

FAMILY READING.

REFLECTION.

BY SOPHIE M. ALMON HENSLEY.

A widening stretch of water sparkling free;
As far as eye can reach a glistening field
Of restless glory. What has been concealed
In the great depths these long, dark days we
see

Come forth in pomp, great ocean's armory
Of shining, tossing spear-points: now revealed
Darting towards the impenetrable shie.
Of Heaven's blue, vast, unknown intensity.

Even so life sparkles after dull, sad days:
And we, not knowing that the brightening
ways

Are but reflections of the Light above
Play on, and wage our mimic wars, and try
Our petty skill, and call it harmony,
And Heaven looks down in ever lasting love.

IMAGINATION.

Concluded.

We are generally inclined to think that the imagination has no connection with the ordinary affairs of life—that it is simply a play thing for the builder of air castles, a will-o-the-wisp to guide the novelist, or, at best, an inspiration for the poet's song, and consequently we place a low estimate on its practical utility. But, when we study the matter, in the light of our daily life, we find, that imagination plays a more important part, than we at first think. Without this faculty, the architect would rear all his structures after one fashion, if, indeed, he could rear any. There would be no such person as the inventor, for he especially, is dependent on his imagination. There would indeed, be "no new thing under the sun." Did we choose to go further, we would find, that in nearly every vocation of life, this faculty plays a part.

Having in a measure, seen what an important place the imagination occupies, we scarcely need to urge the importance of giving some attention to its culture. Its value in connection with school work, can not be over estimated. The cultivation of the constructive imagination of children, is especially important, for much of their future progress depends on their ability to translate words into ideas. The first step in this direction is the culture of the senses, for it is through them that we gather material upon which the imagination may work. Let the children observe an object, and describe it when present, then remove the object, and call for a description. This may at first sight, appear to be mere memory, but it is the imaginative memory, for the child must have a mental picture of the object, before he can describe it. The children should be required to draw pictures of objects thus described, and also to model them in clay. Another step in this direction, is to call for descriptions of familiar objects and scenes. Take, for instance, the breakfast table. Direct the mind minutely to matters of detail, such as the color and figure of the table-cloth, figure of the napkins, color and patterns of the dishes, kind of knives, forks and spoons, arrangement of dishes on the table, &c. It would be found at first, that the children had paid little heed to the most of these matters, and the answers might be found very unsatisfactory, but once their attention has been directed to these details, they will form the habit of looking closely at objects which come under their observation.

This exercise of the reproductive imagination, will prepare for the exercise of the constructive imagination. The children's minds are stored with elementary concepts, and with the words which represent them. We may now aim to secure new pictures through the suggestive power of words. Describe an object with which the children are familiar, and require them to name the object thus described. In an exercise of this kind, they take the elements mentioned, and build them up into a complex mental picture. These exercises in the culture of the imagi-