

The Home Beautiful.

"The Land of Make Believe."

Let us let the little children have the legends and the rest;
Let them keep the glad illusions of the years that are the best;
Let them know the joyous fancies of the mystic fairyland,
And the wonderful enchantments only they can understand,
For the years are coming to them when they'll sigh, and softly grieve
That they left the realm of childhood in the Land of Make Believe.

In the Land of Make Believe there is a vine that meets the sky,
And Jack goes up and down it—we have seen him, you and I;
There's a winding path that leads us to the hushes of the wood,
And a many times we've trod it with the quaint Red Ridinghood;
There's a frowning cliff surrounded by a castle glum and grim,
And old Bluebeard lurks within it—you know how we peered at him!

In the Land of Make Believe we used to ramble up and down
To the playing of the Piper in the streets of Hamelin-town;
And we saw the fairy mother make the horses rear and prance
When we rode with Cinderella to the palace for the dance;
And of evenings, you remember, how we saw some one go by,
And we knew it was the Sandman, come to shut each blinking eye.

All the others—how we loved them! How they used to come and play,
Till at last they sent a message that they'd come no more one day,
For they had to leave us lonely with our broken dreams and toys
—e they stand behind in childhood with the little girls and boys.
Let us let the children have them, ere the years come when they grieve,
That they ever found the highway from the Land of Make Believe.

The Story Hour.

Happy the child and mother who journey together to the land of Make-Believe. I can see them now—a mother in the rocker and a little head cuddled-up so close, with a little ear open to hear of the wonderful things in the world of May-be. I can see them again, seated beside the fire, enjoying the tales so old and yet so new—tales that make them magnify the present joys and forget the present sorrows, and cause them to live in the long ago or in the long hereafter. And yet again I can see them seated beside an open book—perhaps the Book of Books—and a voice, not always sweet indeed, but ever sweet at this hour, reading the stories which all mothers should love to read and which all children have a right to hear. Believe me, it is under such circumstances as this that heart is bound to heart. Without this communion there is not developed that filial piety which is the beginning of all true worship. Without it, a dwelling though ever so fine, cannot become a home.

How to Tell a Story

The telling of a story is not difficult. The story teller who knows the main facts has simply to arrange them in order in her own mind and then begin to talk in a natural manner. Any one who has difficulty should get Miss Bryant's little book on "How to Tell Stories to Children." It not only gives the fullest information but has a fine collection of stories as well.

The teaching of a nursery rhyme is so simple that no instruction is required. The counting of the fingers and the toes to "This little pig goes to market" brings its own reward. The story of "Tom, Tom, the piper's son," has always an attentive hearing, while "Little Bo-Peep" seemingly never grows weary in her search for the missing flock.

And it is just as easy to tell of Cinderella, and of Little Red Ridinghood and Goldie Locks and the Three Bears. The only necessary condition is that voice, face, hands and whole body be used in the telling.

Nor is it less easy to tell one of the old Bible

stories. With very little children it is well to tell these first in simple language. Afterwards they may be read in the words of the Book. Here is how one mother tells the story of Isaac before reading it to her little ones:

The Promised Son.

(Genesis XV., 7-17; XVII, 1-8, 15-22; XXI, 5-8; XXII, 1-19.)

INTRODUCTION.

Do you remember what promise God made to Abraham when He brought him to the land of Canaan? Can you repeat the very words? What did we say Abraham expected from God? A child, of course. Do you remember how Eve looked for a child who would destroy the enemy and bring a blessing to the world? So Abraham was hoping for a child who would bring the blessing. I am sure that he often talked with Sarah about the child God was going to give them, but oh, how long it seemed! The years went by and there was no child. Abraham grew to be as old as your grandfather and Sarah as old as your grandmother, but still no child. Wouldn't you think they would begin to fear God was forgetting them? But Abraham still believed God, and that God was pleased with him.

PRESENTATION.

One day when Abraham was nearly one hundred years old, God came to him and made him the promise again. And I think God must have loved him more than ever, for we read that Abraham still loved God. Hear the very words. (Chap. XV. 5-6). So you see there is one thing God loves more than anything else. It is to have people believe and trust in Him. I wonder how your father would like it if you didn't believe what he said! Of course he wouldn't like it. Neither does God like it when people do not believe Him. Sometimes He keeps waiting and waiting just to see how much they really trust Him. That is just how it was with Abraham.

Well, one day when Abraham was one hundred years old, and Sarah was ninety years old, God sent them a little baby. He was the dearest, sweetest smiling little boy so that they knew at once what to call him. They named him Laughter, or in the language of that time, Isaac. Do you know any boys by that name? What did you say the name meant? I am sure there was a good deal of laughter, too. How Sarah must have laughed! How Abraham must have laughed! How all the neighbors must have come in to laugh over grandma's baby! But I think that behind it all Abraham must have been thinking of God's promise—"In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed."

