

## Answers to Correspondents.

JANE.—We are of opinion that Cowper's lines are most applicable to the winter season, and to the last of the varying months. Alluding to the great Author of All, the poet thus expresses himself:—

“He sets the bright procession on its way,  
And marshals all the order of the year;  
He marks the bounds which Winter may not pass,  
And blunts his pointed fury; in its case,  
Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ  
Uninjured, with inimitable skill;  
And, ere one flowery season fades and dies,  
Designs the blooming wonders of the next.”

LYDIA.—That you should have listened to such proposals does not redound to your credit; but this you may rely on, that an action for breach of promise cannot be sustained when the promise was made under the circumstances stated.

S. A. G.—The fact that has puzzled you has, no doubt, puzzled many others before you, and some little knowledge of optics is necessary to enable you thoroughly to understand why objects placed at a considerable distance from water should, nevertheless, be reflected in it. A few words on the effect produced on light, by its passing through a *transparent medium* such as water, may give you some idea of the cause of what has perplexed you. We must beg “S. A. G.” to observe, that although light passes in straight lines through any *medium* when in it, yet it is turned out of its course if it goes obliquely from one transparent body into another. This effect is called *refraction*, and refraction renders visible objects that could not, without its assistance, be discerned. The rays of light may be said to be refracted when they reach our atmosphere from celestial bodies, and, consequently, these bodies appear, when in the horizon, one degree higher than they are. “S. A. G.” may convince herself of the property possessed by water to render objects visible, if she makes the following simple experiment:—Put a shilling into an empty basin, and stand at such a distance that the coin may be invisible, then let another person pour water into the basin, and the shilling will become visible; this arises from the bending (or the refraction) of the rays in their passage into air at the surface of the water.

ANNIE.—The author of a work entitled “Courtship, Love, and Matrimony,” and which was printed more than 200 years ago, seems ignorant of the origin of ladies' additional privileges in leap year, so we may well reply that its origin is lost in obscurity; but the solemnity with which the author just alluded to speaks of a subject which with us is merely a joke, will amuse “Annie” as well as our other correspondents. In old-fashioned orthography he writes—“Albeit, it is now become a part of the common law in regard to social relations of life, that as often as every bissextile year dost return, the ladies have the sole privilege, during the time it continueth, of making love unto the men, which they doe either by wordes or lookes, as to them it seemeth proper; and, moreover, no man will be entitled to the benefit of clergy who dothe refuse to accept the offers of a ladye, or who dothe in any wise treat her proposal with slight or contumely.”

A LADY WHO CONSTANTLY SUBSCRIBES—FLORENCE EVADNE.—The requests of both of these our correspondents shall be submitted to the lady who superintends our fancy work department. In reply to “Florence's” questions, we can only say that there is no objection to her taking raw eggs in order to clear her voice, but we cannot recommend any cosmetics, the component parts of which we are unacquainted with. Plenty of exercise, constant ablations, and attention to diet, are, in our opinion, the *true improvers* of the complexion, because they promote the health, on which the beauty of the complexion depends. Water that has been boiled and left to become cold, is softened and purified by the process, and is, consequently, better fitted for use.

A. S. K.—We can give you no *reason* for terms in themselves *unreasonable*. Our gracious Queen is herself the temporal head of the Anglican Church, and she has shown no leaning to the views to which you refer. We thank “A. S. K.” for her judicious suggestion, and we regret, extremely, that any question put by her should have remained unanswered. As her letter may have miscarried, we beg she will repeat her query, and we will reply to it immediately.

AQUARIUS.—Creatures wonderfully alike in colour, form, and habits, may be collected from ditches in any part of England, and from such humble sources you may add treasures to your aquarium. We will take your request into consideration.

