

Family Circle.

FIRMNESS AN ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATION

Mothers who would rear such souls as Samuel should have something of the firmness and self-control of Hannah. It is a great mistake to suppose firmness inconsistent with the purest and strongest affection. Firmness is indispensable to accomplish the ends with which true affection seeks. They blended beautifully in the character of Hannah, and are both essential qualifications for a mother. Instead of weakening, they mutually aid and strengthen each other. The impatient, the irritable, and ill-natured are far more likely to be fickle, unstable, and driven about by every momentary impulse, than the affectionate and kind. A want of self-denying firmness is doubtless one of the greatest and most common defects in maternal character at the present day.

Sometimes the love of ease and self-indulgence is so strong, as to produce an aversion to the relationship itself. There is no greater perversion of natural feeling, and all right principle than to regard children as a burden and an obstacle to the mother's enjoyment. Such a sentiment springs only from the most depraved and narrow selfishness, and where it exists there is little hope of efficient intellectual or moral training. The same want of self-denial prevents many no less from acquiring that knowledge of their duties which all should possess. The facility with which such knowledge is acquired is a striking characteristic of the age. Books and periodicals are multiplied; sermons are preached, and maternal associations organized for the benefit of mothers. Among these may be found a tincture of impracticable theorizing, yet they embody much valuable information, and the mother who avails herself of these means of improvement is far better qualified for her duties than one who does not. What is the excuse for their neglect? Simply that other pursuits are more gratifying to the taste or inclination. If duty be consulted, no claim upon a mother's time and care can come in competition with her children's welfare. Their bodies, their intellects, and their souls are committed to her culture, and if she is needlessly and willfully ignorant of their physical, mental or moral structure, and the best means of their development, she is guilty of delinquency that will probably bring upon her negligence its own retribution. I believe most confidently that much sickness and death would be prevented if mothers understood the functions of the human system, and strictly consulted its nature and necessities in the nurture of their children. Not less confidently do I believe that the intellect might be developed more rapidly without hazard to health—that much vice and folly might be prevented and a more symmetrical and vigorous moral development secured, if mothers had sufficient firmness and self-denial thoroughly to qualify themselves for their duties. Let a mother make it her constant study, not how to make her children admired, but how to make them healthy, wise, and good; let her improve all the facilities within her reach for this end, and she will reap her reward. A vigorous, intelligent, and virtuous household, will rise up and call her blessed.

But if self-denying firmness is needed to acquire a knowledge of duty, how much more so in reducing it to practice. Instruction, to be of much avail, should be regular and systematic. How small is the proportion of mothers that firmly carry out a system of daily, or even weekly instruction, and why is it neglected? Not because any one doubts its utility or importance, but from mere negligence, or at the best, from the pressure of other cares, but what right have other pursuits to interfere with the instruction of children? No sensible mother will pretend they can be more important. Others, in less favorable circumstances, have found time for the regular and faithful discharge of this duty. The true secret of its neglect in almost all cases is a want of self-denying firmness on the part of the mother.

But the greatest evil resulting from this self-indulgent indecision of purpose is yet to be considered. It is a baleful influence upon the discipline of the household. The mother that does not govern herself will never govern her children. She may be unnaturally severe, or unreasonably indulgent, but she never will maintain her authority. She will correct from passion, or caress from impulse. She will utter a command perhaps about some trifle, but is too much occupied, or too inefficient to see that it is obeyed. The child discovers that her course is governed by no fixed rule, and learns to despise her injunctions. At length an occasion occurs when it is highly important that she should be obeyed, but the child does not readily discriminate between one command and another, having often disobeyed with impunity, concludes to take its own course. But the mother is now in earnest, and, after exhausting in turn her stock of threats and bribes, she becomes excited, and applies the rod. The contest grows serious—the child has its own way too often to be easily driven from its purpose, and the mother feels determined for once to conquer. If, however, the child is obstinate, she will probably at length give up in despair, and then farewell to obedience, in any circumstances, unless the child please. Even if it yields in such a struggle, it is with a tempor-vexed and soured, and a deter-

mination to recompense the experiment of trying how often it can disobey without punishment. There seems to be in human nature an inherent recognition of the right of possession, and the child that long has had its own way feels truly misused when compelled to yield. No command of sufficient importance to be uttered is too trifling to be obeyed, and obedience always promptly enjoined and secured, soon becomes a habit both easy and natural. All government, whether in family or state, to be efficient, must be stable. It must have fixed laws, and the penalty of transgression must be uniform and certain. It is obvious that to obtain such government the mother will have occasion for much firmness and much self-control. It is not less obvious that without government there can be little valuable instruction, or order and comfort in the household. Ungoverned children seldom make much improvement in mind or morals. They grow up to be wayward and unhappy; they become disorderly members of society, and sometimes are made to experience the penalty of civil laws from having learned to despise those of the household.—*Mother's Mag.*

