

WHY DIRT IS NECESSARY.

BY ELEANOR KIRK.

"Keep the babies in the open air," said the sensible medical man to the mother of two pale delicate looking children.

"Well, I can't see that they get anything out dirt out of doors," the lady responded somewhat fretfully.

"Dirt is a good deal better than medicine for children," the doctor replied.

Mrs. Weldon looked at the tucked and ruffled dresses that her little ones wore, the broad ribbon sashes, the elaborate lace caps, and shook her head dubiously. Dirt and disorder were very distasteful to her. The children never went out with their nurse—a woman who had been specially selected for her neatness and care-taking qualities—that they did not return the worse for wear. The excuse for this was that Master Willie—four years old—would pick up all the stones and sticks that came in his way, and baby Ruth always tried to do just what her brother did.

Mrs. Weldon could not understand why the clean, well-aired nursery was not as healthful a place for children to play in as out doors in the dirt. They had a drive every pleasant day, and why wasn't this enough? She believed that it was, but the children grew thinner and paler and more fretful. The doctor was summoned again and his prescription was the usual one—air and dirt.

Some folks might think this a very expensive prescription, but to Mrs. Weldon it meant dollars and dollars worth of elegant fabrics soiled and ruined. Her children had no common dresses and she did not intend that they should have. She wondered if it were not possible for the babies to have all the out-door they needed without the obnoxious dirt? The experiment was worth trying at all events. She would accompany the nurse a few times and see wherein this servant failed to carry out her instructions. It might require some energy and watchfulness to keep children from crawling in the dirt, but of course it could be done. So one fine morning the little family started out with the intention of spending several hours in the Park. A baby carriage was procured at the entrance for the children, and for a half hour or more everything progressed in an orderly manner. Then Master Willie grew tired and demanded to be allowed to walk. This was the signal for a grand outburst from the baby who staunchly declined to remain a moment longer than her brother did. Mrs. Weldon took the latter infant by the hand, while the nurse led the baby and propelled the carriage. This arrangement was of short duration. Master Willie spied a bird and with almost a bird's quickness started in pursuit. In vain did his mother call to him to return. On and on he went, but the momentum was too great, and before long Master Willie had collided with another little boy, falling flat on his face in a not over clean spot. There was a great splash of mud on his beautiful crimson sash, mud on his pretty cap, mud on his embroidered skirts, and his poor little nose had met with very hard fate indeed. A lady who had just seated herself on an opposite bench, and who also had two little ones with her, appeared at this crisis, and offered Mrs. Weldon a wash cloth. It was as white as now and just damp enough for the purpose.

"I always take three or four with me on such occasions," she said with a smile, holding up the oil silk bag which contained these most necessary articles.

"I believe in dirt," she added, "but it certainly has its place."

Mrs. Weldon watched the operations of this lady with great interest as she returned to her children. They were dressed in excellent taste, but somewhat more plainly than her babies. Their ribbons were taken off and consigned to the motherly hand-bag which seemed filled with every necessary thing. Their delicate caps gave place to little dark shade hats, and over each dress was drawn a long loose gingham garment, tastefully made, completely covering their finery. Then the children went their way with perfect freedom, while their mother conscious that they would be in respectable condition to take home, was able to give herself up to enjoyment also.

Mrs. Weldon's nurse went to a hydrant and rinsed the wash cloth, and her mistress returned it with many thanks.

"You had better keep it," said the lady gracefully, "for you will doubtless need it again."

"Your little ones do not seem to be much troubled," Mrs. Weldon observed thoughtfully.

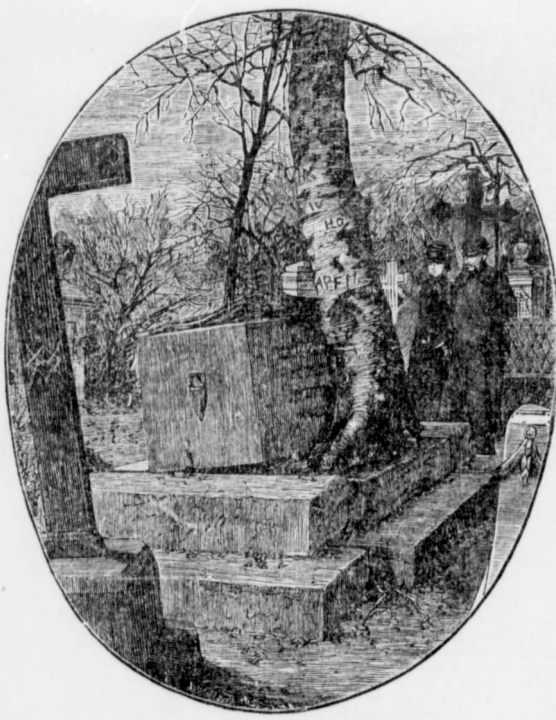
"I have reduced this business to a science," said her companion. "You see I used to be very much annoyed and dissatisfied with my nurse for allowing the children to get into so much dirt and I took the matter into my own hands. The result was that I not only found she was not to blame, but had really done her work admirably, in fact much better than I could."

"But don't you think it would be as well to train children to keep out of dirt?" Mrs. Weldon inquired anxiously. "It doesn't seem to me," she added, "that dirt is necessary to a child's health or happiness."

