

Hearth and Home.

A TALK WITH THE YOUNG FOLKS ABOUT THE MONTH.

September is a very pleasant month. As June has a mixture of Spring and Summer in it, so September is a compound of Summer and Autumn. The season of growth is nearly over, and nature is beginning to prepare for Winter. Some time this month Jack Frost may be expected to pay us a visit. We shall go to bed some evening and feel chilly, another blanket will be wanted, and next morning the ground will be white, there will be ice in the wash-tub at the back-door, and we shall find, when the sun gets up a little, that our vine leaves and corn stalks have got their death-blow. This is a warning to prepare for the time when the ice-king will set up his throne, and we shall have settled winter.

Our picture for this month shews that with September the "shooting season," as it is called, commences. Most boys are fond of a gun, and too many of them are very careless in the use of it. How many sad accidents have taken place in this way. Some foolish people, both young and old, think it courageous to show a kind of bravado in the careless handling of fire-arms. This is very wrong. Wherever there is danger of injury to life and limb it is the part of wisdom to exercise prudence and caution. A slight touch of a trigger, letting a gun fall, pointing it in play at some timid person, want of care in loading,—how much maiming and slaughter have been thus caused! If guns must be in use, and we suppose they must as long as there are hawks, wolves, bears, and Fenians prowling about, by all means let them be very carefully and cautiously handled.

We are not very partial to "sporting" as it is termed. The flutterings of wounded birds, and the writhings of maimed animals, is a species of sport that was never to our liking. And so many sportsmen have shot themselves and one another instead of the birds and other creatures they want to kill, that we have a wholesome dread of the whole thing. Only quite lately a brave African traveller who had encountered lions and tigers, elephants and snakes without injury, went out shooting, when he got back to his nice home in England, and, sad to say, shot himself by drawing his gun after him over a stone wall. Some projecting bit of stone caught the trigger and off went the gun, killing its owner dead on the spot. And during the recent Abyssinian campaign one of the bravest officers in the British army lost his life in a similar way.

We are far from saying that it is wrong to kill birds and wild animals, and certainly we don't think it wicked to eat pigeon pie, or venison haunch. These creatures were made to be of service to man, and we may appropriate them to our use both living and dead. But to go out



SEPTEMBER.

shooting as a pastime, in the gleeful, wild, thoughtless spirit of play, is not to be commended, and there are better, safer playthings for boys than fire-arms. Young people should get to a wise, considerate age before they venture on the use of such deadly weapons, and even men of age and experience cannot be too careful in their movements with them.

The habit, which some boys have, of carrying a fowling-piece round with them and popping it off at every poor little bird, squirrel and chipmunk that may come in their way, is a very bad one. It tends to cultivate a spirit of mischievousness and cruelty. The victims of this kind of sport are of no account for the pot or oven. They are killed and pretty soon thrown away. Their life of song and friskiness is sacrificed for the momentary gratification of shooting at them. The bird which that boy wantonly shot last spring would, if it had lived, perhaps have destroyed a lot of grubs and insects which have eaten a dozen apples or plums, which the boy might have had, if the bird had lived and the grubs and insects had died. Children should cultivate feelings of kindness toward every thing that lives. If pain and death must be inflicted, let it be done as mercifully as possible, that we may be kind, pitiful and tender-hearted. God pities the young ravens which cry, feeds the sparrows, and tenderly cares for all his creatures. "These all wait on Thee and Thou givest them their meat in due season." Let us aim to be