THE INDULGING OF CHILDREN.

There are but two ways of subduing the passions of children, namely, by force and reason; but there are many ways which are daily used to inflame and strengthen them. When a child is accustomed to have all he asks for, he soon becomes unreasonable in his demands, and at last expects impossibilities. Now, which is most eligible, to keep the passions regulated, and prevent their making great resistance—or to suffer them to rise to such a height that all our future care will not be sufficient to check them? Parents, therefore, should by all means accustom themselves to deny their children some things, even such as are innocent and reasonable, not, indeed, to gratify a cruel pleasure, for that they should abhor, but to make them familiar with disappointments that they may brook them the better. Besides, by this method, every grant from the parents will be esteemed a favor, and be received with gratitude; whereas, to grant every thing they ask, destroys the very spirit of compliance, and ceases to be a favor. A little judgment and experience will show parents how to vary these grants and denials; and if children are under any degree of regulation, nothing is more easy. This by no means implies that children are not sometimes to have what they like—far from it; but the regulation which I am speaking of makes their lives comfortable and easy, and at the same time furnishes parents with frequent opportunities of discovering their various inclinations and propensities, and puts it in their power to confer many little favors upon them, which otherwise they would not be sensible of. There are two sorts of meat at table equally innocent; in such a case, parents may sometimes, without impropriety give a child his choice. This indulgence, when allowed without clamor or rudeness in the child, looks graceful, and gives him spirit, with a pleasing air; besides, it affords parents an opportunity of discovering whether a child has any natural antipathy, any unquerable aversion, to certain kinds of food, or anything in his constitution that has a repugnancy to particular meats which, though he may like them, always make him sick—all which must be distinguished from humor and daintiness.

But it will be impossible to gain this knowledge if my first principle, obedience, is neglected. If a child is suffered to have his own humor, what a fantastical figure does he make at the table! The mother shall be thrown into confusion at her child's behavior, and, by attending to his humors, scarce eat any dinner; one minute he will have one kind of meat—the next, another—this piece is too fat—that is cut in the wrong place; by and by he will have something else—at last he grows sullen, and does not eat half his dinner. Obedience obviates this confusion, and makes all calm and regular. Obedient children take what is given them, and eat it without reluctance or reserve. While children see they are not to be humored, parents will be at leisure to attend to them, and may easily observe what food should be generally given, and what avoided; and thus parents might have half-a-dozen of children with peace and pleasure, while the opposite behavior makes one a plague to the whole table. This attention to children will likewise discover what companions they like, and often why they like them; by which means parents will be able to determine what their dispositions are, which will furnish them with hints for granting or denying certain acquaintance. The same rule should be observed by parents through the stated actions of the day; i. e. at rising, breakfast, dressing, school, dinner, supper, and bed-time; all are to be under such regulation that no opposition or untowardness obstruct the order of their designs. These I call the stated actions, because they are things which constantly and regularly return; and parents should by all means habituate their children to consider them as acts of obedience and duty, which must be readily complied with.—*Rev. Rest Knipe's Lectures. Edinburgh, 1783.*

THE DEATH OF CHILDREN.—The death of a child, is, to the mother's heart like the dew on a plant from which a bud has perished. The

but lifts up its head in freshened greenness to the morning light, so the mother's soul gathers from the dark sorrow through which she has passed, a fresh brightening of her heavenly hopes.

Geographic and Historic

LETTER TO THE NORTHERN ELEPHANT.

