

THE HOUSEHOLD.

TAKING CHILDREN TO WALK.

A physician was the other day discussing some of the ills from which children suffer, and in the course of the conversation a number of interesting points were brought out. 'I am of the opinion,' he said, 'that a great many of the deformities and weaknesses of children are caused by the dreadful habit that some grown people have of taking small children out to walk and dragging them along at a fast pace.

'Only a few days ago, I saw a man taking a child not over four years old along the street. He was holding the little one's hand, and walked at his usual gait. The child jumped, ran and stumbled along, frequently losing its feet, and being brought up to the perpendicular by a jerk of the arm. The little creature got white and exhausted-looking, and finally began to cry, but the man seemed insensible to the fact that he was doing an unwise and cruel thing, and scolded and coaxed the little one along as best he could. He had nothing to carry, and might just as well have taken the child up, but perhaps he did not think of it, or if he did, chose not to do so. I had a little curiosity to keep track of them; and when the man stopped, as he shortly did, at a store, I stepped in and spoke to the child. Her father was busy and paid no attention to me. The child's temperature was at fever heat, and every nerve and fibre of the little body was quivering from the over-straining of the muscles. If that child doesn't have an attack of rickets or some kindred trouble, I shall be very seriously mistaken in my estimate of the injury it received in that dreadful dragging over a rough walk.

'Adults are, as a rule, altogether too careless about matters of this kind. They seem not to take into consideration the fact that a child's length of step is relatively so much shorter than their own. They are in a hurry, and fret and scold at the poor things for not keeping up, when it would be quite as reasonable to expect them to keep up with a good-gaited horse.

'I had in my charge at one time a child who had almost lost control of the muscles of one of the legs, a difficulty brought on, as I firmly believe, by the habit the other children had of taking the little thing out with them and hurrying it along, in order to keep up with the other youngsters with whom they were playing. They had strict orders not to leave the baby or to let go of its hands, and as a consequence it was dragged and pulled along in the most frightful fashion. I believe that a great many cases of rickets are brought on by this habit of pulling children by the arms. It necessarily is a strain on the spine, and must be productive of unpleasant if not dangerous results. Let any grown person do any work that strains the arms above the head for any length of time, and a most distressing feeling of exhaustion and pain under the shoulders is the consequence.

'Children should never have their arms stretched above their heads. It is sometimes difficult to know just how to manage in leading them, but this point should always be kept in mind, and no unnecessary pulling must ever be indulged in. I think that the attention of all intelligent parents should be directed to this subject, and that the strictest orders be enjoined on servants and all care-takers of children to avoid a practice that, in the nature of things, must be injurious, for this is, to my mind, without doubt, the cause of many hunchbacks and many deformities.'

USES OF OILCLOTH.

Floor oilcloths are each year being more generally used, especially the flexible ones. Many housekeepers put a wide breadth of it under the dining table, over the carpet already in place. This not only saves the carpet from wear, but is easily cleaned with the use of a damp cloth, and you will be quite surprised to know how soon it becomes dirty, a fact not noticeable when a car-

pet alone is in use, as very much of the fine dirt sifts through to the floor beneath, injuring the carpet to a great extent. Often when the dining room floor is not carpeted, an oilcloth is used under the table, for the men folks, occupying the same position at the table for years, are certain to wear the paint from the floor, especially if they wear heavy boots or shoes; and if they are careless or uneasy with their feet, in a few months the floor shows the effects, all of which the oilcloth prevents. Placed upon the floor before the sink, table, desk, or any place where there is much wear in the dining room, kitchen or sitting room, where rugs are not used, the saving in carpets and painted floors amounts to quite a sum even in one year. These flexible cloths are often used under stoves, and should extend to some distance upon each side, but the thick, heavy ones are better adapted for this purpose. The price of each kind is within the reach of all. Many of the designs are really beautiful, and prominent colors can be selected to match the carpet, paper, or paint in the room for which the cloth is intended. The artistic designs cost no more than the mere daubs of blazing colors. The small figured flexible cloths are very desirable for table covers, as they are readily cleaned, and are much used upon the kitchen table, and while they must be removed for certain culinary operations, they are readily replaced, and the tables look neater when they are in place, and when once used, they are seldom discarded, except for new ones.—'Agriculturist.'

