

South's Court.

THE MOTHER VERSUS THE ROBINS.

The month of February 18—was unusually mild for the climate of New England. There was a long succession of clear, sunny days, which caused the snows to disappear, and released the earth in many places from the frost. Then there came a fall of rain, and then another series of fine warm days. March opened in the same pleasant manner. It seemed as if spring had come in good earnest. The birds thought so, and began to make their appearance. First, you heard the blue bird's sweet notes, which he seemed to utter to announce his coming, and to invite you to look out for him. Then he showed himself on a distant tree in his blue coat and white pantaloons. Then you heard the robin's note, and looking up, you saw him on the tree beside the house, in his brown coat and red waistcoat. Certainly it looked and sounded like spring. Mary and Isaac (who were twins) were out in this fine weather, as you may well suppose. They asked their mother, many times in the day, if spring had yet come? She told them that there would be cold weather and snow yet. Now once asking was sufficient. If, after the continuance of the fine weather, they had asked her again, it would not have been improper; but thus to keep asking her every day, and many times in a day, was highly improper. It would seem to show that they paid very little attention to what she said, or that they did not believe her. It was in fact owing to a habit into which children often fall—the habit of asking unnecessary questions. I hope to reader has not formed this habit. If he has, I hope he will correct it at once, for it is a very unpleasant and annoying one.

There were a couple of robins who had passed the winter in a neighbouring swamp. They were rather indolent in the autumn, and were not ready to go south when the robins' caravan started.

While they were considering what was to be done, whether it was best to set out alone or not, winter set in, and they were obliged to seek such shelter as they could find.

They went into a swamp and found a hollow tree. They climbed up the inside of it as far as they could, and lay as close together as possible. As it was a very mild winter, they did not perish, though they came very near it.

When the warm days of which I have spoken came, they thought it was spring, and came out from their hiding place, and began to look around for a building spot. They chose a tree which stood in Mr. Freeman's garden, and began to collect materials for a nest. If their mother had been there to tell them that spring had not come yet, they would have believed her, and would not have commenced building.

Isaac saw one of these birds with a mouthful of straw, and pretty soon the other came along with a mouthful of wool. He called Mary, and pointed them out to her. The children then ran to their mother, making the gravel stones fly merrily behind their feet.

"Mother, mother," they both exclaimed, "spring has come certainly, for the robins are building their nests, and they know."

"Poor little things! I'm sorry for them. They will lose their labour. There will be snow and hard frosts yet. If they get their nests done, and have eggs, they will be frozen and destroyed," said Mrs. Freeman.

"But, mother, they must know, it must be spring," said Isaac. His mother was grieved that her son should dispute her word so plainly and rudely, and made him no reply.

Isaac and Mary went out again, to observe the birds. They had laid the foundation of their nest on a limb in the apple tree. They worked very fast, and anon one would perch himself on the top of the tree, and sing a few notes, and then at his work again.

"Mary," said Isaac, "there is no doubt but that spring has come; let us make our garden, and plant our flower seeds."

"I think we had better ask mother," said Mary.

"No, no. She will say that spring has not come, and perhaps will forbid our working in the ground."

Mary rather unwillingly yielded to his wishes. She knew that she ought not to do any thing which it was probable her mother would forbid, if it were known to her. She knew that this was disobedience of the heart, seen and disapproved of God. But her own desires and her brother's wishes caused her to yield to the temptation.

They got their tools and prepared to make their garden. Isaac used a spade, and Mary a hoe. Both worked very hard. Isaac's coat was soon off, and thrown on the ground.

"Mother would not let you do that, if she knew it," said Mary.

"She has not said I shouldn't," said Isaac. Here was another example of disobedience of the heart.

Mary soon found her bonnet too warm, and she laid it aside, and worked bareheaded.

When the ground was prepared, as they thought, for the seed, Isaac put on his coat and Mary her bonnet, and they went to their mother, and asked her for their flower seeds. These they had gathered, and put up the last summer, with great care.

"Your seeds will never come up—they will rot in the ground, and you will lose them."

"The robin is building his nest," said Isaac.

Their mother, thinking it would be best to let them suffer the penalty of their folly, gave them their seeds. They had nearly finished planting them, when night approached, and their mother called them in, for fear they should take cold.

They were very tired, and went early to bed. They went to sleep, intending to rise very early in the morning, and finish planting their garden.

Isaac awoke first in the morning, and attempted to rise, but found he could not stir his limbs without great pain. He called to Mary, who slept in the adjoining room. She did not answer him, but after some time she came into the room carrying her head as carefully as if it was made of glass, and she was afraid of breaking it.

"She moved her lips, but did not speak. 'Why don't you speak, and what do you hold your head so for?'"

She shook her hand and coming close to him said with difficulty, in a whisper, "I've got such a cold that I can't speak, and such a sore neck that I can't turn my head."

