

HOME CIRCLE.

CHAT WITH MOTHERS.

In the management of your little ones nobody doubts your love, nobody doubts your readiness to sacrifice yourselves for them; but your methods, the wisdom of your service, may often justly be questioned.

At this time I ask your attention to a suggestion or two in regard to your methods of feeding your babies. You know how vital *regularity* is with us grown-up people. We may take the plainest food, and in moderate quantities; if no attention be paid to times and seasons, our digestion will soon be deranged. A man may eat nothing but beef and stale bread—the two best articles of food with which we are acquainted—and he may take them in proper quantities, but in a month he will have dyspepsia, if he constantly changes the hours of his meals. It is not the kind of food we eat at the railroad stations, but the irregularity of the hours of eating, which so deranges the stomach.

Now, we all know this to be true of ourselves—grown-up, matured, tough people; we believe it to rest upon a physiological law. And in view of this law let us consider how you feed your baby. You put it to your breast whenever it is uneasy, no matter what makes it cry; if it is hungry, or cold, or has a pin stuck in its back, or is sunken and has the colic—no matter what may be the cause of its worrying or crying, you treat it with the same remedy—a dose of milk. The little thing does not know that milk is bad for it, and so it goes on sucking. It has learned to do but one thing—to suck; and in its eagerness to get relief, it will do that thing fifty times a day. In this way it is made feverish and thirsty. Its little pulse will run up to a very high rate. It is suffering with thirst. Like all creatures with thirst, it needs water. Nothing could be worse than milk. It is poison even to a strong man with a fever. What do you give your baby with a fever? One thing, and one thing only, and that is milk. Milk, milk, is the food and drink of every baby, given to it five, ten, twenty, or fifty times a day, just as it happens. At night it is coaxed to dine every time it wakes up.

A baby six to twelve months old should be nursed about eight o'clock in the morning, and it should have time to get all it wants. Every three hours till bed-time, or nine o'clock at night, it should have a good meal, which should be given with perfect regularity. During the night, nothing whatever. In a month the baby will not only become accustomed to this, but on this system the little chap will flourish as he never did before.

More than half the stomach and bowel diseases, fevers, and fits from which babies suffer and die, come from irregularity and excess in feeding them.—*Dr. D. Lewis.*

A HUSBAND AND FATHER.

A young man and his wife were preparing to attend a Christmas party at the house of a friend some miles distant.

"Henry, my dear husband, don't drink too much at the party to-day; you will promise me, won't you?" said she, putting her hand upon his brow, and raising her eyes to his face with a pleading glance.

"No, Millie, I will not; you may trust me."

And he wrapped his infant boy in a soft blanket, and they proceeded.

The horses were soon prancing over the turf, and pleasant conversation beguiled the way.

"Now, don't forget your promise," whispered the young wife, as she passed up the steps.

Poor thing! She was the wife of a man who loved to look upon the wine when it was red. But his love for his wife and babe, whom they both idolized, kept him back, and it was not often that he joined in the bacchanalian revelries.

The party passed off pleasantly, the time for departing drew near, and the wife descended from the upper chamber to join her husband. A pang shot through the trusting heart as she met him, for he was intoxicated—he had broken his promise.

Silently they rode homeward, save when the drunken man would break into snatches of song or unmeaning laughter. But the wife rode on, her babe pressed closely on her grieved heart.

"Give me the babe, Millie, I can't trust you with him," said he, as they approached a dark and somewhat swollen stream, which they had to ford.

After some hesitation, she resigned her first-born, her darling babe, closely wrapped in the great blanket, to his arms. Over the dark waters the noble steed safely bore them, and when they reached the bank the mother asked for the child.

With much care and tenderness he placed the bundle in her arms, but when she clasped it to her bosom no babe was there! It had slipped from the blanket, and the drunken father knew it not.

A wild shriek from the mother aroused him, and he turned just in time to see the little rosy face rise one moment above the dark waves, then sink forever.

What a spectacle! the idol of his heart gone—gone forever! and that, too, by his own intemperance. The anguish of the mother and the remorse of the father are better imagined than described.

THE PRIME OF LIFE.

