

## THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

## House Building.

Haven't you all heard the birds chattering a great deal lately? Perhaps you didn't know exactly what they were saying, but it is easy to guess that they were talking about their house building and furnishing.

"I was sitting alone by the maple tree—  
I wasn't asleep—you needn't tell me.  
Two voices I heard right over my head,  
And this is precisely, just what they said:

"Oh, Robin! Oh, Robin! I'm all out of breath;  
Oh, Robin! Oh, Robin! I'm tired to death  
With, 'Come, look at this tree, and now, look at  
that'!"  
I'll look at no more. Oh, Robin, that's flat!"

"Why, Robina, Robina, Robina, dear,  
You must be both tired and nervous, I fear.  
And, what do you think?—I'm quite sure of this—  
I plainly heard Robin then give her a kiss.

"Oh, see, love, the fountain, there by the path,  
What a beautiful place for a nice morning bath;  
And dewy and fresh, at the breaking of dawn,  
Fat worms will be plenty, right here on the lawn.

"With slugs from the garden, and all of the best,  
Oh, Robina, here is the place for our nest.  
Then gaily they flew to the top of the tree,  
And that's where they'll build, as sure as can be."

That couple did not forget to put in the teaspoonful of love when they were preparing their home, did they? Somebody once said that he would rather have a teaspoonful of love in a house than all the grand furniture in the world. If you ever tried to live in a very grand house where everybody was disagreeable and cross, I think you would agree with him and be very glad to get home again, even if the carpets are rather shabby and the tables do look a little old and scratched. You have a great deal more than a teaspoonful of love in your home, I am sure. A few weeks ago a robin was determined to build his nest inside the house where I live. He tapped at the windows and flung himself against them, from early morning until evening, for nearly a week. Then he gave up the hopeless struggle, and, as he couldn't get in, built his nest in a tree just outside our dining-room window. I don't know whether he intended us to help him in feeding his family, but it certainly was a handy spot for crumbs.

The birds have plenty to do when their babies are young, for they seem to be hungry all the time, and make a great fuss if they are not fed in a hurry. I read of a bird-lover who rescued four little robins that had fallen out of their nest, and undertook to feed them. The cries for help began every morning about four o'clock, and every hour through the day those hungry babies had to be fed. A small boy was engaged to dig worms for them, but he got tired after one day's work, for sixty worms were not enough to satisfy their appetites. Just fancy how hard it must be for the old robins to dig worms or catch insects all day long, to cram into the mouths which seem to be always wide open. Do they ever get time to eat a nice juicy worm themselves, I wonder. However, like other unselfish people, they manage to be contented and even jolly most of the time. Would you like to learn their secret?

"If you'd learn to be happy  
Just study the robin;  
He never looks cross  
With his tail hanging down.  
If it rains, he says 'Thank you,  
That's just what I wanted,  
'The dust is so dreadful  
In this blessed town.'  
He's a poor, homeless fellow,  
Without place of shelter,  
Excepting the sky  
Or a bare, leafless tree.  
But he puts on his best looks,  
Seeks after a wife,  
And then on house-building  
They both will agree.  
And then if he's hungry,  
He first asks a blessing—  
Or rather gives thanks  
For the good things in life.  
Then he breakfasts on fish-worms,  
Which he thinks a great dainty,  
And seems to enjoy  
Without plate, spoon or knife.  
But as springtime advances  
His family grows larger,  
And robin is working  
From morning till night,  
Yet he still looks so happy,  
So bright and so jolly.  
One would think that his days  
Were one constant delight.  
Now that business is over  
He takes things more easy,  
Leaves housekeeping cares  
To his young pretty wife;  
But he often sits by her,  
And sings her a solo,  
Which means (in bird language)  
'You're the joy of my life.'  
And so, my dear children,  
What if you are busy,  
Or have to 'mind baby,'  
The whole living day,  
Don't say, 'Oh, what a bother,'  
And look cross and snappish,  
But be like the robin,  
Light-hearted and gay."

