

## UPON A RAINY DAY.

A PAPER FOR MOTHERS.



HERE are few people who can contemplate with equanimity the prospect of a rainy day. The pleasure-seeker finds his plans frustrated, the idler gloomily wonders how he shall kill time, the worker conjures up visions of wet walks, damp clothing, possible coughs and colds, and the attendant doctor's bill; and however much mankind may agree as to the necessity and utility of rain, there are few who can bear without grumbling the discomfort which it entails. Perhaps, however, there is no one who has more reason to dread a steady downpour than the mother with her family of little ones around her. Too well she knows what the day's experience will be like. Debarred from their usual out-door enjoyments—depressed as children readily are by a gloomy day—they soon become tired of their toys and each other's society, and countless are the demands made upon the mother's skill and patience. With a hundred household duties calling for attention, she must yet find time to bind up a cut finger, to kiss a bumped forehead, to check the inclination to quarrel, to guide mischievous fingers into legitimate channels of employment, and to devise countless amusements to make the time pass pleasantly. Eye, ear, and voice must be ever on the alert until the tired eyelids close; and the mother with a thankful heart tucks her little ones snugly into bed, and hopes for a brighter morrow.

Many of these much-tried mothers would doubtless be glad to hear of pleasant employments for little fingers, which will beguile the tedium of a rainy day and preserve peace and harmony. Those amusements, of which I propose writing, are familiar to every infant-school teacher, who finds in them a great resource for cold, dull days; but in private houses they are little known. Every mother knows that the prospect of being useful is always pleasing to a child, and therefore the proposal to make a cushion for mother's chair, or a pillow to be given to some poor person, will be hailed with delight.

To make the cushion, provide the children with scraps from the rag-bag—small pieces of cloth, snippings from dresses—anything that is soft, in fact, and that cannot be applied to any other purpose—and let them cut them up into tiny pieces until there are enough for the purpose. Fingers will move busily over this work, the gloomy weather will be forgotten, and great will be the fun in seeing who can get the largest pile. If children have not been taught to use scissors, and mothers are fearful that they should hurt themselves, a safer occupation may be found in making a paper pillow.

Divide a newspaper into small portions, and give each child a piece to tear into fragments. It will take a long time to get a sufficient quantity, and will find employment for many a rainy day.

Although to those accustomed to cushions of down these home-made ones may seem uninviting, still they are by no means to be despised, and in many a poor home would be gladly welcomed; while children may thus be early taught the pleasure of working for others. Perhaps some one will say that all this snipping and tearing will make a dreadful mess, and will add to instead of lessen the mother's work. There is no necessity for this, however, if the mother will insist upon every scrap being picked up and everything put away into its proper place. A wise mother will always make it a rule for children to put away their own toys, thereby not only saving herself trouble, but teaching her little ones habits of tidiness and thoughtfulness for others.

Another amusement much liked by children is that of making necklaces. Large beads of different colours may be bought very cheaply, and will give delight for many hours. Indeed, children never seem to weary of threading and unthreading them. Pretty necklaces may also be made with small pieces of straw and coloured paper. The straw may be bought in bundles from a stationer's or fancy repository, and after being soaked in water, is cut into pieces about an inch long. The coloured paper is cut into tiny squares, and is threaded, by the aid of a needle and cotton, alternately with the straw. I should advise that the cotton be tied into the needle, as young children readily get their needles unthreaded. Some of the Kindergarten occupations might also be employed with advantage, especially those of pricking and embroidering. In pricking, a few simple drawing copies are necessary. One of these is placed on the top of a plain piece of cardboard and pricked at regular intervals. On removing the drawing the design will be found to be pricked out on the plain card. This may afterwards be embroidered with coloured wools.

Another source of infinite amusement may be found in making a scrap-book. Old Christmas and New Year's cards, birthday cards, coloured advertisements, cuttings from pictorial papers, may all be used for this purpose. The book will be more durable if made of holland, and will be sure to give more lasting delight than the costliest picture-book the shops could furnish. Little girls often find pleasure in learning to turn down a hem. The white border of a newspaper is useful for beginners; and, when one can be turned down readily on this, pieces of calico may be given.

