

## THE HOUSEHOLD.

## THE SPIRIT OF CHILDHOOD.

BY MARY E. SPENCER.

A little girl sits before me in the middle of a large rug playing with toys. It is a curious sight. She finds a vast pleasure in what to me seems insignificant. Out of the play room she has brought a vast number of fragments of all sorts of mechanisms, of trumpets, mouth organs and other musical instruments; pieces of engines and broken trains of cars; blocks that belonged at one time in well-designed block houses. Just now her fingers and eyes are busy with the smokestack of a "Wredens engine." I remember how my now 11-year-old boy teased for that engine. I did not like a steam explosive about; but at last was weak enough to yield. I bought the engine, and heard the steam phiz for a few weeks. No accident occurred, and I had quite forgotten the toy. But here it is, pulled to pieces, I presume to use parts of it for some other invention.

Don't let us whine over broken toys, or toys pulled to pieces. Don't you see how that girl studies the pieces? There is not a whole toy in the lot; or if there is she has taken small interest in it. What squeaks come from that mouth organ! It has not five keys in order! I hope she will not strike that bunged drum! No, she will not, for her best attention is given to scraps and parts.

Every house should have a little bedlam, a room given over to misrule; a place where the young ones may go and not be compelled to take care of other folks' notions and play other folks' ideas. That is what we older folks do. We are never half so prim as we try to make our children. We don't acknowledge it, but we pull things to pieces a great deal; and when we don't do that, we pull people to pieces—and call it criticism.

Whew! My little Buzz Fuzz has flown; with a shout she has run upstairs to her brothers with some old envelopes. The German nurse of my neighbor has come in and flung down a bunch of French and German and Italian letters—and the young ones are, in a moment, wild over the stamps. The stamp craze is of the same sort as the broken toys. They are pasted together in rows, and finally, perhaps, an idea gets born. It is a puzzle to know just how much of what is done ends in the toy state—or the broken-toy state. But suppose Miss Gladys does no more than truly enjoy herself with her bric-a-brac—I beg your pardon for the comparison—is that not also just about what the rest of us do?

I think we may or will keep all the old toys and pieces of toys—that is, if we can make room for them. I didn't use to think so, but made an annual or semi-annual clear up. At last I noticed that an old broken baby's chair had served three boys, one after another, to push about and get no end of occupation with; then old toys began to have a sacredness in my eyes. Dolls' heads with a hole in the top and lacking one eye are as acceptable, when dressed over, as the best perfect doll just out of the shop. A child has something more than a fancy for bright, new things. She has sympathies, and a battered doll as "Poor Susie," calls out the child's tenderest emotions.

Teaching order and system and art may fairly come on more slowly. Those are only selection and method. The one thing after all is to know how to make much of whatever we have and to use it joyously. This the child does if let alone. The child is not only "father of the man," but mother of the woman.—*Jessie Miller.*

## KEEP THE HOUSE CLEAN.

It is not long since it was considered indispensable to have the regular spring and fall house-cleaning, when for days, and sometimes weeks, chaos reigned from attic to cellar; and at the end of all the weary housewife sat down amid the unnatural cleanliness, feeling two years older, and congratulating herself that she would not have to go through with it again for at least three or four months.

Later housekeepers have found that the better way is to scatter this work along through the year in such a way that one's house can be always clean and yet one need

never know the trials of this wholesale house-cleaning. Those who cling to the old way have been heard to say, "It's so good to feel that for once everything in the house is clean;" but it is certainly better to always feel that nothing in the house is dirty. The regular weekly cleaning, which it is necessary to give to most rooms, should be done with great thoroughness, dusting pictures and furniture front and back, cleaning mirrors, brasses, and windows until perfect freshness and brightness is their natural condition. Then once every few months, before the need of it is quite apparent, the weekly cleaning may be supplemented by wiping off the woodwork and the walls, polishing the floor, if it is hard wood, or taking up the carpet, if the room is carpeted.

Never attempt to give this supplementary cleaning to more than one room at a time; the extra time spent will not be more than an hour or two, and the rooms will be more continuously clean than under the confusion and labor of the old system.