Do you not suppose that Abraham and Sarah watched over the little fellow very carefully? He wasn't a spoiled boy, either. He was most obedient and I am sure Abraham must have loved him all the more for it.

And now we come to the strangest part of the story. One day Abraham heard a voice call out "Abraham!" "Yes," he answered. "Here I am." Then he knew it was the voice of God. What could God want from him now? And what more could God give him?

Do you remember what Cain and Abel offered to God? Do you remember how Noah thanked God and gave him the best he had? Now Abraham used to do the same thing. He used to take his best oxen and his best sheep and put them on a pile of stone and burn them before God. And God was pleased when He saw He was remembered.

So when Abraham said "Yes, here I am," God said "Abraham, I want you to offer me your boy Isaac. I want you to put him, instead of one of the oxen, on the altar of stone."

How do you think Abraham felt now? Just think how long he had waited for Isaac. Think how much he loved him. Surely God couldn't mean it? And if Isaac were taken away how could the world be blessed?

But God told Abraham where to go and when to go, and just what to do. And Abraham still trusted God. So early in the morning he waked Isaac, and got the wood for the fire all ready, and went off to the mountain where Isaac was to be offered. And Isaac talked and chatted by the way just as he always did. All at once he stopped and said "Oh, father, you have forgotten something. Here is the wood and the fire, but where is the lamb? How did you forget the lamb?" Then poor old Abraham must have wept as he answered, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb." You see how much he still

believed God. Then they came to the place where the altar was built. Isaac helped him to get the stones in place, and to lay the wood on them. Then he said, "Now, where is the lamb?" Think how Abraham must have felt when he said, "Isaac, my dear son Isaac, you are to be the lamb today." So he bound Isaac's hands and feet and laid him on the wood. Then he took the knife and lifted it to kill his son. But just then he heard God's voice saying, "Abraham! Abraham!" So immediately he turned and said, "Yes, Lord, here I am!" Then God said, "Abraham! I love you more than you can understand because you have been willing to give your only son to me. Now loose him and let him go. Look behind you in the bushes and you will see a lamb caught in the thorns. Let Isaac go and take the lamb for an offering."

Then how glad was Abraham in his heart! How he must have hugged his boy. How he must have felt as he told the whole story to Sarah, and how she must have wept with joy to see her boy back safe. But sweeter than anything must have been the words of God after it was all over. "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed." (Here read Chap. XII, 1-19.)

REVIEW.

1. What promise did God make to Abraham?
2. How old was Abraham when the child was given?
3. What was the boy's name?
4. What did God ask Abraham to do with him?
5. What happened as Abraham was about to slay Isaac?

What to Read.

What stories shall the mother tell to her children? Surely a woman's intuition is the safest guide. Nursery Rhymes and Jingles, Fairy Tale and Folk Lore, stories of real men and women who served well and truly, stories of animals and pets, accounts of travel at home and in other lands—here is a beginning, and there is no ending. No! you cannot afford to leave out any of them. In the rhyme and jingle the little soul first perceives the music of speech; in the fairy tale he first feels his possibilities and learns to revere the worthy and detest the base; in the real stories of earth he becomes a worshipper of heroes, which is the first step to true nobility; in the study of animals and pets he becomes humane and loving; while the stories of travel develop that longing for a richer and wider experience which is the necessary condition of all growth.

Some Good Books.

Yet what is a mother to do who has forgotten all, or who never knew? Here is a simple little list. For rhymes and jingles get Heart of Oak Books (No. 1) published by Heath & Co., Boston; for fairy tales get any book such as Classic Myths, Judd; Andersen's Fairy Tales; Classic Fables, Turpin. For real stories, read or tell the stories of the Bible and of the world heroes as found in Fifty Famous Stories by Baldwin. For stories of animals nothing is better than Long's stories: "Wilderness Ways" and "Ways of Woodfolk," published by Ginn & Co. The fiction that is suitable in the early years includes such books as "Five Little Peppers," Little Lord Fauntleroy, "Helen's Babies," "Jessica's First Prayer," "The Bird's Christmas Carol." Almost best of all for reading to very little children is a copy of "Little Folks," published at Salem, Mass.

Two Teachers.

A school teacher sat at the close of day
Pressing his hands to his aching head;
He could still hear the boisterous play
And the shouts of his boys, as they hurried away.
And he frowned and fretted and planned anew
More stringent rules for the noisy crew,
"They'll be the death of me yet," he said.

A school teacher stood in his door one day,
And laughed so hard he could scarcely see,
At the antics and pranks of his boys at play—
Their pompous airs and their mimic fray.
As he marked how they aped the ways of men,
He shook with laughter again and again.
"They'll be the death of me yet," said he.

—W. A. C., in California News.