

THE
PARENTS' REVIEW

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

OF HOME-TRAINING AND CULTURE.

“Education is an atmosphere, a discipline of life.”

FAMILY LIFE.

FAMILY life may be said to be the test of Home Education, the great Problem that all parents are trying to solve, the training ground of each new generation—and as such it is one of the most comprehensive titles under which such an address as you ask me to give to-day, can be announced.

But just for that reason it is a little difficult to select those portions of the subject on which anything useful can be said.

One is in doubt whether to deal with it from the theoretical or the practical side.

We hear sometimes complaints that P.N.E.U. addresses and writings are not practical enough. But there is a certain danger in being strictly practical, one may bring about unintentionally, great confusion. I heard of a mother once who came to an experienced old friend for advice as to how to bring up her child. The friend recommended a mild corporal punishment for an oft repeated offence. Next day the mother came again and said “I took your advice; I went straight home and whipped my child, but I am still as puzzled as ever, it did no good, she is just the same to day.”

I met two young parents travelling with a child of three. They had been taught in a lecture to change the course of a fractious child's thoughts, so when he wanted to stand upon the floor, they told him there was a mouse under the seat, forgetting that mice do not frequent railway carriages!

When one hears things like this, one becomes a little alarmed at trying to be too practical, and feels inclined to take refuge in generalities, in order to escape being responsible for such serious calamities. Much of what I have to say to you deals with First Principles, without which we get no clearness in our aims, and no sure foundation to our work:— but I will try presently to deal with the more practical side of the question, and to express the sympathy I have for the daily difficulties we meet with in Family Life.

The Founder of our Society has over and over again said— “I have unbounded faith in Parents,” and every day I feel that to a great extent her words are justified. I am sure all those who have had anything to do with starting Branches of her Society, must agree that there is much cause for encouragement. Parents are often most responsive to the smallest word of sympathy and advice, and more than that, most willing to cast aside old prejudices, and to realise how much there is yet to be learnt in Home Education. They are willing to believe that we are come to a time when there is a great spread of new ideas, a vista of new possibilities, new hopes, new aspirations. Since I have given serious thought to the subject, I seem to meet continually with parents mentally outstretching their arms to the light. What a cause for rejoicing that it is so! We are living in an age of great changes. We all acknowledge this, though some of us are like the West Country-man who found himself in the Strand waiting to cross the street. When they asked him why he stood still on the pavement, he said “I am waiting for the “dring”* to go by—and I suppose he stands there still!

Those of us who have to do with education, especially the education of Women, are brought face to face very closely with one of the most rapid changes of our time. The girls of our day are being prepared for great things, and all round them thickly strewn are large opportunities, and openings of every sort. The possibilities of their education are equal to those of boys. Colleges for women are multiplying, and their doors are thronged. The standard of work rises every year. It is not worth while now even to discuss the question whether the higher education of women is desirable, it is a fact daily

* From “dringen,” meaning “throng.”

becoming more universal. And with it comes another fact also most significant. The place of woman in the world is undergoing a change. Her influence and position are enlarging very rapidly. She is claiming her share in the work of the world, and has in some measure secured it. In countless ways we can see that every year her opportunities will be multiplied, her influence will extend, and nothing great in the world will be done without her having a hand in it. She will inspire thought, as she is more carefully trained to think, she will overcome difficulties as she learns to use her gifts of intuition, she will find utterance as she acquires the cultivated power of expression, and the ability to move the hearts of men. This progress is increasing, it is around us on every side, we cannot shut our eyes to it, treat it how we may. But alongside of these greater opportunities for our young people, and especially for young women, must surely be greater responsibilities for Parents. The atmosphere of family life, the measure of culture which is found there, the quality of the conversation, was always of the greatest importance, but it becomes infinitely more so now. The allegiance of the young people may yet be kept true to the Home, but it must be done by supplying them with abundant sympathy, and a ready welcome for all their fresh ideas; and by showing them too that as *they* expand, the Home view is still wide enough to receive them, and to go along with them. The mature experience of Parents is of as great value as it ever was, but it must be tempered with knowledge, understanding, and willingness to move on, and to hear everything, and to encourage progress and improvement. There is no other way to retain their willing loyalty. The awakening of a wider and more influential life before the younger generation, should not be held to have in any way distorted the relations of Family Life. It cannot destroy the influence of Parents, except by the faults of the Parents themselves, and it never will lessen it if they will but admit the importance of growth and expansion for themselves as much as for their children.

