

Family Circle.

PARENTAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

Remember, those whom you would benefit are naturally depraved and sinful creatures, fallen intelligences, degenerate spirits, impaired and mutilated in their moral faculties, tending awfully to ruin in their strongest propensities and first elements of action. Their corruption is inherent and native. Its date is coeval with their being. They have inherited its defilement from the womb. Dear as they are to yourselves, they are apostates, "children of wrath," fatally estranged from God, and subject to the infliction of his anger. Tender as you feel their alliance, and gladly as you would give your very life for their redemption, yet you cannot stay, by all your efforts, that current of impurity and death which flows so awfully within them; and it is only an almighty arm which can snatch them from perdition. For then, they have derived that heritage of guilt and misery immediately from you. They have brought into this world of sorrow only your rebellious nature. The disease with which they sicken, you have imparted. Their blood is tainted; but it has flowed first in your veins. Their very soul is darkened with sin; but its virulence and its malignity you have communicated. Yet are they prisoners of hope, "the children also of promise," not strangers from the covenant, not aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. Think of that animating declaration: "Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." Ye are the seed of the blessed of the Lord and your offspring with you." There is a strong confirmation, then, to establish your best purposes, and ample encouragement to sustain your holiest anticipations. Again, their welfare is entrusted specially and immediately to your fidelity. Their relation to you is the nearest parallel to that which you bear to God. You are chargeable for their salvation. Woe is unto you if, through your neglect, they perish. But how delightful the thought, the ministry with which you are invested is not left to your unassisted fulfillment!

Once more; the period of your charge is limited, not alone by the duration of life or of youth but by that also of moral susceptibility—a power which, alas! by inconsideration or forgetfulness, may be soon worn out and forfeited. If you would secure for the understanding the just supremacy of truth, it must be before prejudice or falsehood shall have first wrought its perversion. If you would enshrine within the heart an elevated and sublime devotion, it must be before it is imbruted by sensuality and defiled by lust. If you would witness in action a noble and a manlike piety, or purpose of exalted benevolence, filling their path with light, it must be while yet the throne of conscience has not been usurped, nor the affections blunted and chilled, whether by selfishness, or vanity, or guilty pleasure. Your relations towards your children will remain; but your position will suffer a rapid and inevitable change. In a little while, the superiority you now fail to exert may be denied or challenged; and the very power you should convert to an ally may become your most implacable and dangerous enemy. Thus your own future peace may be invaded, and the tranquility of your last hours, if you neglect to turn to full account the present short and most important season. And such, too, may be the bitter harvest which you reap, when other scenes shall have opened and other issues are revealed: It is not long before the phantoms of this bewildering dream shall vanish, and we find ourselves spirits formed for an eternal duration, with those amongst whom we are now briefly sojourning. And O with what emotions shall we then contemplate that participation in each other's destiny, which casts an air of such mysterious grandeur over the pilgrimage of life!

Let us commence, then, the process of amelioration, as nearly as possible at the same period with the earliest developments of sin.—Even from the cradle, let us labor to nurture and train up the heir of glory. Let our efforts be perpetual and directed to crush the demon of innate depravity. Let neither the gushing tear of infancy, nor the throb of childhood under the hand of gentle chastisement, nor the blushes of youthful shame at the detection of its lighter follies, nor the sting of conscience in the breast of early manhood, disdainful and self-dishonored at the sense of its deep pollution, disguise from us the fact, that in all these changing forms we encounter an evil of more formidable magnitude than the most dire and terrible of physical agencies. Our first, our chief design should be, to counteract this influence; to disclose its existence, gradually and wisely, to its subjects; to arm them against its assaults; to rouse up all their better principles in strenuous resistance; to exhibit its dangers, and apprise them of its end; and thus "chastening them while there is yet hope," to anticipate the evil day when, confirmed by indulgence, and fortified by habit, it would bid defiance to our efforts and laugh at the withering of our hopes. Let us put forth steadfastness, fortitude, and the perseverance of invincible affection. But above all, let us abound in the exercise of fervent and believing prayer. Let aspirations mingle with our instructions with every chastisement and reproof. Let us lay fast hold of those securities which lead to the children, and even through

successive generations, the blessing of the God of their fathers. Let our urgency of supplication be such as to forbid denial, and to make the Divine veracity an inviolable guarantee for our success.

