

## On Some Practical Topics.

(NO. 11.)

## A LIVE QUESTION.

A live question may generally be known by the storm of opposition it has to encounter. Like the sturdy pine tree upon the bare hillside, the harder the wind blows, the wilder the tempest rages around it, so much the deeper does it strike its roots downward, and so much the firmer hold does it have upon mother earth. It lives and deserves to live, for it has gained strength through conflict. Nearly all of the epoch-making movements of the world have, in their turn, been cried down as mere fads. Those from whose clever brains they have been evolved have even gone down to their graves not only with their labors unrecognized, but they themselves considered as having been mere visionaries. Yet their work has lived. The seed they sowed has, though slowly, germinated at last, and in its full fruition has proved a blessing to the world. Progressive movements have as many foes in the ranks of the merely indifferent as amongst the active oppositionists. The former simply refuse to consider them at all. "The world," they say, "does very well as it is; why should we bother our heads about changing its conditions? Let well alone." If these do not help, neither do they very seriously hinder, whereas the oppositionists really help, just where they try to hinder, and therefore have a value quite beyond their merits or intention, for it takes two battle-dores to keep the shuttlecock from falling to the ground. Then, there are what Octave Thanet calls the "after-witted men, who are always a little behind the occasion." They come in very usefully when once they have grasped their subject. Their brains may have been "slow in solution," but when at last they have become awakened to the merits of a question, they can be depended upon to fight for it against all odds.

Was it not the notorious claimant of the historical Tichborne trial who originated the oft-quoted remark that "Some has brains and no money, and some has money and no brains"? What cannot be achieved by those who not only have brains, but also money, and who, in a spirit of philanthropy and enlightened patriotism, devote both brains and money to the good of their country?

The golden key placed in the hands of the educationists of Canada by such noble men as Lord Strathcona and Sir W. C. Macdonald should unlock a large storehouse of treasures for the children not only of to-day but of generations yet to come.

The very existence of our public-school system, which, if it has some faults, has also many virtues to commend it, proves how thoroughly alive have been, and are, the legislators of the Dominion to the necessity for affording educational advantages to the children of the land, whose training has rightly been called a national concern. Their danger has been one of overdoing rather than of underdoing, the outcome of a failure to recognize the true definition of education; i. e., that school should be the happy training ground for life of the whole human being, morally, mentally and bodily, not merely for a part of the individual child or for a section of the community. The brain-clever pupil has hitherto been educated at the expense of the finger-clever pupil, and the Canadian educationists of to-day are only beginning to give expression to what they have long dimly felt as an injustice to both. In other lands, schools have long been established, and have amply justified their existence, along the lines of co-operation between head and hands, including technical instruction, manual training, domestic science, teaching and practice of agriculture in allotted grounds, school dairies and school gardens. Hitherto there has almost been what one of our most earnest women workers for the introduction of domestic science once called "a complete divorce between intellectual culture and domestic duties," a divorce which has tended to educate the girl away from her home instead of making her realize that there is no greater scope for the trained mind than in the faithful and competent discharge of her daily tasks within the walls of woman's realm—her own home; and caused the boy to believe that intellectual culture would be thrown away upon him if he should have to spend his days upon the old homestead. In other words, the children of both sexes alike have been dealt with as houses provided with windows on one side of them only, instead of their builder having planned for the "admission of light from every quarter of the intellectual compass." But better counsels are about to prevail. The live question of which we treat is no new one. It has gone through all the stages of passive indifference and of the active opposition born of wilful ignorance, whilst the hearts of those who have so faithfully fought for a fair hearing to be given to it, can thank God and take courage. Meanwhile, there is every indication that the swing of the educational pendulum is going to bring about a happy medium in school methods, and the live question of "What shall we do with it?" will receive its wise and practical answer from those at whose disposal has been placed the munificent gift from Sir William Macdonald.

H. A. B.

## The History of Little Jack Horner.

BY E. YATES, FARMER.

