

mysterious Providence, in calling them away so suddenly, and so young, be the means of leading many of their sorrowing companions to that dear Saviour in whom we confidently hope they trusted. We join many sympathizing friends in offering to both the families bereaved, our tenderest condolences.—Ed. "C. I."

## Home and School.

### AN UNHAPPY CHILDHOOD.

BY MRS. AMELIA E. BARR.

"Whoever extinguishes in a child a sentiment of happiness or of hope, kills him partially."—*Joubert*.

"An unhappy childhood." Ah, what a woeful sentence! Do you fail to realize at once what a sad child is? Listen then to Jean Paul Richter's terrible definition of one: "Think," he says, "of a little child led to a scaffold, of an innocent Cupid in a Dutch coffin, of a butterfly with its four wings torn off and obliged to creep upon the ground like a worm."

The simile is no overdrawn one. There are thousands of children around us whose little hearts are just as full of grief or fear or bewilderment as they can hold. A famous Scotch minister used to say that "when he was eleven years old he wondered how it would be possible to bear a grown-up life when childhood was so full of misery." Think now of a loving, clever little soul pondering day after day such a cruel problem; and then look around your immediate circle and be sure there are no such questionings going on even in your very presence.

For we are apt to imagine that because children have not our griefs and cares, they have none of their own; but greatness and littleness are relative qualities, and "if the sports of childhood satisfy the child" its griefs equally overwhelm it. Indeed, I am very certain that the innumerable worries and paltry cares of our own adult states do not enlist the sympathies and help of the ministering angels half so deeply, half so readily as

the genuine heartbreak sorrows of many a little boy and girl.

Perhaps when they bring some simple offering of flowers, some trifle of needlework, into every thread of which they have sown loving thoughts; some simple picture whose lines were drawn with your smile ever before them—you may think little of accepting it with a critical word, or a not very complimentary joke, or a discouraging indifference; but it is a great disappointment and humiliation to them: perhaps greater than you could conceive for yourself under any circumstances. The smile unanswered, the little offer of service refused, the satirical reproach of some peculiarity, these things wound the sensitive hearts of children with a power no superior in wealth, rank or age could exert over an adult. And yet we all know, or have known at some period of life, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another person's eyes, and be disappointed or, perhaps scorned.

Remember then as a maxim for life in intercourse with children, they who are not polite enough are not human enough.

Another great cause of misery to children is the unnatural mental demands made of them. Learning to read is of itself to the majority of children a gigantic task. If parents would know how difficult, let them, themselves, begin at the same time to study—say the Greek language—learn its alphabet, learn to spell, to construct sentences, to write compositions in it. Perhaps then they would have more consideration for the little brows wrinkled in mental efforts. Every way too much is demanded of children. If they are poor enough to