

HOME CIRCLE.

HOW TO SPEND WINTER EVENINGS.

Daisy Eyebright, a very sprightly and sensible writer, discusses the above subject at some length in a recent number of the *Country Gentleman*. At the outset, she urges parents to devise plans of entertainment and instruction, in which the whole household can join; well observing that it is a common fault in families, both in town and country, to leave each member to go its own way. What she says on this point is so excellent as to deserve being quoted *verbatim*:

"The father reads the newspaper beside the centre table, and wishes no disturbance in his vicinity; the mother, perhaps, is busy in the nursery with the younger children, or engaged in household duties, or absorbed in the pages of a magazine or book, and takes little heed to the occupations of the older members of the family. Perhaps the young men seek amusements abroad, and are allowed to return home when they please, unquestioned concerning their method of passing the long evenings. The older girls receive their friends in the parlour, or gather around the table or piano, occupied with fancy work or music. Each one is independent of the other, and there is no community of interest, which makes the bond of home happiness and increases the love of its inmates. In families thus managed, what wonder that the sons seek questionable amusements, the daughters make ill-assorted marriages and lead unhappy lives, and the parents find little happiness in their children. In their youth they gave them shelter and food, and cared for their health; but they did not interest themselves in making *home happy*; they did not give them real heart love, and teach them that in their society they could always be entertained."

Let every father and mother note this paragraph also, for there is a world of wisdom in it:

"Every evening there should be an hour given up to the little folk, when old and young play together. 'The wise man is he who keeps his child-heart,' has been truly said; and the man who cannot frolic with his children is really to be pitied. No matter how high his station, a good romp is the best exercise for him and for his children; and the father who joins in his son's sports, plays football with him, slides down the hill and skates on the pond, is the father whose old age is the most tenderly cherished, and whose grey head is rarely dishonoured."

Music is naturally assigned a prominent place among the occupations for winter evenings. It should be introduced early enough for the little folks to have a share in it before bed-time. The simpler songs can be taken first for their benefit, and harder ones later on in the evening. But what is called "scientific music" is not needed at all. It is home songs, songs of the heart, songs embodying sentiment, moral and religious truth, songs that linger in the memory and hold the affections to the domestic hearth and altar, that are wanted. If the father cannot sing, and has no ear for music, let him not throw a wet blanket over the enjoyment, by objecting to it as a noisy disturbance. Alas! for the man "who has no music in his soul, and is not moved by concord of sweet sounds." Most men, by trying to get into sympathy with the kind of music specified, will succeed so far as to find at least a modicum of pleasure in it.

An hour of reading aloud by some member of the family is a capital suggestion made by this writer. It is fine vocal exercise for the reader, and nothing is better fitted to form a taste for choice literature in a family than assembling all in a social circle, as listeners. Indeed, reading clubs would be excellent things to introduce into a neighbourhood. Not the members of one family, but of several adjacent to each other, might thus spend many a pleasant and profitable winter evening.

There are also many quiet games which can be played in a large family, that are both instructive and amusing. Let parents take pains to find and introduce such games, and so make home life attractive.

The dreary and almost unbearable monotony which reigns in the absence of such expedients is graphically described in a closing paragraph, which draws a picture the counterpart of which may be found in thousands of households that can hardly, except by a figure of speech, or excess of charity, be called happy ones, and in which the seven evenings of the week are looked forward to with a feeling akin to dread, because they must be passed so stupidly:

"The evening paper once read, *father* families falls asleep beside the fire, the kitten purrs upon the hearth rug and the dog sleeps on the door mat, while the mother clicks her knitting needles and sorts her wools, and chides the children if they are too noisy in their plays; and so the drill evening drags along, until the father arouses himself and thinks it is almost bed-time, and the mother puts away her knitting-bag or her mending-basket and rejoices. Are not many hours of the winter evenings wasted, or passed in such monotonous occupations that the mind fairly rusts out before the body wears out?"

ABOUT THE SUN.

