discomfort; yet, without a bath, a nest-box, or anything to make their lives pleasant or healthy, they showed the grace of patient endurance by living on with merely their bare allowance of food and water.

However, they were redeemed at last from their hard bondage, placed in a large wicker cage with plenty of suitable provender, enabled

to sun themselves in a pleasant verandah, and to take a bath in pure water whenever they felt inclined.

Their plumage soon began to improve, and became as smooth and soft as grey satin.

After a time they were let out to fly about in the dining-room, and the male bird, Peace, might often be seen sitting on the marble clock gazing at himself in the looking-glass over the mantel-piece. I suppose he admired his own reflection, for he would go again and again to bow and curtsy and coo most lovingly to the bird he saw in the glass, and never seemed to find out it was himself all the while.

In spite of this foppishness he was a most devoted mate, paying all kinds of tender attentions to his gentle little wife, following her about and often feeding her with any special dainty he might come across.

Under these new and happy circumstances Peace and Patience began to think of rearing



a family, and we found them searching everywhere for materials wherewith to build their nest. Not finding much that was suitable in my sitting-rooms, they went to the flower-vases and began pulling out the orchids and maiden-hair fern to line their nest.

It looked very pretty to see the little grey bird flying across the room with a great pink flower in her beak; but we thought a more suitable substance might be offered to them, and very gladly they welcomed some little twigs and dried grass, with which, after much cooing and confabulation, they constructed the family home.

In a day or two a pair of snow-white eggs appeared, and then for a fortnight the little hen-bird sat patiently brooding over them, scarcely leaving them long enough to take her necessary food.

In due time we found two little doves were hatched, small, pink feeble-looking creatures they were; it seemed quite wonderful to think that they could ever grow up to be like their parents.

Patience was so tame, that she would let me peep under her soft feathers to see how the tiny birds were progressing, and even if I took one of her children away to show to my friends she was in no way perturbed.

It is a great surprise to see doves feeding their young ones. They take the tender little beak within their own and then pass the soft food, with which nature provides them at that time, from their own crop into the beak of the fledgelings.

The young birds seemed to have excellent appetites and grew rapidly, developing tiny quill-feathers all over their bodies, and in a few weeks they were clothed with soft grey plumage, so that we could hardly tell parents from children.

I have often heard doves spoken of as being less intelligent than other birds. On the contrary, my birds seem to think and almost to reason, as I believe my readers will agree when I tell them some of the clever things they have done.

One day when I was sitting in a room some distance from the verandah where the doves were, Peace found me out and came tapping

with his bill against the window. I am always accustomed to attend at once to any such appeal from a bird or animal, since I generally find it to mean that they urgently require something.

In this case, as the evening was chilly, I let the three doves into their cage and brought it indoors; but I soon found all was not right, for the male bird was greatly excited, apparently longing to get out again, so I opened the cage door and the window of the room, and away he flew. Presently I heard Peace cooing loudly, and, following the sound I found him under the verandah with the young dove that was missing; he was evidently trying to show me his truant child, and as soon as I took them both up and carried them to the cage, Peace was quite happy and content.

When the weather became warm and sunny the little pair decided that their next nest should be built in some clematis growing up the pillars of the verandah.

It was a charming spot to select, for the little mother-bird had flickering sunbeams shining upon her whilst she sat, and leaves to shelter her from the heat.

Now again a domestic difficulty arose and Peace came to tell me about it. What was he to do for building-materials? I provided small flexible birch twigs and was amused to find that when I offered one, the little builder took it gladly, and flying off to the nest presented it to his wife, and she wove it into the family dwelling.

Later on in the day it seemed to me that the comfort of the home would be improved by some softer material than interlacing twigs, so I added a carpet of fine soft shavings; these also were quite approved, and after a time the nest was considered perfect. I felt inclined to call it our nest, as I provided the materials and was allowed to help in the building.

Two snowy eggs soon appeared, and then the parents took it by turns to sit upon the nest for about four hours at a time. This should teach us a beautiful lesson of unselfishness, for it must seem a little hard to have to sit still hour after hour and see another bird

able to fly about enjoying the air and sunshine. I think my dove was well named Patience. But doubtless the strong feeling of mother love made it easy, and the affectionate little father-bird seemed always ready to take his turn in the domestic duties.

