

Rocking the Cradle.

—
BY MRS. ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

“UNTO us a child is born; unto us a son is given, and he shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Prince of Peace.” Such should be the song of exultation and joy, when the ivory gates of life reveal to us one of these waifs of Paradise; and to the father and mother greatly wise, and nobly tender, the child will become all that the Prophet has described as above quoted.

The passages of Scripture detailing the history of the pair in the Garden of Eden are very suggestive and significant, and Milton has elaborated the loveliness of the home of the first pair, till imagination can go no farther in the harmony of delineation; and yet they seem to have been divorced even in this period of rapture, for no child is recorded born to them in Eden, and from the time that Eve permitted the *Tempter* to interpose between her and her husband, there was that divorce of the soul between them, which was the prelude to their expulsion from harmony and spiritual growth. Hence, not desiring to carry the figure too far, a marriage without children is not complete, prosperous, safe, or happy.

Wonderful is the child; a microcosm of the universe dormant in its rosy slumber, as if the white-winged angels had borne it tenderly from the inner spheres through the ivory gates, and laid it asleep upon a human heart. And now it will be cherished with untiring love, and its little wail be more potent than the blast of a trumpet, and its first smile more electric than all the wit that ever “set the table in a roar.” Every house has its young child, yet its advent is always a revelation, always an evangel, always primeval.

Every truly married pair are Eden-dwellers, asleep in rosy bowers, soothed by lulling waters and singing birds, with a clear heavenly note stealing upon the ear, and they know it comes adown the celestial heights.

SONNET TO A NEW-BORN CHILD.

Oh, my sweet child! my sacred world-new book!
From Alpha to Omega filled with rare
And mystic words, and loving truths, in fair
And wondrous characters, which angels took
Delight to read. They with a smiling look
Followed God's finger, as he, writing there,
Inscribed himself thereon with blissful care;
Nor, when He gave it me, his work forsook.

Oh, lovely gift! Oh, pearly-white dear soul!
How shall I keep thee, that no marring blot
Shall come thy leaves between? Sweet, plastic
scroll!

Thus, thus, I write with kisses; thy first thought
Shall be of love; and thy first earth control
A golden link from Heaven's own armory
wrought!

I have lately seen in the papers an account of a poor woman, who went round to beg money enough to have her baby photographed! It is the best excuse for begging I ever heard of! for, to a mother, nothing ought to be more beautiful, or more endearing than her child.

I have known men to grow very jealous of their wives' fondness for their children, and make the household uncomfortable by their foolish discontent. Such sensual, selfish, babyish men are hardly worth talking about, for they could not be *mated* anywhere within the sphere of our line of observation; and it would be well for all men to bear in mind, that a motherly woman is not the one to go astray; thousands of women will endure any suffering, and any misery, rather than risk the good name or happiness of their children. In the first flush of maternal happiness, if the father should find himself somewhat cast into the shade, he ought to be so much of a man as to sympathize with this beautiful instinct; so tender a husband that it will but endear the wife the more to him; and so delighted a father, that he will act even more foolishly than the mother! Counselor of wondrous wisdom is the child to truth-loving parents, willing to sit at the feet of this autocratic Gamaliel, who, as yet has been taught only of God, and who has not forgotten the celestial arcana; its eyes still gleaming with a supernal brightness, and its lips murmuring an unknown tongue. Blessed indeed is the child thus received, whose

“Mother brought him forth
Under the apple tree,”

a symbol which corresponds to the only true basis of a union, Love conjoined to Friendship.

The first thing that arrests our attention in the aspect of the child is its tone of authority, its air of command. It looks around like a king. It points here and there for the ministers to its wants. Nothing is beyond its desires; even the moon is not too high. It tries every thing with foot and hand, and tooth and nail. It will know what it all means. He will not be put off, and kicks and screams lustily for that which is denied it. The earth is subordinate to

him, and already he knows and feels his master-ship. He clings to the finger with a grip prophetic of his hold upon life and destiny.