Some birds are very particular about the materials they use for their nests, and it is wonderful to see how cleverly they build them, when

they have no hands or tools to work with. I have a humming-bird's nest which is such a dainty, round home, almost as pretty as the bird that built it. You have all seen nests made of horse-hair, and I heard of one person who encouraged the birds to build in her garden by tying bits of wool and string to her clothes-line, which they very gladly made use of. I heard of another kind of nest made entirely of hairpins, but that was built by a city bird. It wouldn't make a very comfortable bed for the poor featherless bird-babies, would it?

Most birds are splendid insect-destroyers, and it is quite worth your while to help them in their house-building, and so encourage them to live on your farm. Charles Aldrich says that every spring he gets thirty or forty cigar-boxes and fastens them in the trees for the birds to live in. If the boxes are long, he puts a partition across the middle. This partition has a hole cut through it, so the box is turned into a two-roomed bird cottage. In one of his boxes eighteen wrens were reared in one season. A pair of wrens have been known to carry to their young about a thousand insects in a single day, so it is worth while encouraging them. Will you remember this next spring, and help the little builders to make their nests in your orchards?

Cousin DOROTHY.

## Old Timers.

There are no days like the good old days—

The days when we were youthful!  
When human kind were pure of mind  
And speech and deeds were truthful;  
Before a love for sordid gold  
Became man's ruling passion,  
And before each dame and maid became  
Slaves to the tyrant fashion.

There are no girls like the good old girls—

Against the world I'd stake 'em!  
As buxom and smart and clean at heart  
As the Lord knew how to make 'em!  
They were rich in spirit and common sense,  
A piety all-supportin';  
They could bake and brew, and had taught school, too,  
And they made the likeliest courtin'!

There are no boys like the good old boys—

When we were boys together!  
When the grass was sweet to the brown bare feet  
That dimpled the laughing heather;  
When the pewee sung to the summer dawn  
Or the bee in the willow clover,  
Or down by the mill the whip-poor-will  
Echoed his night song over.

There is no love like the good old love—

The love that mother gave us!  
We are old, old men, yet we pine again  
For the precious grace God gave us!  
So we dream and dream of the good old times,  
And our hearts grow tenderer, fonder,  
As those dear old beams bring soothing gleams  
Of heaven away off yonder.

—Eugene Field.

## Little Essays of the Commonplace.

It is all very well to say "don't worry," but oftentimes it seems impossible not to. One great aid for the "Don't Worrys" is to rest more. Whenever possible, slip into loose clothes and rest in a darkened room. Another good idea is to divert the mind by change. Read children's books, do anything to avoid settling into a rut. It is fatal to do always the same things at the same time. Learn to "swing off." Suggest and do unexpected things. To be attractive, the clever woman must be variable. She must not look to-day as she will to-morrow; her moods must be many, each more fascinating than the other. The woman who "worries" never pleases. "Care killed a cat" seems inconsequential and meaningless, but think about the cat. Poor kitty!

In my grandmother's days, for a woman to be considered "fore-handed" was a great deal of a compliment. A glance backward often serves us in getting forward. Women of this generation would help themselves and others many times by planning ahead, not only as to food and food supplies, but in the little personal matters. To have always a half dozen pairs of stockings, a half dozen handkerchiefs laid away, with some specially nice underclothing, ought to be a rule with every woman. If to these be added a dainty wrapper, dressing sack and bedroom slippers, she will have the comfortable feeling that she is prepared for any emergency. Sudden illnesses come to all, and careless dress is most depressing in times of sickness. Does one have to make an unexpected journey, if there is nothing to do but pack bag or trunk the pleasure of the change is doubled. Close friendship with a woman who always did everything at the last available moment long ago convinced me that this plan of looking "forward" should be a rule. A member of this woman's family wittily says, "Things are always done here at the last minute and 'put on wet.'"—The Lady's World.