Let it once for all be acknowledged, that while the actual acquisition of knowledge must be handed over to the School and the trained Teacher, the Culture must go on at home, the Culture not only of the mind and heart, but of voice, manner, movement, and of all that composes the individuality. Year

by year as they advance, the young people must be taught and encouraged to use what they know, not merely in conversing in their own circle but among strangers. Let also another great truth be added, that example is the great motive power in education, that it is not what you *do* so much as what you *are* which tells, and it must be admitted that by the side of the vast and rapid growth of the children there should be progress and growth in the Parents. We cannot afford to stand still. We must establish a higher education of Parents, we must make an effort to widen our own knowledge, and to increase our hold on the interests which make life really worth living, and especially to inform ourselves upon the great social questions which everyone is thinking about, and for which so many are working. Moments of keen trial may come in dealing with religious difficulties, but for these Coleridge's words may re-enforce us:—

“Be honest; fear nothing; trust God.”

The young people themselves are our salvation. Their eager inquisitiveness, their perpetual questions, their enormous power of acquiring new ideas of all sorts; this, if our eyes and ears are not closed, affords us a large scope. Then there is all that they bring in from their school-time to follow up—they tax a good reference library pretty hard sometimes—if we will get up out of our arm chairs and fetch down the books. I need hardly touch on the importance of reading aloud with them; whole books in some cases, selections in others. The joy of it is known to all those who have tried it; but I may just mention, in passing, that the easiest way to touch on some of the most delicate but most important questions of life between mother and daughter, will be found in reading together the best great novels of our English literature. Conversations on difficult matters of love and romance start naturally from the discussion of the characters of the great heroines in fiction, and valuable help for life may be given, and difficulties drawn out which perhaps might for ever have lain hidden from a mother's eye.

One of the difficulties in which parents desire to be of most use to their children is in the *choice of friends*, and much of the foundation for this can be laid by discussing characters in books. In these days when everyone is talking about the

evils of "mixture" of classes in schools, is not this question of much greater importance than it ever was? Exclusive barriers and thick walls of partition are liable to fail. What other foundation have we to rest on than that which can be gradually built up by teaching our children the true principles on which friendship should rest, by leading them to perceive the qualities which form a sterling character, and by quickening their perception of true refinement and good breeding. When clear views on these points are fully learnt we need fear no "mixtures"; loyalty to the Home Standard will be an unerring and trustworthy guide, and beside that guide I know no other in which we may have confidence.

But to return to the education of Parents themselves, we have in the mother's education course and the establishment of Parents' education libraries most encouraging signs that the need of wider reading is being felt.

We may hope that many of our younger Parents may have an attraction in these suggestive movements which shall prove an effective rival to the absorbing claims of first experiments in housekeeping, first introduction to independent social cares, or even the first baby. It is freely acknowledged that the best work of a man's life in point of intellectual power is done between the ages of 40 and 50. Are women, then, to submit to a theory that their development and growth ends with girlhood? They acknowledge the need of growth readily enough with regard to the spiritual world. How common an assertion in a sermon it is, "we cannot stand still; if we make no progress we must surely go back." Concentration of thought, habits of patient study, even the power to read so as to take in what we read, these are soon lost unless we acknowledge culture of the intellectual powers as a lifelong duty.

