

WALL PAPER AND DECORATIONS—Cont'd.

comfortable is attained in surroundings that they have done all their duty. But it is not enough, when pecuniary ability will permit further expenditure, that the home should be comfortable only. Comfort, regarded relatively, may comprehend little or nothing beyond the understood necessities or the necessities of life; while, in its truest and highest sense, it as surely embodies the elements of the beautiful as it does those of actual need. To be truly expressive of comfort the home must be more or less charming in effect, and to be charming it must be tasteful.

With almost the dawn of intelligence, children find delight in what is pleasing to the sight. Their eyes sparkle with pleasure at glow and glitter, and they are attracted by color well nigh as soon as the sense of vision awakens from the sense of nativity. The babe in the arms, insensible to duller objects, will reach up its chubby hands to grasp mamma's diamond brooch or ear rings; will remorselessly untie the knot of bright ribbon that confines its mother's collar; crows with rapture at the lighting of a candle; contemplates with transport of curiosity the chandelier with its prismatic lustres, and begins to show pleasure in mural decoration. All this before toys enchain its attention, and long before picture books beguile.

Children, to be essentially happy, should be surrounded by extraneous influences which minister, insensibly, it must be, to the aesthetic instinct in the human creature. In no way can the environment of childhood be rendered more effective toward the development of a fondness for the beautiful, thus to refinement and elevation of thought, exaltation of idea and aim, and purification of character, than in home-orderings which appeal to the taste. These, while carried out, as far as means will allow, in every judiciously regulated household, ought, of right, to begin in the nursery. Have the parlors elegant, the dining-rooms sumptuous, the boudoir a dream of delight, the library characteristic, the bed-chambers inviting, but do not neglect the nursery.

The key-note of parental duty has been struck when decorators of home interiors insist that the nursery, quite as much as the drawing room or the ball-room, shall come in for its share of mural enrichment. It is unjust that the baby should open its wondering and inquiring eyes upon bare walls and a homely entourage, while mamma's room, with guest chambers, parlors and boudoir, are made sumptuous by artistic embellishment. Nurseries can easily be so decorated that they can tell, over and over, dear tales

of delight to the little ones who occupy them.

The always-young story of "Old Mother Hubbard and Her Dog" lends itself most charmingly at nursery beautifying. The familiar scenes painted on tapestry and hung from the walls give never-failing pleasure to the young minds, which are as hungry for pretty things as the traditional dog was hungry for bones from the empty cupboard. Another bright scheme of nursery decoration may be drawn from the Mother Goose melodies, while genuine inspiration for enriching the little folks' kingdom may be captured from "Benny," that delightful Christmas idyl of Mrs. Annie Chambers Ketchum.

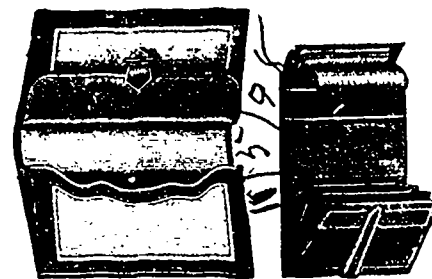
Numberless ideas suggest themselves along this line for the initial education of children in high art. The Holy Scriptures are exhaustless sources from which mural enrichments may be outlined. The cradling of Moses in the bulrushes, beside the river Nile, the story of Joseph and his brethren, the "Babe in the Manger," the "Flight into Egypt," the "Presentation in the Temple," "Christ Among the Doctors," together with any amount of ideality which may be wrought out of conceptions of angels and imaginings of scenes celestial—all help to make the nursery a happy home-place for the children, who pass so much of their time amid its surroundings.

The nursery should never be regarded as a mere retiring quarter for the children of the family. Above all other apartments in the house, it should be inviting and attractive. Even happily chosen wall paper is a step in the right direction, while hundreds of other inexpensive ways might be mentioned through which the children's forming tastes would be trained and the children's hearts made glad. Let mothers who have never tried it begin at once the work of beautifying the nursery. When the walls are made, through their decorations, to tell one of the stories which have beguiled children of their weariness and excited their delight from the time of the infant Chaldees to the time of the toddlers of to-day, or when they show forth a series of pictures embodying some idyl whose charm the young imagination quickly feels, then the decorator, whether house-furnisher or home-mother, will feel that the work was a work it was well to do and a work whose results are incalculable.

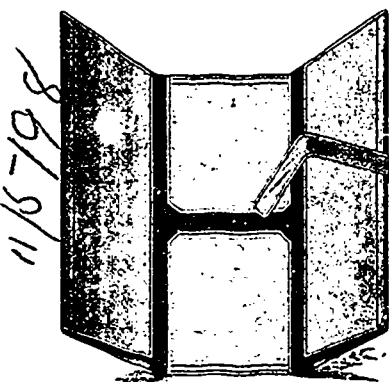
To make children happy is a duty which every right-thinking parent feels to be inevitably binding; it can hardly be questioned that children are happier, more amiable, and more contented in an environment that tends to the beautiful. Let the whole house be pleasant. Let the nursery be its very brightest corner.—J. F. Douthitt, New York.

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