The child is never born a slave: he may be made one; made a poor idiotic chattel; a miserable time-server; a petty coward; a servile parasite; as thousands of men and women are trained into these, and make the earth to groan under human wrongs and human perversions; but the new-born child, fresh from the creative touch of a free-loving God, is a very king, whether he sprawl in the dust of the wayside; or crawl out from the low portal of a slave-cabin, or be nurtured amid the enervating luxuries of a fashionable hot-bed—everywhere the young child feels instinctively the royalty of his heritage, his right to the purple!

The whole aspect of the child is royal-brave. His movements betray curiosity, alertness, delight, but no fear. He is full of faith, believes all things, trusts all things, till the treachery and falsehood of those about him, rob him of this ambrosia of the heavenly bowers, and, in place of the divine manna, he plucks the Dead-Sea fruitage of lying lips and deceitful hearts.

The child is an early and defiant questioner: he will not be put off—he is placed here to learn, and learn he will, therefore heed must be taken as to what he learns, for while the mother sits with work in hand and touch of foot upon the cradle, he is learning from her look, her voice, her careless tongue, that which he will carry with him through all the countless ages of eternity.

The baby does not weep at first; its cries are those of the wild animal in search of relief for its wants, and the child has no more tears than the young lion. Tears, the terrible testimony to wrong, come only when the sovereign nature of the child has felt a check—they are the language of impediment. When he begins to taste the bitterness of unsatisfied desire, and feel the coercion of a will stronger than his own, or the crash of cruel, vindictive, fiend-given blows, then tears are distilled in the benign labyrinths of nature to save the innocent one from the madness of fever. He is met at the very threshold of life with restraint and impediment, which he strives with the force of a young giant to overcome, and kicks and screams are as yet the natural weapons of this new lord of the material; hence the loving parents will be wise to soothe and divert him from this too impassioned mood, lest the young blood circle too ardently in a dangerous channel. If you get angry yourselves, and institute a pitched battle with the tender weakling, God help it,

and forgive you, for mischief will grow out of it!

The child has the whole world to learn, and his hardest lesson is the learning that his own will is not as good as that of another; he understands no reason why he should not have his own way as well as those about him, and his audacity in trying to secure it is not a little amusing to a gentle observer. A wholesome subordination is a hard lesson to learn to all of us. It is a lesson *over-learned* by most of persons. Men and women are as little disposed to walk royally as if they were literally, not metaphorically, "poor miserable worms of the dust."

Hannah More, in her great contempt for the "rights of women," newly broached in her day, exclaims, "Rights of children! rights of babies!" Good, dear old maid! A book might be and ought to be written upon these very rights, which are too little regarded, for the cradle is sometimes rocked with a heavy foot, and the sounds heard from the owner are more like a malison than like a lullaby. When the child, worn and weary at the Babel of jarring discords, becomes desperate with cries and tears, the weak mother, or the over-worked mother, or the wicked mother, scolds, frets, and slaps him; and then the strong, heavy-handed father beats the child into submission. How the heart aches, when the cradle of a child is thus rocked, and the royal occupant is converted into that poor, mean, subservient little scoundrel whom dull people praise as a good boy, because he never slams a door or daubs his pinafore!

The human child, alive with generous impulse, ready for all that is bright and stirring, noisy from full health and affluence of life, has given place to an artificial snob, who, ten to one, in the coming years, will in a worldly decorous way, betray his best friend, cheat his father, and abuse his wife.

Instinctively the child knows no law but that of love, for from the first, his teaching is from God—and God is Love. He springs to your knee with smiles and kisses, for his young soul responds to your look of tenderness, but he turns regally away at a harsh word or severe tone of voice. You may kill out all these fine instincts if you will, but the day of retribution will come to cover your face with shame and fill your heart with remorse. You may beat him like a slave; you may shut him up in cellars, and garrets, and closets, as thousands of well-meaning persons have done, who, in their poor conceit, verily thought they were doing God service, by this most cruel and pernicious

system of rocking the cradle of the child, but in return you but deprive him of what Jeremy Taylor finely calls "the sinews of the soul," the grand moral forces which are needed in after life, to carry him safely through the quicksands of temptation, and unscathed through the hard battle of life.