If the room chanced to be a large one and the carpet heavy and troublesome to lay, it may be taken up one week and the woodwork wiped off the next. This may seem a shiftless way of doing to those housekeepers who expect at house-cleaning time to have clouds of dust from carpets and furniture and walls. But in easy housekeeping such clouds of dust are never allowed to accumulate. If the weekly cleaning is properly done, in accordance with the suggestions given, and the more extensive cleaning is done carefully and systematically, it will seem more a preventive of an accumulation of dirt than a means of removing it; and she who tries this plan will learn, to her relief, that in housekeeping, as much as in medicine, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

The only accumulation of dust which cannot be prevented is that which sifts through the carpets; but even this need not pervade the whole room, if it is carefully removed. Before the carpet is laid in the first place, have the floor well covered with clean paper. When the carpet is to be taken up, fold it gently after the tacks are removed, and carry it out, not drag it; then roll the paper with the dust in it, and carry it away with care; the floor will be left clean and free from dust, except the little that may have sifted in around the edges of the carpet, which should be wiped up with a damp cloth at once.

The treatment of the attic and cellar should not be different from that of the other parts of the house. No methodical, easy housekeeping can go on when there are accumulations of trash and dirt and dust, above or below, which must be periodically cleared out, scattering its particles through the air, and wearing the housewife until she is not in condition to easily meet the duties of the morrow. The attic should be nothing more than a closet for things which are not in frequent use, and should be kept as any other closet is; and the cellar, for reasons of health, as well as convenience, should have almost daily inspection, and always be kept as clean as the kitchen cupboard.—*Demorest's Magazine.*

## WINDOW CLEANING.

Choose a clear, dry but not sunny day (windows cleaned in bright sunlight are very apt to dry streaky); have plenty of clean cloths, and of pure cold water; the window is then rapidly washed down and dried with a soft old cloth, first inside and then out, and finally rubbed with a leather. Indeed, some persons use a leather even for washing the glass. Of course, a wet day is not good for this cleaning, and a frosty one is naturally more objectionable still.

Now judge of the following plan: To begin with, have the windows thoroughly dusted every day, when the rest of the room is done—window-sills, ledges, sashes and all; the gas burned in the room gives off carbon, alias smut, so, of course, in winter does the fire; and this, together with the dust, all lodges in the window. Naturally this is especially the case in winter—a time when window cleaning is particularly inconvenient; now, unless in the case of fogs, the inside of the window is far and away dirtier than the outside, so it stands to reason that if the windows are thoroughly

dusted regularly they will not require to be washed or cleaned nearly so frequently. When the cleaning is inevitable, have ready a muslin bag full of whiting, and two wash-leathers. Dust the glass thickly with the whiting, then rub it off thoroughly with a damp—not wet—leather, and finally polish well with a clean, dry one. This is the method pursued by workmen when cleaning the windows of a new house, and gives a polish unknown to the glass washed in the ordinary way. Another excellent method for giving brilliancy to glass is to damp a rag with spirits of wine, rub the glass well with this, and then polish as before with a clean, dry leather.

## ONE THING AT A TIME.

Plan your work in your brain; then let your brain rest, and it will be again ready for work when your body is tired and its work is done.

Cultivated women do not work with the same good results physically as peasant women, for the latter work with their minds free from all thoughts but of their work, while the former often work wishing they were anywhere but where they are; or if not this, still their minds are working in many different lines of thought.

When you find you are not taking things one at a time and simply, and therefore there is confusion and fatigue, stop short!

Take ten minutes' rest, lie down with thought of your weight only and you will be astonished at the results. Everything will clear, and you will start fresh, as if after a good sleep. The day that is the most full of pressing care is the day when you cannot afford not to take at least one such rest.

To prevent this confusion cut off each duty from its successor; begin anew with each task and get in a deep, slow breath before each change of work.

These are the simplest directions, but if followed they will surely prolong the lives of all our faithful housekeepers and a set of fresher faced old ladies will grandmother the next generation.—*Boston Herald.*

