

THE HOUSEHOLD.

A MOTHER'S VICTIM.

A TRUE STORY FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS.

Mrs. Benton was baking. When she had put the last pie into the oven, she stepped to the door, and called 'Johnny.'

A bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked little boy came bounding up the steps, and stood before her.

'What you want, mamma?' he asked.

'I want you to run to the grocery right quick, and get me some eggs. Wait a moment, and I'll give you some money.'

She stepped into the sitting-room, and going over to the mantel, put out her hand to take the change she thought was there. To her surprise it was gone, and she stood for a moment with a puzzled look on her face.

'I surely put a quarter there this morning,' she thought. Then the puzzled look gave place to one of mingled annoyance and pain. She was positive she had laid that money there on the corner of the mantel after her husband had left the house that morning. The front door had been closed and locked all the time, and nobody but herself and the little boy had been in the room. Had Johnny taken it? The thought startled her. 'But he must have taken it,' she told herself; 'for I know I put it right here after Mr. Benton went away, and there was no one else to take it. Oh, to think my boy would be dishonest—after all my teaching!'

Without taking time to consider the possibility of being mistaken, she turned upon the child, who followed her into the room, and demanded:

'Johnny, did you see that money I laid here this morning? Tell me the truth!'

'Why, no, mamma; I didn't see it,' answered the boy at once.

'Are you going to tell me a falsehood, besides taking what does not belong to you?' asked the mother angrily. 'I shall punish you for that. You needn't deny it, Johnny; mamma knows you took it, and it grieves her very much that you would take anything that doesn't belong to you, and then tell a falsehood about it. It's too much; mamma is ashamed of you!'

Poor little Johnny burst into tears.

'Mama,' he sobbed, 'I didn't take your money,—as true as anything, I didn't.'

'Don't say another word!' interrupted the mother, too angry to be reasonable.

'I tell you, I know you did take it, because nobody has been in here but you; and I know I laid it there after your papa went away this morning. I shall punish you well. Sit down there till I come back, and I'll see if I can't make you tell the truth, any way.' And pushing him into the nearest chair, she left the room.

She came back presently, with a switch in her hand and a determined look on her face. To her surprise, the little boy rose from his chair as she entered the room, and came toward her.

'Mama,' he said, raising a tear-stained little face to meet the angry look she cast upon him,—'mama, I've been praying to God, and I know he'll help me out of this.'

'How do you know he will?' the mother asked, somewhat startled. 'Who told you he would?'

'My Sunday-school teacher said so. She said if we ever got into trouble, to just ask God to help us, and he would. And so I asked him to help me out of this trouble, and I believe he will.' And the brown eyes filled with tears again.

If this were anything but a true story, I should make it read that the mother gladly stayed the punishment of her child until his guilt was proved beyond the shadow of a doubt. But, strangely enough, this real mother was more angry than before, and made the punishment more severe because of his 'hypocrisy,' as she called it.

When Mr. Benton came home to dinner that day, he was told the whole story, his wife expressing much sorrow that their little boy had not only taken the money, and then tried to conceal it with a falsehood, but had acted the hypocrite besides.

When she had finished, Mr. Benton said sadly:

'Well, I am very sorry this has happened, I am sure. You are mistaken about having put the money there after I left. Jenny, I took that money myself.'

I will leave you to imagine the mother's

ceilings. But I am glad to tell you she took the lesson to heart. In relating the incident to a friend afterwards, she said, with quivering lips and tear-filled eyes:

'Poor little fellow! It did not help him out of his trouble to pray that time, but I assure you it will in the future.'—*Elizabeth in Sunday-School Times.*

HOUSECLEANING TIME.

Every right-minded woman, now that Lent and Easter are passed, should turn her attention towards spring housecleaning. If she belongs to the good, old-fashioned sisterhood, she will proceed as rapidly as possible to give her home the inviting air of a barn, to drive her husband to drink and to estrange her children in the mad upheaval she will effect throughout the house. But she may not belong to this set. She may be anxious to do her spring housecleaning according to the most approved modern methods and may not know how to. To such women these helpful suggestions are addressed.

In the first place, it is a mistake to undertake the whole job in a day or two. Keep at least two rooms habitable. Do not have all the floors bare and all the windows curtainless at the same time. It is also false economy to take the servant from her regular duties and set her to cleaning. It is much better to let her do the laundry work, the cooking, the weekly baking and all her duties in their regular order, and to hire a woman for part, at least, of every day to help the mistress of the house.

