

Living Up to One's Teapots.

BY ELIZABETH P. ALLAN.

In the light of the "old china" craze appeared an amusing cartoon which many of you will remember—a willowy figure standing with clasped hands before a rare old teapot, an unusually good "find," saying in rapt tones, "Can I ever live up to it?" We laughed, all over the country, at this mockery of æsthetic despair; but let us remember, now that the laugh is over, what a deal of truth lies under the slippancy.

Can we bring up pure, refined children in dirty houses? Can we bring up healthy ones where the laws of health are broken? Can we make young people industrious if we give them nothing to do? Can we teach them self-restraint if we do not first restrain them? Being sure of a negative answer to these questions, let me put another, one to whose answering I point this little article: Can we form characters of honesty and truth in homes where shams are practiced? Do not answer too hastily. Remember how fashionable shams are, from the laced and ruffled squares that cover your rumpled pillows to the answer at the door that you are "not at home," when you are hanging over the banisters in the upper hall.

My friend boasted merrily to me the other day of a little corner bracket she had for holding a statuette. "It is supposed to be white marble," she said, "and is considered quite handsome and unique; in reality it is pine deftly covered with white, veined oilcloth." Her little boy was leaning against her as she spoke, taking lesson, was he not, in pretending to a style of living beyond their means?

Perhaps I was unduly sensitive about that little boy because I wince to-day, though my own boy has grown a foot or two since, at the remembrance of one of my shams in which he detected me. I had a long visit from a tiresome caller in one of my busiest hours and, when she went away, I exclaimed over the stupidity of people who would come when you were busy and stay so long. "Why, mamma!" said the little boy, who had been sitting quietly at my feet, "you told her you were so glad to see her and asked her not to go away so soon!"

Is this the reason that we look to our country homes, our farmhouses, to supply us with the fresh, vigorous life needed to keep the country from decadence? Because in those plain, solidly-built houses things go for what they really are, and there are no gingerbread pretences? The furnishing and ordering of our homes is no small part of the education of those little immortals who dwell in them while waiting for their heavenly mansions. Judgment must be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet even in the bricks and mortar of our homes; even in the things we put into them for use and for adornment, that no habit of deceit or false showing may be formed as the days are going by, but that truth may be our constant and fearless guest here in these earthly abiding places as she is to be our friend and companion at God's right hand.

Church Etiquette.

There is such a thing as church etiquette, and the lack of it is quite as noticeable as a breach of good manners in any other relation of life. Right behaviour in church should be as religiously observed as are any of the rules and regulations of polite society elsewhere. It is quite certain that our conduct at church has not a little to do in deciding the measure of blessing which we may hope to receive, and has a very direct influence upon the minds of those about us.

The following suggestions are not altogether new, but they deserve frequent repetition, in view of the fact that they are so often and so flagrantly violated, even by those who would be quite offended if directly informed that they were guilty of such violations of good breeding. We should always be reverent and attentive; and in all things we should try to be "an example of the believers."

1. If possible, be in time. You need five minutes after coming to get warm or cool; to compose your body and mind, and to whisper a prayer before the service begins.

2. Never pass up the aisle during prayer or Scripture reading. If you do, your presence will distract the minds of many in the audience.

3. Be devout in every attitude; all whispering should be studiously avoided. Find the hymn and sing it if you can. Share the book with your neighbour. If in a strange church, conform to its customs of worship.

4. If the sermon has begun, take a seat near the door—no matter if you are "at home."

5. Be thoughtful of the comfort of others. Take the inside of the pew, if you are the first to enter, and leave all vacant space at the end next to the aisle.

6. Speak a bright, cheery word to as many as possible at the close of the service. If you are a stranger, ask one of the ushers to introduce you to the pastor, or to some of the church officers. This will always insure you a hearty welcome.

7. Never put on your coat, overshoes, or wraps during the closing hymn, and do not make a rush for the door immediately after the benediction is pronounced.

8. There should be no loud talking and jesting after the service is concluded. They are as much out of place in the house of God as in the house of mourning.

Children's Hobbies.

Don't discourage them, parents. Let the boys have their pets, even if they are somewhat of an inconvenience to you. Don't tell them the "Pail and Milkmaid" story when they are counting on the profits of the sale of the chickens not yet hatched. Let them be enthusiastic over their ventures as long as they are of the right character. It tides the boys over the restless "want-to-do-something" and want-to-go-somewhere" age.

Fathers don't interest themselves enough in their children's pastimes. When your boy talks over his plans and projects with you, don't throw wet blankets over them even if you can see farther than he and know that the result will not be as grand as he anticipates. Take hold of his interests and help them along in the right direction.

"Don't bother me about those rabbits," said a father in an impatient tone to his little boy, who had come to him for counsel. "I've got a great deal on my mind this morning of much more importance than those rabbits. What do they amount to, anyhow? Do you think that that father will gain the confidence of that boy in later years when he will long for it?"

"We're so happy, father and I, when we are together," said a little girl as she put her small hand into her father's strong one and looked up into his face with such love and confidence. That father knew just how many doll children the little mother had, their different names and individualities, the tragedies and happiness of their lives. He kept run of the things going on in the little world which his child lived in. We must remember that the outlook for our children is far different from ours. They see the flowers, but not the thorns, when they pick the roses. And yet they have their sorrows and troubles, and "woe unto him who offends one of these little ones." But thanks be to the father, their griefs are soon forgotten and do not weigh down their hearts as in maturer life, when realization brings out all the dark and shadowy facts. "All our lives in our youth were painted on a background of pale gold."

Fathers and mothers, be companions to your children. Mothers will naturally be more with the little ones and identified with their joys and sorrows. But see to it, fathers, that even amid the busy fret and wear of the world's great mart, that you get time to live your children's lives with them.

The Craze For Methods.

This craze for methods is epidemic in not a few churches. The popular notion is that the more methods a church uses, the more progressive and prosperous it is. Methods are pointed out as infallible signs that the church has life, and is seeking to have life more abundantly. There are pastors who are busy trying new methods that they have no time to think of the end to be attained. There are Sunday school teachers who are engaged in collecting new methods as some people collect postage stamps; their chief aim seems to be to get a round million. In some schools the infection works like the land craze among farmers, who must buy a few more acres to round off the farm, and a few more acres to round off the last purchases, and who keep on buying until they are land poor. We know teachers whose usefulness has declined in proportion as their supply of methods has increased.—Richmond Christian Advocate.

How shall we learn to know ourselves? By reflection? Never, but only through action. Strive to do thy duty; then shalt thou know what is in thee.