I have spoken of believing prayer. It is this we chiefly need, on this we must chiefly rely. The lack of faith it is that entails upon us every other deficiency. We do not honor the Divine fidelity and our punishment is a universal penalty of spiritual good. O that we could overcome that almost only obstacle! and that parents who have tried in vain a hundred other expedients, and are now ready to give up their last hope, retiring this night from the sanctuary humbly resolved and confident, would strive and wrestle even with Omnipotence importuning with a father's earnestness at the feet of the almighty Father!

If we reflect upon those instances supplied so strikingly in Scripture, of the efficacy of unwearied and persevering prayer we shall find several, even of the most affecting of them all, such as bear directly on our subject. For whom was it that the Syro-Phoenician endured the bitterest humiliations and the most disheartening delays, until at length her faith and fervour called forth so signally the testimony of the Saviour's approbation? Was it not for a daughter, bound and oppressed by Satan? (Mark vii. 25, &c.) What was the unconquerable impulse which sustained that Jewish ruler, when in spite of its apparent hopelessness, he came and worshipped him, and preferred not in vain this singular petition: "My daughter is even now dead; but come, and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live?" (Matt. ix. 18, &c.) It is needless to multiply examples; but there is one so singularly applicable, and which may seem to touch the case of parents agitated by an almost hopeless solicitude for the spiritual welfare of their children in so many separate points, and in a manner of such striking adaptation, that I cannot pass it unnoticed. I refer to that urgent, and, as it seemed, remediless extremity, wherein our Lord, descending from the mountain of transfiguration, found his disciples surrounded by the cavilling Scribes and an incredulous multitude, in the midst of which there stood a suppliant and half-desponding parent, with his demoniac son. How great was that parent's disquietude! how heart sickening his affliction! A fury altogether uncontrollable maddened the spirit, over which he had watched and wept from its first dawn of intellect. A malignant and resistless influence had bowed even the body to the earth, cast it into the fire, engulfed it in the waters, and sought its destruction in a thousand ways. And now his last dependence seemed utterly to fail. He had brought his melancholy burden to the followers of Jesus; they could not administer relief.—The populace, indignant at their incapacity, questioned upbraided, challenged them to the proof; while every scornful objection, and every unsuccessful endeavor, brought him nearer to despair. His knowledge was still imperfect, respecting the power of that great Prophet whose help at length he despondingly implored: "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us!" Bitter were the tears with which he uttered that memorable confession, than which there is none more consolatory to the afflicted and the tempted soul, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." And this cup of anguish appeared to have received its last agonizing ingredient, when at the command of the Redeemer, compelled as he was to surrender, the possessing demon gathered his utmost rage, put forth the last and fiercest demonstration of his energy, and left his prostrate victim convulsed and breathless in the dust so that a murmur ran throughout the horror-stricken assembly, that the strife was over, and that life had departed. But O how encouraging the issue! Who will any longer despair of the rescue and salvation of his child? Who will desist from his entreaty, because of the confirmation of those evil habits, or the present eraspiration and recklessness of that infuriated spirit, whose ravages he can only deplore? Let us rest, therefore, no longer in that so prevalent and paralyzing adage, "that we cannot give grace to your children;" true in itself, but in its operation frequently a most pernicious falsehood. Far from us be the apathy with which many a professor looks upon the irreligion of his household, content, as himself would express it, "to wait God's time," without rousing himself to diligence in God's appointed way. We yearn with compassion for the distant heathen: We send our missionaries, and establish schools. And when we have gained here and there a convert, feel that our sacrifices are infinitely overpaid. We have begun to deplore the misery of multitudes dying at our very thresholds; and the best feature of the age unquestionably is, the enlightened and active concern of Christians for the salvation of their hitherto neglected countrymen. But shall we rest contented, while even our offspring are withering beneath our eye? Because we cannot save, shall we abandon them to perish? Shall disheartening calculations have place here, which elsewhere we should reject with a wise and holy disdain? We may fail in these exertions; have we any certainty of direct success in others? And does not feebleness of effort, the natural product of diminished confidence, invite and necessitate that failure? Where else is so properly our field of labor? Where is there demanded so

small an expenditure of our resources?—Where so ready and complete an apparatus?—Where so impulsive a stimulus, or where so blessed a reward?—*M. A.*

Geographic and Historic.

