

THE HOUSEHOLD.

BED-TIME TALKS WITH THE LITTLE ONES.

If all mothers would devote a small portion of the day or evening for a quiet chat, or to exchange confidences with the children, it might prove the means of saving mothers and children much trouble and suffering. I know that most mothers who have the cooking and ironing and mending, and all the other "ings" of the work to do for husband, and, frequently, a large family of little ones, with perhaps no other assistance than one small maid-of-all-work, have all that they can possibly attend to, and may feel that they cannot afford the indulgence of a quiet twilight or a bed-time talk with the children. They may feel that they cannot spare the time from other duties. And yet, mothers, this little half-hour chat with our wee folks is one of the greatest duties we owe them as well as ourselves. Since my own little home brood first began to grow up about me, I have never failed to devote a few minutes at least at bed-time to each wee lad and lassie; and during those few minutes who shall say how many small confidences are exchanged with me, or how many confessions of wrong-doing through the day, now past, are brought to me. We talk over all the little incidents of the day: they tell me of their successes and endeavors, their temptations and failures, and no one but a mother can know what an unspeakable comfort these little bed-time talks are to me. No matter how fretful or sullen, how mischievous, or how quarrelsome, or how altogether naughty they may have been through the day, I know that at bed-time everything will come out all right. Small heads will rest upon my shoulder; repentant tears will leave their traces on chubby faces. But we will "talk it all over" together before sleep visits the small sinner, and the good-night kiss is always given with great fervor on both sides. They are so comforted in the assurance that "mamma knows all about it." And it is such a great comfort for me to know that as yet my little ones have no secrets that mamma may not share. No temptation or wrong-doing that she may not know.

A few days ago I noticed that my little eight-year-old Wilfred was rather quiet, and seemed anxious to avoid notice; fearing that he might be ill I questioned him, but could receive no satisfactory answers to my questions, beyond the fact that he was not ill. The day passed and, although I knew that there must be something the matter with my usually merry, rollicking, mischievous little boy, I could not come to any satisfactory conclusion regarding the matter, and I was unwilling to force the child's confidence, hoping that our bed-time talk would set matters all straight, and it did. Nestling close in my arms, with his shamed, crimson-stained face hidden in my neck, the whole story came out. He had been sent on an errand to the grocery store in the morning and, while there, had been tempted by some very fine figs in a box on the counter, and when the proprietor of the store was busy, and not looking, my boy had reached out his little greedy hand and stolen (yes, stolen. I know it is a hard word, but would any other be right?) four of those figs, and on the way home had eaten them. Who can know how much that boy suffered for that one wrong act all through that long day when conscience was at work telling him that he was a thief; for such the poor little fellow felt that he must be branded for evermore and, what a relief it was to him to "have it out with mamma," as he expressed it afterward. Our bed-time talk was, I think, a little longer that night than is customary. I could understand; how fully he had been punished for his wrong-doing by the shame and grief and misery of that long, dreadful day. We talked it all over, my boy and I, softly and quietly, and the next morning a rather pale, but very brave-hearted little lad started for the store with four pennies taken from his little bank, clutched fast in his small hand, to confess to the storekeeper the theft of the figs and, with his own money, to pay for the same. It was a hard, bitter lesson for my boy, but one that I trust he will never forget while he lives. And that one little confession from my boy paid me a thousand fold for all the home duties that may at any time have been left unperformed, whilst I gave my time and attention to the bed-time talks with my little ones. Mothers are by far the

safest confidants for their children; and the memory of these little bed-time talks may save your boys and girls a world of misery and distress in the years to come, and may prove a safeguard to them as long as they live.—Mrs M. E. Stafford, in *Child Culture*.

AN EPIDEMIC.

There are few words that send a thrill of terror to the heart of a mother more speedily than this. But it is the epidemic of scarlatina, or small-pox, or typhus or some of those fatal ailments, which, if they do not take the beloved little ones, through battling of fevered pulses and throbbing brains down into the valley of death, leave them half wrecked and marred on the thither shore of time, which startle the parent-heart.

Heedlessly, however, the little sons and daughters run amid the poisonous exhalations of an epidemic more dread than either of these named, and no urgent efforts are made for its extermination or the prevention of contamination.