## THE EMERGENCY BOX.

Every housekeeper ought to have a deep drawer, or a large box or trunk, expressly furnished for sickness. It might be called her "emergency box." When a sudden accident occurs it is more than annoying to have the delay of searching after a piece of linen to bind up a wound, or pieces of flannel to wring out in hot water for a suffering patient, or a bag to put a mush poultice in. All such things should be in readiness—the flannel should be cut in convenient pieces, bags of two or three sizes made of linen, strong cotton, and flannel, and old kid cut in shape for spreading on salve. Fine soft muslin is often wanted to spread over a mustard poultice, and cotton batting (the antiseptic is best) is another important article. Old, soft sheets, and some pillow-cases, ought always to be kept on hand; also it is well to have one or two old night-dresses and night-shirts kept for each member of the family. If the drawers or box be partitioned off, one compartment might be furnished with a case of ready-made mustard plasters, a quart bottle of bathing rum or alcohol, and small bottles of ammonia, camphor, paregoric, and castor oil. Old-fashioned remedies these, but nevertheless, remedies which never lost their reputation in time of need; and armed with these, and with the "emergency box" furnished as above suggested, sudden illness in a family may be relieved without calling in a physician.—*Exchange.*

## TEACH THE GIRLS A TRADE.

Mary A. Allen, M.D., speaking of the wisdom of teaching every girl some trade or business, says: "The knowledge acquired in the trade or profession may not be actually needed in the home life, but the mental qualities developed by the acquirement of this knowledge will come in play, and reverses of fortune may occur which will render it needful again to bring into use the money-making ability. I do not believe that the wife and mother should be the bread-winner under any but the

greatest stress of need: but the knowledge that the wife has the ability to be self-supporting may render her less under the dominion of a brutal husband, by compelling his respectful deference to her wishes and opinions. The subservient born of ignoble fear or of ignorant helpfulness is no compliment to man; while the love, the respect and unselfish devotion of an intelligent, cultured, independent woman is something of which any man may be justly proud."

## A GRACEFUL HANGING POCKET.

BY LAURA WHITTEN.

Now that ladies' dresses are made so that a pocket is almost an impossibility, a hanging pocket, made of a shade of silk to correspond with the dress, is very pretty and stylish. Crochet over thirty-five brass rings with knitting silk the desired shade and color, and sew them together, making a square five wide and five long; then across the bottom of this square sew four, three, two, one, making the rings terminate in a point. Around the point tie in a fringe three inches long. Now make a square pocket of silk or cloth to match the silk, the size of the square of twenty-five rings, and fasten on the back. In this way you have a double pocket, as a fancy handkerchief shows off prettily through the rings, and the back pocket may be used for loose change or smaller pocket belongings. At the two upper corners sew one-half yard of No. 4 or 5 ribbon. This should be attached to the skirt band under the basque, at the left side. These pockets make very acceptable gifts.—*Home Journal.*

## CALLING A HALT.

"I cannot imagine why I am so tired all the time. It seems to me that I do very little," said a woman, dragging herself to a chair and sitting down wearily.

"How many times a day do you go up and down stairs?" inquired a friend. The house was, first, high and narrow, with four long stairways, three of which intervened between the kitchen and the mother's "own room."

"Why, not very often; I don't know. I have a good many errands about the house, here and there, and my impulse is usually to wait on myself. I suppose I spend a good deal of strength on the stairs; now that I think of it."

"And, pardon the suggestion, but you are always looking out for others so much and so generously, that others ought to look out for you; have you ever thought how often you are interrupted in the progress of a day? The ordering of the house is the first thing, but some trifle is forgotten, pepper or salt, flavor or seasoning, and you are consulted about that. Then your big boy comes to you with his necktie and his cuffs, and your four-year-old has pinched his finger, and needs comforting; your daughters have no end of affairs in which you must be the counsellor, and your husband leaves the weight of his perplexities and the irritability that grows out of his overwork on your ever-ready strength. Dear, it is not wonderful that you are tired! The wonder is that you rest so soon, after a nap, or a little time by yourself, coming out to the family made over again."

"But what can I do? All that you mention forms part of the every-day duty of a woman like myself, whose main work in the world is to keep her home happy and comfortable."

"Once in a while you might call a halt. You should pack a little bag, and run away for a three days' visit, leaving the house-keeping to the young shoulder, which will find it only a slight burden. It is an imperative duty, occasionally, to take care of one's capital, if one be a wife and a mother." In the interest of the rest, for the sake of the days that are coming, a matron must be provident of her own health, not suffering herself to drift into nervous prostration or wearisome invalidism.

There are graves not a few over which the inscription might be written, "Here lies Mary—, the beloved wife of Theodore—, tired to death." And in most cases the blame is not Theodore's, but Mary's own. She should have called a halt in time.—*Harper's Bazar.*