

## Family Circle.

## THE STRANGER'S VISIT.

Just as we were all busily engaged in our Sunday-school, a few sabbaths ago, the door was quietly opened by a respectably dressed person; he said to the superintendent "I hope, sir, I shall not disturb the proceedings of the school by my visit. I am a stranger here, still I feel a desire to look into the Sunday-school, and, if you will allow me, I will just go round and see how the classes are getting on. I am a teacher myself, and feel a deep interest in the instruction of the young." The superintendent assured the stranger that he was always glad to see a brother teacher, and hoped he would feel quite at home as he visited the classes. The time allowed for teaching quickly passed away, and the children were to be seen quietly seated in the body of the chapel.

It was usual at this school to give the children a short address before they were dismissed. On this occasion the superintendent asked the stranger if he would be kind enough to say a few words to the children, adding that the words of a stranger would be more likely to engage their attention. The unknown visitor cheerfully consented: he came forward and spoke as follows:

"My dear children, many years ago there used to be side-galleries to this place of worship; and in that corner," said he, pointing to the right, "there used to sit a little boy by the side of his mother. So sure as the sabbath came, so sure were this lad and his mother to be seen in their places in the gallery. This boy was also a scholar in the Sunday-school. His mother was a pious woman, and she used often to teach her little son to pray. She would instruct him in the Scriptures, and try her utmost to lead him to love the Saviour. Although this good woman felt so great a concern for her son's eternal happiness, she was not permitted to continue her good work; she became sick, grew worse, and very shortly died. This was a severe loss to the poor little boy; this dear mother was dead, and it seemed to him as though he had lost his all, he had a father, but he was not pious, and cared little about bringing his child up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Soon after the death of this boy's mother, he was removed away to a distance, and as he advanced in years, it is sad to relate, he became a companion of unsteady youths, and very soon forgot the pious counsels of his dear mother and kind teachers. He obtained a situation in a manufactory where there were nearly fifty men employed; and these were nearly all ungodly characters—they were swearers, drunkards, and infidels. Whilst in this unfavorable situation he very nearly lost the fear of God, and became a wicked young man, he went to great lengths in sin, and appeared in the high road to ruin. So forgetful was he of the day of judgment, and its awful consequences, that he made up his mind to have a merry life if it were a short one. He had now gone so far in the downward course that there seemed to be no hope of him; all the good instructions which were given him in his youth appeared wholly lost. In the midst of this course of folly and sin he was seized with a severe illness. There he lay amidst his suffering, and it became doubtful whether he would recover. He now began to reflect; he thought of death and eternity, and then on his past wicked life, and he saw how unprepared he was to meet God. He called to mind the days of his youth he remembered his Sunday-school and his pious mother, and he felt how ungrateful and wicked he had been; he then resolved, if it should please God to spare his life, and permit him once more to enjoy his health, he would alter his whole course. The Lord, who is full of mercy, did recover him, and he kept his promise; he sought and obtained pardon, and yielded his heart and his all to Christ: he broke off from his old companions, and followed no more the way of transgressors; he soon entered the Sunday-school, and found a real pleasure in the work of teaching; he continued firm in the service of God, and could truly say 'the ways of religion are my delight.' After some years, this once wicked, but now pious young man, had occasion to come within a few miles of his native place, and feeling a strong desire to see his old Sunday-school, he determined to pay it a visit; and here," said the stranger, as all eyes were fixed on him, "here you see the individual whose history I have been relating: I shall never forget my Sunday-school or my pious mother." He then affectionately warned the children, from his own history, to shun bad company, and lay hold of instruction; and after delivering a word of encouragement to his fellow-teachers, he concluded with an earnest prayer, that the Lord would continue to bless Sunday-schools, and render them the means of training thousands of souls for heaven!

East Grinstead.

