

Stories From Natural History.

The REVIEW here resumes its stories from natural history, translated from the German by Richard Wagner, and adapted for these pages. A teacher says that her children listen to these with the greatest delight; and well they may, for they are interesting to the youngest children, and teach something about the common things they use and of the animals they are best acquainted with. They may be encouraged to tell or write of the pets they have in their homes, and thus the stories may be used for language work. They should also be a means to train the children to habits of observation, for as the stories describe the habits of animals chiefly, little people are led to watch more attentively, and report what they themselves see.

Teachers should practise reading the story before telling it to children; or, better still, they should make the story their own, adapt it to the children, and tell it in their own words.

Story-telling to children has become such an art that it is recognized by educationists as a powerful means of culture in the schoolroom. A lady greatly gifted in this respect was recently engaged by a school board in one of the largest cities in England to give lessons to the teachers on how to tell stories. Could not the wonderful gifts possessed by Miss Knowlton, of St. John, and by other teachers in our midst, be, in a degree, made a possession to all by similar means?

What the Kitten Has To Learn.

A well brought up cat is not content to lie before the fire, lap milk from a saucer, and occasionally knock down a cup or glass from the table, which any child can do; she has to learn many other things which are not so easily imitated.

When other people close their eyes at night, a cat must have hers wide open, and although everything in the house looks different then, she must learn her way about in the dark, from the attic to the cellar. She must know every hole and corner, every lath between each beam, every ledge in the house along which she can walk. Where her eye can no longer see, her nose must smell, following the track of the mouse to mark if it is hidden in its hole or taking its walks abroad.

All the quaint games and antics which you see the kitten performing are exercises which teach her how to catch mice. She measures the distance of the rolling ball or the swaying straw with her eyes and leaps accordingly. At first she many a time

fails to catch it, but gradually pussy becomes more certain, learns to extend her sharp claws more quickly, and to draw them in more surely, till she knows her work to a nicety. One of the greatest arts and virtues which a kitten has to learn is patience, never wearying if she has to lie hour after hour watching a mouse-hole, never turning her eyes away from it, ready to jump at last, quick as lightning, upon the mouse directly it shows itself.

And although we should not wish children to imitate a cat in thieving or scratching, it would be a good thing if they were like her in learning to give their whole mind to their work, and, without losing patience, never leave it till they have mastered their task.

Two Lumps of Sugar.

You may have two lumps of sugar to put into your tea. Where do they come from, and what have they gone through?

One of these lumps is beet-root sugar, "which has not travelled far," you will say, "for it has only come from the field where the beet-root grows."

The farmer ploughs the field and sows the prickly beet seeds. He puts them into holes about a foot apart, and the seeds sprout upwards into a bunch of big green leaves, downwards into a thick juicy root. Then comes the labourers, who pull out the weeds growing among the beets, and with their hoes cover the earth over the roots, so that they may grow strong and thick, one as fine as the other.

In the autumn the labourers pull up the beets, give the leaves to the cattle, and take the plump roots to the sugar factory. Here they are carefully washed and crushed, and the mash put into sacks and pressed. The beet fibres cannot pass through the meshes of the sacks, and are given to pigs and cattle to eat, to fatten them for the butcher.

The beet syrup, which has been strained, is cloudy till it is sprinkled with charcoal to clear it, after which it is boiled in cauldrons till it becomes thick. During the cooling process the hard sugar divides from the liquid syrup. This newly made sugar is still dark and coarse, but it is again dissolved in water and sprinkled with charcoal to make it white, after which it is put into shapes, and hardens into a loaf of beet-sugar.

Your second lump is cane sugar, which has travelled all the way from Jamaica. And many people think that what comes from far away must be worth more than what comes from hard by. In Jamaica black negroes grew the sugar cane in large fields,