

MOTHERS.

SOME one has said, that a young mother is the most beautiful thing in nature. Why qualify it? Why young? Are not all mothers beautiful? The sentimental outside beholder may prefer youth in the pretty picture; but I am inclined to think that sons and daughters, who are most intimately concerned in the matter, love and admire their mothers most when they are old. How suggestive of something holy and venerable it is when a person talks of his "dear old mother." Away with your mincing "mammias," and mammias suggestive only of a fine lady, who deposes her duties to a nurse, a drawing-room maternal parent, who is afraid to handle her offspring for fear of spoiling her fine new gown. Give me the homely mother, the arms of whose love are all embracing, who is beautiful always, whether old or young, whether arrayed in satin, or modestly habited in bombazine.

Maternal love is a mystery which human reason can never fathom. It is altogether above reason; it is a holy passion; in which all others are absorbed and lost. It is a sacred flame on the altar of the heart, which is never quenched. That it does not require reason to feed it and keep it alive is witnessed in the instinctive maternal love which pervades all animal nature. Every one must have instinctively felt the aptness of the scriptural illustration of maternal solicitude, which likens a great love to a hen which gathers her chickens under her wing. The hen's maternal care, so patient, so unselfish, is a miniature replica of Nature's greatest work. No doubt it is carried on and on ad infinitum, until we want a microscope to see it. There are myriads of anxious mothers in a leaf, whose destiny is to live for a single day, and then die for ever; as there are millions of anxious mothers in the human family whose span of life is three score years and ten, with a glorious eternity lying beyond. The mother is the mainspring of all nature, the fountain of all pure love—the first likeness on earth of God himself. Man did not deserve to have the first entry into the garden of Eden. Burns, with his great sympathetic soul, seems to have felt this when he sang of Dame Nature,

Her 'prentice han'
She tried on man,
And then she made the lassies, O!

It is not altogether because our mothers are of the "gentler" sex that we fly to them for sympathy instead of to our fathers. It is because there is a more intimate relationship between us, because the strings of our nature are more in unison; because we are more nearly flesh of their flesh, and blood of their blood. Yet how little can we return to her for all her patience with us, all her care, all her love for us. When we are young unfledged birds in the nest, we cling close to her, taking her warm breast and her protecting wings as our birthright—as yet unconscious of our debt of gratitude. And when our feathers grow, we fly away and leave her—fly away to build nests of our own. We pass from one care to another, never sharing it, but always the objects of it.

When we reflect upon what mothers have to endure, we may allow that novelists are right in making the culminating point of happiness the marriage of their heroines. After that their trouble begins. Man, in his self-importance, has applied the proverb to himself; but it should be, "When a woman marries, her trouble begins." It is she who feels the needles and pins of life. Man it is, rather, who sharpens their points. Woman is a subjective life from first to last. No man knows what a woman suffers in bearing and bringing up a family of children. Only Heaven knows—Heaven which has endowed her with that wondrous love which redeems her existence from being an intolerable slavery. And when the task is done, and the children have gone forth into the world, how hard it is to be left alone with a full heart—with love still warm and sympathy still unexhausted. Ah me! ah me! my heart bleeds when I think of the widowed mother wafting

her loving thoughts across the seas upon the wings of sighs, nursing us again in thought, fondling us once more in the arms of her imagination. This is the mother's fate often; the father's seldom. The father, when he becomes a widower is never too old to begin his life all over again. The mother, in most cases, holds the old love too sacred to pollute it with another. She is content to live upon the memories of the past—to wait patiently until God calls her to that land, where the love of the mother is known, though there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage.

LARGEST LEGACY ON RECORD.

PROBABLY the largest personality ever sworn for probate was that of the late Mr. Morrison of Basildon. Besides the business in Fore Street and vast landed estates, he bequeathed to his eldest son a direct legacy of a million, which is said to be the only legacy on record to that amount. Like most of those who amass enormous wealth, Mr. Morrison began the world with nothing—in fact, there seems to be no receipt for becoming a millionaire equal to that of walking up to London barefoot, under a firm conviction that its streets are paved with gold. In the dining-room of his house at Basildon in Berkshire, which the traveller to Bath passes on the left as he flies by the beautiful reach of the Thames just above Pangbourne, and which abounds with splendid works of art, the very chairs and tables being from the design of some great R.A., there are two pillars of a rare and beautiful marble, which originally stood in a church in Italy, where great store was set by them; but the church being out of repair and in need of funds, at length sought and obtained permission from Rome to sell the pillar to the wealthy Englishman who had set his heart on possessing them. The conveyance was enormously difficult and expensive, by reason of the extraordinary weight of the columns, which in several places broke into the roads over which they were carried. This story illustrates the energy of the man in getting what he had set his heart upon. Nearly the whole of the Island of Islay, Ponthill Abbey, and vast estates scattered through half the counties in England, are the result of the same energy. Mr. Morrison's wealth would have enabled him to live in the utmost splendor; but though a liberal patron of the arts, he shrank from display, and was utterly free from tuff-hunting, and loved best the society of artists and men of letters.—*Faser's Magazine*.

