

Children's Evenings.

LENA M. M'CAULEY.

Love of home is the best safeguard that a mother can bequeath to her children. When they feel that it is always a delightful place in which to spend an evening, that it is there their best manners and highest standards of morality are wanted, then home takes on the sacredness of a sanctuary in the children's minds. Such a home the young father and young mother should build in their ideals. Fortunate it is that ideals have a happy influence of constantly drawing us nearer to them. There are ideal homes all over the land and as two or three are conspicuous in every neighborhood, lessons may be learned from them.

As soon as the fall school term opens and the days are shorter, the long play hours out of doors after supper must be discontinued. Unless children have something definite to amuse them they are restless and worry until bedtime. Boys and girls in their teens have lessons to be learned and though school work may be a pleasure, one hour devoted to quiet study will accomplish more than an entire evening spent in trifling over the lessons with the attention wandering between family fun and the actual acquisition of knowledge. Children under seven go to bed at sundown, but what of the restless prides of eight, nine and ten years who are in fine trim for a frolic just after dinner.

This is the golden opportunity for fathers, mothers and children to become acquainted in a social way. During the day mother is the censor of duty and father the high chief justice in the last court of discipline, now discipline may be relaxed and all work for enjoyment on terms of equality. In many families this hour of frolic is kept sacred and when the curfew sounds at eight or half past, the little ones trot off cheerfully to bed and the elders settle for quiet study and reading.

A number of amusements may be suggested for the hour when the family are together. In some households the mother has a list of games which receives new additions from time to time as she hears of something or invents a fresh occupation. When at a loss what to do she refers to her list. As children are mercurial in their likes and dislikes and often a season of unrest prevails, sometimes the plan for the evening must be dropped as soon as begun, and another scheme substituted more in keeping with the spirit of the times. Tact is a valuable element in the successful control of children.

When all are in the reading humor, the father or one of the older children may read an interesting story, stopping now and then to provoke discussion and opinions are asked from even the youngest. What do you think of the hero's conduct? What would you have done under like circumstances? Or as a game where every one may take part the titles of stories may be suggested by the children themselves; such as, "Stolen by Gypsies," "Adventures of a Tramp," "Trials of a Rat," "What the Canary Bird Thought." These titles are shaken up in a hat with blanks and the first drawing a title begins the story, talking for five minutes. His neighbor continues and so on until it is brought to a conclusion. As every narrator tries to excel in wild adventures, the story is full of interest and at the same time as an educative purpose in inducing an intelligible story of connected English.

Another game training imaginative power, requires a question supposing a situation from every one engaged. What would you do if the house was on fire? or you drifted from the shore in an open boat, or you were

left without money in a strange city, or you were arrested for some other person? The questions are drawn and answered in order of the numbers. A game called Forty Questions, is excellent for developing reasoning power, and I have yet to meet the children that are tired of it. A committee leaves the room and decides on some object. It may be the North Cape, or an apple on King Oscar's table, or the bow on the left slipper of Shakespeare in Lincoln Park. The victim questioned may answer yes or no. The usual procedure is to determine to what kingdom it belongs. Is it animal, vegetable, or mineral? Is it in this hemisphere? Is it within a mile? etc. Instead of the number of questions being limited to forty, a time limit may be assigned and the family party take sides and have the pleasant excitement of rivalry.

Patented games of various sorts and those of authors, quotations, beasts, birds, animals, and historical events are both valuable and entertaining. Then of course there are the more active games of "Blind Man's Buff," "Drop the Handkerchief," "Musical Chairs," "Pinning the Tail on the Donkey" and guessing and forfeits. Self-control and fairness in playing are lessons learned in family games outside the mere fun of it. It does not hurt the dignity of either father or mother to join in the romping. The children love them all the better when they realize that they are human and only children of larger growth and broader experience.

Game evenings should alternate with more serious work. Alphabets of quotations, that is each quotation beginning with a letter of the alphabet in proper order, may be made from the Bible, Shakespeare, Longfellow, Lowell, or any of the poets. I have known children of ten to hunt through Homer and Dante for treasures of thought, usually doing so for the sake of having something different from their neighbors, though Longfellow or the simple traditional proverbs are much nearer their grasp.

Scrap-books may be filled with pictures of famous men, of European scenes, famous buildings, American scenes, war chronicles, from English history and celebrated works of art. Magazines, and illustrated weeklies are so plenty in these days and every household has a surplus stock. Childless people are only too glad to give them away. Even the four year old could make a scrap book of animals. The illustration of books interests children of reading years. Boys of eleven have illustrated *Ivanhoe* by cutting landscapes, and groups from magazines, fitting passages in the book. Where the child is enthusiastic over it, a cheap edition of the work should be purchased, and the scrap pictures mounted on water color paper or thin parchment, inserted at the proper places and the volume renewed and rebound with a decorative cover by the young book-maker himself. Undertakings like these may extend over the whole year and put away when the interest flags and brought out at odd intervals. Shorter poems like the *Village Blacksmith*, or stories such as *Aesop's Fables* have a pictorial quality and are not as great an undertaking as a novel. Many a child would undertake the illustration of a short story when a longer one would seem stupendous.—Interior.

The Artful Ant.

A whimsical rhyme appeared in St. Nicholas some years ago, written by Oliver Herford, entitled the "Artful Ant." The ant gave a ball to all the birds and beasts of the forests, and the acceptances came in so fast that on the night of the ball, when supper time arrived, "The Artful Ant" was hard pushed to supply the guests with refreshments. When her attention was called to it, she settled the supper question in the following language:

Then said the Ant: "It's only right
That supper should begin,
And if you will be so polite,
Pray take each other in."
(The emphasis was very slight,
But rested on "Take in.")

They needed not a second call,
They took the hint. Oh, yes,
The largest guest "took in" the small,
The small "took in" the less,
The less "took in" the least of all.
(It was a great success.)

As for the rest—but why spin out
This narrative of woe—
The Lion took them in about
As fast as they could go.
(He went home looking very stout,
And walking very slow.)

A Prayer.

BY JOHANN ARNDT.

Lord, give us hearts never to forget Thy love; but to dwell therein, whatever we do, whether we sleep or wake, live or die, or rise again to the life that is to come. For Thy love is eternal life and everlasting rest; for this is life eternal to know Thee and Thy infinite goodness. O, let its flame never be quenched in our hearts; let it glow and brighten till our whole souls are glowing and shining with its light and warmth. Be Thou our joy and hope, our strength and life, our shield and shepherd, our portion forever. For happy are we if we continue in the love wherewith Thou hast loved us; holy are we when we love Thee steadfastly. Therefore, O Thou whose name and essence is love, enkindle our hearts, enlighten our understandings, sanctify our wills, and fill all the thoughts of our hearts, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

A telescope is now promised which will bring the moon within eight miles of the earth instead of forty miles. It is hoped that the instrument will make it possible to determine whether the moon has an atmosphere and whether life exists there. The plans for the telescope are more complete than any now in existence. They were formulated by Thomas Preston Brooke, of England. He is a musician who has devoted his leisure to astronomy. The lens of the new instrument will cost about \$10,000. Mr. Brooke is making arrangements with a manufacturer to contribute the tubing. Astronomers are looking forward with interest to the completion of the telescope.

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