THE ORPHAN HOUSE AT HALLE.

(From *Letterings in Europe*.)

Orphan Asylums are favorite charities all over Europe. The largest, probably, in the world, is the Orphan House at Halle, in Prussia. It was founded, a century and a half since, by the celebrated German philanthropist, Augustus Herman Francke. I never visited a place of the kind that appeared so interesting. I was courteously shown over the whole establishment, and it then contained, orphans and pupils included, some three thousand children. The buildings were on a very large scale, occupying both sides of a street, for some distance. Besides the departments for the orphans, widows, teachers, poor students, and the grades of Prussian schools up to the gymnasium, there belonged to it a Bible house, bookstore, dispensary, hospital, museum, library, and farm.

Everything was regulated like clock-work. The children were cheerfully exercising in the different branches, and the singing of some of the classes exhibited a precision and cultivation that made their music very delightful.

On a rise of ground, at the end of the street, and overlooking the whole, is a fine, expressive statue of Francke, erected by grateful posterity more than a century after his death.

The history of this institution is so extraordinary, and furnishes such an instructive example of what simple goodness, under the most discouraging difficulties, may sometimes accomplish, that we shall dwell upon it a little, for the sake of its admirable lesson.

Francke was a popular minister of the Pietists, or German Evangelical party, of the seventeenth century. After wandering from place to place, the victim of change and persecution, he was at last rewarded with the appointment to a professorship in the University of Halle, and a pastoral charge in the suburb of Glaucha. Entering upon his ministerial duties with great earnestness and success, his attention was early directed to the deplorable state of the surrounding poor. His labors were prodigious. It was customary in Halle, for the needy to visit the houses of the citizens, for special assistance, every Thursday. At this time it was a habit with Francke to assemble a room full of beggars, and, after kindly feeding them, to exhort and instruct the adults, and catechise the children. He found them deplorably ignorant, and their condition, in the words of his biographer, "went to his heart." To benefit them, he had successively established, with a suitable inscription; three poor-boxes in different places. After these had been in operation a few months, a person dropped into one of them four Prussian dollars, a sum amounting to about three dollars of our money. It proved the seed that yielded a mighty harvest. Francke was delighted, and even with so small a beginning, the idea of something permanent flashed upon his mind.—"Without conferring," says he, "with flesh and blood, and acting under the impulse of faith, I made arrangements for the purchase of books to the amount of two dollars, and engaged a poor student to instruct the poor children for a couple of hours daily, promising to give him six groschen (about fourteen cents) weekly, for so doing, in the hope that God would, meanwhile, grant more." Nor was the good pastor disappointed. He appropriated the ante-chamber to his own study as the place of his charity school, and commenced operations about Easter, 1695. Some of the townspeople sent their children, and paid a trifle weekly, to aid the gratuitous instruction to the charity scholars. Encouraged by the success of his first undertaking, Francke was induced, shortly after, to commence what was afterward the Royal School, for more advanced pupils. His funds seemed to increase like the widow's oil; and the more he poured out, the more came. About this time a person of rank offered him a donation of five hundred dollars, to assist poor students.

A few cents weekly were at first attributed to them, but, in keeping with the habits of the social Germans, Francke afterward selected some twenty-four of the most needy and appropriated the money to giving them a plain dinner. To make one thing help another, he chose his charity teachers from these students, and thus originated his teachers' seminary. Finding it impossible properly to care for his poor children out of school, the thought struck him one day of providing a place for keeping some of them as in a family, and, on mentioning it, a friend funded a sum for the purpose, the annual interest of which amounted to twenty-five dollars. Four fatherless and motherless children were brought to him just at the moment, and he ventured to receive them. It was the commencement of the most magnificent orphan asylum in the world. Yet the funds already provided were insufficient to maintain a single child for a year. In the words of its pious founder, "the orphan house was by no means commenced or founded upon any certain sum in hand, or on the assurances of persons of rank to take upon themselves the cost and charges; but solely, and simply in reliance on the living God in heaven." Contributions, however, came

gradually in; apartment after apartment was added, till at last the site of the neighboring inn was purchased, and without money to buy even the first materials, and trusting alone in Providence, the good man laid the cornerstone of a very large edifice. It is deeply interesting to follow the simple narrative of his German biographer. The neighbors sneered, and one man offered to be hanged on the building when it should be finished.