Who that has eyes can fail to see the dire effects of this epidemic? It sallows the skin, blurs the eyes, dulls the intellect, hinders the attainment of growth originally designed for that particular individual, it develops the lowest phases of selfishness; blunts the natural keenness of all desirable qualities, hollows the cheeks, unnerves the hands, injures the voice, defiles the air, makes foul the home, wastes the income, wastes the time, in fact, accomplishes all harmful things and there are none so bold as to say a kindly word for it; its most abject slave says, "It is an abominable habit;" and yet the habit grows and spreads—it is truly at this time a wide-spread epidemic. Little boys and girls are smoking cigarettes and chewing stumps of old cigars. The vice is so common that it has quite lost "its frightful mien." Papa, and grandpa and Uncle James keep the house blue with their incense to vice. If baby goes out for the air, the pipe, or cigar or cigarette, goes with her, and instead of inhaling the sweet invigorating compound which our Wise Creator designed for baby's benefit, papa and brother Dick kindly improve it (!) with the fumes of their baleful fires, and they wonder why the walk did not brighten baby up a little.

"How shall we "stamp it out," cry the mothers who are beginning to wake up. Hercules would be appalled at the immensity of the task were he to rehabilitate himself with mortal form and return here for that purpose.

First, we must "begin at the beginning," insist that our homes be free from the poisonous smoke, ashes and saliva of the smoker and chewer; insist that baby shall not inhale, from the presence of pretended friends, the poisons their vices generate. Insist on the respect due to every clean person—that no one shall smoke or chew tobacco while in our immediate presence. Then teach the little ones the harm of it, the sin of it, the waste of it, the filth of it, and possibly we may control it so that our children's children will not be like to the bondmen of to-day. Teach our girls so to estimate the abominable practice that their husbands will never have been slaves to it.—*Child Culture*.

HEALTH IN OUR HOMES.

Those who are responsible for homes cannot be too careful of the health of their inmates. Good health in the household is more to be considered than sumptuous upholstery, elegant dinners, or expensive table service. Beauty should be and is, consistent with comfort and perfect safety in the home.

Yet how often are these safeguards neglected either through thoughtlessness or in the craze to be fashionable. Some homes that I know of are positively dangerous. Built on low, swampy land, shut in by trees and hedges, everything is damp and chill about them. Fungus growths flourish on the roof and sides of the house, and in the cellar likewise. In one house that I have in mind six children died one winter of diphtheria; every year one of the family has a fever of a typhoid nature, and common colds are as prevalent as storms.

In some houses drain pipes are allowed to leak in the basement. Stagnant water from the sewers, and the dampness coming in slowly through the walls, act in concert to destroy the lives of our loved ones. Often does the enemy approach so insidiously that you do not suspect the danger until it is

too late. Frequent examinations of vaults and cisterns and cellars will usually avoid these lurking dangers.

Sometimes the walls of rooms are themselves disease breeders. Even when the paper itself is free from poison, the paste with which it is put on affords an excellent home for the minute organisms which produce certain diseases. Often the danger is multiplied by paper being repeatedly laid on over the old layers of paste and paper. This should never be done. When new paper is put on the old should be torn off and the walls neatly cleansed with soap or ammonia and water. But the best wall is the old plaster wall kalsomined, or wainscot. The dados of our forefathers' time, washed and scoured as they were by the careful housewife, could happily be revived.

Why is the sunshine so utterly excluded from so many homes? Look at the fashionable window of to-day. First, the shade close to the glass, then the long, rich hangings of lace, again the still richer ones of plush or satin; while, as if to make sure that no ray of light shall penetrate, the silken half-shades strung on wires across the lower panes are added, making the window as useless and inaccessible as possible. To all this barring out of light, fashion adds the edict that it is bad form to stand or sit close to a window.

We might as well go back to the high narrow portholes of our ancestors at once. They would be less ornamental, perhaps, but quite as useful. Even in distant farm houses among the hills, the windows of the sitting-room and parlor are swathed and smothered in drapery, making beautiful, well-furnished dungeons, it may be, but not healthy, cheerful rooms to live in.

It is necessary, I suppose, to be elegant in the drawing-room, or else (terrible alternative), be unfashionable; but in living-room, and chamber and nursery, one can dare to be bright, pleasant and healthy, even at the risk of offending Mrs. Grundy. Banish everything but the linen shades, or if the æsthetic eye demands drapery, let it be of the lightest in color and fabric—cotton, linen, lace, or scrim—something that may easily be washed or renewed.

Children need the sunshine as well as plants, and its subtle tonic has a wonderful curative influence upon both our physical and mental ailments. It pierces into the secret corners, deodorizes foul places, kills disease germs, and brings life, health and joy on its beams. Our broad, low windows should not be designed merely for the display of the upholsterer's art, but for the free advent of the lovely, dancing sunlight as well.—F. M. Colby, in *Household*.

