

And indeed I am glad to be able to thank you—as I fear I did not the other day—for your kindness. The young men of the present day are so degenerate. They have no thought, no pity; and when one meets it one rejoices.”

She pointed to a chair close by the one she had vacated. Then she again seated herself, and Monsieur, Madame and Mademoiselle sat down likewise.

“We are about to partake of *déjeuner*,” said Madame Duclos.

“You will give us the pleasure of your company.”

Margaret went to give the necessary orders with a good deal of secret amusement.

“Dear little madame, I cannot complain that she curtails my liberty. I thought she would accuse me of being forward and unladylike, and, in fact, Anglaise, and she receives him with open arms. It is a good thing that I am capable of looking after myself,

for she has no idea of looking after me. He might be a thorough villain, for all she knows.”

But madame had more sense and more perception than Miss Margaret gave her credit for. She had known a great many men, good, bad and indifferent, before that young lady's mamma was out of the nursery, and her judgment was worth as much as Margaret's, and perhaps a little more.

(To be continued.)

CHILDREN'S WAYS AND SAYINGS.

By A MOTHER.



MR. EDITOR has asked me to talk a little about the ways and sayings of two little people of whom I see a great deal. He thinks that it would be a pleasure to many mothers and brothers and sisters to tell and read of the funny and sensible sayings which fall so simply from the lips of children, and are forgotten in the hurry of every day. He has chosen me to begin by gathering a handful of little ways, and he would like the other mothers to take up the story.

As Mrs. Meynell has lately pointed out, children are better appreciated now than they have ever been before. They used to be crammed with lessons from morning till night, like John Wesley's scholars at Kingswood, who had to get up at four and never had any play. They were admired in proportion to their power of leaving childish ways behind, and their own spontaneous growth was neglected. There were other children of the type of little Nell, in whom mawkishness was fostered as a grace, but few people watched children's minds, and observed their simple working.

How sad it is to read in the life of Francis Place about the Stuart Mill children in their schoolroom. Mr. Place went to stay at Jeremy Bentham's beautiful home at Ford Abbey in Somersetshire, where the Mills were living in 1817, and describes as follows the lessons of John, Clara, Willie, and Jim, of whom the eldest, John, was only eleven years old.

“Mill is exceptionally severe. Lessons have not been well said this morning by Willie and Clara. There they are now, three o'clock, plodding over their books. Their dinner, which they knew went up at one, brought down again. . . and no dinner will any of them get till six o'clock. This has happened once before since I came. The fault to-day is in a mistake of one word.”

Mr. Place tells his wife that Mrs. Mill was a patient soul, hating wrangling, who managed to avoid quarrelling in a very admirable manner. In these days, when James Mill's well-meant cruelty would be condemned by all, Mrs. Mill's avoidance of quarrelling seems less admirable. We might indefinitely multiply instances of the old methods of crushing nature out of children, but we will only recall a few.

There is little Edmund Verney, not yet three years old, whose great-grandmother, Lady Denton, pleads in 1639, “Let me begge of you and his mother that nobody whip him but Mr. Parrye (his tutor); yf you doe goe a violent way with him you will rue it, for i verly beleve he will reseve ingery by it.”

In the next age we read of the little Duke of Gloucester, who was the one survivor of Queen Anne's eighteen babies. His mother doated on him, but yet she thought it inevitable that her stolid “*Est il possible*” husband should constantly belabour the poor little fellow with the birch rod. One would think that the eager boy who took such pride in his troop of boy-soldiers would have easily survived a more reasonable system.

Even where people did love and rejoice in children they were too apt to think such love unworthy of a true believer. I cannot resist quoting the exquisite and pathetic lines of Isaac Watts, which are less known than some of his less beautiful poems, though they give such insight into his tender heart and his creed.

“Where'er my flattering passions rove
I find a lurking snare;
'Tis dangerous to let loose our love
Beneath the eternal Fair.

Nature has soft but powerful bands,

And reason she controls;

While children with their little hands

Hang closest to our souls.

Thoughtless they act the old Serpent's part;

What tempting things they be!

Lord, how they twine about our heart,

And draw it off from Thee!

Dear Sovereign, break these fetters off,

And set our spirits free;

God in Himself is bliss enough;

For we have all in Thee.”