Yet year after year, as if by magic, the vast edifice steadily progressed. At the commencement and end of every week, the faithful minister assembled the workmen for prayer. Often he was reduced to the greatest straits for supplies, and once he could with difficulty purchase a couple of candles. His orphans sometimes ate their last loaf, and workmen murmured for their wages. At these times, we are told, the good man invariably retired to his closet, to use his own words, "with a certainty of being heard by Him who hears the cry of the young ravens." In the moment of darkest despair, help always came. The post brought bills of exchange from some distant stranger whom he had never seen, an unknown hand sent a well-filled purse, or a messenger came, perhaps, bearing the bequest of some departed friend.

Twice his enemies, envious of his fame, raised the hue and cry, of persecution, and misrepresented him and his project to the Government, and commissions of investigation were appointed, which resulted in his triumphant vindication. The storms that shook other men but rooted him more deeply. Opposition but spread the fame of his novel enterprise more and more, and contributions at length poured in from the rich and the poor.

The King of Prussia gave two thousand dollars, and a hundred thousand bricks; a German prince, dying, bequeathed the orphan house five hundred ducats; and a physician in America sent a handsome donation in a time of the greatest need. An apothecary at Leipsic gave the medicines; the common hangman became a contributor, and a chimney sweep bound himself to sweep the orphan house gratuitously as long as he lived.

Thirty-four years from the time the four dollars were dropped in Francke's poor-box, there was a touching scene. The venerable, dying minister was come to bid a last adieu to his orphans. His attendants, at his desire, conveyed him in an easy carriage into the yard of the orphan house. What a change was there since he first saw the spot! Where the inn stood, in the miserable suburb, thirty-five years before, were then noble edifices, consecrated to benevolence, where gathered daily more than two thousand children. How sweet must have seemed the music of those young voices. He had built a monument as a boon to posterity, prouder than the Pyramids. His dimmed eye rekindled with animation at beholding the blessed consummation of the darling purpose of a life.—The expiring lamp flickered brightly once more. Again and again the life blood quickened in the heart of the dying patriarch, till it thrilled like that of a hero falling in the moment of victory. Overcome with his emotions, feeble as he was, we are told he lingered, reclining in his carriage, a whole hour, with a faltering voice pouring out thanks to Heaven, and fervent prayers for his orphan children. Then, as if his work was finished, he returned home to die.

Thousands wept over his remains as over those of a near relative, and a whole city mourned his loss. Many generations have since passed, but his example remains as one of the illustrious good; the orphans of Halle still keep his birth day, and thousands of helpless and lonely little ones have since lived to bless the name of Herman Francke.

FRAIL BOATS OF THE ALEUTIANS: STOICAL DEATHS.—It is not uncommon for the Aleutians to make long voyages in their small baidarkas often going fifty or sixty miles from land to hunt the sea otter. For this purpose they keep together in fleets of perhaps a hundred baidarkas each. Proceeding in calm weather to some spot known to be a favorite haunt of the animal they form their little vessels, end to end in a line; and as soon as any symptoms of the game are perceived, a single canoe approaches, while, if all is right, one of its two inmates holds up his paddle as a signal for the others to range themselves in a circle round the spot. Meanwhile, the creature must rise to breathe; and, no sooner does he show his nose than off fly the arrows of the nearest hunters. If he escapes as is generally the case, from the first attack, another ring is formed round the place where he may be expected again to appear; and so the process is continued, till the victim is exhausted and destroyed. All these movements are executed with an incredible degree of silence, the hunters being so skilful as to prevent even the dip of the paddles from being heard by the object of their pursuit. These distant expeditions are not unattended with danger. The baidarka, being merely a frame of bones with a covering of skins, cannot withstand the action of the water for many days together; and if it springs a leak or is otherwise injured, its tenants have nothing but certain and immediate death before them, for no other vessel can take more than its own complement on board; and, calling their comrades around their sinking craft, send for their families, and then lie down to die.—*Simpson's Journey Round the World.*