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### Household

#### EFFECT OF PLEASANT TABLE TALK

It used to be the custom in our house to talk over during meal time, whatever disagreeable things had occurred at any time preceding. I don't know just how it came about but we fell into the habit and kept it up as a great many people do such things, probably because it had never entered our minds that we were doing a very foolish thing. One summer we had as a guest an old doctor of whom we were very fond. He was soon entirely one of us that we never thought of changing our manners, so the usual discussions went on.

One morning something especially irritating had happened, and the whole family was in a state of ferment. The breakfast had been a very uncomfortable meal, and one or two members of the household had left the table with scarcely a mouthful of food. An hour or so afterward the doctor took occasion to give me a bit of a lecture. He explained in the simplest possible fashion the effect of agitation on the digestion, and questioned the wisdom of ever permitting unpleasant topics to be discussed at meals. He told me to observe particularly what my own sensations were if anything startling occurred just after I had taken food. We had been a family of dyspeptics—nothing serious, but always with what we call weak stomachs.

On the doctor's advice we made a hard and fast rule that under no circumstances should anything unpleasant be brought up at the table. Nothing short of a cyclone or a fatal accident to man or beast was sufficient excuse for breaking this rule. In place of unpleasant topics we all by a sort of private understanding tried to have something funny or interesting to say when we came to the table. If we failed to find anything worthy of comment, which occurred on several occasions, the ludicrousness of the situation struck us so forcibly that we gave way to outbursts of mirth, and a number of times we found ourselves giggling at

what would have seemed to an outsider extremely silly things. Sometimes we laughed simply because there was nothing to say, and the effort to think of something increased our merriment.

Within a few weeks there was a notable improvement in the health of the family. This was particularly observable in one of the children, a timid youngster who was pale, thin, exceedingly nervous, sensitive and irritable, and had given the family no end of uneasiness lest she were going into a decline. She ate literally nothing at the table, but seemed possessed of a mania to fly into the kitchen and pick up what she could find there.

The doctor's talks set me to thinking, and without exciting her suspicions, I got her to speak of her appetite, and why she liked things better when she picked them up between meals. She said they didn't lump in her throat every time she tried to eat, but that when she took them in her hands and ran outdoors to eat them, she felt better, for she was hungry almost all the time.

This was a text for a most valuable lesson, and is one that every parent and nurse or caretaker of children ought to understand. I have asked a number of little ones, since that time why they enjoy eating between meals, and if I could get at the truth it was that they were continually reproved at the table that their pleasure in eating was spoiled, or that everybody was so cross that they really could not eat with any comfort, and almost with choking them. Without knowing the reason why, their nerves were so upset that they had the lump in their throats, a condition which makes eating almost impossible. The best medicine in the world for that lump is a good, hearty laugh, and high spirits and plenty of fun at the table are better dyspeptics cures than all the doctor's stuff in creation.—Canadian Churchman.

#### THE CARE OF THE HAIR.

The various physical features which make or mar the beauty of a child are for the most part the gifts of Nature, and can neither be improved nor cured on several occasions, the ludicrousness of the situation struck us so forcibly that we gave way to outbursts of mirth, and a number of times we found ourselves giggling at

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not so much to prevent disease as to render the child sweet and attractive. If frequent washing did not improve the growth of the hair (which it certainly does), and therefore claim attention on hygienic grounds, it would still add quite as much, or more, to a child's attractiveness as washing of the body, and hence become of highest importance from the purely aesthetic point of view.

The notion entertained by some mothers that delicate children are liable to take cold from having the scalp carefully washed is without foundation. Once a week the head should be thoroughly shampooed with soap and warm water. A pure article of castile soap is easily obtained of any good apothecary, and can safely be recommended, although it may be added that the evil effects of using ordinary toilet soaps are rarely, if ever, met with outside of certain advertisements.

Frequent and thorough brushing of the hair is extremely desirable. It not only improves temporarily the appearance of a child, but tends at the same time to keep the scalp in a healthy condition. It stimulates the growth of the hair and prevents it from becoming dry and harsh. Care should be exercised in selecting a thick, soft brush, and due attention be paid to the manner in which it is used. There is a right way and a wrong way of doing many things, and in hair brushing the latter is too frequently employed. The mother or nurse who assumes this important duty must take plenty of time, and give her undivided attention to it. If the operation be performed hastily or carelessly the child soon learns to dread it, while, on the other hand, if it is always associated with a few pleasant words, a short fairy tale, or something of the kind, the operation will give pleasure to both of the parties concerned, and the beneficial results will soon become apparent.