In the year 1799, a Tangusan fisherman observed a strange, shapeless mass projecting from an icebank, near the mouth of a river, in the North of Siberia, the nature of which he did not understand, and which was so high in the bank as to be beyond his reach. He next year observed the same, which was then more disengaged from among the ice, but was still unable to conceive what it was. Towards the end of the following summer, 1801, he could distinctly see that it was the frozen carcass of an enormous animal, the entire flank of which, and one of its tusks, had become disengaged with the ice. In consequence of the ice beginning to melt earlier, and to a greater degree than usual in 1803 he left year of this discovery, the enormous carcass became entirely disengaged, and fell down from the ice crag on a sand bank, forming part of the coast of the Arctic Ocean. In the month of March of that year, the Tangusan carried away the two tusks, which he sold for the value of 50 rubies, and at this time a drawing was made of the animal. Two years afterwards (1809), Mr Adams went to examine this animal, which still remained on the sand bank where it had fallen from the ice, but its body was now greatly mutilated. The Jebets of the neighborhood had taken away considerable quantities of its flesh to feed their dogs; and the wild animals, particularly the white bears, had also feasted on the carcass: yet the skeleton remained quite entire, except that one of the fore legs was gone. The entire spine, the pelvis, one shoulder blade was found at a short distance. The head remained covered by the dry skin, and the pupil of the eye was still distinguishable.

The brain also remained within the skull, but a good deal shrunk and dried up, and one of the ears was excellent preservation; still retaining a tuft of strong bristly hair. The upper lip was a good deal eaten away, and the under lip was entirely gone the animal was a male, and had a long mane on his neck.

The skin was extremely thick and heavy, and so much of it remained as required the exertions of ten men to carry away, which they did with considerable difficulty. More than thirty pounds weight of hair were gathered from the wet sand bank, having been trampled into the mud by the white bears while devouring the carcass; it consists of three distinct kinds: one of these is the stiff black bristles a foot or more in length; another in thinner bristles or coarse flexible hair, of a reddish brown color; and the third is a coarse brown wool, which grows among the roots of the long hair. These afford an undeniable proof that this animal belonged to a race of Elephants in habiting a cold region, with which we are now unacquainted, and by no means fitted to dwell in the torrid zone.

It is also evident that this enormous animal must have been frozen up by the ice at the moment of its death.—*From Petersburg Journal du Nord, No. 30, by Mr Adams.*

OUR WONDROUS ATMOSPHERE.

We must now strive to conceive of the atmosphere as a whole, and to realize clearly the idea of its unity. And what a whole! what a unity it is! It possesses properties so wonderful, and so dissimilar, that we are slow to believe that they can exist together. It rises above us with its cathedral dome, arching towards the heaven of which it is the most familiar synonyme and symbol. It floats around us like that grand object which the apostle John saw in the vision—"a sea of glass-like unto crystal." So massive is it, that when it begins to stir, it tosses about great ships like playthings, and sweeps cities and forests, like snow flakes, to destruction before it. And yet it is so mobile, that we have lived years in it before we can be persuaded that it exists at all, and the great bulk of mankind never realize the truth that they are bathed in an ocean of air. Its weight is so enormous that iron shivers before it like glass; yet a soap-bell sails through it with impunity, and the tiniest insect waves it aside with its wing. It ministers lavishly to all senses. We touch it not, but it touches us. Its warm south-winds bring back color to the pale face of the invalid; its cool west winds refresh the fevered brow and make the blood mantle in our cheeks; even its north blasts brace into new vigor the hardened children of our rugged clime. The eye is indebted to it for all the magnificence of sunrise, the full brightness of mid-day, the chastened radiance of the gloaming, and the "clouds that cradle near the setting sun." But for it, the rainbow would want its "triumphal arch," and the winds would not send their fleecy messengers on errands round the heavens. The cold weather would not shed its snowy feathers on the earth, nor would drops of dew gather on the flowers. The kindly rain would never fall, nor hail-storm nor fog diversify the face of the sky. Our naked globe would turn its tanned and unshaded forehead to the sun, and one dreary monotonous blaze of light and heat dazzle and burn up all things. Were there no atmosphere, the

evening sun would in a moment set, and without warning, plunge the earth in darkness. But the air keeps in his hand a sheaf of his rays and lets them but slowly through his fingers, so that the shadows of the evening gather by degrees, and the flowers have time to bow their heads, and each creature space to find a place of rest, and to seek for repose. In the morning the garish sun would at one bound burst from the bosom of night, and blaze above the horizon, but the air watches for his coming, and sends at first but one little ray to announce his approach, and then another, and by and by a handful, and so gently draws aside the curtain of night, and slowly lets the light fall on the face of the sleeping earth till her eyelids open, and, like man, she goes forth again to labor till the evening.—*British and Foreign Quarterly Review for February*

AN ENCOUNTER WITH A BOA-CONSTRICTOR.

