

the dresses we wore; and even our dolls and their dwelling-place, with all the toys we could muster, fell far short of what they were in possession of, and did not, as we expected they would, give them any pleasure. True it is, that over-indulgence, instead of adding to our happiness, prevents us from enjoyment.

The next morning our visitors went away, and soon left the country altogether.

About ten years from this time I was still, with many more of my beloved brethren and sisters, living in that dear home of my youth, to which I have already alluded. Our parents were both living, and the stream of time gliding on in the same peaceful and happy way that it did ten years before.

It was a dark and dreary night in December, we were all seated at our cheerful fire-side, and the tea-urn had just been brought in, when an unusually timid and hesitating knock was heard at the hall door, and a servant appeared immediately to tell papa that a person wished to speak to him. Tea was suspended for some time, and during the interval many conjectures were passing through the minds of the young people, as to who the stranger would be.

The door at length opened, and papa returned, accompanied by a young man, whom he introduced to mamma as ———. We started at the name, but would never have recognized in the subdued and dejected countenance and demeanor of this young person, the once animated and elegantly-looking form of the oldest of those fair and lovely children that ten years before he had watched with such delighted interest, alighting from their carriage to be our guests. I can well recall my feelings at that moment, they were almost overpowering; the contrast that my imagination presented was more than I could bear to look upon.

The high expectations with which those children had been brought up were not realized. Their father had lost his property, the children were obliged to seek for maintenance by their own industry, and the object of this young man's visit was to obtain my father's interest to procure him a situation, by which he would be enabled to ensure an humble subsistence.

How mistaken, I would almost say how cruel are those parents who, by a system of over-indulgence, unfit instead of preparing their children for a life of usefulness and happiness! Selfishness, that prominent evil of our polluted hearts, is fostered and cherished in such a soil, and on this unholy tree what evil fruits are ripened into maturity!

Those parents who were ambitious that their children should be heroes, even in the unenlightened and barbarous ages of the world, trained them from their infancy in habits of hardihood and self-mortification. They were taught to spurn every approach to effeminacy, and reminded that the path to greatness was through the subjugation of every selfish indulgence and propensity.

May not Christian parents take a lesson even from them? But we claim higher precedents, we appeal to higher authority.

The histories of Moses, of Joseph, of Daniel, and of many others with which the Old Testament abounds, as well as the lives of our blessed Redeemer and his humble disciples, prove to us that those whom God designs for important offices and sacred employments, must be brought up, not according to the custom of this world, in the indulgence of ease and superfluities, but in the holy path of self-denial in which he has himself trod before, and often in the school of adversity and affliction; such discipline being not only the most favorable for promoting piety and usefulness, but the best preparation for earthly honours and distinctions—if such should hereafter be allotted to them.—*Mother's Magazine*.

ON DANCING.

BY THE REV. ALBERT BARNES.

The question before us is not whether it is proper to train up a family to appear well in life; to be characterized by urbanity, courtesy, and true refinement of heart and manners. It is not whether it is desirable that children should be so reared as to demean themselves well in any situation where they may be placed; so as to avoid painful awkwardness and embarrassment, and so as to appear with ease and propriety in any social circle. No question will be raised on that point, in this house; and as to the importance of the thing itself, there will be no difference of opinion. We have not so read the Bible, or studied the nature of Christianity, as to suppose that it has any precepts that countenance roughness and boorishness of manners; that it is the patron of bluntness, incivility, or sourness of temper; or that there is any holiness in disregarding the courtesies of life, or in awkwardness of mien and gesture. We do not believe that roughness of exterior

can be made to demonstrate that the heart is peculiarly intent on spiritual things, or that the neglect of the ordinary usages of refined society can be regarded as among the means of grace, or a passport to the Divine favor. The precept, "be courteous," cannot be forgotten. The example of Paul may be referred to as one of singular urbanity of manners; and the whole life and the precepts of the Lord Jesus may be mentioned also, as illustrating the importance of true courtesy and refinement. We might also observe, that it is by the precepts and influence of Christianity, far more than by the rules of men like Chesterfield, that true refinement will be, and is, kept up in the world. A man under the full influence of the Gospel from his early years, will be a truly refined and courteous man. If there are exceptions to the laws of true courtesy among Christians, they occur in cases where conversion takes place at a period of life too far advanced to have the manners moulded by the new system, or where, by perverted vision, some special merit seems to be attached to coarseness of manners, as if this were a means of grace. But of the importance of all that is meant by true courtesy, ease, refinement of mind and manners, no question will be raised here. The only question is, whether that is to be gained *only* in the dancing school; or whether it may not be obtained elsewhere, without the dangers incident to an attempt to seek it there.

The question is not whether "balls" are or are not as proper as large and expensive fashionable parties; whether it may not be as consistent for a professing Christian to join in the dance, as to give such a party, or to mingle in such scenes of frivolity. On that question, which is often raised, it is not necessary to go into a discussion, or even to express an opinion in order to elucidate the subject before us. As "two wrongs do not make a right," so it does not prove that one thing is right to show that it is no worse than another, or prove that one custom is consistent or proper for a professing Christian because another is freely indulged in of a similar character. For myself, I freely confess I see no great difference; and as a Christian man, I would as soon accept of an invitation to the one as to the other. The question still would be, however, whether either was consistent and proper for a professor of the religion of Christ.

Nor is the question whether the practice of dancing is consistent for the votaries of the world. I admit that it is *entirely consistent* for them; whether it is *right or wise*, is quite another question.—It is entirely consistent for them, however, because they profess to be governed by no principles which would come in conflict with it, or which are in any way violated by it. The aim of the people of the world is to make the most of the present life, and chiefly in the way of enjoyment or pleasure. This object is prominent in youth, and lives on often when we should suppose that years would give more sedateness, and graver views of the purpose of living. But with this purpose in view, it is just a question with them how they can make the most of this world—of the seasons, months, and years, as they flee away. Whether that which they seek can be best found in the ball-room, the splendid party, the theatre, or even in the low haunt of dissipation and revelry, just as a matter of calculation and probabilities, but does not infringe on any principles which they hold, or any views which they profess to entertain of the objects of living. When, therefore, in imagination, I look in upon a ball-room, and see a large and brilliant assembly with all that can fascinate in lights, and dresses, and music, and graceful movements, sad as the spectacle is, according to the views which I entertain of the object of living, still I see nothing *inconsistent* with any views which they entertain. They profess to act with no reference to the grave, or to the judgment-bar, or to eternity. They do not profess to have any reference to the glory of God, or the love of Christ, or the worth of the soul, or the obligations of prayer. They do not profess to place their happiness in God and in the hope of heaven. When looking on such a scene, though I may weep over what seems to me obvious folly, yet I see no professed principle violated; no disregarded vows; no violated pledges; and I can have a sort of respect for them—as I always must have for consistency with avowed principles—though I may mourn that they have no better. I will weep that they have no better views of life, of the dignity and worth of the soul, of what they might enjoy, of that eternal crown which they might obtain; but with the views which they cherish, I do not know why we should not say to them, "Thoughtless triflers! dance on. Make the most of life. It will soon be ended; and as the insect tribes that flutter in the beams of the evening sun will soon reach the close of their ephemeral being, and terminate their life and their dances together, so it will be with you. If most enjoyment can be crowded into a ball-room