

# OUR HOME PAGE

## Your Home and You

By HELEN KENDALL

### HOME PORTRAITURE.

The most charming portrait in the world is that of a happy, unconscious child, taken in its home setting—a precious family document out of the very heart of home life. No one is so fitted and equipped to take such pictures as the baby's own father or mother, provided the proper precautions are taken.

Amateur snapshots, especially those taken indoors, are rarely satisfactory. Out of doors, with the whole sky filled with light, there is generally greater success; though even then many persons make the mistake of having bright sunshine in the figure, which makes spotty white areas and very black shadows. It is better, when taking snapshots, to be out of the direct sunlight, but in place where the light is plentiful and diffused.

At this time of year, however, the problem is that of getting good interior snaps. This is very difficult because the light is concentrated near the windows, and yet the child, if placed in the window, is apt to have one side too light and the other side in deep shade, because the farther

side of the room provides no light. A flash light is rarely satisfactory, because it startles the child, in the first place, and makes a glaring, unnatural light in the second place.

The best results are obtained by covering the windows with full, thin white curtains which diffuse the sunlight. Cheesecloth is good for this purpose. Now on the other side of the room, fasten up a large white sheet which will reflect the light from the window and provide that all-around light that is available outdoors. This sheet can be fastened to a movable standard—a couple of clothes poles, for example, and placed wherever reflected light is needed.

The most beguiling pictures are those where the child is unconsciously absorbed in some play. If you want a natural, happy look directly into the camera, speak brightly to the baby in a quick way, and snap just as he turns to you. One of the most attractive home pictures I ever saw was of a baby's first steps. The father knelt on the floor, and just as the baby started toward him, snapped the picture. The excited, rapturous look on the baby's face was charming.

## TRAINING FOR UNSELFISHNESS

By May E. Wilson

Not long ago I heard a very lovely woman say, "If my parents had realized how unkind their love for me was when I was a child, they would have saved me many tears. I was allowed my own way in everything and grew up a disagreeable,

and selfish girl. Later when I had to leave home and go among people I found I had to reform myself to be even tolerated. It was a long, heart-breaking task, which I had to struggle through alone, overcoming habits which might easily have been kept

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from becoming habits if I had been guided wisely in my childhood."

Many parents seem to overlook or under estimate the importance of the first appearance of undesirable tendencies in their children which can be overcome, if properly treated while children are still young.

Ill-temper, selfishness, teasing and fault finding can be kept from becoming unlovely characteristics if a wise guide gives help at the right time.

At the root of wrong doing one can always find selfishness. It besets the only child in a home where adults seem to exist to please and spoil him, as well as the little wail on the street where to "have" he has to "snatch." For either of these children, the kindergarten is a blessing. Here in happy surroundings he learns to share in work and play—to give as well as take.

Here a child learns to hang up his wraps; to care for his rubbers; to sit erect, overcoming a desire to slide in his chair; to obey the directions of the teacher, given sometimes by voice, sometimes by the piano; to yield his individual desire and do the

thing that is right for him to do at that moment.

The child who at home makes no effort to help himself in putting on his wraps, who sticks out his feet for someone to put on his rubbers, is encouraged to try and do these things for himself, not only by the teacher, but most of all by the sight of the more independent children delightedly accomplishing the task of slipping on rubbers, putting on coats and struggling successfully with slippery buttons.

But perhaps the games help most to develop unselfishness. Early in life one needs to learn to share—to be a good loser—to relinquish smilingly to someone else, and for five days a week kindergarten offers a splendid opportunity.

In a large group of children, where each has equal rights, the selfish child comes to see the need of respecting those rights, which he does by waiting his turn and sharing with others.

And so the pictures, songs, stories, games and handwork open up to him the world about him and lead him from selfishness, out of himself; to unselfishness.

## An Old Fashioned Quality---Respect

By Carrie E. Ritter

"Mother had a hen-party yesterday," gleefully exclaims a young girl of sweet sixteen. "Mother had seven old hens here and you ought to have heard them cackle and seen them eat ice-cream."

Many people might call this a cute up-to-date speech, but the mother of this same girl complains, "Mary is not respectful to me. She thinks I'm old, too, and I'll not be fifty-six until September. I don't see why—she talks so about my age."

Casually observing these cases we wonder how much of this is training or rather lack of it. We notice the same attitude in the parents not infrequently in speaking of, or to, elderly relatives. Children are often allowed to be saucy to their grandparents or to their elders.

So it comes to us that the atmosphere in which a child is reared is responsible for his respect or disrespect for those older or in authority. Sometimes it is not the words so much as the tone in which the parent speaks of an elderly person that conveys disrespect.

There has always seemed to me to be a natural bond between children and very elderly persons. The little ones love stories which the older ones can tell delightfully. I know of a case in which a grandmother and her only granddaughter are chums. They camped together for a month when the rest of the family did not care to go. "Grandma had the time of her life," explained the girl, "only we did eat such lot, both of us, it kept her busy. The young folks used to come over too. Grandma let us have all kinds of fun, and invited them to meals. She seemed to enjoy it as much as I did."

It was the same girl who said of her grandmother, "Grandma does not hear very well over the phone, in fact she does not hear it ring unless she is in the room with it, but don't hesitate to call her up, there are some persons who can understand so she will answer if possible."

Does not this sound better than, "She's as deaf as a post, what's the good of her trying to understand anything? No use your telephoning unless mother is home, or I am."

We wonder, yes, we wonder very much if the attitude of sons and daughters-in-law to aging widowed mothers has anything to do with the way young people speak of "Grandma."

