

HOUSEHOLD.

Two Birthdays.

(By Mrs. M. W. Robinson.)

'It's always just so. There's always some reason why I can't have a nice birthday. You promised me, or the same as—and Nellie buried her head forlornly in the sofa cushion.

'I'm dreadfully sorry, Nellie,' answered her mother. 'You know that. I thought last spring, when John had his birthday party, that of course you could have one now. But I simply cannot take the money. Your father's out of work, and no knowing when he will get any. We've just got to save every cent for rent and victuals, and that's all there is about it.'

'Well, what can I do? Isn't there something else? All the other girls—'

'O dear! Nellie, I don't know of anything. I wish I did. I can't even get you a present. Mamma's sorry as can be, but that doesn't do any good.'

Just then a step sounded on the porch and Nellie stopped crying to listen. It was Mrs. Jenks, a neighbor, and she had come to ask Nellie to a party. Her little boy's birthday was on the same day as Nellie's, and though he was smaller than most of the children in the neighborhood, his mother wanted them all to come.

Nellie dried her tears altogether. To go to a party wasn't half so nice as to have one, but far better than nothing. But what was mamma saying?

'Thank you, Mrs. Jenks. Nellie would like so much to go, but I'm afraid it won't be convenient to-morrow. I'm very sorry.'

'What could it mean? Not go? Why not? Her white dress was pretty and clean. Did not her mother love her at all?'

'It's too bad, Nellie,' she said, when the door had closed, 'but you wouldn't want to go without making a present, and there's no money to buy one.'

That view of the case had not occurred to the child.

'Maybe they won't all take presents. O mamma,' she pleaded, 'please do let me go!'

'Yes, they will: they always do.'

'Isn't there something in the house that I could take?'

'I'm sure I don't know of a single thing. We've little enough ourselves. It's no use, Nellie. Just give it up and run out to play. Mamma pities you, dear. Maybe—some-time—'

Nellie ran out to a dark corner of the old barn, and she really thought her little heart would break. She wasn't old enough to realize how sore her mamma's heart was at disappointing her. If she had been I think she would have pitied her mamma almost as much as she did herself. She hadn't lived long enough, either to learn that 'sun always follows shadow,' and to know that bright and happy days would come to her again before long. No, she thought that everything bright and happy had suddenly come to an end, and never would begin again. Once in a while she felt a little speck of hope that mamma would change her mind to-morrow. But I am sorry to say that mamma didn't, so poor little Nellie fretted and moped and listened to the happy voices of the children at the party as they played on the lawn, till her head ached dreadfully, and she went to bed in a dark room.

A little farther down the street lived Alice Mason. She and Nellie had always thought it one of the queerest things in the world that their birthdays happened to come on the same day, and they called themselves 'twins,' though Nellie was two years the older. Nellie's mamma was not acquainted with Alice's, which was a pity, because she might have learned from her ideas which would have helped both Nellie and herself. Alice's mamma could have shown her how loving thoughtfulness and painstaking care can take the place of money in making children happy.

Alice's father had been out of work longer than Nellie's had, and her mother felt anxious, too, about the winter that wasn't far ahead, and how they should get enough coal and food and shoes to carry them through. But she tried to be brave and to trust in God, and she said, 'Anyway, the children mustn't lose all their pleasure.' So when Alice's birthday drew near, she remarked, cheerily, 'I'm afraid, dear, I can't give you the party we planned to have, but you can ask the two girls next door to a nice little

lunch, and use your own beautiful dishes. And Alice thought that would be an excellent substitute for a party.

Then mamma set her wits to work, because Alice certainly must have some presents, and it wouldn't do to spend a cent in buying any. She rummaged in a trunk and found a piece of linen lawn, fine and sheer, and made the nicest little empire apron you can imagine. Then, after hunting a while longer, she discovered something out of which she made a dainty little hemstitched handkerchief, with 'A' embroidered in the corner. Alice's older sister, Kate, made a new dress and cap for the big doll, Gladys, and when Alice found these things beside her plate at breakfast time, she never dreamed that she wasn't a rich little girl instead of a poor one.

When the lunch was served, everything was so dainty, and the dishes of pale blue 'real china,' decorated with little ivy leaves, were so pretty, that nobody noticed that there were only the very simplest kinds of food, and only a little of each kind. Alice poured the tea herself from the tiny teapot. Kate helped wait on the children, and it was a great success.

Mrs. Mason had intended to take her little daughter to the park in the afternoon to see the fishes and play by the fountain, though it was rather a long walk. But of course the little boy's mamma, who invited Nellie to the party, asked Alice, too; and her mother said: 'Why, yes; Alice will be delighted to go! It's her birthday, too.' For, you see, it was a great day for birthdays in that neighborhood.

'What will Alice take for a present, mamma?' said Kate.

Mamma thought in her heart, as most sensible women do, that the practice of always taking a present to a birthday party was a foolish one, but, also like most women, she didn't wish to send Alice without one, so she replied, 'I'll think, dear, and tell you by and by.'