Between the ages of forty-five and sixty, a man who has properly regulated himself may be considered in the prime of life. His matured strength of constitution renders him almost impervious to an attack of disease, and experience has given soundness to his judgment. His mind is resolute, firm, and equal; all his functions are in the highest order; he assumes mastery over his business; builds up a competence on the foundation he has laid in early manhood, and passes through a period of life attended by many gratifications. Having gone over a year or two over sixty, he arrives at a stand-still. But athwart this is the viaduct called

the turn of life, which, if crossed in safety, leads to the valley of "old age," round which the river winds, and then beyond, without boat or causeway, to effect his passage. The bridge is, however, constructed of fragile material, and it depends how it is trodden, whether it bend or break. Gout and apoplexy are also in the vicinity to waylay the traveller, and thrust him from the pass; but let him gird up his loins and provide himself with a fitter staff, and he may trudge on in safety and with perfect composure. To quit metaphor, "the turn of life" is a turn either into a prolonged walk or into the grave. The system and powers having reached the utmost expansion, now begin either to close like a flower at sunset or break down at once. One injudicious stimulant, a single fatal excitement, may force it beyond its strength, while a careful supply of props and the withdrawal of all that tends to force a plant will sustain it in beauty and vigour until night has entirely set in.

FARMER JOHN.

"If I'd nothing to do," said Farmer John,
"To fret or to bother me—
Were I but rid of this mountain of work,
What a good man I could be!"

"The pigs get out, and the cows get in,
Where they have no right to be;
And the weeds in the garden and the corn—
Why they fairly frighten me."

"It worries me out of temper quite,
And well-nigh out of my head.
What a curse it is that a man must toil
Like this for his daily bread!"

But Farmer John he broke his leg,
And was kept for many a week
A helpless man and an idle man—
Was he therefore mild and meek

Nay; what with the pain, and what with the fret
Of sitting with nothing to do—
And the farm work botched with a shiftless hand,
He got very cross and blue.

He scolded the children and cuffed the dog
That fawned about his knee;
And snarled at his wife, though she was kind
And patient as wife could be.

He grumbled, and whined, and fretted, and fumed,
The whole of the long day through.
"Twill ruin me quite," cried Farmer John,
"To sit here with nothing to do!"

His hurt got well, and he went to work,
And a busier man than he.
A happier man, or a pleasanter man,
You never would wish to see.

The pigs got out, and he drove them back,
Whistling right merrily;
He mended the fence, and kept the cows
Just where they ought to be.

Weeding the garden was jolly fun,
And ditto hoeing the corn.
"I'm happier far," said Farmer John,
"Than I've been since I was born."

He learned a lesson that lasts him well—
"Twill last him his whole life through.
He frets but seldom, and never because
He has plenty of work to do."

"I tell you what," says Farmer John,
"They are either knaves or fools
Who long to be idle—for idle hands
Are the Devil's chosen tools."

THE MEMORY OF ANTS.

The general fact that, whenever an ant finds her way to a store of food or larvae, she will return to it again and again in a more or less direct line from her nest, constitutes ample proof that the ant remembers her way to the store of food. It is of interest to note that the nature of this insect-memory appears to be identical with that of memory in general. Thus, a new fact becomes impressed upon ants' memory by repetition, and the impression is liable to become effaced by lapse of time. Sir John Lubbock found it necessary to teach the insects, by a repetition of several lessons, their way to treasure, if that way were long or unusual. With regard to the duration of memory in ants, it does not appear that any direct experiments have been made; but the following observation by Mr. Belt on its apparent duration in the leaf-cutting ant may be here stated: In June, 1859, he found his garden invaded by these ants, and on following up their paths, he found their nests about a hundred yards distant. He poured down their burrows a pint of diluted carbolic acid. The marauding parties were at once drawn off from the garden to meet the danger at home, while in the burrows themselves the greatest confusion prevailed. Next day he found the ants busily engaged in bringing up the ant-food from the old burrows, and carrying it to newly-formed ones a few yards distant. These, however, turned out to be intended only as temporary repositories; for, in a few days, both old and new burrows were entirely deserted, so that he supposed all the ants to have died. Subsequently, however, he found that they had migrated to a new site about 200 yards from the old one, and there established themselves in a new nest. Twelve months later the ants again invaded his garden, and again he treated them to a strong dose of carbolic acid. The ants, as on the previous occasion, were at once withdrawn from his garden, and two days afterwards he found

"all the survivors at work on one track that led direct to the old nest of the year before, where they were busily employed in making new excavations. . . . 'It was a wholesale and entire migration.' Mr. Belt adds: 'I do not doubt that some of the leading minds in this formicarium recollected the nest of the year before, and directed the migration to it.'—*George J. Romanus, in Popular Science Monthly for August.*

IMAGINARY DISEASES.