"Old folks aren't wanted." You hear it often. Perhaps they are not, but sometimes it may be their own fault because years before they allowed themselves to speak carelessly of other elderly persons, forgetful of the law of suggestion. Let us be thankful for the mothers who taught us that filial respect and consideration were their due, that members of the generation older than themselves are to be treated with deference, loving care, and gentle thoughtfulness for their comfort, and that selfishness and disrespect to our seniors are neither more uplifting nor ennobling to our own characters than they are pleasant to the elderly people.

## Teaching Your Child Self-Confidence

By Helen Gregg Green

"Mumsey, look at my airplane. Look, Mumsey, dear! Look!" begged six year old Carroll. "Isn't it just a beauty?"

"Calm yourself, Carroll, your airplane is no better than Micky's. Besides, honey boy, it is nothing to get excited about."

Carroll's happy little face fell, and his eyes lost their sparkle.

"Guess it isn't much good, Mumsey. But I did think you'd like it." And Carroll and Micky picked up their once-prized airplanes, and shuffled out of the room, as if half ashamed of having shown so much enthusiasm.

"I must kill his egotism," Carroll's mother exclaimed. "He's simply full of it."

But a mutual friend of Carroll's mother and of mine, a wise, young for her year's grandmother, thought differently.

"My dear Zelia, you haven't the right perspective at all. There's a vast difference between egotism and self-confidence. Nothing wrong with a dollar claiming it's worth a hundred cents, is there? The fault would be claiming anything less for itself. A child will grow and expand because of self-confidence. He will learn to develop qualities and a character that will have to live up to his self-esteem. Carroll's mother interrupted.

"But I think—"

"Pardon me, my dear, but I still have the floor," laughed the little

Wise One. "You did not play fair with Carroll when you told him that Micky's airplane was as well built as his. It was not, and you knew it! Carroll knows it, and Micky knows it. You were deliberately trying to shatter a wonderful possession, self-confidence. It's the 'I can't' and the 'I will's, that make the most out of life. Not the 'I can't's' and 'I won't's'."

Carroll's mother's face was radiant. "Thank you, dear, I'm so grateful," she smiled. "I guess all of us need to be awakened up sometimes. I had never thought of my boy's sureness in his ability in the light of self-confidence before. I'll change my 'system' this very day."

That was four years ago, and Carroll's mother's "system" has been a different one these four years.

Carroll is now a charming youngster, full of poise and self-confidence. His teacher tells me she thinks he's an admirable boy.

"What is his best characteristic, Miss Lloyd?" I asked. "What is there about him that appeals to you most?"

"It's his self-confidence. His belief in himself," she told me.

"And do you encourage this in all your children?" I was very much interested.

"Indeed I do!" she answered. "Too many children get little encouragement at home. Will parents never learn the great difference between egotism and self-confidence. I walked away, wondering too."

## Flower Garden In The Spring

To all lovers of flowers the garden in spring is a most enjoyable place; here one meets old friends among the flowering plants, which, perhaps, one has watched the development of for years. In many gardens, however, there is a dearth of spring flowers, but as there are so many hardy desirable plants, this could easily be remedied if there was a desire to do so.

As soon as the snow is gone one may have the Snowdrops, Snowflakes, Crocuses, Chionodoxa, and Scilla among bulbs, "soon to be followed," by the Daffodils and Tulips. Hardy Primulas soon mingle with the bulbs as

do the Iceland Poppy, Trillium, Trollius, Doronicum, Epimedium, and other early spring flowers; while close behind are the Columbine, Bleeding Heart, Sweet Rocket and Iris, and many others.

ing arrives, if such a plant is put there, it will not be long before there will be a marked improvement in the garden in spring, and this method can be followed with good results for the whole season.

Let all who love flowers, then, plan for improvement on the garden next spring; a little improvement each year would soon result in a great change and make the home grounds much more attractive.

## Good Night Stories

PEGGY MEETS MAMA AND DADDY FLAMINGO

"Oh, dear," Peggy mused, as she saw the long legged bird standing in the lake. "What a funny-looking bird that is!"

The bird turned around and looked at Peggy, then opened its big, hooked beak and laughed.

"I'm not any funnier looking to you than you are to me," he said, twisting his long neck. "What country do you come from, anyway? You certainly don't live in Africa, do you?"

"Oh, no, indeed," replied Peggy politely. "I live in North America. We're just visiting Aunt Bell. I'm sorry that I laughed and called you funny."

"Pshaw! That's all right," replied the bird, good naturedly. "Mama Flamingo and I never would take the beauty prize. Our necks and legs are too long."

"Well, I guess they wouldn't be long if you did not need them that way," Peggy said.

"You're right there," sighed Mr. Flamingo. "We need our long legs for wading. See my feet?" And he held up one foot for Peggy to see.

"It's webbed like a duck's. That helps me in swimming, and my long neck helps me to get my food from the bottom of the lake. But if you want a good laugh you should see Mama Flamingo sitting on her eggs. When she tries to get off it's the funniest sight you ever saw! Of course she's touchy about her long legs, so if you happen to see her on the nest be careful not to let her see you laugh."

"And she won't object if you take me home with you?" Peggy asked. "I'd love to go. Do you suppose she'd mind my pecking into her nest?"

"No, indeed," replied Daddy Flamingo. "Just don't laugh out loud or you'll hurt her feelings. Hop up on my back and we'll be there before you know it."

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do think you're such interesting birds."

"Then by all means come back when they are out of their shells. I'd love to have you," said Mama Flamingo, crawling back on her nest

once more. "I don't mind folks visiting me if they don't laugh at me." Peggy promised to return, and pat in deep shade, because the farther Flamingo she ran home to tell her Aunt Bell what she had seen.

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