

two pivots, which are called the poles* of the earth, once in twenty-four hours. This, while it causes the grateful alternation of day and night, conveys light and heat round the world, so as to diffuse them with nearly equal force on every spot within the same parallel of latitude. Were the earth in the form of a cylinder or roller, this rotatory motion would cause the sun, in the course of the annual revolution, to shine equally on every part of its round surface, while his rays would never reach the wide flat regions at either end; the days and nights would then be invariably of the same length; there would be no change of climate, and all the habitable parts of the earth would be one burning tropical region, without abatement and without variety. If, on the other hand, the earth, in its present form of a ball, were to have no yearly as well as daily motion, or, having an yearly motion, were to move round its own axis in what may be considered the most simple manner, that is, in an erect position with reference to the sun, the effect would be, that he would constantly shine with his direct rays only on that single line of the earth's surface which is called the equator. There would still be no change of seasons, and the accumulated heat in the equatorial regions would be so excessive, as to destroy, in all probability, both animal and vegetable life; while, in the neighbourhood of the polar circle, and even in a vast extent of those countries to which we now give the name of temperate, the globe would be uninhabitable, from the contrary cause of extreme and uniform cold.

The contrivance by which this inconvenience is, to a desirable extent, removed, is well known. The earth, which, in common with the other planets, performs an annual revolution round the sun, is made to take this course, not in an erect, but in an inclined position; by which means the pole, which leans toward the sun in one part of the course, leans away from it in another. The consequence of this is, that the sun, instead of shining constantly with his direct rays upon the equator, appears to be continually traversing a considerable space in the heavens, shifting from tropic to tropic, and presenting himself for one half of the year to the north, and for the other half to the south of the equator. The various parts of the earth's surface, within the tropics, are thus exposed alternately to the direct and indirect rays of the sun at different periods, and the position and influence of this source of light and heat is also varied over the whole globe, or, in common language, the diversified appearances of the seasons are produced.

This is a most beneficial arrangement; but it is evident that it could only be salutary within a certain range, for this simple reason, that, were the sun to traverse from pole to pole, it would necessarily happen, that while he was shining vertically on the south pole, the north would be left to total darkness, and the tenfold rigours of a polar winter; and, *vice versa*, while he was pouring the unmitigated radiance of his burning rays on the regions of the north, the south would be doomed to undergo the extreme, which a few months before, had carried desolation to the north. The fatal consequence of this need not be described; the whole balance of nature, at present so nicely adjusted, would be upset, the elements would be in constant and furious commotion, and no organized existence, such, at least, as is at present to be found on the earth, could survive the conflict; or, if it did, could endure the violent changes of the seasons, for a single year.

It would be by no means difficult to prove, that the extent to which the range of sun is actually confined, is precisely that which manifests the most consummate intelligence in the great Artificer. Had it been either more or less than we actually find it, the same advantages would not have been secured, other things remaining as they are, nor would inconveniences have been so effectually avoided. Evils, indeed, still remain; it is part of the system of a world of discipline that it should be so,—but the proof of Divine contrivance lies in this, that these evils are at the minimum, while the advantages, on the contrary, are at the maximum; that is to say, that any alteration either way would be for the worse. Here, then, we have what we are taught to look for by the general analogy of nature,—a proof of supreme wisdom in the adjustment of materials,—the adaptation of means with admirable skill to a beneficent end.

* The extended line through the centre of the globe, on which it turns, is called the axis of the earth,—taking the metaphor from the axis of carriage wheels.

CHILDREN.

BY MRS. HARRIET BECKFORD STOWE.

‘A little child shall lead them.’

One cold market morning, I looked into a milliner's shop, and there I saw a hale, hearty, well-browned young fellow from the country, with his long cart whip, and a lion shag coat, holding up some little matter, and turning it about on his great fist. And what do you suppose it was! A *baby's bonnet*! A little soft, blue, satin hood, with a swan's down border, white as the new fallen snow, with a frill of rich blonde around the edge.

By his side stood a very pretty woman, holding with no small pride the baby—for evidently it was *the* baby. Any one could read that fact in every glance, as they looked at each other and the little hood, and then at the large blue unconscious eyes, and fat dimpled cheeks of the little one. It was evident that neither of them had ever seen a baby like that before!

“But really, Mary,” said the young man, “isn't three dollars very high?”

Mary very prudently said nothing, but taking the little bonnet, tied it on to the little head, and held up the baby. The man looked, and grinned, and without another word down went the three dollars—all that the last week's butter came to; and as they walked out of the shop, it is hard to say which looked the most delighted with the bargain.

“Ah!” thought I, “a little child shall lead them!”

Another day, as I was passing a carriage factory along one of our back streets, I saw a young mechanic at work on a wheel. The rough body of a carriage stood beside him—and there, wrapped up snugly, all hooded and cloaked, sat a little dark-eyed girl, about a year old, playing with a great shaggy dog. As I stopped, the man looked up from his work and turned admiringly towards his little companion, as much as to say, “See what I have got here!”

“Yes!” thought I, “and if the little lady ever get a glance from admiring swains as sincere as that, she will be lucky.”

Ah, these children! little witches! pretty, even in their faults and absurdities! winning, even in their sins and iniquities! See, for example, yonder little fellow in a naughty fit—he has shaken his long curls over his deep blue eyes—the fair brow is bent in a frown—the rose-leaf lip is pursed up in infinite defiance—and the white shoulder thrust naughtily forward. Can any but a child look so pretty even in their naughtiness?

Then comes the instant change—flashing smiles and tears, as the good comes back all in a rush, and you are overwhelmed with protestations, promises and kisses! They are irresistible, too, these little ones. They pull away the scholar's pen—tumble about his papers—make ~~somersetts~~ over his books, and what can he do? They tear up newspapers—litter the carpets—break, pull, and upset, and then jabber unimaginable English in self-defence, and what can you do for yourself?

“If I had a child,” says the precise man, “you should see.”

He does have a child, and his child tears up his papers, tumbles over his things, and what has the precise man to say for himself? Nothing—he is like everybody else—“a little child shall lead him!”

Poor little children! they bring and teach us, human beings, more good than they get in return! how often does the infant, with its soft cheek and helpless hand, awaken a mother from wordliness and egotism, to a whole world of new and higher feeling! How often does the mother repay this, by doing her best to wipe off, even before the time, the dew and fresh simplicity of childhood, and make her daughter too soon a woman of the world, as she has been.

The hardened heart of the worldly man is unlocked by the guileless tones and simple caresses of his son—but he repays it, in time, by imparting to his boy all the crooked tricks, and hard ways, and callous maxims which have undone himself.

Go to the jail—to the penitentiary, and find there the wretch most sullen, brutal and hardened. Then look at your infant son. Such as he is to you, such to some mother was this man. That hard hand was soft and delicate—that rough voice was tender and lisping—fond eyes followed him as he played—and he was rocked and cradled as something holy. There was a time when his heart, soft and unworn, might have opened to questionings of God, and Jesus, and been sealed with the seal of Heaven. But harsh hands seized it—harsh, godless lines,