A medical writer believes that two persons in three who consider themselves invalids have no serious ailments, and that their diseases exist to a great extent in the imagination only. "Hardly a day passes that I do not see this opinion verified. There is often some disturbance of the system with those who ask advice, but they are not usually afflicted in the manner they had supposed, and most frequently not seriously ill in any respect except as to the imagination. I have never suffered an hour from any sort of illness, since acquiring the knowledge and experience which enable me to account for many of the seeming phenomena incident to human life; previous to that the monotony of my life would be occasionally interrupted by a scare, from which I would suffer during the time it required to reach the nearest competent physician. My imagination has thus presented me at various times with heart disease, kidney troubles, and liver complaint, each of which I left behind me when I came away from the doctor's, and have never heard from since. Few people have any idea of the aggregate of suffering and misery that is silently endured by thousands of our fellow-beings, under the supposition that they are victims of incurable diseases, when, in fact, there is nothing serious the matter with them. Every physician of experience is able to refer to many cases where he has been able to lift a terrible weight from the crushed spirit of some suffering mortal, by explaining away his fears. It should be more satisfactory to a humane physician to quiet the fears of one imaginary invalid, than to have a hundred rich patients who required his services. And yet as to imaginary diseases, let it not be thought that I would advise any person to quietly convince himself that there was nothing the matter, and thus silence his fears; there might be some serious trouble, and then the advantage of early treatment would be lost. A skillful physician should be consulted in every doubtful case. The probability is he would find the patient suffering in most cases from dyspepsia instead of heart disease, or from malaria instead of Bright's disease of the kidneys—that is, from a curable instead of an incurable disease."

SWEET HOME.

When two young people love each other and marry, they restore the picture of the apostolic church. They are of one heart and one soul. Neither do they say that anything they possess is their own, but they have all things in common. Their mutual trust in each other, their entire confidence in each other, draws out all that is best in both. Love is the angel who rolls away the stone from the grave in which we bury our better nature, and it comes forth. Love makes all things new; makes a new heaven and a new earth; makes all cares light, all pains easy. It is the one enchantment of human life which realizes Fortunio's purse and Aladdin's palace, and turns the "Arabian Nights" into mere prose by comparison. Before real society can come, true homes must come. As in a sheltered nook in the midst of the great sea of ice which rolls down the summit of Mont Blanc is found a little green spot full of tender flowers, so in the shelter of home, in the warm atmosphere of household love, spring up the pure affections of parent and child; father, mother, son, daughter; of brothers and sisters. Whatever makes this insecure, and divorce frequent, makes of marriage not a union for life, but an experiment which may be tried as often as we choose, and abandoned when we like. And this cuts up by the roots all the dear affections of home; leaves children orphaned, destroys fatherly and motherly love, and is a virtual dissolution of society.—*James Freeman Clark.*

TO A MODERATE DRINKER.

No, not even the mildest of the California wines will prove useful. Wine is no more healthful than alcohol diluted in water. Suppose a wine contains seven per cent. of alcohol—and that surely would be light enough—it is no more healthful than water with seven per cent. of alcohol in it. The wine is practically just that, with a little colouring matter added. Often, very often, there is an addition of poisonous adulterating stuff. There is no doubt, as you suggest, that the wine is better than lager-beer. This is a wretched stuff, puffing a man out and making his brain stupid. There is a kind of drink known as water which I advise you to try. It may taste strange at first, but you will find it the best drink when you are sick or well, when you are hot or cold, indeed under all possible circumstances.—*Dr. Dio Lewis.*

SKIPPING HARD PLACES.

Boys, I want to ask you how you think a conqueror made out who went through a country he was trying to subdue, and whenever he found a fort hard to take, let it alone. Don't you think the enemy would buzz wild there, like bees in a hive, and when he was well into the heart of the country don't you fancy they would swarm out and harass him terribly?

Just so, I want you to remember, will it be with you, if you skip over the hard places in your lessons and leave them unlearned; you have left an enemy in the rear that will not fail to harass you and mortify you times without number.

"There was just a little bit of my Latin I hadn't read," said a vexed student to me, "and it was just there the Professor had to call upon me at examination. There were just two or three examples I had passed over, and one of them I was asked to do on the blackboard."