

HOUSEHOLD.

The Unfortunate Member of the Household.

'I never had a piece of bread
Particularly large and wide,
But what upon the floor it fell,
And always on the buttered side.'

We prefer the word 'unfortunate' to the one that would perhaps most naturally slip in here—'unlucky.'

In very many families there is one member who comes to be looked upon as the unfortunate one. Once let the title be appended and it sticks like a burr. And once let a child or a young person fall into the belief that misfortune is bound to attend him or her, and it is astonishing how quickly the little mishaps, accidents and misfortunes will multiply. It is hardly probable that parents or those having household matter in their care realize the abiding injury that is likely to fasten on any one who receives and fosters an impression like this.

'I was always the unfortunate member of our family'; how many of us can recall hearing some apparently luckless man or woman utter this plaint in a half smiling, half forlorn way, as if in self-pity, and also in a kind of apology for an unfortunate condition.

No member of a household should be allowed to hold or to nurture such a notion as this, for that it is purely a notion and nothing else at the outset, is a simple fact. Afterward, when the notion has been allowed to become a belief, habit, joined with non-resistance of what is purely a careless tendency, will make it really appear that misfortunes of various kinds are not to be avoided, and so the victim yields to the idea, and adverse happenings become the things looked for and experienced.

What a pity; and what a mistake!

'That child can't help spilling his milk and dropping food all over-himself,' says one mother to a visitor, who is silently wondering why 'Benny' sits at an isolated corner of the table, a huge towel under his plate and a brown gingham pinafore tied about his neck. 'He always has been an unfortunate little fellow,' the mother adds, 'and it is no use trying to make him like the other children, so I've given up, and let him do as he has to.'

Benny for the first time feels a sense of shame in being unlike the other children, and in childish confusion turns away from the visitor's kindly eyes, and attempts to drink his milk while looking sideways out of the window. As a result his throat and the contents of the mug fail to connect, he chokes, a little puddle of milk forms in his plate, and his mother exclaims, 'There! what did I tell you?'

A little quiet observation leads the visitor to determine on trying an experiment with Benny. She calls the boy to her room and asks kindly if he wouldn't rather be like the other children, neat and free from so many uncomfortable little accidents.

'But I can't,' says Benny. 'I'm the unlucky one.'

The lady very soberly but gently tells him there is really no such thing as luck or as being unlucky. Such things are said in sport, then people begin to think there is something earnest about them. 'Now, Benny,' she adds brightly, 'I'll give you a bright new penny every time you get through a meal without spilling your milk or dropping your food.'

Before long the entire family except the visitor—who really is a summer boarder—begins to wonder what has come over Benny. He actually is restored to a place at the table beside his father, where he dearly loves to sit. Other habits of Benny's undergo a change. 'The boy is getting lucky,' some one declares.

A very considerate friendly talk with the mother before the sojourner departs opens the maternal eyes, and shows what a ruthless mistake she was making with a careless, sensitive, but perfectly fortunate child; for Benny had far greater tendencies toward meeting good rather than ill fortune, come to exercise a little tact and decision in his training.

Some one remarked not long ago that it

was astonishing, the amount of cruelty practiced upon children who yet were never abused. That was the idea expressed. It can easily be seen what was meant by the remark. More than one child of loving, indulgent parents goes handicapped through life because of the lack of judicious training, and the lack of common sense on the part of those parents.

If so-called unlucky tendencies seem to attach to any member of the household, if the ink 'gets' spilled in Jennie's room, or her dresses 'get' torn, if Tommy loses his things continually or has a regular habit of upsetting things at the table, as you value Jennie's future happiness or Tommy's future manliness, take the child directly in hand! Instead of the least encouragement of such an idea that either are bound to be unfortunate, drive out and rout out what is a mere habit of carelessness, a growing tendency to neglect small faults, and Jennie's and Tommy's slice of bread will no longer fall to the floor on the buttered side, for it will not fall at all.—'Christian Work.'

Coloring Sheepskins.

(By J. L. Irwin, in N. E. 'Homestead'.)

For a bedroom, sitting room or parlor, a sheepskin rug is adapted, because owing to its home manufacture it can be made to correspond or harmonize with the other furnishings of the room. It is also inexpensive and one of the most beautiful rugs made.

Select a skin, or skins (if one is not large enough), on which the wool is long and as even as possible. Coarse wool is generally liked best. Take a tub of soft water, as hot as the hands will bear—care should be taken not to have the water too hot, as that will cause the wool to drop out—and make a strong soapsuds. Wash thoroughly in this, and put it through another suds, care being taken to have them at a like temperature. When thoroughly washed, rinse well in clear water, also of the same degree of heat, washing all the suds out. Then wring out as dry as possible, and fasten on the side of some shed or outbuilding to dry. Fasten with nails, stretching the skin as much as possible. While it is drying comb out the wool occasionally with a coarse comb. When thoroughly dry it is ready to color.

Any good dye can be used. In preparing the dye follow the directions given with the powder, being sure, however, that when applied, the liquid is the same temperature as were the suds and rinse water. Have the dye in some shallow pan to make the task of dipping in the wool an easy one. In doing this, care should be taken not to wet the skin more than is necessary.

Before this is done it is well to prepare a place, if such an one is not handy, where the skin can be laid out flat. If there is no floor or walk where the dye will do no harm, lay a number of boards on the ground. When the wool is saturated with the dye, lay the skin out with the wool side up, and with the hands rub and mix the coloring well into the wool, pouring on more dye as it is needed. When this is done, roll up tightly with the wool side in, and leave it for about ten minutes. Then once more stretch it up to dry as before, still being careful to stretch it to its utmost. It should be dried in the shade, not in the sun.

When thoroughly dry, comb out once more, trim off the bare places on the skin around the edges, and your rug is done unless it is to be lined. For this any desirable material may be used. These rugs have a very rich appearance.

On Keeping Promises.

The sacredness of promises is too carelessly considered. There seems to be a growing laxity in regard to keeping them and very few realize that a promise made and accepted in good faith, when broken without good cause, comes dangerously near that point where it may be called a lie. Much of this indifference to keeping promises is the result of early training. Children have their sense of truth dulled by the too frequent habit some parents have of

promising what they never intended to do. Unwise mothers in their haste, promise or threaten their children, even from the cradle, with rewards and punishments which they never mean to give, and at so imitative a period the children can hardly fail to be impressed by such examples. Many teachers follow the same line of conduct until, in almost every treatise on school government the would-be successful teacher is warned not to threaten or to promise without fulfilling.

Insincerity seems to flourish everywhere persons make contracts and break them with careless indifference. Teachers will contract for a school term and then for the sake of a better position or for some trivial reason will resign. Women, in this particular, are special sinners, and it is no uncommon thing for a teacher to give up her school in the middle of the term without a thought of the embarrassment the vacancy will cause. Nor is the case any better in society. This seems to be a field where insincerity finds fertile soil, where 'promises are lightly made and lightly broken.' Sometimes promises must be broken, hindering circumstances prevent their fulfilment, but this is not often and in the main they may, with a little effort, be kept. It is well to pay scrupulous attention to even trifling ones, for the habit of neglecting these leads to the neglect of graver ones and thus lowers the moral standard, for broken promises mean broken faith.—'Presbyterian Banner.'

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