

Family Circle

MATERNAL AFFECTION.

From the Presbyterian Herald.

Men talk of the silver cord of friend-ship—of the silken ties which bind young lovers together—of the pure affection of husband and wife, as if it were durable as adamant, and as pure as the love of angels. But a hasty word, a thoughtless action, or a misconstrued expression may break the first; a slight neglect, some inconsistency, or a trifling favor denied, may sunder the second; and even the last may be destroyed, for the green-eyed monster may find some entrance, and blight the fairest flowers of this sweetest earthly paradise.

But there is a love which neglect cannot weaken, which injury cannot destroy, and which even jealousy cannot extinguish. It is the pure, the holy, the enduring love of a mother. It is as gentle as the breeze of evening, firm as the oak, and ceases only when life's last gleam goes out in death. During all the vicissitudes of this changing world, in sickness or in sorrow, in life or in death, in childhood's halcyon days, in "youth's untroubled hour," or in manhood's vigorous prime, the mother clings with the same unwearied affection to her child. It is the same amid the snows and frost of Siberia, the temperate and the joyous regions of our own land, and among the arid sands of Africa.

These anxious cares, and tender attentions, and repeated words of a mother's love are not without their happy influences upon the lives and character of their sons. The stern rebuke of a justly offended father may check for a season the rising and struggling passions of youth, but the sacred lessons learned from a mother's lips are engraven on the heart, and retain their power through life; in virtue's path, and even in the career of vice, they are continually recurring to our mind, and bring with them as farther incitements to good, all the hallowed scenes of childhood and innocence. Hard is the heart that will not melt at the recollection of a mother's prayer; and more obdurate still, the heart of him who by a course of vice can wittingly wring her soul with anguish, and bring down her grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

HOW TO SPEAK TO CHILDREN.

It is usual to attempt the management of children either by corporeal punishment, or by rewards addressed to the senses, and by words alone. There is one other means of government, the power and importance of which are seldom regarded—I refer to the human voice. A blow may be inflicted on a child, accompanied with words so uttered as to counteract entirely its intended effect; or the parent may use language quite unobjectionable in itself, yet spoken in a tone which more than defeats its influence. What is it which tulle the infant to repose? It is not an array of mere words.—There is no charm, 'o the untaught one, in letters, syllables, and sentences. It is the sound which strikes its little ear that soothes and composes it to sleep. A few notes, however unskillfully arranged, if uttered in a soft tone, are found to possess a magic influence. Think we that this influence is confined to the cradle? No; it is diffused over every age, and ceases not while the child remains under the parental roof. Is the boy growing rude in manner, and boisterous in speech? I know no instrument so sure to control these tendencies as the gentle tone of a mother. She who speaks to her son harshly does but give to his conduct the sanction of her own example. She pours oil on the already raging flame. In the pressure of duty, we are liable to utter ourselves harshly to children. Perhaps a threat is expressed in a loud and irritating tone; instead of allaying the passions of the child, it serves directly to increase them. Every fretful expression awakens in him the same spirit which produced it. So does a pleasant voice call up agreeable feelings. Whatever disposition, therefore, we would encourage in a child, the same we should manifest in the tone in which we address it.—Selected.

LITTLE BEN.

Little Ben was truly a child of affliction, and that almost from his very birth. When only a few months old, it became evident that he was the subject of disease, from which he suffered more or less till the time of his death, which took place soon after he completed his twelfth year. He was naturally of a lively, cheerful disposition; and this, accompanied with great innocence and simplicity, rendered him a general favorite. Being the child of pious parents, from his earliest years he had his mind directed to the only source of true pleasure, "the gospel of the grace of God;" and the instruction thus imparted to him, and the example set before him, were richly blessed of heaven.

When very young his attachment to the house of God, his love to religious books, and especially to the Bible, was very remarkable; and this continued undiminished to the close of his life. During his last illness, which continued for five months, the New Testament was his constant companion, and the numerous pencil marks found in it showed how he would up- nreclate it; he was frequently seen meditating,

with evidently the deepest interest, upon some of the most important and striking passages of holy writ.