Particularly impressive are the facts and examples by which Professor Young endeavours to convey to the reader some idea of the prodigious forces and activities with which the student of the sun is confronted. Speaking of the outflow of the solar heat, he says:

"The quantity of heat emitted is enough to melt a shell of ice ten inches thick over the whole surface of the sun every second of time; this is equivalent to the consumption of a layer of the best anthracite coal nearly four inches thick every single second." In regard to the distance of the sun from the earth, he says: "Though the distance can easily be stated in figures, it is not possible to give any real idea of a space so enormous; it is quite beyond our power of conception. If one were to try to walk such a distance, supposing that he could walk four miles an hour, and keep it up for ten hours every day, it would take sixty-eight and a half years to make a single million of miles, and more than sixty-three hundred years to traverse the whole. If

some celestial railway could be imagined, the journey to the sun, even if our trains ran sixty miles an hour, day and night without a stop, would require over one hundred and seventy-five years. Sensation, even, would not travel so far in a human lifetime. To borrow the curious illustration of Professor Mendenhall, if we could imagine an infant with an arm long enough to enable him to touch the sun and burn himself, he would die of old age before the pain would reach him, since, according to the experiments of Helmholtz and others, a nervous shock is communicated only at the rate of about one hundred feet per second, or sixteen hundred and thirty-seven miles a day, and would need more than one hundred and fifty years to make the journey. Sound would do it in about fourteen years if it could be transmitted through celestial space; and a cannon-ball in about nine, if it were to move uniformly with the same speed as when it left the muzzle of the gun. If the earth could be suddenly stopped in her orbit, and allowed to fall unobstructed toward the sun, under the accelerating influence of his attraction, she would reach the centre in about four months."

As to the attraction between the sun and earth: "It amounts to thirty-six hundred quadrillion of tons—in figures, 36 followed by seventeen ciphers. . . . We may imagine gravitation to cease, and to be replaced by a material bond of some sort, holding the earth to the sun and keeping her in her orbit. If, now, we suppose this connection to consist of a web of steel wires, each as large as the heaviest telegraph wires used (No. 4), then to replace the sun's attraction these wires would have to cover the whole sunward hemisphere of our globe about as thickly as blades of grass upon a lawn. It would require *nine* to each square inch."

SAVING MOTHER.

The farmer sat in his easy chair,
Between the fire and the lamplight's glare;
His face was ruddy and full and fair.
His three small boys in the chimney nook
Coned the lines of a picture book;
His wife, the pride of his home and heart,
Baked the biscuit and made the tart,
Laid the table and steeped the tea,
Deftly, swiftly, silently;
Tired and weary, and worn and faint,
She bore her trials without complaint,
Like many another household saint—
Content, all selfish bliss above
In the patient ministry of love.
At last, between the clouds of smoke
That wreathed his lips, the husband spoke:

"There's taxes to raise, an' interest to pay,
And if there should come a rainy day,
'Twould be mighty handy, I'm bound to say
'T'have sumthin' put by. For folks must die,
An' there's funeral bills, an' gravestones to buy—
Enough to swamp a man, purty nigh;
Besides, there's Edward and Dick and Joe
To be provided for when we go.
So 'f I was you, I'll tell you what I'd do,
I'd be savin' of wood as ever I could—
Extra fire don't do any good—
I'd be savin' of soap an' savin' of oil,
And run up some candles once and a while;
I'd be rather sparin' of coffee an' tea,

For sugar is high,
And all to buy,
And cider is good enough for me.
I'd be kind o' careful about my clo'es,
And look out sharp how the money goes—
Gawgaws is useless; natur' knows;
Extry trimmin'
'S the bane of women.

"I'd sell the best of the cheese and honey,
And eggs is as good, nigh about, 's the money;
And as to the carpet you wanted new—
I guess we can make the old one do;
And as for the washer an' sewing machine
Them smooth-tongued agents so pesky mean,
You'd better get rid of 'em' slick and clean.
What do they know about woman's work?
Do they calkilate women were born to skirk?"

Dick and Edward and little Joe
Sat in the corner in a row.
They saw the patient mother go
On ceaseless errands to and fro.
They saw that her form was bent and thin,
Her temples gray, her cheeks sunk in,
They saw the quiver of her lip and chin—
And then with a warmth he could not smother,
Outspoke the youngest, frailest brother:
"You talk of savin' wood and ile,
An' tea and sugar all the while,
But you never talk of savin' mother!"

A GOOD READER.

There is one accomplishment in particular which I would earnestly recommend to you. Cultivate assiduously the ability to read well. I stop to particularise this, because it is so very much neglected, and because it is so elegant, charming, and lady-like an accomplishment. Where one person is really interested by music, twenty are pleased by good reading. Where one person is capable of becoming a good musician, twenty may become good readers. Where there is one occasion suitable for the exercise of musical talent, there are twenty for that of good reading. The culture of the voice necessary for reading well, gives a delightful charm to the same voice in conversation. Good reading is the natural exponent and vehicle of all good things. It is the most effective of all

