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Women's Realm.

A Smile.

They might not need it, Yet they might; I'll let my heart be Just in sight-

A smile so small As mine might be Precisely their Necessity.

-From "Sunday Afternoon."

In one of Mr. Thos. Hardy's books there is a tragic passage which pictures the destiny of a large family of country children, born to a couple of irresponsible parents in a sleepy village under the hills.

The father is a vague, unhappy sort of man. The mother is superstitious and light-headed, always dreaming of great things for her children, but meanwhile doing very little to help them make the best of life. Both father and mother mean rather well, but both do uncommonly ill nevertheless.

And so you have a picture of the small crowd of muddled babies tumbling in a confused, haphazard kind of way, pitiable little passengers on the huge, rough sea of life, their boat manned and guided by captains who know nothing about the art of navigation—children who probably will never do much, because they have never in nursey days had a good example set before them, and so do not realize that life, if it is to be rightly lived, is a serious business, not a thing to be got through as comfortably and as easily as possible.

None of us want to bring up our children like that, but many of us do not, I think, at all realize that in a sense it may be said that a parent is a destiny, and that it rests largely with the parents to determine what sort of men and women their boys and girls shall grow into.

Choice of Parents.

Of course, many witty things have been said about the choice of parents. If only we could have chosen our own mother and father, in the same way as we decide what ship we will travel in over the perilous sea, how much more pleasant, we sometimes think, and how much simpler, our lives would

We should probably chosen somebody with "plenty in the funds" and a nice house in the country, for I fancy the competition for poor fathers and mothers would certainly be small.

But, when one comes to think of it, wealth is really a very small matter as compared to the mental and bodily health, the character, the patient care, the wise example that all parents can, if they will, give to their children, no matter whether their income be large or small.

Do all mothers and fathers remember this, I wonder, or do they sometimes reproach themselves because, owing to the lack of money, they cannot do for their children what they would? Do they know that it lies in their power to help their children to be strong enough not to fear poverty, courageous enough to fight against it, or patient enough to bear it, if it must be borne? Do they realize how, by teaching children to have a right outlook on life and give them recollections of a happy home to look back upon, they can fill the whole of the after life with hope and brightness, and make them, when the nursery is deserted for the huge stage of the world, retain faith in human nature, belief in human goodness, and, in a word, keep their ideals.

The Kingdom of Ideals.

But if ideals are not supplied during nursery days the chances are that they never will be supplied at all, for you will not find them on the

floor of the Stock Exchange, or on the pavements of the muddy streets. Whatever ideals a man carries with him in after life, therefore, he will probably owe to his father and mother, who by living as straightly and honorably as they can will have set before him a standard by which to measure life.

And so it comes to pass that "the mothers' realm," if properly understood, is really the kingdom of ideals. It must begin in nursery days of course, but it will not end there by any means. By recollection, by suggestion, the mother's and father's influence will extend to the very end of life, and so it is impossible to tool greatly magnify its importance.

Prize Hash.

A man who, in the seventies, had occasion to spend a week in an interior town in New York, and who stayed at the only hotel, had a curious and not wholly unpleasant experience. It was in the days of the "shinplaster", or fractional currency, issued by the government in place of silver, which had been driven out of circulation.

We had hash twice a day, sometimes three times, and the novel way they had of inducing the boarders to live chiefly on hash struck me as being original.

The hash would be brought in on a large brown oval dish and placed in the centre of the table, and the landlady would announce to the boarders that there was a new fifty-cent shinplaster hidden in the hash. Then we would all become interested and eat hash, ignoring all other dishes. And how the hash did fly.

Suddenly someone would announce, "Eureka!" or "I have found it!" and the hash was at once side-tracked until the landlady came in and saw the deserted dish.

Seizing it, she would run hurriedly out of the room, and shortly return, with the statement that here was now a twenty-five cent shinplaster in the hash, but the hole by which it had been introduced was so smoothly and evenly rubbed over that no one could discover its whereabouts.

Again we all returned to the hash, and ate until someone again announced, "Eureka!" Then everybody at once lost his appetite for hash.

There probably was now less than half of the original hash left over, when the landlady, seeing the slump in business, resorted to her old tactics, and removing the dish, reappeared with the cheer that there was still ten cents left in the dish.

The volume of the hash had now been so much reduced that the shinplaster was soon found, and the size of the little "mound of mystery" was less than one-quarter of the original. still, there was hash to be seen.

The persevering landlady wanted that hash extinguished, clean and without remnant, and made a five-cent-shinplaster bid for its total extinction.

She won, and we were all fed.

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