"I have found out," said the lady, "that dirt is necessary to my children's happiness, and for this reason and this alone is necessary to their health. Think of the strain upon your nerves, to be incessantly watching your little ones to prevent them from soiling their clothes. It is impossible for a mother or nurse to keep from losing their good nature under such circumstances. I discovered after a while that my children were simply little animals, and that to constantly interfere with their instincts was to

nurse's amusement, but it was the last time. Now they play, and laugh and scream with delight, hour after hour, and their mother has found out why dirt is essential to her children's happiness.—*The Cottage Hearth.*

TEA BAD FOR CHILDREN.—A Waterbury physician wants to begin a movement against tea. "I just came," he said, "from attending the case of a five year old babe who is ruined for life by its parents indulging it in tea drinking. The child became very nervous and dyspeptic, and they sent for me. I asked them how much tea the child drank. 'About two cups at each meal and several between meals,' was the reply. You see they let the teapot stand on the stove all day. Thus the tannic acid is extracted, which serves to turn the linings of the stomach into leather, and brings on dyspepsia and kindred diseases. Yes, you will find hundreds of women, young girls, and aged women, and occasionally a man who have completely ruined their nervous system by the excessive use of common tea. It will be a blessing to mankind when a temperance crusade can spare wind enough



TOMB FORCED OPEN BY A GROWING TREE.

do them a grievous wrong that was sure to react upon myself. My little boy would be happy for half an hour with a stone that would soil his dress. To dig a hole in the dirt with a stick and scoop it out with his hands was a pleasure impossible to exaggerate. If for the sake of his finery I tried to prevent such enjoyment the result was a conflict extremely demoralizing to both of us. I have known him to serenade and kick until he was completely exhausted and would remain irritable all the rest of the day. A morning in the Park with my children and a good nurse to look after them would make me ill for a week. Now under this regime I often prefer to serve alone. It is a real rest and comfort to me."

"And you get all this out of a couple of gingham aprons?" said Mrs. Weldon.

"Out of suitable clothing and an oil silk bag to hold the wash cloths," the lady responded laughingly.

"I shall copy you in every respect," said Mrs. Weldon. "I was at my wit's end," she added, "and I am rejoiced at having met you."

The babies were more unrepresentable on this occasion than ever before, very much to

from its attack on alcohol to assual tea."—*N. Y. Witness.*

If Mrs. H. would use a solution of hartshorn or spirits of ammonia to clean coat collars and sleeves she would like it better than soap and it is not so liable to injure the fabric. I have cleaned the most delicate colors with it without hurting them in the least. It is splendid for cleaning Spanish laces. I do not use it, however, for anything without weakening it. I take two parts water and one part spirits unless the article is very much soiled when I use more of the ammonia.—*Cor. Household.*

SCALLOPED OYSTERS.—Wash out of the liquor two quarts of oysters, pound very fine eight soft crackers, or grate a stale loaf of bread, butter a deep dish, sprinkle in a layer of crumbs, then a layer of oysters, a little mace, pepper, and bits of butter; another layer of crumbs, another of oysters; then season as before, and so on until the dish is filled, cover the dish over with bread crumbs, seasoning as before. Turn over it a cup of the oyster liquor; set in the oven for thirty or forty minutes to brown.

THE MIGHT OF THE PRECIOUS SEED.

Near Mary street, in Hanover, which is becoming a flourishing mercantile centre of Northern Germany, is the old Garden graveyard. Once in the outskirts, now the rush of traffic and rattle of street cars disturb the quiet of the old cemetery. For many a year its rusty gates have never been swung back to receive any new tenants. The graves are overshadowed by large trees and overgrown by weeds, and neglected marks the spot everywhere. Quite near the entrance, in the shadow of the old church, lie the remains of a lady who belonged to the old nobility and who was buried here during the middle of the last century. Her grave is covered by two massive blocks of sandstone on which lies another double their size. The latter is ornamented in relief by an extinguished torch, the symbol of death.

The immense blocks are fastened together by heavy iron-clamps, showing the intention of the owner not to have the place disturbed. This is still more emphatically pronounced by the inscription which is hewn in large letters opposite to the name of the occupant and the date of her death. On one of the lower stones, "This grave, bought for all time, must never be opened." But what is man's will in a universe ruled by an Almighty Creator? Where the two stones are joined together, a passing wind, not long after the monument was erected, carried a tiny seed. No one observed it but the eye of God.

But there it took, and as summer showers and winter storms followed the course of the seasons it grew, its roots finding nourishment in the soil beneath, till now an immense birch-tree spreads out its silvery and graceful branches over the moss-covered stones, and the sparrows build their nests in it. But in getting its present growth and expansion its great roots have gone clear through the grave, and the dust of the dead has nourished them, while its massive trunk has lifted the ponderous stones out of their places, turning them on edge and rending the iron clamps that held them together. And there the leafy branches, high in the air, nod to the sculptured legend below, as if in quiet mockery of the man's vain command, "This grave, bought for all time, must never be opened." It is the triumph of life over death.—*Selected.*

A GREAT STEP is gained when a child has learned that there is no necessary connection between liking a thing and doing it.—*Guesses at Truth.*

GOD'S ALMANAC has but one day; that is to-day.