commentaries upon the works of genius. It seems to bring dead authors to life again, and makes us sit down familiarly with the great and good of all ages. Did you ever notice what life and power the Holy Scripture has when well read? Have you ever heard the wonderful effects produced by Elizabeth Fry on the prisoners of Newgate by simply reading to them the parable of the Prodigal Son? Princes and peers of the realm, it is said, counted it a privilege to stand in the dismal corridors among felons and murderers, merely to share with them the privilege of witnessing the marvellous pathos which genius, taste and culture could infuse into that simple story. What a fascination there is in really good reading! What a power it gives one! In the hospital, in the chamber of the invalid, in the nursery, in the domestic and in the social circle, among chosen friends and companions, how it enables you to minister to the amusement, the comfort, the pleasure of the dear ones, as no other art or accomplishment can! No instrument of man's devising can reach the heart as does that most wonderful instrument, the human voice. It is God's special gift and endowment to His chosen creatures. Fold it not away in a napkin. If you would double the value of all your other acquisitions, if you would add immeasurably to your own enjoyment and to your power of promoting the enjoyment of others, cultivate with incessant care this divine gift. No music below the skies is equal to that of pure silvery speech from the lips of a man or woman of high culture.—*John S. Hart.*

HEALTHFULNESS OF MILK.

If any one wishes to grow fleshy, a pint of milk taken on retiring at night will soon cover the scrawniest bones. Although we see a good many fleshy persons nowadays, there are a great many lean and lank ones, who sigh for the fashionable measure of plumpness, and who would be vastly improved in health and appearance could their figures be rounded with good solid flesh. Nothing is more coveted by a thin woman than a full figure, and nothing will so rise the ire and provoke the scandal of the "clipper-oid" as the consciousness of plumpness in a rival. In a case of fever and summer complaints milk is now given with excellent results. The idea that milk is feverish has exploded, and it is now the physician's great reliance in bringing through typhoid patients, or those in too low a state to be nourished by solid food. It is a mistake to scrimp the milk pitcher. Take more milk and buy less meat. Look to your milkman; have large-sized, well-filled milk pitchers on the table each meal, and you will have sound flesh and save doctors' bills.—*Housekeeper.*

"I'LL TURN OVER A NEW LEAF."

It is all very well to say that you will "turn over a new leaf." But let me ask, What about the *past black leaves of guilt*? The schoolboy, after spilling the ink on the page of his copy book, turns over a new leaf, resolving that in the future he will be more careful; but "turning over a new leaf" does not remove the blotted one, and soon the teacher's eye detects the blots and punishes him for his carelessness.

It may be, dear reader, at one time you were addicted to drinking or swearing, or other bad habits; but of late you have "turned over a new leaf," and are become what the world calls a "reformed" person. This is right and proper, but don't forget that *future good conduct can never blot out past disobedience.*

ORIGIN OF NAMES IN THE WEEK.

In the museum at Berlin, in the hall devoted to Northern antiquities, they have the representations from the idols from which the names of the days of the week are derived. From the idol of the sun comes Sunday. This idol is represented with his face like the sun, holding a burning wheel, with both hands on his breast, signifying his course round the world. The idol of the moon, from which comes Monday, is habited in a short coat, like a man, but holding the moon in his hands. Tuesday, from which comes Tuesday, was one of the most ancient and popular gods of the Germans, and represented in his garments of skin, according to their peculiar manner of clothing; the third day of the week was dedicated to his worship. Woden, from which comes Wednesday, was a valiant prince among the Saxons. His image was prayed to for victory. Thor, from whence comes Thursday, is seated in a bed with twelve stars over his head, holding a sceptre in his hand. Friga, from whence we have Friday, is represented with a drawn sword in his right hand, and a bow in his left. Seater, from which is Saturday, has the appearance of perfect wretchedness. He is thin-visaged, long-haired, with a long beard. He carries a pail of water in his right hand, wherein are fruits and flowers.

WITHOUT CAPITAL.

It is bad beginning business without capital. It is hard marketing with empty pockets. We want a nest-egg, for hens will lay where there are eggs already. It is true you must bake with the flour you have, but if the sack is empty, it might be quite as well not to set up for a baker. Making bricks without straw is easy enough, compared with making money when you have none to start with. You, young gentleman, stay as a journeyman a little longer, till you have saved a few pounds; fly when your wings have got feathers; but if you try it too soon, you will be like the young rook that broke its neck through trying to fly before it was fledged. Every minnow wants to be a whale, but it is prudent to be a little fish while you have but little water; when your pond becomes the sea, then swell as much as you like. Trading without capital is like building a house without bricks, making a fire without sticks, burning candles without wicks; it leads men into tricks, and lands them in a fix.—*"John Ploughman" (Spargrow).*