## THE QUIET HOUR.

## The Lord is at Hand.

"Loose not Thy hold, O Hand of God!  
Or utterly we faint and fall;  
The way is rough, the way is blind,  
And buffeted with stormy wind;  
Thick darkness veils above, below,  
From whence we come, to what we go;  
Feebly we grope o'er rock and sand,  
But still go on, confiding all,  
Lord, to Thy Hand!"

"In that strong hold salvation is;  
Its touch is comfort in distress,  
Cure for all sickness, balm for ill,  
And energy for heart and will,  
Securely held, unflinching,  
The soul can walk at ease, and sing,  
And fearless tread each unknown strand,  
Leaving each large thing, and each less,  
Lord, in Thy Hand!"

There are always two sides to everything. A little while ago we considered the possibility of looking at things invisible—that was our point of view. Now let us look at the other side and consider that, whether we remember Him or not, God never forgets us. Life would not be the discouraging thing it often is if we realized the wonderful promise: "I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee."

Do you remember the object lesson our Lord once gave to His disciples? He sent them away, depriving them of the visible presence which might be a hindrance to faith. They thought themselves alone on the stormy sea, in the darkest hour of the night. But Christ's disciples are never alone. He saw them toiling in rowing, and, when things seemed at their worst, He came to them, walking upon the sea. Even then they did not know their Master, and cried out for fear. How often must they have thought of that night afterwards, when fighting far greater difficulties than contrary winds. It must have been a great help to know that the Lord was watching them, though Himself unseen, and would come to their assistance when most needed.

When we think we are having rather a hard time of it, it is often a help to get away from ourselves altogether and study our case from an outside point of view—seeing our lives as God sees them. The Bible tells us over and over again that our Father is carefully training his children. Tenderly and patiently He steadies each faltering step, like a mother teaching a little child to walk alone, as He has said: "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." How beautifully His watchful care is shown by the image of a mother eagle forcing the young birds to leave the comfortable, enervating security of the nest. She deliberately puts them in a dangerous position, that they may become strong and hardy, but she is always near to help if needed. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead them." The young eagles were perfectly safe, and so are we, for the eternal God is our refuge, "and underneath are the everlasting arms."

Even the wind and the rain do not come by chance; everything is governed by what we call physical laws. People are beginning to accept as sober fact, instead of poetical imagery, the words of Job about the winds having weight, the rain obeying laws, and even the swift lightning being chained to a track. God made all things, and still keeps even the mightiest powers in check: "He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds; and He weigheth the waters by measure. When He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder; then did He see it, and declare it. He prepared it, yea, and searched it out." Let us try to remember that God "weigheth by measure" all the sorrows and joys of our lives. Nothing is too trifling for His patient consideration, nothing comes by chance. Even when our troubles are of our own making, He permits them, and overrules them for our good.

"Child of my love, lean hard!  
And let me feel the pressure of thy care.  
I know thy burden, for I fashioned it,  
Poised it in my own hand and made its weight  
Precisely that which I saw best for thee;  
And when I placed it on thy shrinking form,  
I said: 'I shall be near, and, while thou leanest  
On me, this burden shall be mine, not thine.'

"So shall I keep within my circling arms  
The child of my own love; here lay it down,  
Nor fear to weary Him who made, upholds,  
And guides the universe. Yet closer come;  
Thou art not near enough. Thy care, thy self,  
Lay both on me, that I may feel my child  
Reposing on my heart. Thou lovest me?  
I doubt it not; then, loving me, lean hard."

In some kinds of modern religious teaching there is a great deal of introspection. People are encouraged to study their own feelings, instead of looking up to God. If this is carried to an extreme it leads to a morbid, narrow-minded, spiritual selfishness. There is a story told of a certain university professor who had been suspected of skeptical tendencies. He was asked on one occa-