

## PET THE OLDER ONES.

IT sometimes occurs to us that the babies get more than their share of petting. Not that anybody can help it. The dear little dimpled things, with their sweet ways and their helpless dependence and the charm of some new revelation every day, invite our caresses, and our whole store of complimentary adjectives. Darling and treasure, and the common stock of nouns of endearment and approbation come easily to our lips when we talk to the little ones.

How often we drop these pretty forms of speech as they grow older. They leave the cunning age behind, and graduate into the awkward one. Girls and boys alike pass through a period when they are shy, sensitive, morbid, and self-conscious, yet perhaps withal arrogant, conceited, and opinionated. With what matchless confidence sixteen and eighteen adopt and parade notions on subjects which have puzzled prophets and sages! Then their fathers and mothers too often feel impatient and disappointed. They do not remember that this queer husk will fall away, and from it emerge a flower by-and-by.

So gradually and insensibly do mothers lose the habit of caressing their older children, that the latter would often look very much surprised at a kiss bestowed out of the regular way. The habit of a morning and evening salute is kept in families where it is merely mechanical and perfunctory. Yet that is better than no kiss at all. The magnetism of mother-love, shown to the boy or girl, however unamiable their transitory mood may be, is strong enough to save them from much unhappiness, or from the attacks of temptation. Do not slight so strong a power. Even though you feel dissident in taking up what should never have been laid aside, begin again, and pet your big sons and daughters.

## THE BABY.

WHO knows not the beautiful group of babe and mother, sacred in nature, sacred also in the religious associations of half the globe? Welcome to the parents is the puny little struggler, strong in his weakness, his little arms more irresistible than the soldier's, his lips touched with persuasion which Chatham and Pericles in manhood had not. The small despot asks so little that all nature and reason is on his side. His ignorance is more charming than all knowledge, and his little sins more bewitching than all virtue. All day between his three or four sleeps he coos like a pigeon-house, spatters and crows, and puts on faces of importance; and when he fasts, the little Pharisee fails not to sound his trumpet before him. Out of blocks, thread-spoons, cards, and checkers, he will build his pyramid with the gravity of a Palladio. With an acoustic apparatus of whistle and rattle he explores the laws of sound. But chiefly like his senior countryman, the young Englishman studies new and speedier modes of transportation. Mistrusting the cunning of his small legs, he wishes to ride on the neck and shoulders of all flesh. The small enchanter nothing can withstand—no seniority of age, no gravity of character; uncles, aunts, cousins, grandsires, grandmas, all fall an easy prey; he conforms to nobody, all conform to him, all caper and make mouths, and babble and chirrup to him. On the strongest shoulder he rides, and pulls the hair of laurelled heads.

## THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

THE cross of Christ is the sweetest burden that ever I bore; it is such a burden as wings are to a bird, or as sails to a ship, to carry me forward to my desired haven.

Those who by faith see the Invisible God and the fair city, make no account of present losses and crosses.

Truly, it is a glorious thing to follow the Lamb; it is the highway to glory; but when you see Him in His own country at home you will think you never saw Him before.

More than Christ I can neither wish, nor pray, nor desire for you. I am sure that the saints are at best but strangers to the weight and worth of the incomparable excellence of Christ. We know not the half of what we love when we love Him.

That Christ and the sinner should be one, and should share heaven between them, is the wonder of salvation. What more could love do?—*Rutherford's Letters*.

## PRAY FOR THE STANDARD BEARERS.

IT is sometimes the case that Christians forget to pray for those who really most need the help of their prayers. They look upon them as strong, and as needing no assistance. They think of their talents and abilities, of the works which they have done, and of the influence which they wield, and say: "Surely they have no need of any help from such weak ones as I!"

But greatness is no guarantee of goodness. Strong men have strong passions; great men have great faults. The man who to-day seems adequate to every emergency, capable of meeting and confounding every foe, may, by the subtle influence of temptation, before another morning dawns, be smitten, wounded, and destroyed. The light rages most fiercely where the banners wave above the fray; and those who have been set forth in the providence of God, and by the call of His Church to bear the standard in the night of faith, of all persons need the earnest, sympathetic, prayerful help of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

Many have fallen, and many now are trembling on the verge of overthrow. Pressed down with burdens, afflicted in various ways, tempted, tried, flattered, and praised, unless God interpose it is a wonder that their lives are not an utter failure, and the hopes of those who love them wrecked in ruin and despair.

Let Christians remember the standard-bearers, those who lead the van, those who mould and guide the opinions of others, and who shape the sentiment that rules the hour. Let them be faithful to God in all they are called to do, and let us pray for them, that fulfilling all His will, they may be accepted in His sight at last.—*Christian*.

## OUR CHILDREN.

THE keenest anxiety of life, perhaps, is that felt by Christian parents concerning the morals of their children. No father can feel otherwise than anxious touching his son's character and habits. No mother can be happy until she feels that her child is firmly established in virtue. This is as it should be. Piety finds her best expression in such feelings. While motherhood and fatherhood remain what they should be these anxieties will remain. Many parents will peruse these lines. Suffer, friend, this word of suggestion: The best and only adequate protection for your children against the manifold temptations to which they are and will be exposed, is to be found in *personal religion*. Bring them to God in conversion, and your hopes will be fully realised. Do not trust this work of love to anyone save yourselves. Consecrate your children to the service of God yourselves. It is your privilege to do so. You can do it better than another. Your children look to you for advice and suggestion as to the way they should live. Do not say, "They have never asked me for it." Why should they? Are the younger to take the initiative? Is your duty to remain undone until by forwardness your child reverses the order of nature? Must weakness brace the loins of strength? Must an unrenewed heart show a regenerated nature how to be faithful? Must the young furnish wisdom to the old? Surely not. God has made you, parents, to be guides to your children. Guide them to Him. Do it yourselves. Do not leave the sweet service to others. Who can do it as you can? Whose prayer is as a mother's prayer? Whose counsel is like a father's? O parents, bring your children to Christ yourselves. Within the fold they are safe; and only there is safety found for them. Is your child safe? "Feed my lambs.—*Golden Rule*."

A sense of an earnest will

To help the lowly-living;

And a terrible heart-thrill

If you've no power of giving;

An arm of aid to the weak,

A friendly hand to the friendless;

Kind words, so short to speak,

But their echo is endless;

The world is wide—these things are small;

They may be nothing—but they are all.