Some months previous to his death, being asked by a Christian friend if he loved the Saviour?—he answered, very modestly, "I hope I do." If he loved prayer? he said, "Yes."—"What," said the friend, "do you pray for most?"—is it to be relieved from pain, and that you may recover?" He answered, "For a new heart; I want holiness." He knew he was a sinner, and was sometimes afraid that Christ would not receive him; but, at other times, he could feel he was safe in the hand of Christ, his Saviour! When too weak to read himself, he wished to have frequently read or sung to him the four last verses of the 17th Psalm.

"What sinners value I resign,
Lord 'tis enough that thou art mine!
I shall behold thy blissful face,
And stand complete in righteousness," &c.

Of the verses Ben spoke with much delight, as descriptive of his own feelings and hopes.

On being asked by a friend, if he knew that he was a sinner?—he answered, "Yes."—"How, then, do you expect to go to heaven—heaven is a holy place?" His answer was—"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin; I am looking to Christ!"

Two days prior to his death, when suffering from extreme pain, he said to his father, "Oh! father, the thought of parting with you is very dismal." To which his mother replied, "Yes, dear; but you are going to your heavenly Father, and your elder brother, Jesus!" He looked up, and, with a sweet smile, said, "Yes, yes!"

The day before his death, he said to his mother, "Mother, do you think it likely I shall be better?" To which she answered, "No, my dear: do you regret it?" "No, no," said he; "not at all: I am willing to depart, if it is the will of Jesus." On another occasion, when suffering greatly from difficulty of breathing, the lines,—

"'Tis religion that can give
Sweetest pleasure while we live,"

were repeated to him; he said, "I have thought much of these lines lately;" and added, with much feeling,—

"'Tis religion can supply
Solid comfort when we die!"

And adding the remark, "I find Christ precious to me," he alluded to the beautiful hymn,—

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly," &c.

He was much in prayer, and greatly loved secret prayer; and even during the silent hours of night was he frequently heard pouring out his heart unto the Lord.

He was permitted to retain his faculties to the last; and a very short time before he yielded up his spirit, in answer to an inquiry made of him, he said he was happy, and felt that the Lord was with him; and thus he fell asleep in Jesus. When now, as it were, in imagination, standing by his dying bed, who can forbear exclaiming,—

"Happy soul! thy days are ended,
All thy mourning days below;
Go, by angel guards attended,
To the throne of Jesus go!
Waiting to receive thy spirit,
Lo! the Saviour stands above;
Claims the purchase of his merit—
Reaches out the crown of love!"

One very lovely feature in the character of little Ben, was his patience and submission under his severe and protracted sufferings. There was nothing like murmuring, or complaining, or peevishness; he was uniformly grateful for the kindness of those who waited upon him, and resigned to the will of his heavenly Father. Another feature was his attachment to the sabbath school, and his love to his teacher.—When prevented by indisposition from attending the school, he anticipated, with peculiar pleasure, the kind visit of his teacher; and often expressed the satisfaction he had from it.—What a pleasure to teach such a scholar!

He also felt a deep and lively interest in the success of the cause of God, and especially in missionary operations; the Foreign Missionary Society and the Itinerant Society was the objects of his sincere delight. He read with great interest the accounts of the labors of missionaries among the heathen; and never did he appear more in his element than when he could contribute to their funds himself, or induce others to do so.

The love of order and accuracy were very strikingly seen in him: he kept a regular debtor and creditor account, putting down all the little sums of money he received on the one hand, and what they were expended for upon the other; nor did he ever make any allotment of his little sums without consulting his parents, and you may be sure that there were no entries there for lollypops or gingerbread, or such sort of things. One of the last things that he did before he was taken too ill to attend to such things, was to wrap up some money he had by him in various parcels to be appropriated to certain purposes he named; which, it is needless to say, was done after his decease. Our young readers may learn much from little Ben, and may they all be blessed with that grace that shone so conspicuously in him! Dear young reader, think of happy Ben, and see in him the loveliness of religion.

J. J.

Geographic and Historic.

THE CAFFERS.