"That's comfortable, now," said Isaac, "I've got such a cold that I can't move hand or foot without great pain. But draw aside the curtain, and let us see how it looks out doors."

Mary did so. With a good many Oh's and Ah's, he raised himself up in bed, so that he could get a view of the distant hill side. It was as white as in midwinter.

"Is there snow in the garden?" said he.

Mary whispered a reply. "Well," said he, as he laid himself slowly and painfully down in the bed, "I think it will be as well to believe mother instead of the robins, next time."

He reflected on the folly, and afterwards on the wickedness of disbelieving and disobeying his mother. He had abundant time for reflection, for the inflammatory rheumatism set in and confined him to his bed for nearly three months. When he left his chamber, the spring was over. He felt that the way of transgressors is hard.

Mary did not suffer so severely. She went with her throat bound up in flannels several days before she could speak. The first use she made of her voice, when she recovered it, was to confess her fault to her mother, and promise not to disobey either in deed or heart in future. I cannot tell you what became of the robins. They never made their appearance again.

Mary was in hopes that they would come back when warm weather came, and finish their nest, but they never did. Whether they perished in the snow storm, or went to another place, I do not know.

The ruins of their premature foundation remained on the tree for a long time, and served to remind Mary and Isaac of their own folly and sin.—*Rev. Joseph Allen, D. D.*

THE FAMILY.—If there are any joys on earth which harmonize with those of heaven, they are the joys of the christian family. When the snowflakes fall fast in the wintry evening, and the moaning winds struggle at the windows, what is so delightful as to see the happy little ones sporting around the blazing fire.—Look at that little creature in her nightdress, frolicking and laughing as though she had never known or never would know a care. Now she climbs the chair—now she rolls upon the carpet—and now she pursues her older sister around the room, while her little heart is overflowing full of happiness. Who does not covet the pleasurable emotions with which the parents look upon this lovely scene?

But with these joys are associated responsibilities. All the inmates of this family are immortal. The home of their childhood must be either the nursery of heaven or the broad gate of destruction.

The infant prattlers are acquiring habits and feelings which are to control them through life, and to guide their destinies for ever. How necessary, then, that purifying influences should surround them in their early home! How important the duties devolving upon those who have the control of the family! How soon will this household be scattered! This little boy, now so timid so susceptible of every impression, may soon be breasting the storms of a distant ocean, or controlling the decisions of justice and law, or mingling in the conflicts of armies, He may be honoured for his virtues and his influence, or be an outlaw, pursued by justice, and the hopeless victim of wretchedness and crime. This little girl may live to be, in her turn, the happy parent, rejoicing in the opening virtues and increasing love of her children; or a wretched outcast, strolling in shame, a disgrace to herself, her friends and her sex.

Around the fireside they are, probably, acquiring unchanging characters for good or evil. They will probably go on through eternity in that direction, upon which they enter the first few years of life. The stamp is on your hand, with which to place upon their characters that impress which never can be effaced.

It is, therefore, almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of domestic influence.—*Prot. Churchman.*

CENTRAL AFRICA.

Prospect of the success of commercial expeditions up the Niger.

Mr. Robert Jamieson, of Liverpool, has made a report "to the subscribers to the fund in support of an experimental trial to open commerce with central Africa." The trial has been abruptly stopped by unforeseen disasters, having no connection with the real difficulties of penetrating into Africa, but being in that respect purely fortuitous. Our readers already know that the steamer Ethiopie sustained a damage to its machinery; two other disasters were, a quarrel between the sailing-master and the engineer of the steamer, which led to a serious delay, and the total loss of a vessel carrying out stores and supplies for the expedition.

In consequence of this most distressing sequence of disasters—such as perhaps never before overtook a commercial enterprise—one ascent only of the Niger has been accomplished; while expenses adequate to cover all the three originally contemplated, and the exploration of the Congo also, have been incurred. On this

one ascent, though totally unlooked for by the natives, produce to a respectable amount under the circumstances was obtained; and a very considerable additional quantity of ivory might have been purchased.

Unfortunate as the mission has been, there may nevertheless be gathered from it proofs of the possibility of forming a remunerative commercial intercourse with central Africa by the Niger. We now know that that river continues free and open as high as Rabbah, a distance of about 500 miles from the coast; there are no duties leviable, no demurs or barriers in passing from one territory to another; chiefs and people at all points are friendly, and desirous for a continuance of intercourse, seemingly aware of the benefits they themselves would derive therefrom; and there is every reason to suppose that the same feeling would be found to prevail higher up the river. * * *

According to Mr. Arrowsmith's computation, as laid down in the map, the distance from Bousah to the far famed Tombuctoo is in a straight line 710 miles; it must be very much more, however, by the river to Kabra, the port of Tombuctoo. It is well known that Alungo Park, in a small schooner which he built at Sansanding, a town near to the sources of the Niger, sailed down thence to Bousah, and in doing so of necessity passed Kabra; and in 1810 Captain Beccroft ascended from the sea as high as Lever.