TRAINING LITTLE HANDS.

'It has always been a source of regret to me,' said a woman who has had a great deal of experience in managing help, 'that I could not have gotten possession of a little girl that I once knew. She was a child of a servant in my employ, and for deft and quick hands I never saw her match.

'Her imitative powers were something wonderful, although her intellectual abilities were not much to speak of; but she was bright and quick to comprehend everything in the way of objects that she could see and handle, and would do almost anything after once showing her. I used to wonder what the possibilities of that child were if she could be properly trained.

'I think much of her deftness came from a habit she had of amusing herself with various toys and articles that she made herself. In order to be out of the way of the family, it was her mother's habit to place her in a chair by a table, and give her scissors, paper, pins, and many other little things to work with. She dressed up clothes-pins as dolls, made little bags and boxes out of cloth and paper, sewed patch-work quilts for doll cradles, cutting out each piece as she needed it. Only a few hints had been given her, but these she seemed to have made good use of. She also had doll-dishes, and arranged tables, and gave teas to her numerous family. A square of bright color here, a bit of muslin for a doily there, napkins made of paper, and all the table decorations, not omitting twisted-up scraps to serve as flowers, were made ready.

'At last I took her in hand and taught her to do many things about the house, and always felt that if some proper person could have the handling of her, she would make an extremely useful and agreeable assistant.

'This experience furnished a good idea of teaching that the average mother would do well to carry out with her little ones, instead of the rough pulling and hauling, racing and romping that seem to be the principal amusements of little children. If they were taught to make something symmetrical, and given a few plain directions when they began, they would gradually acquire constructiveness that would stand them in good stead later in life. Every youngster should be supplied with blocks, paper, paper-folders, shears, and, if there is any inclination for it, needles, thread and pins galore. Knitting and crocheting have little value so far as training is concerned. It is much more useful to teach them to cut out blocks with the utmost accuracy, drawing a thread or following some stripe in the material.

'Little children should be taught to

sew, boys as well as girls. There are times in the life of almost every man when the ability to use a needle is of the greatest importance. A child should be taught to sharpen a knife, also a pencil. Paper-folding and the arrangement of boxes is a pastime that even half-grown children will enjoy for hours. Paste-board is inexpensive, and a limited amount of it ought to be within reach of every youngster.

'To make and put together a symmetrical box is a neat little accomplishment, and all that is required is proper board, some bits of cloth to stay the corners, some paper for covers and a flour paste that costs but a trifle.

'Occupations of this kind would be of great advantage in keeping the children out of the street, to say nothing of the saving in the wear and tear of clothes which are often almost torn from their backs by their rudeness and romping.—'N. Y. Ledger.'

FALSE ECONOMY.

Mothers whose precious lives are beyond all else needful and valuable to their families, will go on rising too early and sitting up too late, performing what they rate as necessary labors, when in reality they are courting prostration in prolonged and aggravated forms. A physician, high up in the profession, once brusquely asked a lady if she had forgotten the facts in the case, and imagined herself a kitchen utensil of iron, that she had fancied herself able to go through the daily round that a few pointed questions had led her to confess was her usual routine. The truth is, this question of real economy in dealing with one's self, has got to be considered thoughtfully and sensibly. In contrast to the instances just spoken of, we are glad to have known women who, from a pure sense of duty, have taken the ride, eked out the vacation, and put out the sewing, when it would have been a gratification and to a degree a need, to have saved the money each cost. Yet a greater outcry was dreaded in case of false economy being practised. And what can be said to convince mothers of their piteous mistake who argue that they 'have too much to do' to devote a little portion of each day to talking with their own dear children? Why! the swift years are carrying them rapidly out of the confiding age when every trial, every fault and every victory, could be right in the mother's keeping, and what a deplorable waste of most precious opportunity it becomes when the every-day duties are allowed to crowd out the best, most assimilating influences of parents and home.—'Living Epistle.'

WASTEFULNESS.