Speaking especially as a mother to mothers, I think if we could have this ideal before us, we might maintain a calmer attitude as we grow older, as life is fuller, richer, more expanded, and more and more responsibility falls upon us. Many of us are struggling and fretting, and trying to do an impossible thing—trying to teach our children to learn great lessons of self-control, when for very want of physical power our own control over our actions, our own power to be always temperate and self-contained, is simply slipping away from

us. I said physical power, but it is not *that* so much as nerve power that is going, and against this wicked and terrible waste of one of the most precious things in the world—the mature part of a mother's life—I want, in the next place, to enter an earnest protest. Some people are perfectly aware of what is going on. They know that their lives are unliveable, but they live in constant hope of running away from them. The perpetual longing to have a holiday seems to me to make matters only worse. Because there is some hope of a change they will live at a greater rate while they can, and not take the whole matter seriously in hand. The question of health underlies the matter very often, no doubt—far more than we think, perhaps—but into that I cannot enter now. I will only quote, in passing, two remarks on health I lately met with. The Head Mistress of a high school told her girls “no one ought to expect to keep her temper through the day who does not thoroughly cleanse her skin all over once in 24 hours.” The Master of a large house for boys—a man of 25 years' experience—said, “Sometimes my house seems to be in a desperate condition, and all my efforts to put things right appear to fail; when I am completely puzzled and utterly at a loss to arrive at the cause, I take a pill.” Common sense of this kind is very valuable. The rest of the medical side of the question I leave aside, but there is much that may be said which, while not intruding on the physician's province, may tend to the prevention of the “break-downs” of mothers, which they tell us are growing more frequent every day. Is it not true that instead of taking our lives and shaping them so that they *can* be carried on safely, many of us seem to have drifted into them by what we think necessity, when it is not necessity at all, and we are fast tending to the condition of that historical personage whom “all the king's horses and all the king's men could not put together again”? We have let ourselves get into such a condition that the details of life are like a horde of midges on a summer evening, pricking us in unexpected places, and by dint of their number and impertunity altogether upsetting the calm peace we might be enjoying as the halo of sunset surrounds us. We feel as if what was best in us got gradually frittered away, little by little, and the chipping away bit by bit of the energy we possess, and of the self-control we used to depend on, makes

the loss of it seem a sin, whereas it is the natural result of the life we are allowing ourselves to live ; and yet how small, after all, is our sphere. I asked a great doctor once this question, "Women preside for years over great institutions, hospitals, high schools, colleges, and preserve their force intact. Why do we mothers break down in ruling a small household, or educating two or three children, as we so frequently do?" His answer gave me a clue to a large part of the reason, "Your affections are every moment drawn upon, maternal responsibility is a totally different thing from official responsibility. The work of the women you speak of is reduced to a system—it is mechanical to some extent—and the success of it depends on reducing the system to perfection."

I think we have here two thoughts worth remembering. The mother's work is unlike any other in the whole world, it entails the constant drawing out of the very depths of her nature, and keeps it on the stretch often for hours together. It is from morning till night, and often does not end with night. But different calls are made on her at different times, that is where the difficulty and the need of adaptation arise. She must, like a musician on a rich toned organ, frequently, at a moment's notice, pull out a new stop and push in all the others—thus only can she supply the harmony of family life. She must be ready to meet these sudden, rapid changes, these calls on her love and her sympathy on all sides. She must go from the anxiety of a sick room to a cheerful meal, without casting sorrow around her ; from the practical and troublesome study of economies to join the intellectual joys which have no price on earth. She may come in from visits to her poorer neighbours, and while her heart aches at leaving some terrible sight—a burnt child, it may be, or a dying old friend—she must at once devote her whole attention to something her children have been waiting for, the rehearsal of a play, perhaps, in which they cannot do without her, and in which all her best powers must be used. In these rapid changes she must shew no dismay, no surprise ; they are her life. She must reckon herself as rightly the servant of all while she is mistress of all, and must take smallest details as not only "all in the day's work," but as her own special province and one of her joys in life, as that about which it

warms her heart to think that she, and she alone, is the one who can in the end order and arrange them for the comfort and well-being of the little community under her charge.

