

in his day, and be fondly transmitted from father to son, as memorials of a great monarch, in whose reign they could boast of having lived; but whether the stories ascribed to him in this strange miscellany, refer to events which actually occurred, and which became afterwards a part of the traditionary legends of the country, or whether they are the pure invention of the Rabbis, it is now impossible to determine. Some of them are too ridiculous for the grotesque scenes in which they make Solomon and the most venerable characters of antiquity to figure; and others are too extravagant and gross in sentiment to be fit for translation in the pages of a Christian journal. But there are a few characterised by a pure, innocent, and beautiful simplicity, in which class is the following, selected in the hope that it may gratify the reader, not only as relating to a memorable passage in the life of Solomon, but as affording a pleasant illustration of a pastime on which the greatest and wisest men of the East have, in all ages, delighted to exercise their genius and their wit. The date of the story is the visit of the Queen of Sheba to the court of Jerusalem, who came, we are told by the sacred historian, "to prove the king with hard questions." And that these were neither of a learned nor philosophical cast, but nothing else than enigmas and riddles, is placed beyond all doubt by the testimony of Josephus, who informs us that the wise monarch of Israel used to relieve his graver cares by corresponding about these agreeable trifles both with King Hiram and another Tyrian of great celebrity for his skill in them, and also by the well known fact that they form a favourite source of enjoyment with the higher circles, in many countries of the East, at the present day. The legend, after informing us that the Queen having gone over her whole collection of "questions," which she had studiously made of the most difficult kind, but which the quick and penetrating mind of Solomon, unrivalled, determined on making her last and greatest effort, by which she persuaded herself she would bring to a stand the hitherto invincible powers of the monarch. She formed a nosegay of the rarest and most beautiful exotics, such as were growing in the pleasure gardens of the palace, and with the names and the hues of which she knew the royal student of nature to be well acquainted. In the construction of this artificial bouquet she had exhausted all the resources of art to render it a perfect imitation of natural beauty, and carefully concealing from all but her immediate attendants the secret of its origin, she arranged and brought it out in such a manner that it was impossible to judge by the eye whether it was a production of nature or of art. It only remained to choose a proper time, when the king might be taken by surprise, for the trial of her ingenious stratagem; and fixing, therefore, on the hour when Solomon was seated amid a circle of his courtiers at the gate of the palace, in the course of his daily administration of justice, she presented herself abruptly before him, and holding up her nosegay, at such a distance, that no scent had there been any, could have been perceived, she challenged him to tell her whether it was natural or artificial. The king looked intently at the splendid bouquet, but seemed at a loss for a reply. The whole divan were thrown into confusion by the unexpected occurrence—the first time they had ever seen their king in perplexity, and, waiting in silence, trembled for the honour of their prince; when, happily looking around in his distress from the open scaffolding that formed his tribunal, he espied a swarm of bees fluttering about some wild flowers, and causing the nosegay, without declaring his object, to be

placed on the meadow, he soon beheld them, with the greatest satisfaction, refuse to alight on the Queen's flower, thus giving the most decisive evidence that it was a work of art. His triumph was complete; the whole court rang with applause at the sagacity of the King, and the Queen of Sheba, when she saw this fresh proof of the wisdom of Solomon, "had no more spirit in her." Such is the story of the Jewish Rabbis.

#### THE TEMPORAL BENEFITS WHICH CHRISTIANITY CONFERS ON FAMILIES.

THE family circle is the scene which God has chosen for the display of the most amiable and engaging virtues. When, accordingly, the poet would carry us to the abodes of earthly happiness, he delights us with a description of household joys.

"O friendly to the best pursuits of man,  
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace:  
Domestic life in rural leisure pass'd,  
Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets,  
Though many boast thy favours, and affect  
To understand, and choose thee for their own."  
COWPER.

Even the historian, as if weary with recording those actions which have attracted notice on the world's wide theatre, willingly diversifies his page with a tale of domestic life, and seems to linger in admiration of the milder beauties which such a scene discloses.

