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he appeared a very genial and even imaginative companion. His imagination he exercised chiefly for the amusement of the four little children, whose lives could not but be dreary. It was so seldom they had really enough to eat, and so often that their mother was too ill to give them lessons, and they were left for days together to their own resources. The evening, however, usually brought them consolation, when their father returned from his ill-spent day in the bare studio or at the British Museum, and he would insist upon more coals being heaped upon the fire, and his wife being cosily ensconced at one corner of the fireplace and himself at the other.

Matthew, as the evening wore on, warmed to the task of amusing the children, and the form such amusement took was generally to discuss

plans for the time when "father should get an order."

"If I had the lot of money that such an order would bring me," began Matthew, as usual, in his big gruff voice, "I should first of all buy a silk frock for mother."

"And I should make father buy a new suit of clothes for himself," put in Mrs. Failes, in a tired, delicate voice, but with a gentle smile on her pale face.

"And then—" Here Matthew paused and this never failed to cause great excitement, for it was here that the variety began. The first two suggestions were never altered, but after that both Mr. and Mrs. Failes let their imagination have full play and each child had numerous ideas on the subject.

"And then," repeated Matthew looking round on his breathless audience, "I should shut up this old house (I'll never alter that plan), and after that I should go away and leave you all—just for a rest."

"Oh no, no, father!" came the chorus.

"We must do everything together!" "Ah, but I can't see that—it'd be my money, and I should give you just sixpence each!"

Then everyone laughed, and his wife added, "What father really means is that he would take us all with him."

"Yes in a motor," cried the eldest boy.

"I'd rather go in an electric brougham," added another.

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"No, we'll go in a balloon!" said Matthew. "And we'll go miles and miles right up above the clouds—high up above the horrid rain-clouds."

"But when the sun shines," said his wife, "We'll just stay as still as we can up in the blue sky and—"

"We'd take something to eat, wouldn't we, mummie?" queried Baby, open-eyed.

"Rather!" exclaimed her senior by one year. "We'd take ripping fings—chocolates and ices, and—and mince-

pies and Krismas pudding, and lots and lots of cream."

"And I should have to take lots and lots of medicine if that's all you'd take to eat, my son," said his mother, with a laugh that was surprisingly gay considering her tired, sad voice.

Thus the game went on and on unendingly till supper-time came with its frugal fare of bread and cheese, or jam, and just water to drink. But the game went on through the whole meal, so that nobody thought of what he was eating.

Matthew and his wife would look sadly at their little family after one of these evenings, and Matthew's hopelessness would return—he felt but little hope of ever earning more than he did at present—and he knew no means of educating his children for the positions they ought to take in the world.

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Bitterly one day he read of a splendid window that it was proposed to put in one of the chapels of the fine historic church at Abbey Barton, and he also read that a firm who sometimes gave him commissions were undertaking the work. It was purely for the want of something to do that he designed a window for the purpose.

And somehow, as he worked at it—the first work he had undertaken for work's sake for so many years—the old love and a certain amount of inspiration came to him. When it was finished, unasked, he sent it to the firm for consideration, and he asked for the design a sum that seemed to himself stupendous.

It would never occur to such a man as Matthew Failes to keep this fact to himself. All the family shared in the excitement of sending the design away, and the interest was doubled in the customary game. In his heart of hearts Matthew did not really expect any good to come of his venture, or he might, perhaps, have foreborne to make so many plans, knowing as he did the realities of their case.

At last the longed for letter arrived, and in a breathless silence Matthew opened it and read that Messrs. Samuel Brightwen and Co., accepted his design at the price he asked if he would be good enough to sign the enclosed agreement.

The delight of the family knew no bounds, and each one began to ask eagerly which of their many plans they should adopt first, and when the silk frock and the new suit were to be bought. Then Matthew realized what he had done and Mrs. Failes looked at him sadly and shook her head.

"I'm afraid we shall have to spend it all, children," she said, wearily, "paying rent and bills and buying new boots and shoes and heaps of other things."



For a moment a dead silence reigned, and each little face fell dismally, then Baby smiled a little April smile and said shyly, "Never mind, daddy; let's think of what we'll do next time!"

"Well, p'haps not next time, dear-ies," cried Matthew, "but one day when the real big ship comes home."

And the evening saw the little family as usual busy with their same old game. The "real big ship" was no further off than "daddy's order" had been, and this time Matthew promised that when the ship did come there should be no debts and rent to pay, or if there were "ther'll be plenty for our travels, too," he said.—Southern Churchman.

Spring Finds the Human System

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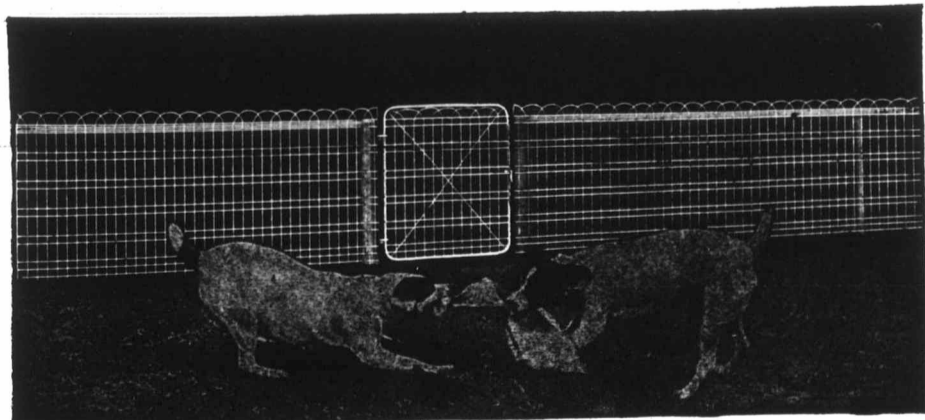
In the spring the human system is loaded with poisons which have accumulated as a result of artificial winter life. There has been too much breathing of poisoned indoor air, too little outdoor exercise, too much eating of heavy, indigestible food, especially too much meat and too little fruit.

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