



WHAT TO DO WITH THE CHILDREN AT THE TABLE.

Out of a dozen inquiries as to whether children should be allowed at the table, eight "certainlys," three "yeses—after a certain age, say four years— and one "not until a child is capable of using its knife and fork properly," were received. Care was taken to ask the question of women who have large families and are leaders in society and whose children are not only cultured, but have done well unto themselves. It is a subject that every mother is interested in and one on which there is necessarily a diversity of opinion, for the management of children must vary according to the age, health and disposition of the child. Some are ruled by kindness, some by strictness, and others need only careful management or tact to lead them.

It is impossible for any but the mother to make rules, all articles on the subject can only give advice in the form of suggestions, and we therefore hope that the following will prove of use to mothers and all those who have charge of children.

A very good rule to adopt in regard to bringing children to the table is to allow them to be brought in when dessert is served. This can be made a real pleasure, not only to the children, but to the parents. Of course the little ones have had their dinner earlier, and the little taste of sweetmeats given by the mother's permission can do no harm, and can be made a reward. We are referring, of course, to babies or young children say under five years.

I believe as eight of the twelve mothers do, in children being brought to the table, for it is necessary that they should begin as early as possible to learn table manners; and nowhere can they be taught so well as at the family table.

In some households a side-table is provided for the children, with the governess or head nurse to superintend, and if the mother does not feel equal to the task of overseeing her children at meals, this is a very excellent plan to adopt, only she should see that the person in charge is well qualified for the duty.

Before going further I wish very much to tell you of a beautiful house in New York, where everything is kept in perfect order—except the children—and dinner or any meal in that house is an ordeal which few people care to go through twice. There are two children, a boy and a girl, and a few of the things they do and should not be allowed to do are as follows: In the first place the waitress is never sure of where they are going to sit. Their proper places, the girl beside her mother and the boy by his father, are of course neatly laid, but as like as not the girl will want to sit beside her father, or the guest if there is one, and immediately there arises a squabble as to what seat she will take, and after five minutes loud talking, scolding and perhaps crying, it is settled, then the waitress must change the plates, napkins and so on. No attention is paid by them to the blessing, and the moment it is ended both begin to tell what they want. Of course they are helped first and after being helped they invariably change their mind and want something different. When the bread is passed they finger every slice or roll to get the softest piece, and after they have got it break it into a thousand bits. They are allowed to help themselves to the preserves and sauces and butter, and by the time the dessert reaches the table they have eaten—or wasted—enough to satisfy a grown man or woman. Then most likely there will be a hot discussion as to how much "puddin'" or pie they want, and it will in all probability end in one of them being carried out of the room screaming, while the other is sure to be rewarded for not crying.

What can parents expect in the future for these children? and can they blame them for anything they do in after life that is unmanly or unwomanly? I think not. I have not drawn from imagination, but from actual life; and it is not such a very unusual case either, as many can testify.

On the other hand there is such a thing as being too strict. There will be many among my readers who can remember the plate of cold porridge that was set by from breakfast and must be eaten before anything else at lunch, and the hard crusts saved from one meal to another. Such a practice seems barbarous. After children cannot eat the food provided, let a mother try it on herself and see how it affects her stomach. If the food must be given a second time to the little one, put it in a different cup or plate and heat it if it will make it more palatable.

And then, why should a child be made to eat what it does not like, just because the father, mother or nurse is careless in helping it? If John likes the leg and Mollie the wing, why should John have the wing and Mollie the leg? Children have their preferences, and as far as it is right they should be regarded. At the same time no child should be fed entirely upon the white meat of the turkey, or given all the cream in the pitcher simply because he wishes it.

Then again, how often their food is tasteless for want of salt, or too much salted; the milk just turned, or the bread hard. But it is not of the children's food that we are writing but of how they shall eat it and in what manner it shall be served to them.

The first thing is to establish a seat at the table for the child that shall be his or her place. A high chair is necessary for a child under four, and what a precious piece of furniture this chair is to every mother. It is also an excellent plan and will save a deal of trouble if the nurse can be spared from other duties to take care and wait upon the children at table.

Now comes a difficult time in a child's training; it must be taught to treat its nurse respectfully, and the nurse must also speak kindly and be respectful to her little charge. It was in this particular that the old coloured mammies of the South were so invaluable. They never allowed the children under their care to be rude either to themselves or any one else.

There is a very pretty custom, sometimes met with here and which is universal in England and if once adopted is sure to always exist, that is that all children over four years old shall not take their seats until their father, and especially the mother, is seated. I saw a veritable Little Lord Fauntleroy the other day take his mother by the hand when dinner was announced and lead her to her seat, draw out her chair and see her comfortably seated before taking his own. It was all so natural and charming I could not help contrasting this bit of courtesy with that of the two children of our New York friend.

