

Children's Department.

MY MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY.

DEAR mother, this is thy birthday,
And gifts of love thy children bring!
Mine is an humble, heartfelt lay,
Which fond remembrance bids me sing.

The harp, that ever wins the ear
When tuned to notes of love or fame,
Cannot awake a theme more dear,
More lofty, than a mother's name.

The name of mother is a word
At which the sacred tear will start,
When it reminds me that our Lord
Was pressed once to a mother's heart.

For loving eyes once gazed on Him
In childhood's grace, in manhood's
power;
Yet with a mother's woe grew dim
In Calvary's last mortal hour.

As she watched o'er her heavenly Son
With all a mother's hopes and fears,
Such thy regard since I began
A life of dark and cloudy years.

When first thy gaze upon my face
Sent through my heart a tender thrill,
Didst thou not pray for heavenly grace
To shield thy babe from earthly ill?

Thy precepts, oft instilled with care
When I was but a heedless child,
Have kept me from the tempter's snare
Since I have trod life's mazes wild.

And with the tribute now we bring
For deeds of kindness thou hast
wrought,
This lay of gratitude I sing
For precepts in my childhood taught.

May we, who form this filial band,
Thus meet at last with thee in heaven;
That thou mayst say in that blest land,
"Here, Lord, are those whom Thou
hast given!"

SPEECH AND HEARING GIVEN TO THE DEAF AND DUMB.

"HE hath done all things well; He maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." This cry, first raised upon the shores of the Galilean lake after our Lord had said, "Ephphatha," to the closed ears and chained tongue, should be echoed by us whenever we behold the like wonders wrought before our eyes. Is it not well when the ear, long deaf to the Master's voice, is opened to receive His call; when the silent tongue is freed to exclaim, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" Let our hearts then respond to every such miracle of divine mercy; let us praise the Lord for His goodness, and declare the wonders that He doeth for the children of men. Nor can we choose a more marvelous instance of such mercy for our instruction to-day, than that of an African slave-boy transformed into a minister of Christ's Gospel. His history is briefly this:—

In that part of Africa which we call Guinea, to the west of the river Niger, lies the kingdom of Yoruba. When we first heard of it it was entirely a heathen kingdom, yet its inhabitants appear to have been in their way industrious, simple and kind-hearted, at peace among themselves and with their neighbours. Between forty and fifty years ago, however, a Mohammedan tribe, called Fellatahs, began to molest them, overrunning the country, attacking villages and towns, and carrying away the people to be sold as slaves upon the coast.

The inhabitants of Oshogun, a remote town in the west of Yoruba, thought themselves secure from invasion; but they were mistaken. One spring morning, in the year 1821, a cry was heard within its walls, "The Mohammedans are coming! and before they had time to defend themselves, the city was sur-

rounded and all escape cut off. The men of Oshogun fought bravely, but to no purpose. They were overpowered, their houses burnt, such captives as were of any value as slaves chained together, and the rest massacred. Among the former was a boy named Edjai, with his mother and two sisters, one of them an infant. His father seems to have escaped only to perish in another battle.

The captives were hurried from the blazing town and dragged twenty miles that day, the aged and weakly being threatened with death if they did not keep up with the rest of the party. The next morning the conquerors divided their booty. Edjai and his elder sister fell to the lot of the principal chief, while his mother and the baby were made over to another master. The poor creatures were miserably at this separation, and sobbed bitterly, not daring to cry aloud. Edjai was next exchanged with another Fellatah for a horse, but after two months the chief, not liking his bargain, returned the horse and got the boy again. The chief soon afterwards took him to the place where his mother was living, and for three months the poor boy saw her constantly, but he was parted from his sister, and never saw her again.