Now, between these two towns the distance is not more than 40 miles; and this is the only part of the river that remains to be explored in order to ascertain the practicability of opening commercial intercourse with the mysterious Tombuctoo and the whole of the upper Niger. This exploration might be made simultaneously with the trade upon the river, by the employment of steamers such as Captain Beccroft recommends—namely, vessels of a less draught of water and more power than the Ethiopie, by which not only the Niger but its Tebalah branch might be navigated at almost all seasons.

With such vessels running from the Island of Fernando Po, a free communication and lasting commerce might be formed with central Africa, which might very soon be conducted with not more than 2 or at most 3 Europeans, in any one steamer. Vessels of this class would require to be made of iron, and sent out in compartments, to be put together and to have their engines fitted at Fernando Po. But perhaps it might be well in the first instance farther to prepare the way by 2 or 3 ascents of the river with vessels of the Ethiopie's class; in the course of which the nature of the river between Lever and Bousah might possibly be ascertained.

IMPROVEMENT AMONG FEMALE CONVICTS IN VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

At the Middlesex sessions, on Wednesday, Mr. Sergeant Adams, the assistant judge, made some interesting statements of measures that have been taken for the improvement of the female convicts in the penal colony of Van Diemen's Land. There had been established, he said, an "Institution for the Reformation of Female convicts," which was under the care and superintendence of Mrs. Bowden, a lady who, for some years, had been the matron of the Hanwell Lunatic Asylum. She was much astonished to find, on her arrival in that country, that all the clothes of the female convicts were sent out from England ready-made, and that there were no means of giving the prisoners employment, even by the manufacture of the very clothes they were to wear. Mrs. Bowden at once applied to the Government at home to have the unmade materials sent out, so that she might give them to the convicts to cut out and make up for their own wearing apparel, thereby giving them useful employment. In this application Mrs. Bowden was successful; but, as even then she had not sufficient employment for all the women under her charge, she endeavoured to obtain contracts for them to make shirts. She got contracts but met with a difficulty in respect to the price she had undertaken to make each shirt for, because that charge happened to be something less than the fixed price of the colony. Upon this, Mrs. Bowden was subjected to a penalty. But the Government put an end to this state of matters. Still there was not enough of employment; and, therefore, Mrs. Bowden endeavoured to discover whether she could not put them in the way of making bonnets; but, strange to say, upon inquiry she ascertained that, notwithstanding some of the most beautiful straw in the world is produced in that country, there was not a single individual in Hobart Town who knew how to make such a thing as a bonnet. Upon this Mrs. Bowden obtained some straw, and ere long taught herself how to make one: she then taught the women under her care, and having effected that object, she established a straw bonnet manufactory, and had now 150 convicts employed in the operation. Even with these sources of occupation, she was still without a sufficiency of employment for all the prisoners, and she next thought whether she could not establish a manufactory for cloth upon a small scale. In this object, he was glad to find, she had met with much success, for she now had a vessel, the Anson, to which wool was taken in its raw state, and which the convicts on board made into the coarser cloths. The results of this energy of conduct, on the part of the lady, were that she had now the means of providing full employment for all the female convicts. He had, a few days since only, received a letter from Mrs. Bowden, who gave him a most flattering and pleasing picture of the present state of the women under her care. Mrs. Bowden, from her residence at the Hanwell Asylum, had witnessed the effect of moral influence over the unhappy lunatic, and she had determined to try what results could be accomplished by the application of moral influence to female convicts.

ATTRACTIONS OF A GREEK HEIRESS IN TURKEY.—A Greek lady, the owner of considerable landed property in the place, came with her youthful daughter to exchange civilities with us. She was a plain, almost ugly, old woman; but, like nine out of ten of all women extant, was of kind and feminine disposition.