PHILOSOPHY OF BREAD AND BUTTER.

HALL, in his "Journal of Health," gives us the following bit of wisdom:—"Bread and butter are the only articles of food of which we never tire, from early childhood to extreme old age. A pound of fine flour of Indian meal contains three times as much meat as one pound of butcher's roast beef; and is the whole product of the grain, bran and all, were made into bread, fifteen per cent more of nutriment would be added. Unfortunately the bran, the coarsest part, is thrown away; the very part which gives soundness to the teeth, and strength to the brain. Five hundred pounds of flour give to the body thirty pounds of the bony element, while the same quantity of bran gives more than one hundred and twenty-five pounds. This bone is lime and the phosphate of lime, the indispensable element of health to the whole human body, from the want of the natural supply of which multitudes of persons go into a general decline. But swallowing phosphates in the shape of powders or in syrups, to cure these declines, has little or no effect. The articles contained in these phosphates must pass through nature's laboratory; must be subject to her manipulations, in alchemies specially prepared by Almighty power and skill, in order to impart their peculiar virtues to the human frame; in plainer phrase, the shortest, safest, and most infallible method of giving strength to the body, bone, and brain, thereby arresting disease, and building up the constitution, is to eat and digest more bread made out of the whole grain, whether of wheat, corn, rye or oats."

H. J.

AN EXCEPTIONAL PROPERTY OF WATER.

WATER in some of its properties affords abundant evidence of design. The action of the cold atmosphere of winter upon the surface of rivers and lakes is evidence of this.—These are cooled from the surface, and a circulation is established by the constant sinking of the chilled water, until the temperature falls to forty degrees. But at this point, still eight degrees above freezing point, the circulation stops. The surface water, as it cools below this temperature, remains at the top, and in the end freezes; but then a remarkable provision comes into play. Most substances are heavier in their solid than in their liquid state; but ice, on the contrary, is lighter than water, and therefore floats on its surface. Moreover, as ice is a very poor conductor of heat, it serves as a protection to the lake; so that at the depth of a few feet, at most, the temperature of the water during winter is never under forty degrees, although the atmosphere may continue for weeks below zero. But for this wise and merciful provision, the occurrence of a severe winter would behold the complete destruction of our fresh-water fish.

If water resembled other liquids, and continued to contract with cold to its freezing point—if the exceptions we have mentioned had not been made, the whole order of Nature would have been reversed. The circulation just described would continue until the whole mass of water in the lake had fallen to the freezing point. The ice would then first form at the bottom, and congelation would continue until the whole lake had been changed into one mass of solid ice. Upon such a mass the hottest summer would produce but little effect, for the poor conducting power would then prevent its melting; and instead of ponds and lakes, we should have large masses of ice, which during the summer would melt on the surface to the depth of only a few feet. It is unnecessary to state that this condition of things would be utterly inconsistent with the existence of aquatic plants or animals, and it would be almost as fatal to organic life everywhere. The soil itself would, to a certain extent, share in the fate of the ponds remaining frozen to the depth of many feet, and the only effect of the summer's heat would be to melt a few inches at the surface. It would be, perhaps, possible to cultivate some hardy annuals in such a climate, but this would be all. Trees and shrubs could not brave the severity of the winter. Thus, then, it appears that the very existence of some forms of life depend on an apparent exception to a general law of Nature.

—**TURKISH BATH.**—It is said that gout is a disease not known in Turkey, and that this exemption is owing to the use of what we call the "Turkish bath," a luxury which Greece gave to Arabia, and which Mohammed denounced as effeminate and impure. The "Turkish bath" is the natural curative process of most savage or semi-civilised nations. As a remedy for disease it was practised by the Irish Celts, and continues to be practised by their descendants. A "sweating-house" still exists in county Cavan, near the "Port of Shannon," as the head of the river which flows into Loch Allen is called. It is resorted to especially by those who seek health by obtaining copious perspiration. This primitive hot-air bath is easily provided. In a bell-shaped hut, like a wild Indian's, a fire of turf is kindled on the floor, and the hut is tightly closed up. The ashes are subsequently swept out, the patient enters, and he is pretty tightly closed up too. The consequent perspiration is extremely copious, and the patient, on issuing from this oven, plunges into cold water, or has it thrown over him, and he relies upon being swiftly relieved from fever, rheumatism, or whatever malady he may have that is to be cured by this sudorific process.

—**SPECTACLES FOR HORSES.**—An old resident of Philadelphia has a family horse which has done good service for twenty years. For some time past the horse evinced a tendency to stumble and to strain his sight at objects close by. The kind-hearted owner judged the animal from his own case, and ordered of an optician a pair of equine spectacles. A pair of pebble-glasses, about the size of the object-glasses of a large sized lunette, were set in a frame over the horse's eyes. He appreciates the convenience wonderfully, and has never stumbled since he donned the spectacles.