

forth, as arms in solemn benediction, one's soul is refreshed and strengthened to go back and take up life's work with renewed vigor, as Mrs. Browning tells us: "Every bush is a fire, but only he who sees takes off his shoes."

Books for Children

By MRS. J. McDONALD

FROM the Ethel Branch comes a paper on this subject, which contains many suggestions of value.

The books we read have a wonderful power in moulding our character for good or evil. While reading we are usually unconscious of any influence upon our minds, but after we have mastered the book the thought will work out in our daily lives. We cannot say how much the sense of honor, the courage, the energy and the broader outlook upon life is due to the inspiration of our reading; while on the other hand we cannot tell how much the dwarfed mind, the gloomy outlook on life and the lowered morals are due to the reading of a bad book. For these reasons the choice of reading material for our children is a matter of great importance.

Gibbon says, "My early love of reading I would not exchange for the treasures of India."

Joseph Cook says: "When a boy has once acquired a keen interest in biographical and historical reading he cannot thereafter be wholly vulgar in his taste for literature."

Beecher says: "Books are the windows through which the soul looks out." A home without books is like a room without windows. No man has a right to bring up his children without surrounding them with books, if he has the means to buy them. It is a wrong to his family; he cheats them. Children learn to read by being in the presence of books.

Parsons says: "If you teach a child to economize time and fill him with a love of good books, you ensure him an education far beyond anything he can get in the university, an education that will cease only with his life."

Ruskin says: "And I would urge upon every young man, as the beginning of due and wise provision for his household, to obtain as soon as he can, by the severest economy, a restricted, serviceable and steadily—however slowly—increasing series of books for use through life, making his little library, of all the furniture in his room, the most studied and decorative piece, and one of the earliest and strictest lessons to the children of the house being how to turn the pages of their own books lightly and carefully with no chance of tearing, or dog's ears."

The cultivation of the child's taste for good reading should begin early in life. It is a sad thing to see children deprived of books. It is worse to see them supplied with literature injurious to their moral or intellectual growth. Before the children learn to read much may be done to prepare the way for good literature. The love of stories in some form or other is a characteristic of childhood. In all lands and in all conditions of life the mother's words, "Once upon a time" open up to the young child a vague retrospect of the past. Fairy stories are types of certain feeling which pertain to the early years of life. They are most effective when they are told rather than read. "Ghost stories" are objectionable, as they foster a dread of the unseen. On the other hand to cut off "Jack and the Bean Stalk," "Red Riding Hood," "The Three Bears," "Jack the Giant Killer," "Cinderella" from a child's life is to proclaim him to be stupid after he grows up.

It is scarcely necessary to be reminded that the stories of the Bible can never be surpassed, either from an intellectual or from a moral aspect. The history of Adam and Eve, of Cain and Abel, of Abraham and Isaac, and of Jacob, the lives of Joseph, Moses, David and Daniel will ever have their interest for children.

Aesop's fables are very popular among children. Many of them are valuable in consequence of their teaching of moral principles. For instance, the evil of greediness is shown in the fable of "The Dog and the Shadow," of lying, in the fable of the boy who cried "Wolf," and of improvidence in the case of the man who killed "The goose that laid the golden eggs." As the young reader advances in knowledge, stronger food should be furnished. "Grimm's Fairy Tales" and "Household Stories," and the delightful "Wonder Stories" of Hans Andersen should form part of

every child's library. Other books that will be read with interest are: "The Fairy Land of Science," Charles Kingsley's "Water Babies," "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments," Hawthorne's "Wonder Book" and "Tanglewood Tales." The stories of Indian life, "Swiss Family Robinson," "Gulliver's Travels," "Robin Hood" and "Robinson Crusoe." Later the romances of Scott and others will have place, also Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," Lamb's "Tales From Shakespeare" and books of stories from history.

Stories of real men of adventure like Livingstone, etc., "Books of Golden Deeds," by Charlotte Yonge, would shape the taste away from cheap novels, and detective stories. "Servants of the King," by Robert E. Speer, contains eleven stories of lives of Christian missionaries, written especially for young people. Chapman's "Book on Birds," "Adventures of Nils," by Selma Lagerlof is full of Swedish folklore and one of the best new books for children.

Hamilton W. Mabie's selections of books are good; his "Heroes and Heroines" are books which boys and girls are very fond of. "Peeps Into Other Lands" is a good series. Girls especially should be given more stories of the world's famous women that their ideals may not be shaped altogether by stories of men. Too often the mistake is made of fostering a relish for nothing other than the novel. Many novels are far from being desirable food for children. Books about places and people of far-off lands will implant a love for geography and works of travel. Cultivate a taste for poetry, history, biography and science. It is a mistake to suppose that children should be kept in ignorance of these fields until they become fit to enter a High School.

Hints on Flower Culture

MISS CLARA RUTHVEN of the Everett Branch makes the following remarks regarding this seasonable subject:

The long bright days of March are with us again, and we will very soon have to make preparations for our spring gardening. And what a pleasure the average housewife finds in making the various small changes to brighten up her home in honor of spring's coming. Soon there will be the gardens to make, the flower beds to arrange, vines to set by the porch, and seeds to plant of the flowers we like the very best. I think it is best to plant your flower seeds in a hotbed early in the spring, or if these are not convenient, plant in shallow boxes in the house, and set in windows where there is plenty of sunshine.

I generally plant the seeds about the last of March. In doing this you have bloom much earlier, and can see much more for your labor. Select good loamy soil, not having it heavy, as when it is watered frequently it makes it soggy. I generally mix some of the soil in the woods (decayed leaves, etc.) with rich garden soil, thus making the soil light, and it does not harden. Water lightly every day. (I would say here that it is advisable to have these boxes ready in the fall, as it saves time in the spring), and perhaps you cannot always get the earth just when you need it.

Do not sow the seeds too thickly. It is better to sow the seeds sparingly, as the little plants grow more sturdy and strong. When these are an inch or two high they can be transplanted into the garden. It has been remarked that flowers started in the house should not be set out in the garden till corn-planting time. However, care should be taken not to set them out too early, not till all danger of frost is over, and the nights are warm. As a rule, people rush out at the beginning of a rain to set out their plants. If a few cloudy or rainy days succeed, this will be all right, but if the shower be immediately followed by a hot sun, it is all wrong.

Hence the most successful transplanters do not depend on rainy days, but set out their plants even on a warm, bright evening. In the first place, the beds should be made a few days, at least, ahead, so the soil may have had time to settle. Now then very carefully take out just a few plants, so few that you are absolutely certain they will not have time to wilt before you get them in the ground again. Disturb the roots just as little as possible during the moving process.

Have holes made quite large enough to receive the roots without danger of overcrowding, and pour in a little water. Next set the plants very gently (remember that the young rootlets are very tender and delicate) and work in the



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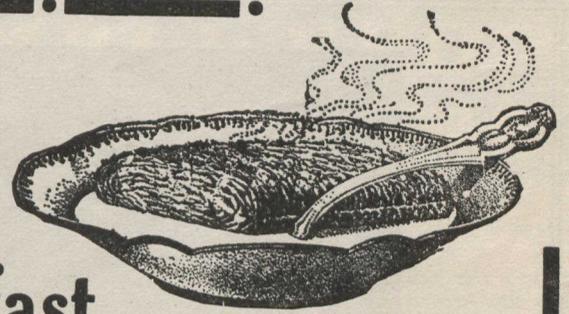
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