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What is Life?

From the Baltimore Herald,
A little crib beside the bed,
A little face above the spread,
A little frock behind the door,
A little shoe upon the floor.

A little lad with dark brown hair,
A little blue eyed face and fair,
A little lane that leads to school,
A little pencil, slate and rule.

A little blithesome, winsome maid,
A little hand within it laid,
A little cottage, acres four,
A little old time household store.

A little family gathered round,
A little turf-heaped, tear-dewed mound;
A little added to his soil,
A little rest from hardest toil.

A little silver in his hair,
A little stool and easy chair;
A little night of earth lit gloom,
A little cortege to the tomb.

LADIES' DEPARTMENT.

MEMS. BY THE WAY.

Even lamb's trotters are made to subserve to the purposes of adornment, three of them being set upright upon the back of a hat of rich porceau velvet, which was bordered with Persian lamb.

Fur is extensively used on bonnets, a hat soup plate shape being almost entirely covered with narrow bands of mink; the strings are of narrow grey velvet, and on the outer side are bands of the fur.

One no longer hears the rustle of starched cambrics, for where linsens instead of silk are worn they are never starched. One or two silk petticoats are now considered an indispensable part of the wardrobe, and they are a more expensive than a greater number of cambric ones.

Brown furs are more fashionable than any other, and are even used on evening dresses. A striking costume seen lately in a theatre box was of heavy white ermine, trimmed with bands of otter; the garment worn in the hair consisted of several tufts of fur, surmounted by a feathery heron's aigrette.

If you insure your "furniture" against fire, will the insurance cover your teeth? Apparently it will in London, for a householder, whose wife sneezed her false teeth into the fire, claimed four guineas for their loss. He was paid, but the company might have contested the claim on the ground that false teeth are not furniture, but machinery.

All women rejoice in the sleeves of the present. Thin women because it conceals their slender arms and broadens their shoulders. Stout women because the sleeves take away from the apparent size of the body and render broad hips less noticeable. Short women because the puff on the shoulders gives them a little more height, and tall women because it renders their gowns both distigute and striking.

The French milliners use little fancy pins in place of stitche wherever possible. The trimming on some of the new hats is entirely put on with pins. Old paste ornaments may be turned to good account now for trimming bonnets. They are used for fastening velvet bows. It seems likely that the ridiculously small bonnet will be followed by the ridiculously large bonnet. This of course will not be a surprise to those who know fashion's mood.

Blue jean is becoming a most popular material for many home uses. It sheds dust easily and can be washed without changing color, and for these reasons it is liked for table covers, seats for partially worn out chairs, crumb cloths and closet portieres. It should be worked in a bold conventional pattern, with rope linen or coarse embroidery silk, and it makes a splendid cover for an invalid's sofa pillow, worked with white rope linen.

It is the correct thing now to have small tables in one's drawing room, or best room of whatever name, entirely devoted to a single sort of bric-a-brac. A bronze table, for instance, is presided over by a low boudoir lamp in the precious metal, and various accompanying bronze baskets, small figures, trays, and the like cluster about its base. Silver, Dresden, ivory, and amber tables are other treatments of the same idea.

A sewing implement less familiar than the thimble, or even the old-fashioned "shield" worn on the little finger, is a small silver covering for the end of the index finger. It looks like a silver egg sheathed in two near the larger axis. Two little prongs nearly meet on the inner side of the finger, and these may be separated or pinched together to make the implement fit. It is designed to protect the finger from the friction of the thread in crocheting. The implement contains perhaps fifteen cents' worth of silver. It is more used in England than in this country.

Eugene Field takes up the cudgel in favor of pet names for girls. "When," he says, "an American calls Ellen Nellie he obeys a noble, manly instinct: he loves to regard his mother as 'little mother,' his sister as 'little sister,' his sweetheart as 'little sweetheart,' his daughter as 'little daughter,' and this tender and beautiful sentiment he expresses when he employs the diminutives Nellie, Carrie, Susie, Mamie, etc. A powerful argument in favor of the custom is the fact that the girls themselves approve it. I believe in and stand for everything that shall show to the world that our girls, our sweethearts, our wives and our mothers are our pets and are petted."