It is now pretty generally admitted that the Caffers belong to the negro race of mankind, but the characteristic peculiarities of that race, with the exception of the woolly hair, are less strongly marked in them than in the natives of Guinea or Mozambique; the lips are less thick, the nose less flat, the lower part of the face is not remarkably prominent, and the forehead is often as high and as amply developed as in Europeans. The color of the skin appeared to me, in most of the individuals I saw, to be a dark amber brow, frequently approaching to black, while in others it had a tinge of yellow or red; but the skin is so often smeared with red ochre, that it is not easy to judge accurately of its real native tint. The Caffer men are in general tall, though not gigantic, and extremely well proportioned, indeed, their fine forms and easy attitudes often remind one of ancient statues; but they are more remarkable for activity than for strength, and, it is said, have generally been found inferior in muscular power to British soldiers. They were no clothing, except the skin cloak, or *kaross*, and this is worn only as a protection against weather, not with the view of concealing any part of the body.—The skins of which these cloaks are made are dressed in such a manner as to be as soft and pliable as glove leather, and acquire a red-brown color, which is not at all displeasing to the eye. The Caffers call these cloaks *ingubo*; *kaross* is I believe a word borrowed by the Dutch from the Hottentots. Many of the chiefs wear mantles of leopard's skin, prepared with the hair on. They ornament their hair on great occasions with red ochre, which is applied in a very elaborate manner, the hair being twisted up in a multitude of separate knots or lumps, and every knot carefully covered over with grease and ochre. This process, which is performed by the women, is said to be very long and tedious; but the appearance which results from it, though whimsical in our eyes, is considered by them as highly ornamental. In truth, I do not see that this practice is in any degree more barbarous or irrational than that of covering the hair with white powder, which not long ago was so fashionable in the most civilized parts of Europe. The Caffer women, as I have already mentioned, are inferior in personal appearance to the men, and differ from them in point of costume, by constantly wearing a cap of dressed leather, shaped a little like a turban, and decorated with beads and brass buttons. Their cloak, which is usually ornamented with these same articles, is arranged more decently than that of the other sex, being in general wrapped round them, and covering them from the throat to the ankles; but the unmarried women sometimes fasten it round the waist in the manner of a petticoat leaving the upper part of the person exposed.—All the Caffers at Block Drift, with the exception of their chiefs, were armed with their national weapon, the light spear or javolin, which they themselves call *Unkoulou*, but to which the colonists have given the name of *Assaigai*. It has a slender shaft about five feet long, made of the very tough and elastic wood which the Dutch call *Assaigaihout*, (the wood of the *Curtisia saginea*), and an iron head or blade, some what like that of a lance, generally without any barb, but sharp at the edges as well as the point. The whole thing is very light, and is but a paltry weapon for warfare against European troops; it can be thrown fifty or sixty yards with effect; but beyond that distance they have no certainty of aim. Another weapon used by the Amakosa is the *Kirrie*, or *Keerie*, which is simply a thick stick of a very hard and heavy wood, with a knob at one end; this is likewise used as a missile, and it is said that they can bring down birds on the wing with it. A considerable number of these people are now provided with fire-arms; and though as yet, few are expert in the use of them, there seems to be no reason why the Caffers should not in time become as skilful marksmen as the North American Indians. They will in that case be truly formidable enemies in the bush.—*Journal of a Residence at the Cape of Good Hope*, &c., by Charles J. F. Bunbury.

REPTILES IN INDIA.

I was crossing my compound in the dusk a few evenings ago, after feeding my fowls and ducks. I walked slowly, thinking of England and my children, when I happened suddenly to cast my eyes upon the ground. I started back on perceiving within two paces of me the dreadful cobra de capello—its head raised, its hood expanded, and manifested every sign of anger. Two, or at most three, steps more, and I should have trodden upon it and received the fatal bite. Unfortunatly I had no stick in my hand, I called the servants to bring bamboos, but by the time they came it had glided into its hole, and I went home thanking the Supreme Being who had saved me from the fatal danger. Since that time I have not been out without a large bamboo in my hand, for, although I have stopped up the hole, yet the cobra de capello is, no doubt, still in my compound. The bite of this snake is most deadly. During the last fortnight I have heard of three persons having been killed by it in Malapour. Two of them were hunters, the other was one of the wives of