If children are taught from the very first to take their seats quietly, wait patiently for their food, answer promptly and speak when spoken to they will not only be a credit to you but their presence will be anything but a trouble. If the child has an accident try to treat it as such, not as a piece of willful mischief, as we are too apt to. The plaintive little cry, "I didn't mean to," is oftener true than otherwise.

Never make fun of a child for the use of its knife or fork, but try patiently and perseveringly to correct its mistakes, and from the very first when you say *no* let it be *no*. Of course there are delicate, nervous children who must be indulged in many ways not to be thought of with a strong and healthy child, but even then there is a limit not only for the child's sake but the mother's and nurse's.

In many families the oldest child is required to ask the blessing. This does not seem quite right. Should the father be absent, however, and there is a son, then it is a grateful duty for the boy to be able to do it. A child's training can never begin too early, nor can it be too carefully schooled in all that is graceful. Civility has always had luck as an ally. "My mother taught me," how often, how very often we hear that phrase when one wishes to explain something worthy of remembrance.

Here are a few good old rules that can be safely followed:

- Give the child a seat that shall be strictly its own.
- Teach it to take its seat quietly;
- To use its napkin properly;
- To wait patiently to be served;
- To answer promptly;
- To say thank you;

If asked to leave the table for a forgotten article or for any purpose to do so at once;

Never to interrupt and never to contradict;

Never to make remarks about the food, such as "I saw that turkey killed and how it did bleed," as I once heard a little boy remark at a Thanksgiving dinner.

Teach the child to keep his plate in order;

Not to handle the bread or to drop food on the cloth and floor;

To always say "Excuse me, please," to the mother when at home, and to the lady or hostess when visiting, if leaving the table before the rest of the party;

To fold its napkin and to put back its chair or push it close to the table before leaving;

And after leaving the table not to return.

I know children who observe every one of these rules, and are in no way priggish, but are simply well-behaved, delightful companions, and they owe it all to their mother's careful training from babyhood.—*Good-Housekeeping*.

COTTON IMITATION CHAMOIS.

A cotton fabric which has been patented in England, is thus described by the *Canadian Journal of Fabrics*: "it has the appearance and soft feel of chamois leather, and it is guaranteed will not lose its special qualities when washed. In making the cloth cotton yarns form the warps, these being dyed a fast colour, a chrome yellow tint being preferable; they are sized and dressed in the usual manner. The weft is spun soft and is used in the undyed state. The fabric is woven from these yarns, and is then passed several times through cylinder teasing or raising machines, whereby the surface is broken and a good ground nap is produced on one side or both sides thereof. The fabric is then 'soap' finished, to impart to it the desired appearance and soft, cold feel of chamois leather. It is applicable for either wet or dry cleaning purposes and also as a polishing cloth, and especially suitable for underclothing and for linings of the same, and for general use as a substitute for the chamois leather now used for these and for analogous purposes. Being, moreover, of a woven texture and absorbent, it is more healthy for use in garments than chamois leather, and does not require to be perforated. Unlike leather also, which gets stiff after washing, this improved material so produced is capable of being repeatedly washed without stiffening, and is found to retain its softness perpetually."

NO SAWDUST.

Some time ago, it was announced in the papers that a prominent citizen would make a trip to Spain this summer. Three or four days after the announcement, he received a call at his house from an oldish lady, who introduced herself as living in the city and stating that she had read the notice.

"Yes I shall visit Spain," he replied.

"These Malaga grapes come from Spain, don't they?" she asked.

"Yes'm."

"You will undoubtedly go where they grow?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Well, I wanted to see if you wouldn't do me a little favour. I'm very fond of Malagas, but I hate to pay two shillings a pound for 'em. I don't believe they are over ten cents a pound there; and I'll leave thirty cents with you, and have you bring me back three pounds. Please select large bunches, and don't have any sawdust on 'em."

His astonishment was so great that she had laid down the money and got away before he could speak. He rushed to the door just as she boarded a street car, and she called to him from the platform:—

"Large bunches and no sawdust. The sawdust never agrees with me."

MINISTERS who preach long sermons—in the summer—will be interested in the comments of their smallest hearers. One of them, when asked what lesson was to be learned from the story of Paul and Eutychus, replied, "Please, sir, ministers should learn not to preach too long sermons!" Another, a little four-years-old, commented thus: "Mamma, that minister preached me all to hunger!"