In order to succeed in this she must bring all her powers to bear on it with definite intention, just as the skilful musician would. Details, interruptions, perplexities, all must be, as it were, part of one great whole, must minister to the efficiency of the one great work, the fulfilment of the one ideal. This ideal is the same for the woman of high rank, with her large household and her heavy social responsibilities, as for the quiet "home-maker" who has but one little maid of-all-work to direct. Both alike have husband and children to care for, and of the two the second has perhaps the making of her own life most entirely in her own hands. To be Queen over her little kingdom, serene in every family emergency, capable to direct all things with calmness, cheerfulness, and decision, is an ambition sufficient to tax the powers of the most skilful amongst us, and a vocation equal to the highest God has appointed on this earth.

The other idea which I got from that reply was the need we have of order and regularity. Wherever we go, and whatever other large or difficult undertakings we see carried out efficiently, we may learn lessons of simplifying and systematizing our work. I remember a bright young officer in the Rifle Brigade saying, as he described his men's work while making earth-works and fortifications in Canada, "You have no idea how splendid it is to get a hundred barrows to run without a check." I have often thought of his hundred barrows, and the delight he took in them. That is the sort of spirit that gives a feeling of victory over the minor ills of life, and gives a due sense of proportion to our anxieties. It banishes the baffled and hopeless tone of voice, the assumed attitude of self-imposed martyrdom, the fretful refusal to be bothered, and the wilful resistance to attend to petty trifles. And it reminds us that each of the details might be disposed of in a few minutes, if only we would deal with them patiently one by one, and had faith to *believe*, and the courage and the will to *act*.

There is no possibility of saying how important is, in family life, the tone of a mother's voice. It is the sound the youngest child is most quick to estimate. It is music to the

father's ear. It is the barometer of the family peace. I remember one who all my life has been my ideal of a wife, a mother, and a friend. What most comes back to me now, next to her smile, is the perfect control she had over her voice. I will tell you two little words she often used. As she sat amidst her many children I have watched her when her husband came in. He was a man of many schemes, who felt keenly whatever opposition he met with. She would patiently wait as he recounted his day, till the tale of his woes was exhausted and a turn came in his descriptions; something, at least, had happened a little better than all the rest. Then was her opportunity. "That's well," she would say, and though 20 years have passed I hear the tone of them still. Sympathy, gentle rebuke, and a restorative of calm, all were felt as a magnetic influence. One more thing I will tell you about her. When I visited her on her death-bed she drew from under her pillow a volume of poems, then just published, and repeated to me one of them which she had just learnt by heart; so that I may quote her as one re-enforced even to the end by the principle of self-culture and growth.

And now lest it should be thought that I wish to add to your lives yet greater and heavier duties, I would say a few words about selection. We cannot *all do everything*, and yet this seems to be the aim of some people, and they wonder that they fail. Life is like a drawer that will not shut, and never can be orderly; it is too full. Suppose that you had such a drawer representing your life. At the bottom of it would lie a few things which should have been done a month ago. Then a layer of letters and bills; bundles with india-rubber rings which are breaking; in one corner your Bible; in another your account book; a bit of a child's work you promised to finish; on the top of all the baby's broken toy. Every time you touch the drawer you make hay of it, and further confusion ensues. The fairy of old childhood days, whose wand puts all in order, passes by. You look at her with imploring eyes. "Yes! I will do it, but only in my own way." You stand and watch. She takes the drawer right out, and, while you shudder, she turns the contents all on the floor. She puts the drawer back clean and fresh, and, just as you expect she will replace the contents, she leaves the room, saying, "Oh! no, *you* only know what should be in

it ; pick up all you can use, and I will come back, and sweep away the rubbish."