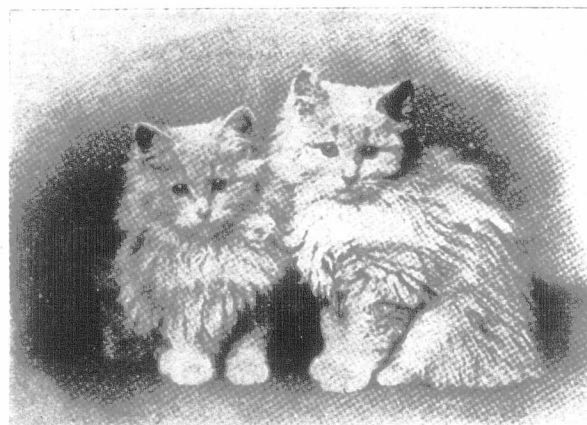
"Little Jack Horner sat in a corner,  
Eating some Christmas pie;  
He put in his thumb and pulled out a plum,  
Saying, 'What a good boy am I.'"

This is a nursery rhyme so often repeated that every child has it by heart, and here is the origin of the story:

When Henry VIII. suppressed the monasteries and drove out the old monks from their nest, the title deeds of Mella Abbey, including the sumptuous grange, built by Abbot Bellwood, were demanded by the commissioners. The Abbot of Glastonbury determined that he would send them to London, and, as the documents were very valuable and the roads infested with thieves, it was difficult to get them to the metropolis in safety. To accomplish this end, however, he devised the following plan. He ordered a pie to be made, as fine as ever seen on a refectory table; inside he put the documents, as rich a filling as pie ever had. He entrusted this to a lad named Jack Horner to carry up to London and deliver safely into the hands for whom it was intended. The journey was long, the day was cold, the boy was hungry, the pie looked tempting, and the chance of detection was small, so the boy broke off a piece of pie. To his surprise, he beheld the parchment; pulling it forth innocently enough, he wondered how it got there. Tying up the pastry, he journeyed on, and when he arrived in town the parcel was delivered; but the title deeds were missing—Jack had them in his pocket—the juiciest plums that had ever been made into a pie. Great was the rage of the commissioners, heavy the vengeance they dealt out to the monks. Jack kept his secret, and when peaceable times were restored he claimed the estates and received them.

## THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

## Two to Make It.



Friends so true these kittens are—  
Little Fluff and Floss—  
Don't they love to roll a ball,  
Play at pitch and toss!  
Fluff is rather cranky, too,  
If you put her out;  
Like some children that we know,  
She can sulk and pout.  
But dear little Flossie knows  
What the Spaniards say,  
"Two it takes to make a fight,  
One the strife can stay."  
Copy Floss, and you will find  
That the words are true.  
If you're friendly, bright and kind,  
None can fight with you.  
If your friend is angry, then,  
Never storm and fret,  
For two wrongs don't make a right—  
Never did it yet.  
When you're angry, stop and think,  
Be careful what you say;  
"Two it takes to make a fight,  
One the strife can stay."

COUSIN DOROTHY.

## Our Competitions.

Did you ever try to write poetry, children? A small niece of mine, who is just eleven, sent me an original poem the other day—called "Naughty Sam"—and I thought it would be a good idea to have a poetical competition for once. Prizes will be given for the best original poetry on "Canadian Country Life." All who are under fifteen may compete. Write your name, age, and address on the back of your poem, and address to "COUSIN DOROTHY, BOX 92, NEWCASTLE, ONT." The competition closes on the first of April. Don't be afraid to try. I don't expect any of you to rival Tennyson or Longfellow, but you can surely describe country life in some sort of rhyme. If there are enough competitors, they will, as usual, be divided into classes.

Here is the little poem I mentioned:

## Naughty Sam.

I'll tell you now of naughty Sam—  
He wouldn't wear his best new tam.  
He said it seemed so like a girl  
Giving the pretty tam a whirl.  
"You must wear it, Samuel," his mother said,  
"It looks so nice on your curly head."  
But Sam was spoilt; as spoilt could be,  
As you and I will plainly see.  
And spoilt little Sam soon got his way;  
He wore his little red cap that day.  
At last he thought he'd play a trick,  
And he gave his curls a little flick.