T. C.

## BODILY EXERCISE IN EARLY LIFE.

To fetter the active motions of children, as soon as they have acquired the use of their limbs, is barbarous opposition to nature, and to do so under a pretence of improving their minds and manners, is an insult to common sense. It may, indeed, be the way to train up elevated puppets for short-lived prodigies of learning but never to form healthy, well-informed, and accomplished men and women. Every feeling indi-

vidual must behold, with much heartfelt concern, poor, little, puny creatures of eight, or ten, or twelve years of age, exhibited by their silly parents as proficient in learning, or as distinguished for their early proficiency in language, elocution, music, or even some frivolous acquirement. The strength of the mind, as well as of the body, is exhausted, and the natural growth of both checked by such untimely exertions.

## THE CLAIMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STEP-MOTHERS.\*

The position in which a second wife is placed with respect to the children of her husband by a former marriage, is one of peculiar delicacy. It is deeply to be regretted that the relative claims of parties so circumstanced are not better understood, as, until this is the case, we cannot expect that the stigma, so often unjustly attached, to step-mothers, will be entirely removed.

There is, perhaps, no situation in which woman can be placed, where she may so fully exhibit the peculiar excellencies of the female character, as in that of a step-mother, none where the delicacy and tact so characteristic of the sex are so especially needed. Placed over those who have no natural claims on her affection and sympathy, she must be guided in the faithful and self-denying discharge of her duties, by principles of a more elevated class, than the mere maternal instinct by which most mothers are governed. Here she has indeed an opportunity of exercising that influence for good, with which she has been so lavishly endowed by her creator. Occupying a position which she must rule by persuasion rather than by force, she must exhibit the apparently opposite virtues of firmness and gentleness, of patient endurance and persevering effort. She will require much of that charity which "suffereth long and is kind," which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things." But let her not be cast down, either with a consciousness of the responsibility her situation involves, or with an apprehension that she is not competent to the efficient discharge of its duties.

It is but too true that there are women who take upon themselves the important duties of a second mother without any intention faithfully to discharge them; in truth, without considering that the situation involves any. They say by actions, if not in words, "We married the husband, not the children: if we do our duty to him, it is as much as can reasonably be expected of us." But can that wife perform her duty to her husband, who willingly neglects his children? Allow me to ask one of these fair cavaliers, if any such should read these pages, whether she plainly told her intended husband before marriage, that she should neglect his children: if so, let the blame rest on him.

That there are men so overpowered by passion, or stimulated by ambition, as to consent to part with their children in order to obtain the woman of their choice, we are compelled to admit—would that they could all be treated as in the following instance:—

A lady was requested to become second wife to a gentleman who had been left with three children; but she declined the offer, stating that she was not prepared to take upon herself the duties of a step-mother. The gentleman renewed his suit, and assured the fair object of his choice that the children should not be any obstruction to their union, as he would send them to school, and she should never see them in his house. Her reply was worthy of a woman. "Now, Sir, I am indeed decided the man who is capable of banishing from home the children of his first wife, is not likely to prove a good husband to a second wife, or a kind father to her children. No more need be said, Sir, on the subject: your unnatural proposal speaks volumes."

It is the writer's opinion, that a woman more frequently acts unkindly or injudiciously in this situation from the pressure of circumstances, which she has not foreseen, than from premeditation. She probably enters on her new home with a wish to be happy, and to make all around her comfortable, but it is received with coldness and suspicion where she expected cordiality and kindness. The children treat her with disrespect, if not with positive insult, and in self-defence she is tempted to retaliate, and in time may become the tyrant of those whom she was prepared to love. Had any one whispered to the smiling bride that she would behave unkindly to the children of her adoption, that she would alienate from them their father's love, and drive them from their father's home;—how indignantly would she have repelled the insinuation, feeling at the time conscious of having very indifferent intentions. But let us hope that instances as we have just alluded to are rare, and let us turn our attention to the best means of preventing their recurrence.

A step-mother ought to consider that she has many prejudices to overcome, before she can secure the confidence and affection of her husband's children, unless they be mere infants—

\*The Mother's practical Guide in the physical, intellectual, and moral training of her Children: with an additional Chapter on the Claims and Responsibilities of Step-Mothers. By Mrs. J. Bakewell. Third Edition, revised and enlarged. Foolscap 8vo. pp. xvi, 266. John Snow. An admirable family vade mecum worthy of universal adoption.

