

and in an unhappy light! And by this means we form a worse opinion of our neighbours than they deserve; while at the same time pride and self-flattery tempt us to make unjust observations on ourselves in our own favour. In all the favourable judgments we pass concerning ourselves, we should allow a little abatement on this account.

V. In making your observations on persons, take care of indulging that busy curiosity which is ever inquiring into private and domestic affairs, with an endless itch of learning the secret history of families. It is but seldom that such a prying curiosity attains any valuable ends; it often begets suspicion, jealousies, and disturbances in households, and it is a frequent temptation to persons to defame their neighbours: some persons cannot help telling what they know; a busybody is most liable to become a tattler upon every occasion.

VI. Let your observation, even of persons and their conduct, be chiefly designed in order to lead you to a better acquaintance with things, particularly with human nature; and to inform you what to imitate and what to avoid, rather than to furnish out matter for the evil passions of the mind, or the impertinencies of discourse and reproaches of the tongue.

VII. Though it may be proper sometimes to make your observations concerning persons as well as things the subject of your discourse in learned or useful conversations; yet what remarks you make on particular persons, particularly to their disadvantage, should for the most part lie hid in your own breast, till some just and apparent occasion, some necessary call of Providence, leads you to speak to them.

If the character or conduct which you observe be greatly culpable, it should so much the less be published. You may treasure up such remarks of the follies, indecencies, or vices of your neighbours as may be a constant guard against your practice of the same, without exposing the reputation of your neighbour on that account. It is a good old rule, that our conversation should rather be laid out on things than on persons; and this rule should generally be observed, unless names be concealed, wheresoever the faults or follies of mankind are our present theme.

Our late Archbishop Tillotson has written a small but excellent discourse on evil speaking wherein he admirably explains, limits, and applies, that general apostolic precept, "Speak evil of no man," Tit. iii. 2.

VIII. Be not too hasty to erect general theories from a few particular observations, appear nees, or experiments. This is what the logicians call a false induction. When general observations are drawn from so many particulars as to become certain and indubitable, these are jewels of knowledge, comprehending great treasure in little room: but they are therefore to be made with the greater care and caution, lest errors become large and diffusive, if we should mistake in these general notions.

A hasty determination of some universal principles, without a due survey of all the particular cases which may be included in them, is the way to lay a trap for our own understandings, in their pursuit of any subject, and we shall often be taken captives into mistake and falsehood. Niveo in his youth observed, that on three Christmas days together there fell a good quantity of snow, and now hath writ it down in his almanac, as a part of his wise remarks on the weather, that it will always snow at Christmas. Euron, a young lad, took notice ten times, that there was a hard frost when the wind was in the north-east; therefore, in the middle of the last July, he almost expected it should freeze, because the weathercocks showed him the north-east wind; and he was still more disappointed, when he found it a very sultry season. It is hasty judgment that hath thrown scandal on a whole nation, for the sake of some credible characters belonging to several particular natives of that country; whereas all the Frenchmen are not gay and airy; all the Italians are not jealous and revengeful; nor are all the English overrun with the spleen. —*National Education* by J. SIMPSON.

MOTHER'S DEPARTMENT.

The Mother's Difficulties.

BY REV. JOHN S. C. ABBOTT.

The remarks which have already been made are so obvious, that one is led to inquire, why is family government generally so defective? Why do so few succeed in obtaining prompt obedience? There are many causes operating to produce this result. The

rules of discipline may be simple and plain, and yet many motives may influence us to shrink from enforcing them.

1. *One great obstacle is the want of self-control on the part of parents.* How few persons are there who have gained that conquest over self, which enables them to meet the various vicissitudes of life with calmness and composure! How few are there who are not, occasionally at least, thrown off their guard, and provoked to the exhibition of excited and irritated feeling! And can a mother expect to govern her child when she cannot govern herself? Family government must most emphatically begin at home. It must begin in the bosom of the parent. She must learn to control herself; to subdue her own passions; she must set her children an example of meekness and of equanimity, or she must reasonably expect that all her efforts to control their passions will be ineffectual. A child gets irritated and strikes his sister; and the mother gets irritated and whips the child. Now, both mother and child have been guilty of precisely the same crime. They have both been angry, and both in anger have struck another. And what is the effect of this sinful punishment? It may make the child afraid to strike his sister again; but will it teach that child that he has done wrong; that it is wicked to be angry? Can it have any salutary effect upon his heart? He sees that his mother is irritated, and thus is he taught that it is proper for him to be angry. He sees that when his mother is irritated she strikes; and thus is he taught that the same course is proper for him. The direct effect of the punishment is to feed the flame and strengthen the inveteracy of passion. In such a course as this there is no moral instruction, and no salutary discipline. And yet a mother who has not conquered self, who cannot restrain the violence of her own passions, will often thus punish. When we see such a mother with passionate and turbulent children, no second question need be asked why they are not gentle and obedient. And when we reflect how very seldom it is that we see an individual who may not be occasionally provoked to act from the irritation of the moment, we cannot wonder the family so often presents a scene of uproar and misrule.

This self-control, at all times, and under all circumstances is one of the most important and most difficult things to be acquired. Many parents have, from infancy, been unaccustomed to restraint and they find a very great struggle to be necessary to smother those feelings which will sometimes rise almost involuntarily. But we should ever remember that this must be done, or we cannot be faithful to our children. We must bring our own feelings and our own actions under a system of rigid discipline, or it will be in vain for us to hope to curb the passions and restrain the conduct of those who are looking to us for instruction and example. There will many cases occur which will exceedingly try a mother's patience. Unless naturally blest with a peculiarly quiet spirit, or habituated from early life to habits of self-government, she will find that she has very much to do with her own heart. This point we would most earnestly urge, for it is of fundamental importance. Anger is temporary insanity. And what can be more deplorable than to see a mother in the paroxysm of irritation, taking vengeance on her child? Let a mother feel grieved, and manifest her grief when her child does wrong. Let her, with calmness and reflection, use the discipline which the case requires. But never let her manifest irritated feeling, or give utterance to an angry expression. If her own mind is thus kept serene and unimpassioned, she will instruct by example as well as precept. She will easily know, and more judiciously perform her duty. And the superiority of her own conduct will command the respect and the admiration of her children. And until this is done it will be impossible for a mother to enforce the rules of discipline, simple and obvious as those rules are.

2. *Another great obstacle in the way is the want of resolution.* It is always painful to a parent's feelings to deprive a child of any reasonable enjoyment, or to inflict pain. Hence we are ingenious in framing apologies to relieve ourselves from this duty. Your child does wrong, and you know that he ought to be punished; but you shrink from the duty of inflicting it. Now of what avail is it to be acquainted with the rules of discipline, if we cannot summon resolution to enforce those rules? It will do no good to read one book and another upon the subject of education, unless we are willing, with calm and steady decision, to punish our children when the occasion requires. It is this weak indulgence, this wicked refusal to perform painful duty, which has ruined thousands of families. A mother will sometimes openly remonstrate with a father for punishing a stubborn child. She will call him cruel and unfeeling, and confirm her child in his wilfulness, by her wicked sympathy and caresses.