

From ABBOTT'S "Principles of Maternal duty."

## ADDRESS TO MOTHERS.

### CHAPTER II.—MATERNAL AUTHORITY.

I HAVE thus endeavoured to show the mother how much her happiness is dependent upon the good or bad character of her children. Your own reflections and observation have, doubtless, impressed this subject most deeply upon your heart; the question has probably often presented itself to your mind while reading the previous chapter, "How shall I govern my children so as to secure their virtue and happiness?" This question I shall now endeavor to answer.

*Obedience* is absolutely essential to proper family government; without this all other efforts will be in vain. You may pray with and for your children; you may strive to instruct them in religious truth; you may be unwearied in your efforts to make them happy and to gain their affection; but if they are habituated to disobedience, your instructions will be lost, and your toil in vain. And by *obedience*, I do not mean languid and dilatory yielding to repeated threats, but prompt and cheerful acquiescence in parental commands; neither is it enough that a child should yield to your *arguments* and *persuasions*, it is essential that he should submit to your authority.

I will suppose a case in illustration of this last remark; your little daughter is sick, you go to her with the medicine prescribed for her, and the following dialogue ensues:—

"Here, my daughter, is some medicine for you."

"I don't want to take it, mamma."

"Yes, my dear, do take it, for it will make you feel better."

"No it won't, mother, I don't want it."

The mother continues her persuasions, and the child persists in its refusal; after a long and wearisome conflict, the mother is compelled either to throw the medicine away, or to resort to compulsion, and force down the unpalatable drug; thus instead of appealing to her own supreme authority, she is appealing to the reason of the child, and under these circumstances the child, of course, refuses to submit.

A mother, not long since, under similar circumstances, not being able to persuade her child to take the medicine, and not having sufficient resolution to compel it, threw the medicine away; when the physician next called she was ashamed to acknowledge her want of government, and therefore did not tell him that the medicine had not been given. The physician finding the child worse, left another prescription, supposing the previous one had been properly administered. But the child had no idea of being convinced of the propriety of taking the nauseous dose, and the renewed efforts of the mother were unavailing; again the fond and foolish, but cruel parent, threw the medicine away, and the fever was left to rage unchecked in its veins; again the physician called, and was surprised to find the inefficacy of his prescriptions,