A woman tells of a curious case of ap-

parent spontaneous combustion which may, perhaps, explain some alleged incendiarisms or inexplicably started fires. Coming home late from the theatre one evening she left her bonnet which was damp from a slight rain, on the parlor table, and forgot to remove it the next morning. Toward noon, passing through the hall, her attention was attracted by a smell of smoke, very faint but still distinct, and in the parlor, after some search, its origin was found in a tiny curl issuing from the center of the feather-trimmed bonnet. An attempt to snatch the article from the table resulted in a sudden transformation, as it fell to ashes beneath her fingers. Then it was discovered that the bonnet had been lying on a table upon which was also a stereoscope, and through its lens the morning sun had shone so ardently as to develop a burning glass, which in its turn had created a spark that had run hither and thither over the bonnet until it was completely destroyed.

The recent reference in the public prints to the fact that a bacteriological authority apprehends danger of transmission of disease in the present manner of administering communion in religious societies, emphasizes anew the more common one of careless drinking at public places. Children in particular are endowed, it seems, with a desire to drink at the sight of every cup and fountain. In the stores and railway trains, it is the children who are oftenest thirsty. Careful mothers realizing this, take pains to teach their families to avoid, as much as possible, drinking at public places, even at school, and it is really surprising how soon children will overcome this habit, for habit it really is, if watched for a while. When, however, it is necessary to relieve one's thirst abroad, if the cup be filled quite full and placed to the mouth in such a way that the rim will be about half an inch below the under lip, one can drink from the surface of the water. In this way no part of the vessel, to which some particles of poisonous matter may still be clinging, will touch the delicate skin of the lip. It is hardly necessary to add that the water which adheres to the mouth and below the lips should be removed by a handkerchief and not by the tongue.

An idea which is sanctioned by indisputable authority—the English—is that which curtains the back of a piano, when the exigencies of furnishing require that the instrument shall stand with its back to the room. A narrow brass rod is fitted across the top and from this depends a full curtain of whatever pleases the owner's taste or seems to accord with the rest of the room—plain, dull cloth or a brocade, or even cretonne, though this latter surely cannot be recommended. In this connection occurs the scheme of a woman who last Summer found herself at her wits end to dispose of her children's clothing when the one small closet of her country quarters was filled. A bedstead with a high head-board stood across a corner of the room, and on the back of this head-board the perplexed mother had rows of hooks screwed, fitting to the top on a wire cord a curtain of calico to protect the clothes from dust, and that improvised closet, she said, "was my salvation," which is a suggestion worth remembering against future restricted country quarters.

A sandbag is one of the most useful of household articles. Its virtues are equal, if not superior to the hot-water bag, and the cost is considerably less. The sand should be fine and clean, and should be thoroughly dried out before being "bagged." It is better to cover the flannel bag which holds the sand with a cotton one, as this prevents the sand from sifting out. A bag not larger than ten inches square is an available size. Mothers whose children are subject to carache will find these bags invaluable; they hold the heat a long time and their composition is such that they are easily adjustable to the affected parts.

Those little beauty spots on ladies' veils which were supposed to look like patches of court plaster on the fair skin, have found a successor at last. The spot fashion has had its drawbacks, and no matter how carefully that spot was located, it was almost sure to work around so that it came on the tip of the wearer's nose. Its successor is a dainty spray of flowers or a leaf worked on the gauze. One is supposed to come opposite each cheek.

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WINTER COSTUMES FOR CHILDREN.

TALL GIRLS. And Taller People Generally—What Has Made Them Grow.

From the Spectator.
The assertion that the fancy of the day flows toward tall girls, and that girls are manifestly taller than they were, is, we think, true.

We think ourselves, as matter of observation, that English men and women have profited by the cheaper food of the last thirty years, and are decidedly bigger than when we were lads. We are only sure that a certain limited class, the well-to-do section of the middle class, has become decidedly bigger, healthier, and, as regards its younger women, apparently taller than was the case forty years ago. Any jury of mothers would say that in seven out of ten families they knew the sons were larger than the fathers, unless the latter were specially big men; and that the daughters not only were larger than the mothers, but that they at all events seemed to be taller, too. The first cause of bulk and stature is probably race—we do not mean superior race, for the negroes of many districts are bigger than the English, and the "barbarians" were all bigger than the Roman soldiers who enslaved them—but race, and a continuance alike of pedigree and conditions of life usually involved in that word; but the second cause is diet in infancy; and the third, training in childhood and early youth. Much milk, for example, makes good bones, and soldiers caught young visibly lengthen out under their food and drill. In both these latter conditions the change within the last generation—we are speaking only of the well-to-do—has been very great indeed. The world has grown unconsciously much wiser as to the management of children. Nothing improves physique like good milk—that, and not porridge, is the cause of the tall Highlanders, Irishmen and Sikhs; and the little children of our day are nourished on cream and water, or milk procured from the great dairies, which is as good as milk can be, and different from the milk of thirty years ago. The very cows are of a different breed, not to mention the improvement in their food and lodging.