Three months later Edjai was sent on an errand to a neighbouring house, where to his surprise he was chained and added to a gang of prisoners to be sold at the nearest market town. No time was allowed him to take leave of his mother, and he passed her dwelling in silence, after seeing a little companion punished for asking to see his parents. A Mohammedan woman bought Edjai and took him towards the coast. The unhappy boy, dreading above all things to fall into the hands of the Portuguese, attempted several times to strangle himself, but without effect. He pined away so that his owner, fearing lest he should die in his hands, hastily sold him. Twice more he was sold or exchanged for rum and tobacco before the thing he dreaded came on him, and he was purchased by white men. His fear was not unreasonable. Most cruel were the sufferings he underwent from his Portuguese masters. The whole gang of slaves was chained, men and boys together, the chain being thrust through an iron fetter on the neck of each prisoner and fastened at both ends with padlocks. In this situation the boys suffered most, for the men would draw the chain so violently as to bruise their necks terribly, and sometimes almost suffocate them, especially at night, as they lay crowded together in a room without a window or proper ventilation. After a time, as the party increased, the boys were parted from the men, but still their sufferings were great.

After four months of this cruel bondage the slaves, now 187 in number, were crowded into a Portuguese vessel to be transported to their settlements in America. On the very evening of their embarkation, the English fleet, which was cruising off the coast of Guinea to hinder this vile traffic in human flesh, attached the Portuguese ship, went on board of her, and released the slaves. Edjai and his companions were terribly frightened at the long swords of the English officers. They thought they had fallen into the hands of fresh tyrants, who would kill and eat them, and indeed they at first took a heap of cannon-shot for the heads of some of their comrades; and some joints of pork, which they saw hanging up, for part of their bodies! However, they were soon undeceived. Edjai and five of his young companions were taken as ship-boys on board the "Myrmidon," and were clothed and kindly treated by the sailors, till, after a cruise of two months and a half, they were landed at Sierra Leone, the refuge which England has provided for negroes captured from slave ships. They were assured now of their freedom, and missionaries came forward to teach them the religion of Jesus Christ. Edjai gladly received the heavenly tidings, and in the year 1825 he was baptised by the name of Samuel Crowther. After

this he spent some years at the Fourah Bay institution for the education of teachers and catechists, first as a student, then as a teacher, only leaving it in 1841 to join in the great Niger expedition.

In 1843 Mr. Crowther was ordained, and as there was yet no Bishop of Sierra Leone, he had to come to England to obtain his commission from the hands of the Bishop of London. The following year he set out with Mr. Townsend and other missionaries of the Church Missionary Society for Abbeokuta, in his native land of Yoruba, which after some delay he reached in 1846. With what feelings he entered as a Christian minister the country which he left a heathen child we are not told, but we read that he laboured there most earnestly, most diligently. At first he and his brother clergymen preached in the open air; within a year a church was erected, and a year later four more. There was also great mercy in store for Mr. Crowther at Abbeokuta. He had heard nothing of his family since he was first sent to the coast and sold to the Portuguese, though his thoughts had often turned to them, and from boyhood the history of Joseph and his brethren had been his favourite study. An uncle who had escaped from the destruction of Oshogun was the first relation who was restored to him. Through him he obtained tidings of his mother and sisters, and after a separation of nearly twenty-five years they were reunited. The sisters were married and had homes of their own, but the widowed mother came to live with her long-lost son. He spoke to her of the religion which was the mainspring of his life, and two years later, on a yet more glorious day he witnessed her reception into the Church by baptism.

Time fails to tell of Mr. Crowther's history. He is now engaged in planting fresh missions on the shores of his native land; let us pray for a blessing on his work, asking that many deaf ears may there be opened to hear the Saviour's voice, and many tongues loosed to make prayer and supplication unto Him.

WICKED FOR CLERGYMEN.—Rev. Washington, D.C., writes:—"I believe it to be all wrong and even wicked for clergymen or other public men to be led into giving testimonials to quack doctors or vile stuffs called medicines, but when a really meritorious article made of valuable remedies known to all, that all physicians use and trust in daily, we should freely commend it. I therefore cheerfully and heartily commend Hop Bitters for the good they have done me and my friends, firmly believing they have no equal for family use. I will not be without them."—*New York Baptist Weekly*.

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The best evidence of the superior merit and virtues of Dr. Fowler's Extract of Wild Strawberry for the cure of Summer Complaints, is that its popularity and demand is greatest where it has been longest known.

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