I have spoken of the importance of self culture, of method and of selection ; I would add one more point which is too often neglected, and that is *Rest*. If mothers are valuable and worth preserving in this hurrying world, the strain we require of them must be balanced by a due proportion of rest. New strength through repose. This is part of the duty of making life liveable, and it re-acts on the whole family. Sometimes the strong support of a few firm words from the father would greatly mend matters ; sometimes a friend can influence elder children, and point out to them the duty of unselfishness which their mother's courage and love leaves them in blind forgetfulness of. But very often there is at fault the whole theory of life which *women make for themselves*. I knew a mother once who led a most complicated life as the wife of a master in a school house. After a partial recovery from influenza, I heard her say "I was so tired out that I crept up to my room when they thought I was out. No one knew I was there till Bobby found me out." This is an attitude which one cannot but condemn ; it is folly dressed up in a mask of unselfishness. While on the other hand where a definite understanding exists that rest is a mother's rightful privilege, I have known a child go himself on tip-toe and tie a handkerchief on the outside handle of the door, as a sign no one was to go in.

There are many different ways of resting. Everyone must work out their own system. Where quiet can be ensured, combined with fresh air, the conditions are the best for restoring tired nerves. There is something also very restful in the mere physical act of walking, putting one foot before another and resting the eyes by contact with nature. Where it is possible I have great faith in taking a meal in the open air, I have had my breakfast in the sun as late as September. It is not a bad plan to invite one child alone to such a meal. He considers himself highly honoured, and becomes the little messenger to fetch and carry ; or I have seen both table and chair decorated with flowers by the little ones as a surprise. Some people get overworked because they think that others cannot do without them. They must always be at every meal, always carry out every detail with their own hands ; but the

very essence of organisation is to find out what you need *not* do, and what others *can* do for you—and this especially the case where families are growing up—and the elder ones are longing to be trusted. Although I enlarge upon the necessity of method and regularity, it is quite as important to be able to adapt ourselves quickly to change and variety; to take advantage of specially fine days and make the most of them; to put in use with but little alteration some empty room in the holiday time, where peace can be secured for the day's necessary writing; to arrange life with the definite intention of being as restful, and as comfortable for the time being as circumstances permit. Speaking of writing, I am often astonished at the discomfort in which many very busy people write. Nothing ready to their hand. No fresh ink, pens and paper. They lose thereby far more than they know, most valuable training for the young people as well as comfort for themselves. Under rather exceptional circumstances I had charge of my father's stationery before I was ten years old, and I have never forgotten the training it gave me. And again, how many things in daily life can be disposed of in writing. I have a great belief in the economy of shopping by post. I have no belief in the economy of shopping at sales. The backs of my envelopes are often made into square tablets for messages to the servants. It is a great relief to leave the orders to your maids on your dressing table, and find them clearly understood and smoothly carried out. All this I put under the category of Rest; it is the relief of friction, the saving of nerve worry, the oiling of the wheels of life. But it needs to be done deliberately, and of set purpose; and the small expenses of parcel post and other little things to be set down as cheaper than doctor's bills, or lodgings at the sea side. We do not all see these things early in our lives, or understand what are the real causes of our break downs. We learn wisdom too late, by painful experience. When we are ourselves converted we long to "strengthen our brethren." One of the most irritating forms of our folly lies in ridiculous small economies. We all talk economy, even the richest of us—broad lands and fine houses certainly bring no exemption from this topic. While some of us say "I cannot afford a cab," another says "I can't have a moor in Scotland," and it comes to exactly the same thing, only varied in degree. It