"I'll tease my sister till she's mad,  
I hope she won't tattle-tale to Dad."  
He went to his sister and said to her:  
"I see on your dress a little burr.  
Because you are so grand and gay  
You'd better flick it off to-day.  
Or p'raps you'd better call a maid  
If you are yourself afraid."  
"Oh!" she said, "you silly boy,  
You're always trying to annoy.  
You'd better go and feed your bird  
Till you can find a better word."  
So Sam went off to feed his bird,  
But did not find a kinder word  
For his younger sister Jane.  
At last he felt a dreadful pain,  
For you see this greedy child  
Had eaten food not very mild;  
And so you see it served him right  
This very dreadful food to bite.  
Alas! for him the doctor came  
And questioned him and gave him shame;  
His conduct he then had to tell  
Why that he was now not so well.  
He wished the doctor would go away  
And far away from him would stay.

MARJORIE.

Now, I hope you won't give in without trying, even though you may never have attempted to write verses. When people think they can't do a thing, and yet keep at it, they often succeed, much to their own surprise. Did you ever hear of the two frogs who went on an exploring expedition and fell into a jug of cream? The sides of the jug were steep and slippery, so, after a few attempts to jump out, one of them said:

"It's no use, we can't get out, we might just as well die at once."

"You may die if you like," said the other, "but I shall keep at it as long as I can."

Then the dismal frog cheered up, and they both began to jump and splash about energetically. What do you think happened? Something they never expected, as they knew nothing about churning. The cream suddenly turned into butter, and our heroes climbed on top and made a high jump for liberty.

They succeeded by "keeping at it," and there is no reason why anyone should fail in his ambition. Only keep on trying, no matter how hard it seems to win. If you don't get exactly what you are aiming at, you will surely get something better. As one little girl found—

"It's a funny thing that lessons,"  
Said a kindergartner small,  
"Are easy when I study them,—  
Don't bother me at all.  
But if, instead of work, I play,  
They're dreadful hard to get.  
I get mixed up in every way  
And cry my 'kerchief wet.'"

COUSIN DOROTHY.

## Do You Know It?

Here is an amusing game: Paste or pin several newspapers together. Cut a number of holes in them about eighteen inches apart, and each a little larger than the human eye.

Now fasten this big paper round three sides of a clothes-horse. Some of the party go inside and look through the holes in the paper, placing their faces close to it. The rest remain outside and try to decide the owner of each of the various eyes beaming upon them.

Strange to say, however familiar all the players may be, they will find this a very difficult task.

Try it and see. The game is well worth the very slight preparation required.

## Cheerfulness at the Table.

An old lady, who looked as though she might have belonged to the "Sunshine Society" all her life, was asked by a friend for the secret of her never-failing cheerfulness. Her answer contains a suggestive lesson for parents. "I think," said the clever old lady, "it is because we were taught in our family to be cheerful at the table. My father was a lawyer with a large criminal practice. His mind was harassed with difficult problems all the day long, yet he always came to the table with a smile and a pleasant greeting for everyone, and exerted himself to make the table-hour delightful. All his powers to charm were freely given to entertain his family. Three times a day we felt this genial influence, and the effect was marvellous. If a child came to the table with cross looks, he or she was quietly sent away to find a good boy or girl, for only such were allowed to come within that loving circle. We were taught that all petty grievances and jealousies must be forgotten when mealtime came, and the habit of being cheerful three times a day, under all circumstances, had its effect on even the most sullen temper. Grateful as I am for all the training received in my childhood home, I look back upon the table influence as among the best of my life."

Much is said and written these days about "table manners." Children (in well-bred families) are drilled in a knowledge of "good form," as to the use of the fork and napkin; proper methods of eating the various courses are descanted upon; but training in the most important grace or habit a child should have, that of cheerfulness at the table, is too often neglected.

The Orientals had no family ties of affection until they began to eat at a common table. Let the gathering at mealtime be made the most happy hour of the day, and the influence on the children may be beyond estimation.—(Canadian Churchman.)