The first heavy shower after the nest was built made me rather anxious for the comfort of the sitting bird; she would soon have been soaked with rain, so I racked my wits to devise a shelter. With some contrivance I managed to fix a slanting roof of stiff cardboard so as to keep off rain and scorching sunshine.

By talking quietly to my pet she seemed quite to understand that she was not to be alarmed, and sat calmly on her nest whilst I fixed her shelter.

The bird that is off duty is fond of coming to visit me in the house. I am quite accustomed to see a dove sitting amongst my working materials, I have even found an egg lying on my writing-table as a modest gift and token of affection from my gentle Patience.

Peace looks very pretty when he perches on a white marble bust in the drawing-room. He dearly likes investigating anything fresh, and I once found him in the museum busily pulling an old nest to pieces, because it contained some materials he thought would be desirable for his own home.

I learn many lessons from my little doves. I see how affection begets confidence.

These little creatures trust me perfectly, and that gives me true pleasure, and makes them very dear to me.

I think it is thus our Heavenly Father would have us show our love to Him. He says, "I love them that love Me," and the text goes on to say, "and those that seek Me early shall find Me."

Then let all the dear young people who read about my doves try to learn, from their history, how they can please God by showing their love and trust in Him, by going to Him continually with all their difficulties, not doubting that He will hear, and abundantly answer their prayers.

E. BRIGHTWEN.

## TWO BY-PATHS OF WOMEN'S WORK.



IN these days when the keen and anxious competition for bare livelihood is affecting women as well as men, and when parents have grown to consider the question, "What shall we do with our daughters?" of equal importance with the old cry, "What shall we do

with our sons?" the majority of the professions and occupations, once exclusively reserved for the bread-winning male, have been thrown open to women of all classes. From an educational point of view girls share equal privileges with their brothers. Step by step, from the Board School to the college, women may climb the mount of knowledge through the pleasant fields of culture on precisely the same level with men; and each year the wisdom of this equality may be seen from the most cursory glance at examination results all over the kingdom. The advancement women have made upon the old feminine ideal, whose "education has not been neglected; that is to say, she can write and spell, and speak

French, and play on the harpsichord," has entirely justified the recognition made by the country of her right to equal mental development with man. But there are many women to whom the higher education is impossible, perhaps for monetary reasons, perhaps because prejudice and old-fashioned notions have held them from sharing in the new advantages placed before them. But, be the reason what it may, there is a distinct class of women who, fairly well-educated, and with parents in a good position, find it necessary to work. The sterner occupations, for which lengthy training is required, are closed to them; literature, art, the City, business, the many avocations within their reach, are overcrowded; they need occupation, but the world does not seem to need their labour.

Perhaps such women, anxiously seeking work, and meeting only failure and disappointment, will learn a valuable lesson from the useful and successful business carried on by the Lady Agents in Kensington, and the Ladies' Agency, near Victoria. The word "business" scarcely applies to the new paths these two agencies have struck across the limitless area of female occupation, for the work undertaken by each comes under no recognised heading of labour.

Both agencies are entirely distinct, and in

no way connected with one another, nor do they follow the same system. Priority must be given to the Ladies' Agency, conveniently situated in Belgravia, and close to Victoria.

A small number of ladies, knowing the difficulty so often experienced by the travelling public and country residents of finding suitable rooms in London, formed themselves into a syndicate, for the purpose of providing good apartments not only in private houses but in hotels. Thus, a lady living in the country and wishing to stay for a few weeks in London, by writing to the agency stating the description of rooms she requires, the locality, the rental she is prepared to pay, would find on her arrival every arrangement made for her comfort, and, what is most important, a thoroughly trustworthy landlady, the agency engaging no rooms of which they have not personal knowledge. The percentage, paid according to the rental of the rooms, is very small, when the trouble attending apartment-seeking is remembered. This agency exists practically for the benefit of the travelling public, complete arrangements being made for families passing through or staying for a short visit in London, but it also engages furnished houses both in town and country. So successful has the venture proved to be that during the