has been wisely said, "To have an over-mastering sense of duty in this direction takes away all feeling of freedom, and induces a spirit as far away from the strong inward compelling of the artist, or the luminous calm of the philosopher, as anything very well can. It distorts and confuses the reason, and rubs down all the sharp edges of the individuality, till life is a sordid, unlovely, and 'dust coloured' affair altogether, with a countenance crystallized by mistaken sacrifices into an habitual expression of resigned discomfort."† There was a little boy once, wearied with school tasks, who sighed "Oh, if all the world would but agree to *know* a little less!" Impossible of course and retrograde—but, "if all the world would but agree to *spend* a little less;" if we could reverse the old proverb, and take care of the pounds and have the pennies to play with, what a relief of friction and lengthening of youthfulness there would be! There is a vast difference between parsimony and economy, it is the fixing of the boundaries that matter—fixing them so that we can live within them with a margin to spare. True happiness lies not in the abundance of possessions, but on making the most of those we have, and extracting pleasure and brightness out of little things. Unhappiness lies in desiring something more. In family life there are many and many very small expenses which should be incurred without scruple, while the large ones can be done without, perhaps with advantage. There is much also in education that may be absolutely crippled for want of small sums. How many school-rooms are wearying out a starved existence because the demand for books and apparatus is refused or grudgingly met. Is it not true as Ruskin says that people will look many and many times at a book, and scruple to spend on it the price of a turbot? Collections of exquisite poems can now be had for the price of a few herrings! Besides books there are many small gifts which supply most valuable educational atmosphere to intelligent children; how much arithmetic in dominoes; training for the fingers in a bundle of sticklaying sticks; food for the imagination in a lump of clay; how much hunger for knowledge in a magnifying glass or small microscope! I have sometimes wished I could make a list of the small treasures

† Lucas Malet.

of this kind which I have seen of priceless value in home education.

Then again many a matter of family friction arises from poverty of invention, and want of supply of sufficient material. Incessantly having to pass things at table is a great worry to children. It does not cost more in the end to *double* the dishes and *halve* the contents. Anything is better than to live in a condition typified by a sentence my mother vouched for on good authority:—"Sister, have you done with the tooth-brush?"

When we have thus striven to bring up the level of our life to a liveable point, to clench our nettle, and bend our circumstances to our best ends, there is still one thing wanting, and that is what an old housekeeper of ours calls "the blessed gift of tact." Real tact is a gift—that is what makes it very difficult to say anything useful about it. There always will be to the end of the chapter people who want to do the right thing, but in the wrong way, who, all their lives are like a bull in a china shop, the wonder is that they do not do more harm than they do. The provoking thing is when people who are really intelligent and full of other good points thus mar their good work by thoughtlessness and want of insight. Tact, after all, chiefly means consideration for other people's feelings—doing as you would be done by, and to mothers it should come naturally enough. How easy it is to get your will obeyed by a child, if you take the trouble to seize a quiet moment beforehand for explanation; or, failing that, to call him close up to you and make him your special confidant in a friendly whisper. But, pounce upon him without having first put yourself in his place and thought the matter out, and you deserve to be beaten. I sat once beside a mother on a sunny tennis ground. She was a woman of great capacity—one of the leaders among women who care about great social questions and modern reforms. She was busily writing on her knee. Suddenly she looked up from her letters, and called to her daughter across the net to fix a time to come with her to some afternoon engagement. The game was delayed; the man who was playing stood waiting, while the mother and daughter, almost out of earshot of each other, discussed the plans for the day. I was not a bit surprised, and my sympathy, I am afraid, was on the pretty but deter-

mined daughter's side, as she finished up the discussion. "No, I really can't, Mother, I have some letters to write this afternoon ; after all, one does *sometimes* want some time to one's self!" I have heard one who has numbers of young girls to deal with, and who strongly upholds the ideas of the past generation say, that her greatest difficulty is to maintain the honour due to parental authority in spite of the terrible errors of parents in matters of tact, which she hears of in her confidential talks with the girls. My sympathy goes out to the young people. They are very naughty, very troublesome, and headstrong, sometimes, no doubt ; but parental respect and submission after all cannot be *forced*, it can only be *cherished* ; and, when lost, what is left, but at the best, silent toleration ?