Rajah. She put her hand into a cupboard to the procure something, when a cobra, which had concealed itself there, bit her. When a person is wounded by this venomous reptile he generally expires within an hour. The only possible cure, and this is an uncertain one, is to swallow every few minutes a glass of brandy with some camphor, or smelling salts dissolved in it, while a man stands near beating you with a heavy whip. Or instead of this you may be fastened to a carriage, and compelled to run as fast as possible. The object is to keep you awake, for the danger of the bite consists in the heavy lethargy it produces. The remedies applied, however, are sure to bring on a violent fever, which proves fatal. Few diseases in this country last longer than an hour or two. Fever, cholera, and inflammation of the liver, the three great scourges in India, commonly prove fatal within from two to twelve hours, so that no one can exist here without being constantly reminded of the uncertainty of human life. Our house is infested by numbers of centipedes, which get on the chairs and on the clothes in an unpleasant manner. However, we have neither of us yet been bitten.—The other day my servants brought me in a venomous snake which they said they had killed in the compound; I took it up by the tail and carried it into my wife's dressing room to show it to her. I laid it down upon the floor, and soon it began to wriggle away, and raising its head, turned at us. Fortunately there was a stick at hand, and, taking it up, I killed the animal with one blow. So great is the dread of them here, that no one ever sleeps without a light, lest, stepping out of bed at night, he should place his foot upon some venomous creature; most people keep a long bamboo in every room. We never put on our shoes without first examining well to see that there is nothing alive in them. The oil which we burn in the evening and at night is extracted from the cocoa-nut and has a most agreeable smell. For this purpose cocoa-nuts are brought from Ceylon and all the neighboring islands. The oil could not be used in England; because it congeals into a sort of fat when the thermometer is at 64°.—*Acland's India*.

EDINBURGH CASTLE, 1572.

On the highest part of the rock stood, and stands, the square tower where Mary of Guise died, James VI. was born, and where the regalia have been kept for ages. On the north, a massive pile called David's Tower, built by the second monarch of that name, and containing a spacious hall, rose to the height of more than forty feet above the precipice, which throw its shadows on the loch 200 feet below. Another, named from Wallace, stood nearer to the city; and where now the formidable half-moon rears up its time-worn front two high embattled walls, bristling with double tiers of ordnance, flanked on the north by the round tower of the constable, fifty feet high, and on the south by a square gigantic peel, the foundations of which are yet visible. Below it lay the entrance, with its portcullis and gates, to which a flight of forty steps ascended. The other towers were St. Margaret's closed by ponderous gates of iron, the kitchen tower, the laich-munition house the armour's forge, the bake house, brewery, and gunhouse, at the gable of which swung a sonorous copper bell, for calling the watches and alarming the garrison. Between the fortress and the city a strong round rampart, called the Spur, and another named the well house Tower defended a narrow path which led to Cuthbert's Well. The castle contained a great hall, a palace, the regalia, a church and oratory, endowed by St. Margaret, who five hundred years before, expired in a room which tradition still names "the blessed Margaret's chamber."—*Memoirs of Kikkaldy*.

CHARACTER OF THE FRENCH.

Even if you care not to watch the successive phases which European society has exhibited if you have grown weary of political lessons, for ever taught and never learned—if you ever read history merely for its story, and for its examples of the general passions of mankind, you will no where find a richer narrative than in the annals of France. Nowhere is the human heart laid so open—no where does it beat greater strokes—no where is it seen in more violent or variable actions—no where greater crimes, greater virtues. France may not only be considered as the fittest type of Europe in her several mutations, but the truest type of our variable humanity I self. This vivacious sympathetic race—so prompt to seize whatever is new—so capable of carrying out to its utmost limits whatever it embraces—be it good or evil, pleasure or devotion, power or freedom, are they not pre-eminently man?—pre-eminently the selfish, social, headstrong, inconsistent, reasoning, unreasonable man? For this it is, that albeit we are English, irreclaimably English, and could breathe no air but what plays under our own cloud-built sky, and comes to us mingled with our own ocean-music—for this it is we love the Frenchman even as we love humanity. Paris has long been, what it still is, the buzziest of all human hives—where there is more buzzing, more stinging and more honey made, than in any other like receptacle on the face of the earth.