The strong passions of the child are so many elements of powers, which need only be directed into a wholesome channel, to send him forth a sturdy champion for all things that are true and just, and noble and best in our humanity—a clear-sighted Hampden; a democratic Cromwell, or an inspired Milton. These forces, unruly it may be in early life, for lack of object, are the levers to remove mountains of error, and prejudice, and oppression in the world.

A wise parent, with insight and conscience will see much, and perhaps the worst part of himself reproduced in his child, and so far from feeling impatient with him, when there unfortunate developments are manifested in him, he will feel his whole soul yearn over him with indescribable tenderness and unappeasable sorrow. He will feel that he is the one that ought to be "beaten with many stripes," and the child go free. Indeed as the race advances to a higher human scale, the bar of public opinion will hold the parent responsible for all the obliquities of the child.

We live but in the infancy of the race, big, squalling, fighting babies at the best, and history will as much condemn us and our doings, as we condemn the barbarous and malevolent ages which have preceded us, therefore it is that all reform must begin in the family, and by the cradle-side.

No wonder, to my mind, that the little children break out with measles and scarlet fever, breathed upon as they are with the rank breath of tobacco, and alcohol, and opium; no wonder that they choke and strangle with whooping cough, and die as best they should, for the atmosphere about them is full of fever, and scrofula, and decay, and they choke and cough in vain struggles to escape it! No wonder the little ones die of marasmus, pining for lack of that vitalizing care which only the healthful and loving can supply! They die of convulsions, fall into syncope, and wring with epilepsies, and recoil as if a thousand pins and needles were thrust into the delicate net-work of the nerves, because hands spotted with the leprosy of care, and the canker of discontent have been laid upon their poor helpless bodies!

No wonder they gurgle in the throat and start from slumber, with cries piteous to the ear,

when unlovely kisses, and impure eyes, like hideous Gorgons, look down upon them, and, calling themselves parents, rock the cradle of the miserable child!

Alas! for the poor, dear children! our tender mercies are but cruelty to them. We bathe their lovely bodies with hands heated by evil passions; we hold them to cruel, callous hearts, and hug them with brown, bony arms, and nauseate them with fevered breaths, and then wonder that they die!

They lie in our arms and absorb our wicked passions; they look into our eyes and assimilate to what they see there; we act the covert part, and their instincts detect it; we are vain and false, malevolent and treacherous; earth-loving, more than God-loving, and they grow to manhood full of envy and deceit and moral madness--demagogues, and thieves, and cowards, knavish and cruel, and they are just what we have made them.

Alas! alas! for the child! alas! for the cradle rockers! The arms of Paradise should lap in Elysium these "cryptogamia of the skies," as John Neal has exquisitely denominated little children—a sphere redolent with asphodels and roses; harmonious with music of birds, and voices "musical as is Apollo's lute;" they should sleep as if cradled in rainbows, and smile therein under the kisses of angels, and from such a childhood walk forth to a glorious manhood.

Did you ever see a little man or woman of two summers flush all over its pretty face, and put up a bit of round lip, like a rosebud trembling, a prelude to tears? If so, you have seen the way the chorubs look, peering over the crystal walls, at sight of a dear soul gone astray. This look is a remnant of the foregone heaven from whence it came.

"Trailing clouds of glory, do they come
From God, which is our home?"

There was a universe of grief in that sweet transparent body to set the chin and lip tremulous. I trust, if you have seen this, you gathered the little shape to your bosom and covered it with kisses, and the magnetism of sympathy was as a kindly poultice to the poor bruised heart.

As the race now exists, and the wintry days will come, when mothers, looking through the lattice, behold the nests of the last year's birds filled and rounded over with snow, and straight it reminds her of an empty cradle white and cold, in a silent room; and of a churchyard mound, whereon in summer-time the daisies

grow; whereat her tears overflow, and her heart ascends in prayers to the Comforter, for almost every house has had its white lamb stray'd away to the Good Shepherd.

