

Young People

Fireside Games

By Nelson Wright

The wind is howling down the chimney, and perhaps the rain and sleet are beating against the window pane, but what child cares that it is a stormy night outside? The nursery fire is all aglow and ablaze with the coals of good cheer. It sparkles and crackles and burns merrily enough to make one forget the weather. There is a dish of apples to roast in front of the fire, and there are chestnuts, too, and marshmallows. A warm red rug is spread on the floor, and the children, in bath gowns and slippers, are sitting up for a happy hour just before bedtime to play games—fireside games—and what shall they be?

Games for playing in front of an open fire should be mostly thinking and guessing games. A child doesn't want to romp and play too much about the nursery in his slippers and bath gowns. What he does want to do is to sit by the fire, curled up on the floor, and just watch the coals while he makes his "thinking machine work," as Br'er Rabbit used to say.

These are a few fireside games that will help a child to do just that.

"I Love My Love," is played by a line of children, who start with a lot of questions about my Love, which must be answered according to the letters of the alphabet. The A's might run this way: "I love my love with an A because he is Adorable."

I hate him with an A, because he is Ancient.

He took me to Appledore and treated me to Arrowroot and Apricots.

His name is Ananias, and he comes from Ayrshire."

The B's may run as follows:

"I love my love with a B, because he is Brilliant."

I hate him with a B, because he is Boorish.

He took me to Banbury and treated me to Barberries and Biscuits.

His name is Bob, and he comes from Babylon."

Each child must tell the story and fill in the missing ideas in the sentences with words that begin with his special letter of the alphabet. Should he fail, or hesitate, another player may fill in the gap and move up the line after the manner of an old-fashioned spelling match, to take the place of the child who failed. The player who stays longest at the head of the line may have the biggest roasted apple for a prize.

P's and Q's is another fine fireside game. The players sit in a circle, and one stands, asking each in turn a question, as:

"The Sultan of Turkey has gone forth with all his men to battle. Tell me where he has gone, but mind your P's and Q's." The child questioned must answer quickly, naming a city in Turkey beginning with a letter before P in the order of the alphabet.

Another question is put immediately.

"The Sultan of Turkey, with all his men, was entertained at —. Tell me where, but mind your P's and Q's."

In replying, no letter of the alphabet used previously may be repeated, so the

game is a difficult one and a tax upon a child's wits. It has unlimited variations, and may be applied to animals or flowers, as well as geography.

The questioner may ask:

"The circus has come to town. Tell me which animal roared the loudest—

Which came from Africa;

Which wore horns and hoofs;

Which carried his house on his back;

But mind your P's and Q's."

Varying the game to make it a literary one, the child asks:

"Charles Dickens wrote a book. Tell me the title, but mind your P's and Q's."

The children sit in a row to play the Ship Alphabet. One child is chosen for the schoolmaster, and he asks the child at the head of the line:

"The letter?"

"B," answers the child, perhaps, although any letter may be chosen.

"The name of the ship?" the schoolmaster then asks of the next child in the line.

"Bouncing Bet," the child replies, or an equally absurd name which suggests itself to him.

"The name of the Captain?" is the next question.

"The name of her cargo?" The name of her port?" follow rapidly. As the schoolmaster puts each question, he counts ten. The child must answer the question within that time. This will be found difficult, especially if the letter chosen was an unusual one. The successful players move up the line, taking the places of those who failed.

Making up limericks in front of an open fire will be found a whole lot of fun. The best way to describe a limerick is to really quote one that some children made up one evening in the nursery:

"There was a fat man of Tobago,

Who lived on saltpetre and sago,

When asked what he'd drink,

He said he'd take ink,

Because it was good for lumbago."

A group of children may play a game of Suggestions. The first child in the circle voices the first idea which comes to him—treacle, perhaps, or something quite as absurd. The next player then gives immediately the idea suggested to him by treacle—jug, perhaps, or bread. Following jug comes the next child's idea—potter—and the fun of the game is to see how far, after one or two rounds, the children have gone from the first idea, or suggestion.

