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#### The Mother and the H.C. of L.

By Sarah Cantwell Smith, B.A.M.A.

Contd. from page 11

collars will do for, the lot and much of the work of the making is saved, also such a middy can be made in less than two hours, and eight or ten of these will provide even two or three boys with a summer outfit for any occasion and he always looks his best. And a good share of the mother's tiredness leaves her when she sees her kiddies looking sweet and clean. Why so many think that little girls must be kept dainty but that the small boy does not need to be dressed for afternoons at all is most surprising.

This same middy style will do for the winter's best suit—jerseys are most satisfactory here for every day—and by buying the shield-collar and whistle-cord can be made even from the best serge. With the little trousers for considerably less than a third what such a suit would cost in the stores, a plain coat style may suit some mothers better, but whatever it is, one pattern and style simplifies things a hundred-fold and the making soon becomes so much a matter of experience that no pattern at all is needed.

In children's clothes again good taste can be displayed in seeing that the summer hat, tie and socks will match. That will give the look of distinctiveness that every mother wants even for her small boys. A little Spanish boy from South America was a guest of mine with his mother a few summers ago. He was dressed always in black socks and oxfords, white suits with black belt, tie and collar (made separate), and he wore a little black silk hat, and I never remember having the child out on the street that he did not attract the regard of every one and hundreds said to me: "What a distinguished looking child!" He was the child of a cultured home, of course, but a good part of his charm came from the simplicity and good taste of his dress. Such is not, as I said before, a matter of money. In fact, it is a saving to one's purse in addition to being a pleasure to one's eye.

To the mother of children food in the home is a problem and a serious one. I noted the other day that over 600,000 children under twelve years in the States were mal-nourished and the reports of our school-boards give very much the same percentage. Here, as elsewhere, it isn't so much, how long, or how hard the mother works that counts but the results of her labor. She may be spending endless hours over her stove and oven but if her children do not weigh enough for their height, something is at fault. I think the average family in Canada are too fond of desserts as against the plainer foods and vegetables. Then I've seen on the table of friends, when they have supper as against dinner in the evening, at least two kinds of fancy breads, usually warm, and three desserts, cake, pie and the like, and that is practically all, where a little fish and creamed potato with plain white bread and a bit of fruit would represent far less labor on the mother's part and be infinitely better for the children and the husband also, not only so, but at the end of a month her bill for food will not be so high.

The child who does not want to eat is one of the mother's greatest problems, but that needs an article by itself and one need only mention here that every growing child needs and must have three good meals a day and every day if he is to be at his physical best. To keep his body nourished is of even greater importance than to keep his mind disciplined, yet it is a matter that is far too often overlooked. A guest, the daughter of a physician too, came to dinner in my home one evening and had with her, her little two-year old at dinner. Being anxious to go on with his play he ate only three tiny fingers of toast and she permitted him to get down, saying that his stomach was the best arbiter of what he needed, though she admitted he had had nothing since lunch, but then she added: "He's a very light eater." They went home at ten-thirty with the child already asleep,

having gone even then over ten hours with practically no food. Not eating is to a great extent a habit and should not be permitted for any excuse whatever, except illness.

One wonders what would happen in these days when the world is topsyturvy over the labor question, when nurses, servants, miners, clerks and all the rest are clamoring for an eight-hour day, a six-hour day or what not, if all the mothers of the world would strike for even a twelve hour day. If having arisen at six o'clock and having been servant, cook, mistress, wife and mother until six in the evening, if then the little faces could be washed, the little prayers listened to, the little bodies tucked into bed, the dinner served and the dishes cleared away by someone else, and the evening could be free every day of every week of every year, oh "That were Paradise e'now." But strangely enough no one has even suggested her striking. It's only God and a mother that's on their job twenty-four hours of every day. And it is this being eternally on the job that is the greatest problem of all, and that makes for such physical weariness that sometimes it beclouds her vision as to the worth-whileness of her work. As one of them said to me one day, a woman of rare education too: "If I were only doing things that counted; but any underling can do the things I am doing as well as myself. I'd love to take care of my children's souls and minds if only I had some help in caring for their bodies." And she felt that she could have met the emergencies of life bravely and beautifully, and she could. It was the common-place tasks of every day that seemed to her so petty and so trifling. But in general she was brave and she found, as every mother of children must, the secret of how to get up and go on when seemingly the point of absolute weariness has come. And not only must one go on, they must go on cheerfully, for bearing one's self like a martyr neither helps one along nor does it make for peace and sooner or later every woman learns what it is up to her to learn, how to live happily with other personalities, even those of her own family and that as a mother she can not avail herself even of the privilege of being tired and cross, but if she must be tired, must at the same time be goodnatured for our lives are the only Bible our children will read for the first few years of their lives, so we must needs be their religion as well as their mother.

But our children's little faults and their thoughtless noise and din would not vex us so nor seem so great in our eyes if we only stopped more often to realize how quickly that noise might go out of our lives altogether. Yet no day passes that the noise of some little life isn't stopped and where yesterday was din and chatter, to-day there is only the remembrance of the angel's wings.

What if we do miss the things that others seem to be finding all their pleasure in! What if for these few years our play, our relaxation and our social life must be had from our own home and children! We will learn more from their caresses and the gladness of their hearts than from all the social teas we might otherwise be going to.

Do you send forth your youngsters to school in the mornings with the belief in your own souls so strong that you instill it into theirs that they will be the great men of the future?

If we thought of these things more often we would never for one moment have anything but pity for those other wives—childless through their own selfishness, who spend their time in dress and bridge, and say oft-times of their neighbor: "Oh yes, a sweet woman, but she's so burdened down with children." More often than not these acquaintances of ours who have put their own ease as the highest thing to be considered, have done no brain work, they read no books, they have no special culture. One wonders if after twenty years, when they look their soul in the face, they would dare choose to go through it again, the emptiness and the loneliness of willfully keeping the children out of their lives, the restless girl and the still more restless boy? Years of ease just now, perhaps, but years of poverty both now and in the future.

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