Quite recently my attention was called to three children who hailed a car as it passed a huckster's stand; they took the seat in front of me. The oldest, a girl of about twelve, had at a little distance the appearance of being handsomely dressed, but nearer approach showed that her clothing, although showy, was of the cheapest and most flimsy material. The girl and her two little brothers had no sooner paid their car fare than they began the examination of their purchases; the stock seemed almost inexhaustible. They drew from their various pockets, caramels, chocolate creams, and sticky preparations enough to poison them all. These they devoured without cessation, and when at the end of a mile I left the car, they were eating still.

Happily the school savings-bank is beginning to find a place in our educational system, and in nearly all our large cities the Penny Provident Fund is beginning to train children in economy and thrift.

There are few who will not admit that money might be put to a better use than to the purchase of sweets. To ruin the digestive organs is an evil, but hardly more of an evil than the training in self-gratification which comes by such expenditure. We may follow in thought the future career of those three children. They have been allowed to think that what they want they must have. As they grow up, their wants become more expensive, but their habits have not changed. They are accustomed to have what they want. They

never learned self-denial; how are they to gratify the wants of their maturer years? The answer comes from the records of the police courts and the ruined lives of hundreds of young men and young women.

Now that children are taught so much let us add one thing more: the proper use of money in their home life. To every child should be given a stated weekly amount, and a careful account of it should be required of them by their parents; so that the child should be taught the value of money and how to spend it. This need not lead to selfishness, nor to the sordid hoarding up of the child's small possessions; on the contrary, it tends to a true appreciation of the spending value of the money and a knowledge of how to lay it out to advantage. The proper use of money requires the exercise of judgment, and that faculty is not developed at an early age, nor does it come to perfection without training. The habit of wastefulness and self-indulgence may become fixed before parents are aware of the lesson in extravagance which their thoughtless liberality is giving their children.

May we not plead with parents to ask for an account of the money they allow their children to spend? Money is a great power for good or for evil, and the child who learns to discriminate, learns a lesson which may make all the difference in future life between a philanthropist and a Christian on the one side, and a prodigal and spendthrift on the other. Let us see to it that the child's spending money proves a lesson for good and not for evil.—'American Messenger.'

VARIETY IN FOOD.

Many people fall into the mistake of supposing that, because they take a certain number of meals daily, and keep their stomachs in constant employment, they have satisfied the needs of the body. A doctor was recently called in to attend upon a seamstress who was suffering from weakness and general depression. 'What kind of food have you been living upon?' asked he of his patient. 'Oh, my food has been all right,' she replied. 'I have lived mostly on bread and butter for a long time, and I am sure there is no harm in that.' 'My dear woman,' exclaimed the doctor; 'you have explained the secret of your illness. Your body has been starving on that diet, and I am surprised you are no worse.' The functions which the body has to perform are many and various, and the supply of food must be complex to meet its requirements. The internal organs are constantly at work, and therefore wasting; the body must be kept warm to a large extent by food. Then there is the wear and tear of the system which an ordinary day's work involves. Whether one's life be one of comparative ease or filled with arduous toil, this variety of diet must be maintained, and flesh-forming, heat-giving and starchy matter must be taken in proper proportions. With this fact before us, it is a duty incumbent upon all to understand the nature and composition of food, and its fitness for the nourishment of the human frame.—'Hall's Journal of Health.'

TRAIN THE BOYS.

A doctor writes:—When a boy, I had to take hold and help my sisters in housework, and now I am glad that it was so. Such work does a boy good. It leads him to notice how a house would look with books thrown here and cap there, and coat somewhere else. Teach the boys to look as tidy as they can, even in their work clothes. Here is a boy just come in for a drink of water, only one suspender button remaining, and shingle nails used for the rest. Why not teach him to sew on a button and to do any little mending for himself? He would be the better for it and his worn-out mother or busy sisters would be saved so much.

I was taught to brush my clothes, turn them wrong side out, and hang them up ready for use when wanted. A boy, as well as a girl, should be taught to be neat and tidy. If he keeps himself in order, he will be likely to keep the barn, the yard, the office in order. It is not well to scold boys. Give them as much praise as possible, for this is encouraging.