This was a strangely perverted lesson to have learnt in the school of the Master who “set a little child in the midst” of His disciples. We may be thankful that the instincts of the doctor's own loving heart witnessed to a primitive doctrine older than that of his day.

But gloomy and repellent as was the old severity, when little Quetitia Pilkington “was frequently whipped for looking blue of a frosty morning,” it did not necessarily ruin children body and mind. The senseless admiration and attention which many people show to little ones nowadays, kills the child in them as effectually as the undue severity of the past. Let children once know that they are admired and that their droll sayings are repeated, and they lose their fresh charm and become affected apes of their elders.

So before beginning these little tales about children, I should like to deprecate any participation by the babies in such records, or any knowledge of them. The bird deserts the nest when she knows she is watched, and the charm of a child dissolves and is gone if it once realises that grown folks are studying it.

Perhaps the most delightful stage in children is that from the age of two to three, when they are safe from the knowledge of their own individuality and perfectly free from self-consciousness.

The babies I am going to talk of are Agnes and Tom, aged six-and-a-half and two-and-a-fortnight. They live in the depths of the country, so that Agnes sees few new faces and meets with no flattery. She has never been at a loss for companions, as her fancy has called up familiars ever since she could talk at all. She tells us sometimes about the country called “Home Italy,” from which she came to live with us. She had a mother there who hit her one day, and Agnes “accidentally hit her back again.” This seems to have caused a coolness, for from that day Agnes deserted her old home and her “young father, who knew nothing about horses,” and came to live with us. She often tells us tales of the strange manners of Homeos and Charmos and Hopfrog, which are places near Home Italy,

and of the monks who are all married, especially one Zamros, who was Agnes' special friend.

But since the advent of Tom with his curly gold hair, and legs which go pat-pat everywhere in sister's train, Agnes has had an added charm of motherliness, and a decided increase in her love of dolls and small animals. In the old lonely days she used to be the mother of a visionary family of children who filled her little world. There was Tarey-Mary, who was Agnes' own whipping girl, and who made marks with a pencil or "panty" on mother's best books, or hid new boots, which turned up after a month at the bottom of mother's clothes-basket. Then there was Lucy, who was the companion of Agnes' serener moments, and Lazarus, who had shabby clothes and was put into new trousers whenever patterns came for father from the London tailor. There were many more, and you might hear Agnes at any time on the lawn or in the nursery struggling with the angry passions of her numerous family; but they have faded into the background now that the dolls can be wheeled in a pram like Tom's, or put in the corner and made to say "sorry bad."

Even the dolls are not always in request, for Tom is beginning to be able to join a little in the games. Agnes is fond of playing at church, and fat little brother is useful as the congregation. Agnes makes up the first lesson very nicely out of such reminiscences as "And Moses said, let the people go," but it is a little disconcerting to have to stop in the middle and remove Tom from the table to which he has clambered, as she firmly tells him "people don't stand on the table in this church."

When it is a wet day Agnes plays "mothers," and the dolls have a severe time of it; or "engines," and she and Tom dash about and have collisions. But when it is dry the little pair gather dandelions and patter off to feed the guinea-pigs or "gimpey-digs" as Tom calls them. It is to be feared that primroses and the choicest plants in mother's garden are sometimes borne off in Tom's fat fists as an offering to the pets. There are three generations of these small people who eat with their chins and say "week, week." Sooty and Blackie and Andrew and Brownie and Bruno are fat and well-liking, but poor Katy fell ill and died one day, so that Agnes wailed and could not be comforted. She stopped crying at last to go and bury it in the rain in her long-suffering garden, where the wooden ponies have funerals when three of their legs have been knocked off by Tom. Agnes soothed her grief by saying "Rock of Ages" as she buried her poor pet in the rain, and it was impossible to tell her this was profane when one reflected that our Lord had said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father." A friend asked Agnes if her favourite had died of old age. "No," she explained sorrowfully, "of young age." The next day Mrs. Guinea-pig had three babies, Harry, Isabel and Alice; they looked exactly like commas, and were a great consolation to Agnes. She is small enough to creep into their low house and put out their bran in the long trough. How eagerly she watches while black Andrew with his brown collar and the other big ones enjoy their meal, envying sorely the easy manners of the "gimpey-dig" dinner-table where Harry, Isabel and Alice are allowed to sit in the trough to eat their share with no reproofs from Blackie and Sooty.