How has Christianity contributed to the increase of family happiness? It has done so by abolishing infanticide, by treating the grey hairs of age with honour and respect, by terminating domestic slavery, and by assigning to woman her due place and importance in the family circle. The beneficial effects of Christianity in this last particular have been much marked. The Barbarian regards his female companion as the mere drudge of his will, whose only office it is to minister with trembling servility to his want and inconstant humours. Chivalry invested woman with an interest which was absorbing, making her the subject of dreams by night and adventures by day. The false religion of Mahomet degrades her to be the mere toy of a wavering affection. Christianity alone has vindicated her rights. It has brought her forth from the seclusion of the East, made her to descend from the heights of chivalrous excellence, raised her from the degradations of barbarism, and made her to mingle in the duties of active life. To the influence which Christianity has given woman in the family, much of what is engaging in modern domestic manners may be traced.

Christianity has farther added to family happiness, by the power which it exercises in repressing those unamiable dispositions which are often the occasion of much domestic misery. As amid the flowees of the garden the noxious weeds are seen to rise, so even in the bosom of families the evil passions of the heart sometimes display themselves. At times they rise into violence, and the son is seen rising against the father, and the daughter against the mother. But more frequently they manifest their presence by exciting those little jealousies and heart burnings which serve as a continual dropping, and banish peace and comfort from many a hearth.—Against these, Christianity, by example and by entreaty, hangs out many monitors, and powerfully constrains to the opposite virtues. If we would wish to see how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, we must look to a family where natural affection is heightened, by Christian principles. It is the dwelling of the righteous which is gladdened by the looks of affection, the words of love, and the deeds of kindness.

A farther temporal advantage which Christianity imparts to families is the habits of sobriety and of industry which it forms and cherishes. The experience of every day convinces how much the prosperity of families depends upon the existence of these habits, and a little reflection will satisfy how influential Christianity is in producing them. The heart is often made sad by the sight of the squalid wretchedness which meets us in the streets and lanes of our cities. To relieve it, charity has given rise to many diversified plans. The poor house has thrown open its doors, legislation has given forth its poor laws, private benevolence has contributed its means and its exertions, yet the poor we have always with us. Pauperism seems to gain strength from the means which are employed to check it. The cause of the evil lies deep. It has had its root too often in habits of dissipation and of sloth; it is there,

"Which keep the larder lean, put out the fires,  
And introduce hunger, frost, and woe,  
Where peace and hospitality might reign."

Against such evils Christianity affords the surest antidotes by the principles of active exertion and of godly sobriety which she so forcibly inculcates.

Christianity stands at the door of our homes, with earnest entreaty seeks an entrance. To those who open to her and address her in the language of kindly reception, "Come in thou blessed of the Lord, why standest thou without," she will be found the safeguard of virtue, the encourager of industry; in the moments of gladness her presence will increase their innocent mirth, and in the hour of sadness she will prove their consolation; she will guide the young in the way of dutiful obedience, and will temper the commands of authority with the mildness of persuasion; she will make the abodes of the rich the abodes of elegance and humility, "where polished friends and dear relations mingle into bliss," and will convert the humble dwellings of the poor into the dwelling places of contentment.

#### ON EDUCATION, AS ADAPTED TO THE FACULTIES.

By *Physical Education* is meant the improvement of the bodily powers and functions.—There is much useful instruction in medical writers on this subject; but, from this circumstance, not only its theory, but its practical application, is too much held to be a medical more than a popular object, and therefore is apt to be lost sight of altogether. This is a great error; the physician may be required to direct the cure of actual disease, but the conditions of preserving health and preventing disease are in our own hands, and depend upon our knowledge of them. This is not the place to impart that knowledge, but only to urge the necessity of its being imparted, and of the teacher of youth being qualified to impart it, so that the pupil should not only acquire the habit of a judicious attention to health, in the different and very simple requisites of air, temperature, clothing, diet, sleep, cleanliness, all as concerning himself, but should be able to apply his knowledge to the treatment of the infant of which he may be the parent. This last office concerns particularly the other sex. The physical education of the infant naturally begins at birth, and the mother, and all employed about it, should not only be disabused of all gossip absurdities, such as swathing, rocking, and the like, but should know and apply, as a matter of easy practice, certain rules as to temperature and clothing, avoiding cold and too much heat,—attention to the skin, and ablution from tepid water gradually to cooler, but never cold to a