Closets and cupboards may be cleared of their belongings, scrubbed, dried and repapered, without any particular confusion. All these and other minor parts of the work may be done first and the men of the house never know that the awful period of housecleaning has begun. When the larger parts of the process are entered upon, one room should be taken at a time. Its carpet may be taken up and shaken. If the walls need repapering or repainting, that should be done before the floors are touched. Then the windows should be washed and the floor washed, stained, oiled or treated to whatever rejuvenating process it needs. Then the curtains, cleaned and freshened, should be restored to their places, the summer rugs laid and the furniture, cleaned and repaired, replaced. The picture frames should be retouched, if they need it, and the pictures rehung.

If each room is treated in this way the general confusion which used to be synonymous with spring cleaning is escaped. There is always a large part of the house habitable and the woman of the house need never be the tired, exhausted creature she used to be under the ancient trying process.

ON SUNDAY AFTERNOONS.

In my experience I have found invaluable help in books, writes Eleanor B. Amerman on a discussion on 'Children and the Sabbath' in the *May Ladies' Home Journal*. Almost every child likes to be read to. I have tried to choose books which would widen the children's field of scriptural knowledge, and they have listened to so much about the land of Palestine, its hills and valleys and grand old mountains, its plains and rivers and seas, and its principal cities and villages, that they think of it now as a real place, where people live, and where the flowers grow, and the birds sing, and where little children play, just as they do in other countries. And we have found so many beautiful bible stories connected with these different places, both in the Old and New Testaments.

I have read to the children from the lives of great missionaries, of their labors among the heathen for Christ, and as they hear these stories—these thrilling stories which are all true—of noble self-sacrifice, dauntless courage and patient perseverance in the Master's service, do you not think, with me, that they will be filled with a desire to be like these men, 'faithful over a few things? They hear of foreign lands, of queer people who 'sit in darkness,' of heathen customs and religious rites and ceremonies. They hear, too, of the change wrought in these people by the working of the Holy Spirit in their hearts.

It is best that you should not do all the reading yourself. Let there be some maga-

zine, paper or book suitable for the day, which the children may have to read themselves and let these be reserved for Sunday.

LIME WATER.

The uses of so homely an article as lime about the household are almost innumerable. One sees the hodman on a new building keep his drinking water in a pail coated with lime, and one thinks it is a poor receptacle for the universal beverage. Yet it would not be so good or so pure served in a silver ice pitcher. A tablespoonful of lime water in a glass of milk is a remedy for summer complaint. It corrects acidity of the stomach. It prevents the turning of milk or cream, and a cupful added to bread sponge will keep it from souring. Allowed to evaporate from a vessel on the stove, it will alleviate the distresses due to lung fever, croup or diphtheria. It will sweeten and purify bottles, jugs, etc.

Lime itself, as every one knows, is invaluable as a purifier and disinfectant. Sprinkled in cellars, or closets, where there is a slight dampness, it will not only serve as a purifier, but will prevent the invasion of noxious animals. It is one of the notable instances of the economy and the bounty of Nature that this article so common and cheap is serviceable in so many instances.

TEASING.

Few habits into which children fall are more reprehensible than that of teasing, and one child can afflict as much misery on another by teasing or 'plugging' as in any other way possible. Bad as this habit is in children, it is much worse in parents. In a child it may be excused under the head of thoughtlessness or ignorance, but no such excuse as that can be made for grown people, and especially parents. No man or woman has any right to bring helpless beings into the world and then render their lives wretched through the torture of teasing; for nothing less than torture is it to a sensitive child, and many a child is rendered extremely nervous as much by teasing as anything else.

A friend relates the following instance: 'While travelling one day, a father, mother and a little boy about five years old entered the same car, and took a seat with the little fellow kneeling beside the window, his arms resting on the sill. No sooner were they comfortably settled than the father began amusing himself by pulling the child's ears, pinching his cheeks, shoving his elbows off the window sill, and pulling his feet. At every manifestation of anger or impatience the father would throw his head back and laugh. At last he made the boy cry, and his enjoyment had now evidently reached a climax as he kept saying in an audible whisper, "Cry baby! cry baby!'

The poor little fellow was a pitiful object. He was very thin, had tiny bones, and was evidently worn out nervously and without doubt his physical condition was due to the thoughtless cruelty of his father, a big, healthy, careless, fun-loving man—monster—selfish and dense to every finer emotion. The patient expression on the mother's face, as she mechanically soothed the boy, proved that the experience was too common to even arouse comment in her mind.

In conclusion we will give an extract from the report of the proceedings of a well-known woman's club: 'How would you break a child of the habit of teasing? was a question. "By breaking older people off the habit of teasing the child," was the answer, which contained the whole truth in a nutshell.—*By Clara S. Everts, in Farm, Field and Fireside.*

NERVOUSNESS.

