

half the joy that is due to their extraordinary inventiveness and the perfect music of the rhythms. There is not very much humour, if one may venture to say so, in Hans Christian Andersen, but what there is of good quality. Children are rather shy of his pathos, his humour is apt to escape them, and what they love in those unfading stories is chiefly *what happens*. So strong is the interest in mere narrative, so long as it is to the purpose, that a child, albeit not lacking in imagination, will make a conscious effort to ignore the signification of an allegory as he reads, well knowing it to be an allegory, but resolved to take no notice of the allegorical meaning, so that he may enjoy the story itself with an untroubled mind, free of suspicion as to its sincerity as a pure story.

The greatest surprise, however, is in the discovery that little children, by no means dull of spirit or commonplace in intelligence, take a noticeable pleasure in a curious revival during this past Winter in London—the re-editing of those most prosaic and dowdy of all known verses written for the pretended amusement of children and their real discipline—the *Cautionary Stories* of Elizabeth Turner and Ann and Jane Taylor, writers of the beginning of the present century. In these poems, which show not the slightest sense of humour, the girls and boys who transgress in any way are drowned, or are whipped, or fall down and hurt themselves, or tear their frocks, or are poisoned by accident, with a sternness of destiny and retribution that nothing can mitigate. And this is the kind of verse in which these tremendous lessons are taught:

"Yesterday Rebecca Mason,  
In the parlor by herself,  
Broke a handsome China basin,  
Placed upon the mantel shelf."

The rhyme is brought about with an artless preparation, in the case of Rebecca's surname, which might, one would think, spoil the pleasure of any child. Then take the light regret, which is really worse than nothing, expressed for the death of Tommy and his sister, who had eaten berries of unknown character when they walked together:

"Alas! had Tommy understood,  
That fruit in lanes is seldom good."

that urchin might have been spared to endure much. It is true that Elizabeth Turner and Jane and Ann Taylor might reply that if they are stern, so is Nature, and that Nature, and not the poet, is responsible for the fact that fruit in lanes is seldom good: they might add that the moralist does her best to warn the young against Nature's own disproportionate retributions. But it is the way of doing it!

"Maria had an aunt at Leeds,  
For whom she worked a purse of beads."

The sententiousness is too much for the natural sense of derision at nine years old: but not at seven. To your great astonishment you find the younger children actually taking an interest in Maria, in Mrs. Manners, in Sophia who climbed a gate, "and won't another time," as the author darkly remarks, in Master James who would not say "please" to the servants, and in all the other grotesquely dull persons of these unilluminated, unfrolisome, unsmiling and always self-complacent verses. Men of genius have been rewarded, for all their wit, with less attention than Elizabeth Turner, the unhumorous, gained and gains even now from the very young and very simple amongst children, for her grimly expert verses—the implacable dowdy! Our own feeling, as adults, is one of something like consternation at the menacing completeness of Elizabeth Turner's couplets. We would really rather be butted by a good-sized sheep than meet too suddenly such lines as these:

"Louisa, my love," Mrs. Manners began,  
"I fear you are learning to stare."

Let us do the children justice—they, too, are sensible, at any age after seven or eight, of the absurdity. To read a whole "cautionary story" aloud to them is to set them dancing and clapping with laughter. It is strange that any age, having all the bright past behind it, should have so lost touch with everything that was fanciful or fresh as to produce these verses—the cautious Elizabeth Turner and the two spinsters her contemporaries were but spokeswomen for their time—for entertaining the spirit of childhood. These are dull times, and those were of them. And unfortunately there are dull children. It may be that some children, of rather low vitality, who were never really delighted with the walrus and the carpenter, or with the fobble who had no toes, or with the eggs and buttercups fried with fish, or with the middle of next week, or with the runcible cat, and who were tired, as poets have been tired, of too much liberty, have been rather glad to go back into captivity under the warning forefingers of Ann and Jane Taylor, and to rest in the commonplace. It would be lamentable, but it might be so. Even with children there are reactions, and with the writers for children reactions have it all their own way. "Lewis Carroll" and Edward Lear reacted against Elizabeth, Jane and Ann almost too extremely. It has become a commonplace to the modern child that his literature is to bear no moral, and is to be light-hearted, and is to appeal to his sense of humour. Irresponsibility has ceased to be a relief to him—it has been so insisted upon by all his modern authors.

As a rule a child's sense of humour seems to thrive uncommonly well without too much intentional training; on the other hand, it should not be depressed. A free glimpse of life outside the nursery is enough to keep it in good condition.

ALICE MEYNELL.

## THREE FASCINATING ENTERTAINMENTS.

### AN EVENING WITH AMATEUR ILLUSTRATORS.

One of the most enjoyable and mirthful entertainments for an evening can be given in this way. The hostess sends out invitations—say twenty—worded:

To meet Amateur Illustrators.  
Miss Cable.

A Symposium.  
Eight o'clock. Lake George Avenue.

Upon entering the drawing-room each guest is presented with an envelope within which is a pencil, also a large blank card and a slip of paper bearing the name of some well-known book. The card and slip are numbered to correspond. There should be five small tables; when the guests have been seated, four at each table, the hostess in a few words explains that the assembled company are the Amateurs, and that the evening will be devoted to creating title-pages.

Each person will represent in realistic manner the book named on his slip of paper, which must not be made known to his neighbors. If impressionist or poster work is referred to, it must be such as to suggest the book to be represented. A box

of colored crayons should be placed on each table for use. The clever hostess will see that the books most difficult of representation are given to the persons possessing the most artistic ability, and vice-versa.

At the end of fifteen minutes, sufficient time for the drawing, the slips are collected and sheets of letter paper distributed. Then the artists become conjecturers and critics. Each person passes his sketch to his right-hand neighbor, who places the name of the book suggested to him opposite the corresponding number on the sheet of paper and passes it on, receiving the next, which he treats in like manner until all have been guessed at that table. A change of tables is now made and the progressive movement kept up until all the tables have been visited. Five minutes should be allowed on each change of cards.

The person guessing the most titles correctly receives a handsome book or other appropriate prize. The person showing the most artistic ability, a small etching or water color. The hostess can tie the cards together, thus making a souvenir book or keep them for a game.

Below is given a list of titles with suggestions, which can be extended indefinitely:

Charles Dudley Warner's "The Golden House." A house drawn in yellow crayon.