It would gratify a child's ambition to be able to make a ball for baby, so I will give directions how this should be done. Cut two round pieces of cardboard about four inches in diameter; and, from the centre of each, cut out a circle about two inches across.

Take the two larger pieces and lay one on the top of the other, with a strong piece of string between. Now take any scraps of coloured wool and thread them through the hole in the centre until it is filled up. Then with a sharp pair of scissors cut through all the wool on the outside edge, and tie the string securely in the middle. The cardboard will then fall out. Trim the ball evenly with a sharp pair of scissors, and you will have a safe and delightful plaything for baby.

I have often wondered why mothers do not teach their children more rhymes and songs. So many books are published now, containing pretty songs with music for children, that it would not be difficult to

make a selection; and when the little ones are tired of play, and the mother is busy at her sewing, it would be found a pleasant task to let them repeat the words of some pretty song until it is learned by heart.

Perhaps the preparations for some of these amusements may entail a little extra work upon the mother; but no wise parent will grudge a few minutes spent in this way if it insures the happiness of her little ones. She will know that idleness is always productive of mischief, quarrelling, and ill-temper; and she will try by the means of pleasant occupations to make the time pass smoothly, and help her children "to make sunshine in the house, when there is none without."

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### THE GARDEN IN APRIL.

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**A**FTER a long and dreary cold and darkness, the month of April may fairly be called the opening of the transformation scene from winter to summer. By this, though, we do not mean to advocate the immediate bedding-out of our greenhouse stock merely because a few sunny and almost warm days have suddenly burst upon us. The temptation to discard an overcoat on a bright April morning is certainly a great one, but we know what that proceeding often — not necessarily *always* — involves. A cautious man, however, will put on a light overcoat by way of a compromise, and thus give himself a partial protection, and, to carry out our parallel, this is precisely the course we should advocate in our garden. To a good many, then, of our advancing flowers we give a light covering in the shape of litter, peas haulm, &c., while over the bulk of our bedding-out stock and other flowers we still have the shelter

of the substantial great-coat of the greenhouse. Only the "April fools" will begin their bedding-out on the first of the month; but on the 30th things certainly begin to wear a different aspect, for we may in a favourable season, and in warm and sunny situations, begin hardening off some of the strongest of our plants, such, for example, as our calceolarias and many of our geraniums; the latter might be placed upon a board against a wall or shed having a south or warm frontage, and a little matting or covering of some sort given them at night-fall. If our calceolarias have been stowed away in the greenhouse all the winter, we should advocate serving them now just as we do the hardiest of the geraniums; but, on the

other hand, if our calceolarias have only had the shelter of a cold and discarded cucumber-frame at the end of our kitchen garden during the winter months, which is very often all they require to keep them in life and health, they would by the end of April stand bedding-out very well, provided the season were a moderate and a genial one, and this merely because they have been subject for the last few months to a hardier process of preservation, and have shown that they are well able to hold out without the enervating luxury of a fire in the bed-room. And this mention of a fire reminds us that the occasion for a fire in the greenhouse, assuming that we have merely our bedding-out stock inside, is hardly necessary after this time. Thus, the process of hardening off can in an average season really begin without the removal of our plants from the greenhouse at all. It is a very fortunate thing that at this transition stage of the year we generally start our cucumber and melon frames, for to these frames, if any collection of delicate plants that we may wish to rear is only on a limited scale, we can transfer our less hardy and more sensitive plants; or we can certainly force on more quickly in our frames than in our greenhouse a pot or two of celery, vegetable-marrow, seed tomatoes, &c., which later on we take out and prick off into their respective borders. And these tomatoes, by the way we may remark, like a good blazing sun and a warm aspect, or they will not properly ripen with us. Every one must have remarked last summer how fine and plentiful they were: this was probably owing to the fact of our long and warm season, when many tomatoes were probably ripened in the open where on another occasion they would have mouldered away. Most of our greenhouses are nearly empty, at least with many of us, in the summer months, and it is therefore an admirable plan to force on here our tomatoes: a few of these should be set out in some large-sized flower-pots.

To get back, however, to our flowers. In the rose garden, some of us may like to retard the blooming of a *few* of the roses for the sake of keeping up a