Nervousness is a condition not easy to define; but the common use of the term in every-day speech indicates the commonness of the thing itself. There are few persons, indeed, who have not at some time suffered from irritability of the nerves and its accompanying depression.

It is to be remembered that this state always indicates a falling away from the normal standard of health. It should be taken as a danger-signal, a notice from the nerves that something is wrong. The cause of the trouble is sometimes easily found, as, for example, temporary or

habitual loss of sleep; or the difficulty may be more deeply seated and more serious.

Whatever its cause, nervousness indicates a lack of nervous force, a lowering of vital energy. Somewhere a tap is loose, and waste is proceeding more rapidly than repair. In such a state of things, the performance of every voluntary action and of every unconscious organic function is affected unfavorably.

Women suffer from nervousness more commonly than men. It is a mistake, however, to think that there is any material difference between the nerve structure of the two sexes. Unfavorable surroundings and occupations account for the greater frequency of nervous diseases among women. Farmers are rarely affected with nervousness. Farmers' wives are almost proverbially so affected.

Loss of sleep, indigestion, grief or worry, and many other functional causes may produce nervousness. Doubtless the most frequent cause is lack of sufficient out-of-door air and of moderate exercise.

It is too common for nervous people to think their complaint too trivial for a physician's notice. Strict inquiry as to the manner of life often reveals errors the correction of which relieves the condition and averts serious disease.

'Overwork does not kill, but overworry does,' some one has said, with a measure of exaggeration. Excessive work may no doubt shorten life, but constant worry over every-day cares is sure to do so.

Ceaseless cares exhaust the nervous energy. Change of occupation and of scene allows the nervous force—the cerebral gray matter—to become restocked. Nervous matter is actually consumed in performing the details of every-day existence, just as muscular tissue is expended in exercise.

A spring kept at a constant tension surely loses its elasticity, while one which is frequently unelastic does not. The figure is a good one to apply to mental and nervous experience.—*Youth's Companion.*

NEATNESS.

The difference between really nice house-keeping and its opposite is mainly discernible in trifles. A crumpled tablecloth, though ever so clean, gives the sense of discomfort to all at the table, and salt-cellars, seldom properly refilled, impart an air of neglect which the best viands do not dissipate. A bright grate-fire is an ornamental adjunct to any room; but the same, if choked with ashes, and half-dead, is as disagreeable a feature as one can imagine. A house may shine with cleanliness, yet have an untidy vestibule and door-yard, which eclipses the whole establishment.—*L.T.V., in Christian Intelligencer.*

SELECTED RECIPES.

HOMINY requires eight hours' steady cooking to be at its best and bring out the finest flavor.—*Laws of Life.*

CORN RICE MUFFINS.—Well cooked rice may be added to any muffin or pancake batter without changing the proportions as given in other receipts, as the rice simply helps to make the muffins lighter.

POTATO BALLS.—Moisten two cupfuls of cold mashed potatoes with one-half cupful of hot milk, and when softened stir in two salted, well beaten eggs. Drop carefully from a spoon into flour or egg and crumb them—the mixture should be very soft—and brown either in hot butter or boiling fat.

GRAHAM MUFFINS.—Sprinkle graham flour into milk, or milk and water, stirring slowly, but as soon as the mixture is stiff enough to drop from the spoon, stop stirring or the lightness will all be stirred out. Bake in the heated iron muffin cups. This bread will be perfectly light without anything but the brains that are put into the mixing.

VEGETABLE SOUP.—Mince roughly six onions, three carrots, one turnip, and two lettuce, or a cabbage; wash and dry these well. Melt three ounces of clarified dripping in a large pan, add the vegetables, cover the pan, and toss the contents till well mixed, then add 1½ quarts of water. Let it come to a boil in the uncovered pan, season and skim well. Boil all for half an hour, then cover pan, and simmer slowly till the vegetables are done. Make some little slices of stale bread, pour the soup on them and serve very hot.

CORN MUFFINS without baking powder. Pour over one cup of corn meal, three quarters of a cup of boiling water, and gradually add the same amount of cold milk mixed with the yolk of one egg. If it is not put in gradually the mixture will be lumpy. Stir in one-half teaspoonful of salt, and a level teaspoon of sugar, not to make it taste sweeter but to give a sweet flavor. Beat the white of egg to a stiff froth and stir in last. Meanwhile have the cast iron gem cups heating in the oven, place on top of the stove while filling, bake in a quick oven. These muffins are light and porous and have a more delicious flavor, besides being more wholesome than they would be if made with baking powder.