I was just loading my towing-piece, when I observed an object on the white mud of the river, which gleamed in the sun's rays like a coil of silver: it was a serpent basking in the sun.—We rowed toward the spot, and Count Oriolla fired at it from a distance of thirty to forty paces: he missed it with the first barrel, but wounded it in the tail with the second, which was charged with large shot No. 2. This seemed to rouse the creature, our boat grounded almost at the same moment, a little higher up than where the serpent lay, but some intervening bushes prevented our keeping it in sight. We all eagerly jumped into the river, followed by most of the crew; Counts Oriolla and Bismark were overboard in a minute, but as the real depth of the water seemed to me very problematical, I leaped quickly on to a withered branch of an enormous prostrate tree, which served as a bridge to shore. Although I had little hope of coming up with the serpent, I advanced as fast as I could along the slippery trunk,—a thing by no means easy, on account of my large India-rubber shoes, which the swollen state of my feet had obliged me to wear for some weeks past. Just then I heard the report of a gun on my left, and instantly jumping into the morass, warm from the sun's heat, sinking into it up to my knee at every step, and leaving one of my shoes in the mud, I hastened in the direction of the sound. Count Oriolla, who was the first to leap out of the boat, ran to the spot where he had wounded the serpent, and caught a sight of the reptile as it was trying to escape into the forest. Suddenly it glided into the mud under the trunk of a prostrate tree, and at that instant the Count struck it with a cutlass, which, however, merely rased the skin: he then threw himself at full length upon the creature as it was sliding away, and thrust the steel into its back, a few feet from the tail. The Count vainly tried to stop the monstrous reptile, which dragged him along, though the cutlass had pierced its body and entered the ground beneath. It was fortunate that the serpent did not bend backwards, and entwine its bold pursuer in its folds, nor less so that Count Bismark, the only one who was armed with a gun, came up at this critical moment; climbing over the trunk of the tree, he faced the enemy, which, hissing, lifted its head erect in the air, and, with great coolness, gave it a shot a *bout* poured through the head, which laid it apparently lifeless on the ground. My companions described the creature's strength as wonderful, writhing in immense folds, and flinging its head from one side to another in its efforts to escape the well aimed stroke of Count Oriolla; but a few moments after the shot, which carried away its lower jaw and a part of the head, the serpent seemed to arouse from its stupefaction, and Count Bismark hastened back to the boat to fetch Mr. Theremin's gun. All this was the work of a few minutes: I had hardly left the boat more than two or three minutes, when I stood behind Count Oriolla, on the trunk of the tree, with the serpent coiled up in an unshapeless mass at its roots. I could scarcely wait to hear what had passed, but seized a heavy pole from one of the men who gathered round, to have thrust at the creature's head. Raising myself up, it now seemed to summon its last strength, but it vainly strove to reach us on the tree. I stood ready, armed with a cutlass, to thrust into its jaws, while the Count stirred up the serpent, provoking it to the fight; the creature's strength was, however, exhausted. Count Bismark now returned, and shattered its skull with another shot, and it died in strong convulsions. Though I could not share with valiant companions the honor of the day, I was fortunate enough to arrive in time for the "hallali." Our prey proved to be a large boa-constrictor, measuring sixteen feet two inches in length, and one foot nine inches in circumference; the sailors called it a "sueuriju." In skinning and dissecting it, a dozen membranaceous bags of eggs were found in its body, containing young serpents, some still alive, and from one to two long. The Counts kindly presented me with the beautiful skin, which was spotted with yellow, and black, and covered with small scales; this trophy of their valor now forms the chief ornament of my residence at Montblanc. As soon as the task of skinning was accomplished, which the thickness of the animal's scaly covering rendered very difficult, we again set sail, soon after twelve o'clock, and continued the ascent of the Amazon, carrying off the skin of the boa in triumph, spread out upon the roof of our boat.—*Prince Adalbert's*