

THE ANTIDOTE

Published every Saturday at the offices, 171 and 173 St. James Street Montreal. It is issued by the JOURNAL OF COMMERCE plant and machinery, in time for the evening suburban trains. Personal inquiries may be made of the proprietor. Subscription ONE DOLLAR per annum, single copies FIVE CENTS. May be obtained at all the leading stationers and newsdealers in Montreal, Toronto, Quebec, Hamilton, Ottawa, London, Halifax, St. Johns, Kingston, Winnipeg, Victoria, Vancouver, &c. All communications and remittances should be addressed "THE ANTIDOTE," 171 and 173 St. James Street, Montreal. We do not undertake to return unused MSS. or sketches. Published by M. S. FOLLY at the above address.

CHILDREN'S TOYS AND GAMES.

A toy is a plaything; a plaything is a thing to play with; that at all events is the childrens' definition and it is one whose antiquity commands our respect. It has good argument too: If all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Jack must sometimes be allowed to play; and if he plays he must have some plaything, and the plaything must be to play with, for if they are to work with, Jack is at work and not at play. A toy ought not to be a teaching-trap; under that aspect it is altogether reprehensible, it is an impostor, a creature which shrinks into discredit under a fictitious guise and with crafty designs; it is misleading, it upsets Jack's honest feeling in distinguishing between work and play; it is baneful, it sophisticates play and deludes work; it is a bore. The amusements of all grown up people are unexhilarating enough, but at all events we do not undergo them with an arduous sense of having our minds improved and taking in instructive information.

There may be a good deal of blank space still in our heads where the instructive information should be—we may admit that in our humility—but offer us a nice game of political economy, question-and-answer cards, instead of our meaningless rubber of whist, or devise making our cotillon or our german educationally valuable by our assuming each some historic characters for others to guess, and our offering chronological remarks in keeping as we whirl and change partners, and see with what gratification we shall hail the new recreation. Or let any admirer of scientific teaching-traps try presenting the lady he delights to please with a ball-room bouquet, hap-

ply arranged to impress on the mind the difference between dimidiato and tetrahecal anthers, or sending his father in the country a barrel of oyster shells with each pair of valves containing, instead of the customary inmate, an ingenious surprise calculated to illustrate chemical affinities.

All the teaching-traps, all the frauds upon children, whether in the shape of playthings or games, have one quality in common: they do not teach what they aim at. How should they? Let an illustration be never so happy, it illustrates nothing to those who mark only the illustration indifferent to the thing it means. Thus it is the fate of many a careful allegory and many a tale of warning to please, indeed, perhaps to be read and re-read a score of times almost as if it were no more purposeful than Jack and the Bean Stalk, and to have impressed no single lesson lurking within it. One might deduce many an instance to show that this wholesome capacity of assimilating the jam without the rhubarb does not belong to children only; but it would still remain sure that the gift is especially a childrens' gift. Children always skip the moral; they skip it even if it is as the moralist fondly hopes: inextricably mixed into the acceptable parts of the story. They draw out the sweet and leave the bitter unstirred as infallibly as the busy bee herself. And they exercise the same faculty on their amusements and toys. For instance, the garden squirt would illustrate in a nice familiar way a good deal of educational intelligence by the suction, such as a teacher, who believes in the new favorite doctrine that what the man may most usefully know is what the child should be learning, would wish to lose no time in communicating to his infant pupils: and a bright boy of sound health, with no premature or abnormal speciality of genius, will accept the intelligence as one fact and the squirt as another, and putting aside the intelligence as one fact, and squirt as another, and putting aside the intelligence as for the present irrelevant an dwill be convinced of the extreme suitability of the apparatus for watering his mother's rose tree and his little sister.

The illustration will become interesting as an illustration only when, with riper faculties he has learnt an interest in the subject, not depending on the illustration, and which can dispense with it. It is the same with the games that should teach chronology and geography and other assortments of names and numbers, hard to learn and easy to forget; the children who know the facts win the games and are merry; the children who think Penetanguishene might as well be situated in Prince Edwards Island as anywhere else, and that there is no great difference as to a century or two here and there when you are dealing with the lives of people who lived too long ago to have been real, give the wrong answer-cards and don't think the games first-rate anyway. There are no other permanent results.

Wives of Famous Men.

Racine was so disgusted with the failure of one of his plays that he determined to become a monk. His confessor persuaded him to take a wife instead. He did so and never regretted it.

Tea, dyspepsia and a scolding wife made Hazlitt's life a burden.

Nero kicked his wife, Poppaea, to death.

The domestic relations of both Thackeray and Dickens were unhappy.

Fielding, the novelist, married his maid-servant and was miserable.

Lessing married a widow with four children and made them a good stepfather.

Mollere, at the age of 40, married an actress of 17 and soon separated from her.

Steele was happy in both marriages, and pays high compliments to each wife.

Goethe married an estimate "frau" who made him quite content with his home.

The married life of the famous Palestrina was long and unsullied by domestic clouds.

Milton's wives gave him so much trouble that he wrote a treatise advocating divorce.

Verdi married young, winning a charming Italian girl, who made his home ideally perfect.

Van Dyke married a lady for her money, and was disappointed on finding she had none.

The married life of Lord Nelson was made miserable by his infatuation for Lady Hamilton.

Dr. Sir Hugh Smithson married a Percy heiress for love and became Duke of Northumberland.

Alexander and Julius Caesar were both accustomed to whip their wives on the slightest provocation.

Leigh Hunt was happy in his marriage, though his wife was no cook and a very poor housekeeper.