Acting out one's favorite stories will afford a great deal of fireside fun. One child must leave the room, and those who remain decide what fairy or household tale they will act, without costume or stage setting. If the story of Cinderella is chosen, the smallest little girl crouches by the fire, pretending to cry, while two larger children play that they are dressing themselves in all manner of finery and go through the pantomime of starting away for the ball. The child who went outside is then called back to the room, and tries to guess the title of the story that is being acted.

And by this time the fireside games will have grown so hilarious that mother will come upstairs, saying, "Bedtime," and the games will have to be continued to-morrow night.

Ma Can't Vote

Ma's a graduate of college, and she's read most everything. She can talk in French and German, she can paint and she can sing. Beautiful! She's like a picture! When she talks she makes you think

Of the sweetest kind of music, and she doesn't smoke or drink.

Oh, I can't begin to tell you all the poems she can quote;

She knows more than half the lawyers do; but ma can't vote.

When my pa is writing letters, ma must always linger near

To assist him in his spelling and to make his meaning clear.

If he needs advice, her judgment, he admits, is always best:

Every day she gives him pointers, mostly at his own request.

She keeps track of legislation, and is taxed on bonds and stocks,

But she never gets a look-in at the sacred ballot-box.

Ma is wiser than our coachman, for he's not a graduate, And I doubt if he could tell you who is governing the state.

He has never studied grammar, and I'll bet he doesn't know

Whether Caesar lived a thousand or two thousand years ago.

He could never tell us how to keep the ship of state afloat,

For he doesn't know there's such a thing—but ma can't vote.

Mrs. Gooking does our washing, for she has to help along,

Taking care of her six children, though her husband's big and strong.

When he gets a job, he only holds it till he draws his pay,

Then he spends his cash for whiskey, or else gambles it away.

I suppose his brain's no bigger than the brain of any goat,

And he'd trade his ballot for a drink—but ma can't vote!

—Chicago Record Herald.

The Objection to John

The Gaylords and Nelsons have always been neighbors and intimate friends. So when John Gaylord, at twenty-four, as fine a fellow as ever was, began to see what an altogether charming girl Molly Nelson was, there was, naturally, no opposition. Indeed, as the "affair" became serious it was evident to all, including John and Molly themselves, that the parents concerned, were delighted as yet there was no formal announcement, but every one knew that it was "understood," and evening after evening John talked to Molly on the front porch, often lingering after the other Nelsons had retired.

The surprise of the two was consequently great when one evening a shuffling step was heard in the hall, and presently Mr. Nelson appeared in slipper and dressing-gown, candle in hand. Quite evidently he had gone to bed and then got up—for some purpose.

"Why, father, what is the matter?"

Molly's cheeks were burning, as her father stood there hesitating and eyeing John closely.

John, leaning against the door-post, where he had stood for the last fifteen minutes saying good night to Molly, felt decidedly uncomfortable under Mr. Nelson's gaze.

In fact, it was embarrassing all round. But John is a young man who goes straight to the point.

"Is anything wrong, Mr. Nelson?" he began, directly. "Am I to infer that you object to my being here?"

"Well, no, not exactly, John." Mr. Nelson coughed slightly, hesitating. "It's only that mother and I would like to get a little sleep."

"Father," cried Molly, quite indignant, "we couldn't have been disturbing any one! John has been talking very low—"

"I don't doubt that, my dear," Mr. Nelson was beginning to enjoy the situation. "It's not that, nor have I any objection to John's talking to you. In fact, I haven't any objection in the world to John, nor to his conduct, except—"

Mr. Nelson is open to suspicion of having prolonged the matter unnecessarily at this point.

"Except in one thing. Mrs. Nelson and I do object seriously, my dear John, to the habit you seem to have formed this evening of leaning against the bell-push. Our bedroom is next to the kitchen, and this continuous bell-ringing is not conducive to repose."

Return in Kind

Mark Twain once, asked a neighbor if he might borrow a set of his books. The neighbor replied ungraciously that he was welcome to read them in his library, but he had a rule never to let his books leave his house. Some weeks later the same neighbor sent over to ask for the loan of Mark Twain's lawn-mower.

"Certainly," said Mark, "but since I have made it a rule never to let it leave my lawn you will be obliged to use it there."—Ladies' Home Journal.

Every one complains of his memory, and no one complains of his judgment.—James J. Hill.

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Mr. Mawer

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