New Notes of Observations on the Action of the Heart.

BY RUFUS KING BROWNE, M. D.

THUS the heart does not propel the blood, except into the pulmonic channels:

From this we see how inapprehensive of the truth is the notion that the heart is not the cause of the circulation (Draper, *et al*), arising from the fallacious notion that in parts of the circulation, where propulsion is observed, it is in itself not effected by the heart; for all the notions which lead to this fallacious supposition are based upon observations of propulsion, in situations remote from the heart.

But this shallow fallacy of observation is based upon an entire void of apprehension of the fact that the heart is an *impelling* organ, but is *yet the cause of the propulsion*, inasmuch as the arteries would not be dilated nor propel the blood were it not for the heart itself, whose impulsive action, by means of the blood, causes the dilatation of the arteries which propel it.

The blood is only *propelled* after leaving the heart, and not *while leaving it*. This may be clearly apprehended, and the distinction found strikingly illustrated, in experiments where the lungs are quiescent, in which case, the blood, which will pass through them is unarterialized; in which case, the arteries being filled to the point of continued distension by venous blood, can not retract upon and propel the blood from the point next the heart to their terminations. Here the heart still receives and impels the blood, but the arteries being already pre-occupied with all they can possibly hold, can not be distended by each charge expelled from the heart, and hence they can not retract or react upon their contents.

The cardiac curves, therefore, are that part of the bloodvessels through which the blood pursues its course. They not only send forward the blood in a different way from what it is elsewhere, but it is only by means of the way in which it is driven forth from them that it is further forwarded on its round. For it is only in this way, namely, by successive leaps or throes into the vessels next the heart, that they are suddenly and forcibly dilated and are thus constrained to retract upon their contents.

The heart thus acts upon the blood from every direction and ejects it; the arteries retract upon it in a direction at right angles to the flow, while in the capillaries and veins, it is acted upon from behind, by pushing it forward.

The blood is therefore arterialized in going from one side of the heart to the other; and hence from that part of the cardiac apparatus included between its two sides, and this can only be done by going through that part which is between these sides, the ventricles.

We invariably speak of the pulmonary and the cardiac functions as two, yet they are one in a way that we have not hitherto even suspected, to all the extent of their blood channels, for the blood which is in the pulmonary artery has not passed through the heart, but is still within it, unless we deny that the passage from one side of the heart to the other, is within the limits of its function.

Elsewhere in the system, outside of the heart, the blood is *propelled* by successive dilatations of the artery, caused by the increase of the blood, and successive retractions of the artery itself upon its contents; but in the case of the bloodvessels running between the cardiac curves, namely, the pulmonary vessels, the blood is *propelled* by the heart, the only situation in the body, where it is propelled by that organ. This distinction we are justified in announcing as that by which alone we can understand the wide difference between the action of the arterial vessels, and their termination running to the lungs and to other situations.

Dr. Jucee shows that in frogs, what is by common consent called first movement, is compounded of the auricular portion and the dilatation of the ventricle;* that the second is formed by the contraction of the ventricle, and the dilatation of the two auricles, *per contra*, with which the heart is provided. Dr. Jucee states that what Chaveau has taken for the commencement of the first movement, or systole, was nothing but the end of the second, or diastole of the heart. In other words, that the

* Prof. Huxley has entirely misunderstood, or else misrepresented the character and order of these phenomena. He says (Huxley's Physiology): "Then the contraction of the heart is rythmical; two short contractions of the upper and lower halves, respectively being followed by a pause of the whole." Obviously, no such pause of the whole heart occurs as described. For although there is no distinct interval of time between the contraction of the auricle and that of the ventricle, yet immediately afterward, while the ventricle is dilating or pausing, the auricle contracts, this being the very moment when the ventricle is receiving its blood from it. This occurs during the time described by Prof. Huxley, as the pause of the whole heart.