Moreover, like the rest of the ladies, she was very fond of talking; but, on this particular occasion, unhappily, could speak no single word that would convey any meaning to us. Still it was not to be expected that she could hold her tongue; so she squatted down by us, and talked perhaps all the faster, because she had the conversation all to herself. Her daughter was a young lady whom, by appearance in England, you would call somewhere in her teens; but here-away, they are so precocious that one is constantly deceived in guessing their age. She would have been pretty if she had been clean; and was abundantly and expensively ornamented. Sometimes we hear it figuratively said of a domestic coquette, that she carries all her property on her back. These Greeks must be well off, if it may not sometimes be so said with propriety of them. They have a plan of advertising a young lady's assets in a manner that must be most satisfactory to fortune-hunters, and prevent the mistakes that with us constantly foil the best laid plans. They turn a girl's fortune into money, and hang it about her neck. They do not buy jewels worth so many hundreds or tens—but transpiree the actual coin, and of them compose a necklace of whose value there can be no doubt, and whose fashion is not very variable. This may be called a fair and above board way of doing things. The swain, as he sits by the beloved object, may amuse himself by counting the number of precious links in the chain that is drawing him into matrimony, and debate within himself, on sure data, the question whether or no he shall yield to the gentle influence. There would not have been much doubt about the monetary recommendation of this young lady, for she was abundantly girt, as became the daughter of one reputed so rich as the old lady. Poor girls! It makes one sad to look upon them, brought up with so little idea of what is girlish and beautiful; to see them ignorant yet sophisticated, bejewelled and unwashed. This poor child was decked out in the most absurd manner, and sat for admiration most properly. She also sat for something else, which was her picture. This was taken by several of the party, so much to the satisfaction of mother and daughter, that the old lady insisted on taking her turn as model. We invariably found them pleased with the production of our art in these cases, and satisfied of the correctness of the likeness. The only objection they would occasionally make, would refer to the premisses of some such thing as a tassel in the cap. The fidelity of the likeness they took implicitly on trust.—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

SOUTH AMERICAN CANNIBALS.—The Chunchos are far more dangerous, and are one of the most formidable races of the Indian Braves. They inhabit the most southern part of the Pampa del Sacramento, (the terra incognita of Peru,) and chiefly the district through which flow the rivers Chunchamaro and Perene. These regions are inhabited by a great number of tribes, most of which are only known by name. The frontier neighbours of the Chunchos are the sanguinary Campas, or Antes, who destroyed the missions of Jesus Maria, in Paogoa, and who still occasionally pay hostile visits to San Buenaventura de Churini, the extreme Christian outpost in the Montana de Andamarca. The savage race of the Casibos, the enemies of all the surrounding populations, inhabit the banks of the river Pacheta. According to the accounts of the missionaries, they, as well as the Antes and Chunchos, are still cannibals, and undertake warlike expeditions for the purpose of capturing prisoners, whom they devour. After the rainy season, when the Simirichos, the Ampuhas, or Cosbos hunt in the Western forests, they often fall into the hands of the Casibos, who imitate in perfection the cries of the forest animals, so that the hunters are treacherously misled, and being captured, are carried off as victims. Many horrible accounts of this barbarous tribe were related by the missionaries, centuries ago, when romantic stories and exaggerations of every kind were the order of the day; but the most recent communications of the missionaries from Ocopa confirm the fact that, in the year 1842, the Casibos continued to be savage anthropophagi. It is worthy of remark that they never eat women, a fact which some may be inclined to attribute to respect for the female sex. It is, however, assignable to a different feeling. All the South American Indians who still remain under the influence of sorcery and empiricism, consider women in the light of impure and evil beings, and calculated to injure them. Among a few of the less rude nations this aversion is apparent, in domestic life, in a certain unconquerable contempt of females. With the anthropophagi the feeling extends, fortunately, to their flesh, which is held to be poisonous.—*Von Tschudi's Travels in Peru.*

CALIFORNIA.—The files which we have received of the California Star show a degree of jealousy in the new communities there, hardly in character with the men who constantly refer to the position which they occupy as pilgrims. They have frequent occasions to make addresses and manifestoes, and allude almost as frequently to the example of their fathers when they landed on the shores of the Atlantic.

The different bodies of Emigrants are already choosing delegates to represent them in a Legislature called by proclamation of the Governor. The proclamation asked for no such members, but they say, with some reason, that the members chosen by others before their arrival cannot represent their interests, and therefore they volunteer this supplementary representation.

Those who have been for past years familiar with the history of California, will be glad to learn that Capt. Sutter, of New Helyetia, seems still to prosper. We believe he never dreaded the influx of American settlers, but rather courted it, while

he prophesied years ago, that his loneliness would be broken in upon, in precisely the way which he now sees. We see in these papers a proposal from him to mechanists to make for him two large threshing machines.

Capt. John A. Sutter is a Swiss by birth. At one time he was an officer in the French service. Leaving that service he came to this country and made many friends in the Atlantic cities.—But still he travelled further westward, until at last he established himself on a large grant in the beautiful valley of the St. Francisco. The Indians of the neighbourhood have long since been his friends and allies, and brought their peltries to his growing establishment, while the trappers and hunters also have been glad to work for his ready pay. His trading arrangements are known to the merchants of the Sandwich Islands and our own ports, and on one occasion, at least, have carried him to Sitka, in the Russian possessions, the Paris of Western North America. At the time our exploring expedition was on the coast, our officers received his ready hospitality, and at a subsequent period Capt. Fremont tested it after his terrible passage over the mountains in winter, the end of which, without Sutter's assistance, might have been truly tragical.—*Daily Advertiser.*

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