I might go on to speak of other difficulties in family life, but I think I have said enough. I want to leave on your mind in conclusion the application of the grand old lesson which in the days of "mint, anise, and cummin," was hard to learn as it is now. Look to the weightier matters of the law—"these ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone." *Character building, physical training—mental and moral culture*, on these spend yourselves—and refuse, by every power you can exert—oh ! refuse to be spent, engulfed, bewildered, blinded, by the details, while such large and eternal issues are shaping themselves under your hands, and mainly and primarily by your own actions and deeds. What should we think of the commander of a large vessel who allowed himself to come down off his bridge to fidget about with every little thing that went wrong in his ship ? His experienced eye detects what his wrong, but he restores efficiency without leaving his post. He steers straight on, and so must we.

One more illustration, and I have done. A mother who had a large family of boys, at last was the proud possessor of a sweet little girl. Of course all her relations and friends joined in one chorus—"The child will be spoilt." "No," said she, "it will be loved and treasured—that *must* be, it would be absurd to pretend it will not—but if it is brought up to be thoroughly obedient and thoroughly unselfish it cannot be spoilt." And her words were verified by the results. This is what I mean by looking at the larger issues

and keeping our heads above water so that the details of life shall not blind our eyes—we must keep a calm mastery over them, they must range themselves in order, and succumb to our will as we have power and time to deal with them. Some will be done with and dismissed at once; some, as they say in the House of Commons, “advanced a stage;” some kept out of sight, or lightly passed over as of no importance, in view of mightier issues and more serious principles towards which we have set our course.

While that mother pursued her quiet way, always saying to herself “My child shall not be ruined, it shall only be loved,” she was steering steadily towards principles which were clear enough and definite enough to enable her to be calm and untroubled at the prospect before her. Difficult and dangerous may have been her path, perplexing beyond all doubt, but as she put restraint upon herself, and as she insisted on all around her—indulgent father, adoring brothers, foolish and thoughtless servants, working towards one end, and as she saw unfolding before her the character loved but not spoilt, how bright, how blessed must have been her reward! She started with courage, knowing what was possible to be done, she must have looked back with untold thankfulness.

It is this courage and this confidence that I would hope I may be the means of inspiring by the few ideas I have put before you.

Hold fast to the vast importance of family life and the great issues that flow from it—remember that your fitness for guiding and ruling it depends greatly on your maintaining in yourself the principle of growth and progress in your own life; upon reasonable management of details and fair proportion of real rest; and believe that the calm peace and cheerful brightness which it is your special work to cultivate in your little kingdom, cannot be maintained in any other way. And is it not worth some effort, some careful thought to preserve the brightness and joy of home? The result of your work may be very well summed up in some words in an essay by a well-known preacher. †

“The home that you have thus made will be to the children

† R. F. Horton.

you bring up within its doors the very dearest place on earth. In after years they will look back upon it as the most beautiful place that imagination can conceive. It will seem to them that it was a little sanctuary—a heaven upon earth. Their ideal of enjoyment all their life will be those homely scenes, the love and tenderness which used to greet them at breakfast in the morning, and the hush of the family worship when all knelt down in prayer to God ; the duties of the day, laborious and painful, with the sweet back-ground of the home always in sight ; the evening and the twilight with the romps of the children, the loud peals of laughter around the fire, the tales that were told, the games that were played, the growing seriousness of the discussions as childhood passed into young manhood and young womanhood, and the time came for launching upon life ; the father's thought, the mother's tears, when they sent the boys out to the great city ; and again the solemn hush of the gathering for worship as the day closed in, the hovering presence of angels that seemed to fly white-winged over the little bed, and never quite to leave us in the dark, and that half-revealed face of God which used to look out upon us from our mother's and our father's face—these will be the abiding memory which no chance or change of life can tear away. These homes of yours may be poor or rich, they may be large or small, the family may be one or two, or a large circle, but they are the great places of possibility. You may bring the curse down upon them and ruin them ; or you may bring the highest blessing upon them for evermore.”