The world seems unwilling that the bereaved ones should find a substitute for their mother, and before a second wife is welcomed some busy whisperer has too frequently prejudiced the older children against her, and thus materially aggravated the difficulties which necessarily arise from her peculiar position.

TO BE CONTINUED.

## Geographic and Historic.

## HOLLAND AND THE DUTCH.

Translated from the Paris Siecle Aug. 14.

The Hollanders are an excellent people—perfectly simple, honest, unassuming, courageous, tenacious and benevolent. Provided they are left at their ease, and that we do nothing to disturb their natural phlegm, and leave them to smoke their pipe from morning to night, they are the best people in the world. Their principal merit consists in a sage philosophy, which makes them disdain the vanities of luxury, of fashion, and high life. There is nowhere a more modest or unpretentious people. In this respect, their King sympathises with the tastes and sentiments of his subjects. Not only does he reside in a house which bears no resemblance to a palace, but his entire train, and all his habits, conform to the simplicity of his abode. He lives as a common citizen—shows himself everywhere, without pomp, and without attendants. We meet him at all hours, in the streets, alone, and on foot. This simplicity of manners is, however, common to all the sovereign princes of Germany.

A few days ago the King of Wurtemberg arrived at the Hague, where he has come to pass two months with his daughter, married to the Prince of Orange, the presumptive heir to the throne. The august visitor alighted neither at the house of his son-in-law, nor at that of the King of Holland. The King and the Prince of Orange had each too close quarters at home to receive even the most accommodating visitor. What, then, did the King of Wurtemberg do? He went to lodge in a furnished hotel. His post-chaise stopped before the Hotel Bellevue, which is not the best in the city; but all the others were filled, and the kingly traveller was obliged to content himself with what he could get. They gave him the best room that was vacant and he installed himself there, upon the footing and rights of a first comer. Whilst the King of Wurtemberg, aided by his domestic, was unpacking his trunk and his travelling bag and was crowding his bureau, a visit was announced from the King of Holland, who was perceived at the end of the street, in a small calash, in which he was seated with another gentleman. The august visitor immediately descended to the door of the hotel. There were present neither lords, guards, officers nor attendants. The scene was witnessed only by some domestics of the hotel, plates in hand, and some travellers who had gone to the windows of their chamber to see the singular interview between two powerful Kings.

Once before about ten years since, the King of Wurtemberg, accompanied by his family, came to pass three months at the Hague, and lodged, as now at a inn. It was at the time the Prince of Orange became acquainted with his daughter, and married her. It is said at the Hague, that the journey of the King of Wurtemberg is prompted by a very serious motive. He has come to oppose the intention of the Prince of Orange, who has signified his intention of renouncing his right of birth, and to abdicate his succession to the throne of Holland.

## RELIGION IN NORWAY.

The dead formalism and neology, that have overrun the Protestant countries of continental Europe, had their first disturbance in Norway, in the early part of the present century, from a peasant, by the name of Hans Neilsen Hange, After awaking thousands, he came under persecution by the clergy, and was thrown into prison, where he remained ten years. Meanwhile the work went on by means of Cottage-Bible-reading. Hange had drunk deeply into the spirit of the Pietists, such as Spener, Arnd and Franke. The impression which was made by his earnest preaching, was aided by providential movements. In 1815, Norway passed the sceptre of Denmark to that of Sweden. This change set the Norwegian church free from the control of foreign and anti-evangelical body. It also occasioned the establishment of a new University at Christiana, under the care of two pious Professors, Herslep and Stenersen. These men exerted immense influence for good on the theological students and future pastors of the churches. And that influence still remains in the University. Doctrinal orthodoxy now prevails in Norway. And the intemperate laws of a former age have been repealed one by one, till in 1842, a law was passed for the full establishment of religious liberty; and as a symptom of the real vitality of religion, there has been in that country a recent kindling of missionary zeal. The facts in relation to religion in Norway, will be found in detail in the second quarterly number of the German periodical, Studien and Kirtiken.

