

will recant with convulsions of distress. In every place, for good or evil, he has to "speak the thing he will"; and when he recants it is not from fear.

If it were possible to rule this fiery kind of boy by some small means adapted to his small size rather than to his vigorous passions, it would doubtless be well for his health. But by no means can his elders keep all tragedy out of a little life evidently so unready for it. He must perforce be for a time yet the subject of disproportionate emotions, as has been said; and to see him thus wronged and wrung and wrecked by tempests leads one to canvass again the old and fruitless question as to the mental sorrow of children, poets or saints.

The griefs of a tumultuous boy are none the less close because they can be swiftly dispersed and scattered to the first wind that comes by. To his elders such a wind is welcome indeed, and they will seize the easiest chance of change. For the first years it seems that a boy is more apt to love flowers than is a girl, and a gift of flowers is an ever-ready delight and distraction. If the worst of the tumult be but over-past, the mere sight of a flower may be enough to turn all to pleasure. And when pleasure has once set in the boy begins again to live his own natural springing life, winged against the flight of time. The five minutes of the grown-up world are no measure for him. He encounters the flight of his own minutes by volleys of rapid feeling, and so fills them, so charges them, that they shall hold all the events and incidents which attend his rapid change of heart.

A boy seems to be at once more simple and more ingenious than a girl; at any rate, he seizes with a surer instinct the self-excusing fictions of the human race. He probably has them by inheritance, for he has never heard them and has certainly never read them in minor literature. What he says when charged with some enormity that does not really touch his conscience is, "I did not know what I was doing"; he lies to that old convention. On a certain occasion he used the phrase with a great deal of gesticulation, intended apparently to express the tempo-

rary distraction of his mind. "I didn't know what I was doing, darling," he said to his mother. "When nurse slapped me as hard as ever she could, I suppose I pushed her with my foot." Then he assumed the look of one with whom the "strong hours" of antique poetry had too severely dealt. But his mother knows as well as does the modern Tolstoi that men and children are aware of what they are doing, and are the more intently and intensely aware when the pressure and stress of feeling make the moments tense, and she will not consent to that plea. She has heard it too often on the trivial stage put into the mouths of undramatic actors by undramatic authors.

Some experience of the boy of seven in various characters seems to suggest that as far as the one goes daily in the practice of fearless frankness, so far does another carry his equally brave reserve. Both boys have an indomitable temperament and are unfolding at six or seven years old what they were, by implication, at six or seven days. A like education has done nothing, so far, to make these creatures resemble each other; is it likely that a further course will bring them closer together in temperament at sixteen or seventeen? Those who think, or who thought in the eighteenth century, that education might write its lessons equally upon the equally blank tablets of each young mind were hardly observers of the first days, the first weeks of all. Those weeks are all sufficient to show the implicit signs of the eternal difference of persons—minute signs, but at any rate visible to the naked eye; and we know that the microscopic germ itself would betray them if we had eyes or instruments to see.

It is with no intention of slighting the infinite and innumerable differences amongst girl children that a faithful observer confesses to have found boys more extremely unlike on those two points of character—frankness and reticence. The little girls differ less widely and wildly in that simple respect, and their unlikeness amongst themselves deals with other matters of their nature.

ALICE MEYNELL.

## AN ENTERTAINMENT FOR WATCH NIGHT.

By GRACE GALLATIN THOMPSON.

Here is a novel and very pretty idea for a Watch Night entertainment; it is sure to be a welcome suggestion to many a hostess who desires to increase the general pleasure of the coming festivities. Last year, when the friends of a certain American girl resident in Paris were busy with the tag ends of their Christmas shopping, they each received the following message:

*Miss Blank, assisted by Mrs. Black and Mrs. White, requests the pleasure of your company at No. — Rd., Mont Parnasse, December thirty-first, at ten o'clock, in celebration of the Watch Night.*

This last phrase piqued curiosity. What did it mean?

As New Year's eve is essentially a family reunion night, the invitation was extended to old as well as young, grave and gay, and a program prepared to interest all. This consisted of presentations of the New Year's eve customs of various nations, in which the guests became actors guided by the hostess and half a dozen aids. A fitting place for such festivities—the studio apartment of a friendly artist—was put at the hostess's disposal. Such a huge place, hung with fascinating tapestries behind which lurked dark corners and unsuspected cubbyholes. In oaken chests were many a silken fabric treasured by hearts now no longer caring. On the walls were pieces of rare needlework and skillful carving and delicate modelling by fingers now no longer real.

Properly supplied with a gracious chaperone on each side, the hostess received her guests at the foot of stairs which led from the studio to an overhanging balcony.

A piano solo opened the program in a graceful way, after which the guests, breaking into easy groups (how much this is augmented by a wise manipulation of the human material one but the hostess knows), were entertained by an amateur skirt-dancer who had been privately informed that she was not

to be offended at a certain abstraction of attention from her in one corner of the studio where preparations for certain customs were going on. These were brought on in due time and consisted of "throwing the slipper," "spinning the plate," paring rosy-cheeked apples to be thrown over one's shoulder to see what the initial of future wife or husband might be, turning around slowly with eyes closed and suddenly looking over one's shoulder through a mirror in a dark corner, to obtain a stolen glimpse of the future.

The "Fate Cabinet"\* was a great success. One of the dark cubby-holes of the great studio had been curtained off by a tapestry. The bold one who would see what his luck is to be for the following year enters; the curtain is dropped behind him, and he is told to look straight before him—neither to the right

\*The Fate Cabinet was constructed in this way: A foot away from the wall proper is stretched some light-proof material, which should also form the other walls of the cabinet. In this false wall is cut a circular hole (see diagram) a foot in diameter, about five inches from the ground, and on the inside of the cabinet a thin black cloth is stretched over hole and all. On the outside, on the wall opposite to the hole, is put a shelf with a lighted lamp. The operator stands concealed in this blind space. Three wire frames fifteen inches square should be prepared, over one of which is stretched blue tissue paper, over another red and over the third some light proof material. The last screen would be in front of the opening, of course, when the bold one enters the cabinet, and would remain throughout if the verdict were to be "black." If not, this screen would be replaced slowly by the blue or red screen after the manner of slides in a magic lantern, or if the "pure, unclouded light" was to be seen by the watcher, the black screen would be slowly removed, leaving the full glare of the lamp shining through the thin lining of the cabinet. The lamp should be turned down while a change is being made and then slowly turned up, left for a moment and then the light-proof screen should be suddenly and completely clapped over the opening to exclude all light.