So by and by Kate was instructed to select some pretty plates from a flower magazine, and fit a cover for them of pasteboard, painted with a little design in watercolors; and when it was finished and tied with a bright bow of ribbon, Alice marched happily off, not at all ashamed of her present, which had cost only a little care and patience on the part of Kate and mamma.

Alice's father got work before winter, and so did Nellie's. Both little girls had shoes that winter, and several birthday parties before they grew to be young ladies. But Nellie always felt a lump in her throat and an ache in her heart when she remembered this particular birthday, and Alice used to say, 'My mother always planned in some way to make my birthdays happy.'—'Congregationalist.'

Nature and the Children.

It matters little what joys or toys or recreations we select for our children, after all those that most commend themselves to the wee folks, are such as approach most nearly to the usual avocations of grown-up men and women. This point is emphasized by Miss Katharine Beebe, a famous kindergarten, who writes:—

Most mothers will bear me out in the statement that the playthings which the baby seems to prefer are such as the clothes-basket, the wash-boiler, and the ice-cream freezer; that is, when he can get these treasures; for usually they are taken away and the little tin horse or red ball substituted in the mistaken idea that these small objects are better suited to his small hands. People think that small toys are what he really wants, that he is mistaken when he thinks he wants the baby-carriage or the foot-tub; but he is not mistaken, he wants these big things, and mothers will do well, if, as far as possible, they will allow their little folks to play with them. If, sometimes, instead of visiting a toy-shop, to buy something to amuse two-year-old they will instead go through the basement of some large department store and buy a bushel basket or a clothes-line instead of a rubber cat, they will be working on the true line of development instead of against it. I remember watching a baby boy one summer whose choicest plaything was one cylindrical cedar block left in front of the house when the street was paved. With great apparent difficulty, but with equal enjoyment, he carried it back and forth from one place to another, for all sorts of reasons. He sat on it only to rest for further exertions. His wise mother did not object to his playing with it, neither did she insist on carrying it for him. She let nature

teach her as well as her little son and both were stronger and wiser for it.

Real tools with a little help while the children are learning to use them, should be a part of every home outfit. Instead of the cheap and useless tool-chests sold as toys, the real tools purchased as the child grows up to their use, will be found to yield the best results. Real gardening and real work of all sorts is play to children when they are rightly led into it.

Miss Beebe pronounces the attic the ideal playground for winter or stormy days. It may be turned into any sort of place in make-believe,—a garden, a work-shop, a gymnasium, or a school-room,—according as the child fancies. But, of course, there is nothing like out-door play, when the weather permits. Even the most expensive toys will be neglected by the youngsters when they wish to have a romp with nature, who is herself a fine playfellow at all times, and in her boisterous mood as well as when she is hushed and quiet. She sends summer showers to be enjoyed in bathing-suits! She gives ice-ponds, snowdrifts, and heaps of leaves to roll in as well as sunshine and flowers and the whole beautiful, 'Out of Doors!'—'Harper's Bazar.'

How to Make Curry.

There are curries and curries, endless in variety. One can make a superior powder at home by buying and mixing the several ingredients, and in these days, when so much we buy is adulterated, it is a satisfaction to know our curry is pure. The powder should be kept for convenience in wide-mouthed bottles, and tightly corked. The use of curry is considered very wholesome, as it is stimulating to the action of the stomach. Those unused to it should begin its use in moderation; the taste will dictate the increase in its use. It is a very simple process to make the powder. The materials should be the best, fresh as possible, pulverized and mixed. The following is the best rule I have ever yet seen, the proportions correct, and the result superior to anything that can be bought.

Best Curry Powder. — One ounce ginger, one ounce mustard, one ounce pepper, three ounces coriander seed, three ounces turmeric, one-half ounce of cardamom seeds, one ounce cayenne pepper, one-quarter ounce cinnamon, and one-quarter ounce cummin seed. One-half this amount makes sufficient for an experiment, if unaccustomed to its use.

Curried Veal. — We often see curry used with veal, for, of itself, this meat has little character, the taste unseasoned is apt to be insipid; so curry is especially adapted to give it an attractive taste. Cut up two pounds of lean-veal into small pieces. Cut a large onion and one large sour apple into slices, put into a saucepan with a large spoonful of butter, and stir till browned; then stir in a small spoonful of curry powder. Add one pint of water, and the veal, season with salt. Stir carefully and well together, then cover, and cook moderately till the veal is tender; then add the juice of one lemon, turn on a hot dish, and serve with a border of rice around it.

Curried Eggs. — These make a welcome supper dish, of a cold winter's night. Make a sauce with two spoonfuls each of butter and flour, half a teaspoonful of salt, one of curry powder, and a pint of milk. Into this sauce put seven hard-boiled eggs, cut lengthwise into eighths.

NORTHERN MESSENGER.

One yearly subscription, 30c.

Three or more to different addresses, 25c each.

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Sample package supplied free on application.

JOHN DOUGALL & SON,
Publishers, Montreal.

THE 'NORTHERN MESSENGER' is printed and published every week at the 'Witness' Building, at the corner of Craig and St. Peter streets in the city of Montreal, by John Redpath Dougall, of Montreal.

All business communications should be addressed 'John Dougall & Son,' and all letters to the editor should be addressed Editor of the 'Northern Messenger.'