KEEPING THE ANNIVERSARY.

Many a bereaved mother has been helped through the agonizing memories of birth-day and other anniversaries by giving a little thoughtful planning to the day, seeking out some motherless child to be made particularly glad for the sake of her own vanished darling. In reading the annual reports of orphan asylums or other charitable institutions one often sees acknowledgment made of a special "treat" for the children given in memory of some small "Johnny" or "Nellie," safe in the country where they "hunger no more, neither thirst any more."

"We always dress a doll for Josephine on her birthday," said one mother to a friend, "and give it to some other child."

Josephine went to the Lover of little children years ago, but to-day she seems a sweet and blessed possession to the brothers and sisters who have no real knowledge of her little face except from cherished pictures.—Congregationalist.

KISSING THE BABY.

I witnessed on the street, a few days ago, a little scene that set me thinking. A nurse maid was wheeling a perambulator in which was a baby, perhaps a year old, when two ladies stopped her.

"Is this Mrs. ———'s baby?" one asked, and then, a second lady said, "You dear little thing! I must kiss you."

She was about to kiss the baby when the maid intervened.

"Mrs. ——— has given me orders that no one is to kiss Baby Hilda when she is outdoors," she said. The lady drew back indignantly. "You may be sure," she said, with a stare of haughty surprise, "that I shall not fail to report your impertinence to Mrs. ———" and she swept on. The little maid looked after her with a troubled face, and as I passed the perambulator I could not help saying:

"I am sure Baby's mother will be glad to know how carefully you carry out her orders. It is very hurtful for a baby to be kissed so much by strangers."

"Yes, ma'am," she replied. "This cold weather, it chaps her little lips, and that lady had a cold-blistet on her lip, anyway, and Mrs. ——— wouldn't kiss Baby herself if she had one."

I wonder how many ladies would be as foolish, in the first place, and as cruelly rude, in the second, as the one I saw. Women should know better than to offer to kiss babies in the street, and certainly any woman should know better than to rebuke a maid for carrying out her mistress's orders. It is hard enough to get the idea of properly protecting a child in to a nurse maid's mind, without finding fault with her when she does her duty.

FASHION NOTES.

Plaided materials are finding a wide acceptance in the trimming section. Smart street costumes of tailor-made gowns are fashioned of fine and silky mohairs in the most elusive and delicate tones, and those are strapped and piped with bias plaids of the same material to quite a considerable extent. It is a mode, however, that needs to be employed with a judicious discrimination, especially where the delicate pastel tones are concerned, since it is an all too easy task to make a commonplace result from charming materials if the plaid be used to excess, just a bare hint here and there, that is enough.

Plaided skirts are coming to the front in quite impressive style. The sin pleating that has been hanging along with scant recognition until last year promises to hold even a greater measure of modishness in the new materials, especially for house wear. Kilted skirts, in knife box, double box, combination and draped pleats are to be noted among the late importations. Those are at their most lasting best when planted at some professional pleating establishment, and when worn out in the rain are likely to need frequent pressing to keep them in shape.

If one is to judge by the latest modes from Paris the short sleeve is already passe over there, even for Southern wear. Evening gowns seem to have dispensed with the sleeve altogether, there being just a strap or two over the shoulder and a little drape for the forearm. The lingerie blouse has a full-length sleeve, often coming well over the knuckles of the hand, while the only thing that retains the half sleeve for formal wear is the smart little dinner jacket of velveteen, broad tan or some other costly and luxurious material.

As usual, at the start of the season there are several radical departures from accepted styles that are tried, as it were, tentatively, and accordingly as they are met with favor or otherwise their future career is settled. One of the prettiest of the recent innovations in this line is a smart sailor shape, one of those sautechrimed affairs, in white chip, provided with a bandeau of goodly depth. The novelty consists in the fact that the steepest part of the bandeau is in the front instead of at the back as heretofore the trim turned up sharply off the face and the bandeau covered with a huge rosette bow of white mesaline ribbon, some of the edges being dolly wired to hold the shape. Wired ends of black velvet ribbon are caught into a chow and posed beside the white this being repeated in the trimming around the crown where the strands of black and white ribbon are mixed, and the loops and ends that decorate the back being composed equally of white satin and black velvet ribbons.

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