ABOUT SHOES.

Never try to wear a shoe too small, or that does not fit when you first put it on.

There is no longer any necessity of "breaking in a shoe."

"Science" has removed all necessity for physical endurance in this direction.

Having procured a comfortable fit, keep it so by proper care.

Never let your shoe get hard or dry. Don't let it run down at the heel or side. Never wear into the welt or insole. A shoe repaired in time will retain its shape and comfort, and is true economy. Never put your wet shoes by the fire to dry, but dry them gradually and slowly. Never dry a wet shoe without first applying some oil and grease—castor oil or tallow is the best. The steam generated in a wet boot will surely scald it and cause it to crack.

Don't use too much force in polishing, a gentle brushing with a soft brush is better than the vigorous work of the boot-black. When the brushing makes your foot feel warm, stop until your shoe cools off.

Don't allow a thick crust of blacking on your shoes. Wash them off occasionally and apply a little castor oil; you can polish it over in an hour or two.

Never try on or handle a patent leather shoe when cold—always thoroughly warm it before bending the leather. A patent leather shoe put on in a warm room can be worn out in the cold weather without injury.

Never put a good pair of shoes in rubbers—use an old pair for this and withdraw the rubbers as soon as you enter a house.

There is no part of a gentleman's or lady's outfit that requires more care than the foot wear, and, as a rule, none receive less.—*Household*.

CARPETS.—I have just seen a good suggestion as to the sweeping of carpets. It has become a general rule to save the residuum of the teapot for this purpose, but the manner in which the leaves of the fragrant herb clog the broom, considerably detracts from the advantage gained. Bran, slightly moistened, is strongly recommended instead. It should be only slightly damped, just sufficiently to hold the particles together, and then sprinkled evenly over the carpet, which may then be swept in the ordinary way. The advantages of this plan are, that the fabric is scoured and cleaned at the same time, little or no dust arises to settle on the furniture, every particle of dirt, thread, fragment of paper, &c., is gathered up by the mass of bran that is being moved over the floor by the broom, and thoroughly incorporated with the cleansing substance. When the carpet is taken up for "the annual clean," the good results will be self-evident.—*The Reformer*.

IT IS NOT THE EYE that is intelligently used which fails early in life; but the eye that is abused by excessive glare of light; seeing without seeing, looking without study of detail, looking heedlessly with no after-thought of what has been seen; and also by the use of narcotics and want of cleanliness. Teach your little ones to see, to open their eyes, to describe what they see, to look with a purpose, and especially train them to look quietly and earnestly at that one who is addressing them or saying what should interest them. With such a training, the eyes become indeed windows of the soul, as well as windows to the soul, through which there is a never ceasing ingathering of wisdom and a glad outflowing of joy-giving love-light.—*A Lady Physician*.

A WORK CHAIR.—I want to ask the readers of this magazine how many of you have a work chair? If you have none, I advise you to get this very necessary piece of furniture as soon as possible. By a work chair, I mean a common wooden or cane bottom chair with legs sufficiently long for the occupant to be raised so that she can sit comfortably to wash dishes, cook, iron, or do any of the common household work, which so many women do standing, when they might sit just as well, and so much better. No wonder you are nervous and fretful and "all tired out," standing on your feet two-thirds of the day. Get a work chair and use it, and see if you can not do your work with much more ease.

KITCHEN WALLS.—The walls of a kitchen should always be painted, and a light color is to be preferred. They will need washing twice a year, or at the most every three months. If they are plastered or kalsomined, it is a good plan to tack clean newspapers just back of the tubs and table, to protect the wall as much as possible.

PUZZLES.

ANAGRAM.

All omitted words are formed from those omitted from last line.

***** and Richmond were two noted men;

At Bosworth they fought; the date; tell me *****?

That battle the wars of the Roses did ***,
And Henry of Richmond the throne did *****;

For ***** was slain, and his crown, falling off,

Was placed upon Richmond. But ***** did quaff,

Ere his death, some cold water, which Englishmen tell

Still refreshes the thirsty at *****.

PYRAMID.

The upper letter a consonant; 2, an animal's home; 3, to distribute; 4, used in a fire-place; 5, a soldier of a peculiar height. Centre word down, a woman's name.

SQUARE WORD.

1, What comes in winter; 2, to mark; 3, a genus of birds; 4, a point of the compass.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN LAST NUMBER

CHARADE.—Dryden.

CROSSWORD.—Constantinople.

CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED.

Correct answers have been received from Stanfel Wainwright.