## The Mother.

EACH century has its peculiar tide of thought; the highest wave bearing onwards, as ocean tides bear the tossed bark to land, the human race into the promised harbour of Millennial peace. “The ninth wave of the nineteenth century is the Destiny of Woman.” Like all moral and social changes, the one now going on in the public mind has its absurdities and

errors. But “the face of truth is not less fair and beautiful for all the counterfeit vizards which may be put upon her.” Of the many interesting aspects under which we may regard the female character, there is none more striking and beautiful than that of the mother. “The excellent woman,” says Goethe, “is she who, if the husband dies, can be a father to their children.” And no less excellent is she when, blessed in her husband's support, she trains her children with instinctive love in the ways of purity and happiness. Upon her devolves, under almost all circumstances, the early training of the young, and it is a mother's chief praise to see to her house and tend her children. An old Christian writer, paying a tribute of filial affection, says: “My mother's lips were those of truth itself; but she would rather conceal the good that was known of her than publish that which, being unknown, might have done her honour.” “The fate of a child,” said the first Napoleon, “is always the work of his mother.” However silenced or neglected, the mysterious workings of a mother's love will one day re-assert the influence of bygone years—

“My mother's voice! how often creeps  
Its cadence on my lonely hours!  
Like healing sent on wings of sleep,  
Or dew to the unconscious flower.  
I can forget her melting prayer,  
While leaping pulses madly fly;  
But in the still unbroken air,  
Her gentle tones come stealing by;  
And years and sin and manhood flee,  
And leave me at my mother's knee.”

“Depart in peace,” said Ambrose, to the weeping mother of the then dissolute Chrysostom; “it is *impossible* that the son of these tears should perish!”

— “There is none  
In all this cold and hollow world, no fount  
Of deep, strong, deathless love, save that within  
A mother's heart.”

Hannah More very beautifully describes the passion—

— “A tender mother lives  
In many lives; through many a nerve she feels;  
From child to child the quick affection spreads,  
For ever wandering, yet for ever fixed.  
Nor does division weaken, nor the force  
Of constant operation e'er exhaust  
Parental love. All other passions change  
With changing circumstances; rise or fall  
Dependent on their object; claim returns;  
Live on reciprocations, and expire  
Unfed by hope. A mother's fondness reigns  
Without a rival and without an end.”

Lady Morgan says, “That which the woman is, the mother will be, and her personal qualities will direct and govern her maternal instinct as her taste will influence her appetite \* \* \* The perfection of motherhood lies in the harmonious blending of a happy instinct with those qualities which make the good member of society—with good sense and information, with subdued or regulated passion, and that abnegation which lays every selfish consideration at the feet of duty. To make a good mother, it is not enough to seek the happiness of the child, but to seek it with forethought and effect. Her actions must be regulated by long-sighted views, and steadily and perseveringly directed to that health of the body and the mind, which can alone enable the objects of her solicitude to meet the shocks and rubs of life with firmness, and to maintain that independence in practice and principle, which sets the vicissitudes of fortune at defiance, fitting its possessor to fill the various stations, whether of wealth or poverty, of honour or obscurity, to which chance may conduct him.”

There is much care, therefore, devolving upon a mother, and



THE MOTHER.

much responsibility. The children at their mother's knee may seem, in the language of Mary Howitt, to say—

“Raise us by your Christian knowledge,  
Consecrate to man our powers;  
Let us take our proper station;  
We, the rising generation,  
Let us stamp the age in ours.

“We shall be what you will make us,  
Make us wise and make us good;  
Make us strong for time of trial,  
Teach us temperance, self-denial,  
Patience, kindness, fortitude.”

The education of the young is one of the most important duties of woman—one of the chief sources of her happiness, and her mightiest power for good. The stronger sex may occupy the more conspicuous positions—may receive the loftiest praises and

the highest rewards; but who first moulded the plastic clay of the mind of the illustrious statesman or invincible warrior? who first directed its thoughts and passions? was it not a mother?

“Be satisfied,  
Something thou hast to bear through womanhood—  
Peculiar suffering annexed to sin;  
Some pang paid down for some new human life,  
Some weariness in guarding such a life—  
Some coldness from the guarded; some mistrust  
From those thou hast too well served; from those beloved  
Too loyally, some treason; feebleness  
Within thine heart and cruelty without;  
And pressure of an alien tyranny  
With its dynastic reasons of larger bones,  
And stronger sinews. But go to, thy love  
Shall chant itself its own beatitudes,  
After its own life working. A child's kiss  
Set on thy sighing lips shall make thee glad.”