Then a prejudice of an extraordinary injurious character—we write these sentences on first class medical evidence—has silently, no one knows why, entirely disappeared. Nothing nourishes like good sugar, possessing as it does just the requisite heat-giving quality; but the mothers of 1850-55 draded sugar. They had an idea that it sickens babies, and that it spoiled the teeth of growing children. They, therefore, withheld sugar, thus leaving the children half-nourished. Nowadays, everybody among the cultivated knows that sugar is beneficial, and the children are left to their instincts with the result that they make flesh, and are almost always warm. Then the matrons of 1850-55 had a fixed idea, incurable by the men who never quite gave in to it, that children, if left alone, would invariably overeat themselves, a theory true of about five per cent. The nurseries were dieted like prisons, with the result—all nurses exaggerating the popular ideas—that the children who longed for food were never fed enough, and the children who disliked much food—a peculiarity of many good constitutions—were gorged to indigestion.

Finally, children are kept warm enough. The old idea that children should be "hardened" by exposure, has died away; the nurseries, besides being properly ventilated, are kept warm, and the whole principle of children's clothing has been radically, and we hope finally, modified in the sense that the "baby," as distinguished from the limbs, is thoroughly and warmly clad. The result is, that the child with a tendency to grow does grow, and that a greatly increased percentage of boys run toward 5 feet 11 inches, and of girls toward 5 feet 8 inches and 5 feet 9 inches, than has ever been the case before. The improvement, always, mind, in a strictly limited class which hardly considers the cost of food, is manifest at every turn, and is reported not only by every artist, but every caricaturist in the country. The undersized lads and skinny girls have disappeared from pictures of the middle class, even when drawn with distinctly hostile intent.

Food has been helped by training. It has become a custom to let girls live in the open air, to suffer them to play games which thirty years since would have been pronounced "hoydenish"—then a most opprobrious adjective—and even to train them through gymnastics with scientific attention and regularity. They may take as much exercise as they like, and, owing to the partly accidental introduction of vigorous games in which both sexes can share, they like to take a good deal. The girls stand like soldiers without their stiffness, and because they can do it, and know they can, they fall instinctively into

a style of dress which displays their ability, which recognizes, for example, the place of the waist in the human figure. Girls do not "lollop" now, have, indeed, almost forgotten a word which forty years ago was incessantly in their seniors' mouths, and was the origin of thousands of cases of positive physical harm. A well-bred girl nowadays does not "lollop," any more than she ties her waist belt about five inches too high.

We suppose also, that there has been a positive change in taste, such as occurs at least once in every fifty years, and that tall men and maidens, being appreciated, are more noticed, but we wonder whether there is or is not another cause at work, whether, that is, the approval of a type positively produces that type in answer to the demand. No one ever studies the history of a generation, carefully reviewing its portraits as well as its biographies, without being struck with the prevalence of a predominant type, especially among women. You cannot mistake Holbein's great ladies, whose faces have always character and seldom soul; or the ladies of the Puritan houses, or the women of Charles II.'s court, or the beauties of the early years of George III., or the "fine women" of Cruikshank's day, women who, whether it was his fault or not, now all appear to have positively unnatural cheeks. If they were all married women the explanation would be simple, for the fact would merely mean this, that taste having taken a different direction, those who pleased it succeeded in marriage, and were therefore the principal subjects of the portrait painters; but the existence of a type extends to unmarried women, too, and to well-born lads, and seems, we confess, quite beyond a perfect explanation.

A little may be due to the varied education of each generation—the gracefully thoughtful type of to-day, with its careful modelling and tendency toward a Greek outline, either in ivory or fine flesh tints, is, for example, a clear result of culture—and a little more to positive effort, every girl and nearly every young woman trying to realize in themselves the understood ideal—for example, completely altering in accordance with it the arrangement of the hair—and much must be allowed for dress, but there is something else, nevertheless. There is a type specially acceptable to each generation, and it is difficult not to speculate, as one turns over a volume of sketches of society, what the next one will be.

If the general tendency indicates the law, the next type should be slightly Oriental, for it is the East which is in the ascendant, and the East prefers the low, broad brow, rounded contours, and black eyes; but the "fashion" is as likely to be set by a great actress, a great heroine, or a great queen. Were there any brunettes at all in Queen Elizabeth's court?

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