## BRITISH INDIA.

British dominion in India may now be said to comprise a territory fluctuating between, it it

cannot be admitted virtually to comprehend an expanse of surface varying from 553,000 to 1,280,000 square miles, with a population alternating between the extremes of 83,000,000 and 134,800,000 of human souls surrounded by the extensive and fertile countries of China, Burmah, Siam, Persia, Arabia and the Eastern Archipelago, it may be described as comprising some of the richest and most sumptuous portions of the globe terminated by a sea coast of 1500 miles indented with various harbors and an interior intersected by the magnificent streams of Ganges, the Brahmapootra, and the Indus. In climate it is classed by the latest authorities as falling under three general divisions, viz. the Aimmaleh, the belt of the flat country extending from the Indus to the Brahmapootra, and Peninsular India. In short reaching as our Asiatic possessions do, from within six degrees of the equatorial line to the thirty fifth degree Northern latitude, it may be easily perceived to possess a range from the temperature of the torrid zone to the region of perpetual snow. The Agricultural wealth of such a realm is, of course, of the grandest to be conceived, comprehending all the demands of the vastest commerce that could be prosecuted. Yet, what is the reason that such rich and profuse elements have not attained their rank in the markets of the world? How is it that we import cotton from America; wheat from various quarters of the globe; tallow, flax, hemp, from Russia; that we squabble about sugar from Brazil; when India is the natural storehouse of the empire for every raw product to be yielded by the bounteousness of nature? The trade of India with the whole world has been estimated at about £30,000,000 sterling annually. It may well be hoped to be only in his infancy. It is, however, delightful to reflect upon the improvements which must naturally be given to it by the increase of her steam power, and the introduction of railroads.—London Asiatic Jour.

## CAPACITY OF ITALIAN SERVANTS.

A friend of mine in Rome was mightily entertained by a visit from his *traiteur*, the person who supplies dinners, who begged to know whether *il signor* had an English servant with whom he could settle for the usual commission, as he really could not satisfy the Italian cormorant. So universal is this vile practice, that the servants of a foreign ambassador, nay, even of royalty, in Italy, the day after their reception by their masters, visit the guests, and extort at least a scudi from each English family who had been entertained. This meanness is not practiced by the domestics of the English ambassadors. The washerwoman of the family, *traiteur* and all others must bribe him. This usage I have referred to of commission on bills paid is upheld by law. I really enjoyed the trial of a cause against one of the wisest of our English residents in Florence, so very knowing in all Tuscan customs, that he advises others how to behave and manage their establishment. Shortly before his departure for Rome a servant applied to be hired. The gentleman having mentioned his intention for leaving in a few days, the fellow expressed his anxiety to be employed for the intermediate time, accordingly a written agreement was signed for this brief service. The exact man of business was in good time on the eve of his departure summoned before the tribunal for non-payment of wages.—He plumped himself on his cautious habits, produced his written agreement and receipt, and was on the very point of gaining his cause when the judge asked the Florentine had he no other claim against his master. The fellow coolly replied, "Now, I remember, *il signor* has paid many house bills, and has more to pay on which I have not had my allowance." The Englishman replied, "I was not summoned for this, but for non-payment of wages: I prefer paying my house bills myself." The judge ruled that the money should pass through the hands of the domestic, so that he might secure his commission, to which by usage, he was entitled; but, as the Florentine impeached his master for another groundless demand, the judge gave him no costs. The judicial mode of proceeding has deeply injured the character of the Tuscan people; they are tempted into shabby practices; mean frauds and artifices are encouraged; no one confides frankly in his fellow-man.—Whetstone's Italy in the Nineteenth Century.

RUSSIAN WIFE MARRIAGE.—The chief opportunity of seeing native finery is mixed up with a curious custom observed on Whit-Monday at the summer gardens, when the unmarried girls parade themselves for the chance of being selected and sought in marriage by those who are on the look out for wives. These young people arrange themselves in rows by the sides of the long avenues, attended by their mothers, decked out in the gayest costume; while congregated thousands promenade up and down in dense crowds. The idea realises what we call "love at first sight," and is certainly a novel way of putting the power of Cupid to the test. If an arrow tells, the party introduces himself to the mother, exchanges addresses, and the matter is negotiated at home.—Life in Russia.