The time when Tom is in his element is in the early morning. He wakes at about 5.30, and sleepy Mum and Farvey are an easy prey. "Blind, pull it," is his first remark, and when he has been popped into a warm

dressing-gown and provided with a "lugga-bicky" as he calls a sweet or sugar biscuit, he proceeds to "buccaneer" for an hour or two. For his mother this period is one of athletic sports calculated to develop all the muscles connected with leaping. Every jug and box and chair has to be sleepily fielded out of the way before Tom is let loose, else the points of vantage, such as the mantel-shelf and the chest of drawers, would be swept at a blow. The snooze which follows is soon rudely broken, for Tom has an amazing ingenuity in devising fresh "clime-ups," as he calls them. The towel-horse has been applied as a daring escalade to the high chest of drawers, and Mum leaps from her uneasy sleep at the clinking sound of a lapis brooch following two halfpennies to the bottom of the ewer, while Tom, perched aloft on the drawers, murmurs softly as he watches the nice hard things gurgling through the water.

When tired of aiming candlesticks and candles at his recumbent parents, Tom applies "climent" (namely the aforesaid towel-horse) to the bed, and then giddily hoists it on Farvey while he tries to reach the shoes he has lodged on the bed-head, muttering "shoe, fro' it," the while. Much dragging about by the indefatigable Tom at last broke off the foot of poor "climent." Next morning we heard the fat one tumbling about on it and murmuring sadly, "Climent broke—part short;" no rebuffs however would deter this Arctic explorer, and when "climent" was banished to the dressing-room, he was discovered perched unsafely upon the slope of the clothes-basket, which he had rolled on its side and scaled with the skill of a Blondin.

The next morning, when even the basket was reft from him, Tom consoled himself by aiming bits of "lugga-bicky" at the treasured objects on the mantel-shelf, and smashing sister's picture in a glass frame by the precision of his aim. Mother's "marmels," as he calls her crystal and other necklaces, have all been put away until the destroyer shall have become a wiser if a sadder man. Their attraction was overwhelming, and when broken, they could be pursued under the bed with all the pleasures of the chase.

Agnes looks on the reckless career of Tom with the eyes of a sage. "Ah, you'll have lessons one day, Tom," she moralises, mournfully, as she reflects on the copy she hates so much, in which the o's will not look round, and the letters all turn the wrong way.

One day she bursts into the "dimet," as Tom calls the dining-room, and says despairingly to mother, "I wouldn't mind being a bird or an engine, but the life of a girl is horrid, especially lessons." However, the greatest trial is the writing. Reading involves such delights as, "One day Mamma said," "Conrad dear," and "The Raggedy Man," while history is so attractive that Agnes already talks to us at meals about Lanfranc and the white ship.

Tom shows no signs of eventual greatness, yet some of the ways in which his little mind works are very nice to watch. He likes to have a word for everything, and if he does not know a new one he makes an old one do, or invents one. The bed into which he creeps when his pink feet are cold with buccaneering he calls his "toes-house," and the bulges on the poker which he waves at mother and father as he sits on the bed he calls "hoops." Trays and rings and all round things are also hoops. "Poker, like it," he shouts. "Poker fly," and waves it, hoops and all, over the bed which is his war-path.

Tom and Agnes have been very different in their early vowel-pronunciation. For Agnes, eggs and legs were always aggs and lags, "I won't have medicine on my hind lags," she said once, on a lotion being rubbed

into her shoulders; whereas to Tom, eggs and legs and beds and Teds have always been "eggs and leegs and beeds and Teeds," "Mummy beed," he always wakes up to say when 10 o'clock is near, as he plants a determined "leeg" outside the crib into which he is netted at 6.30.

Most of Tom's words end in "cotch," for some unknown reason. A picture story-book about Joseph is his most treasured possession, and he is never tired of looking at Doughfig in his coat of many colours in conversation with the patriarch Jaycotch, or the still more stirring picture of the butler and the baycotch recounting their dreams to Doughfig. One evening he sniffed a little on the landing, and then said "baycotch," foreseeing the "ham-pam" or sop-in-the-pan, of which he gets a share when we have eggs and bacon for tea. His sense of smell has been excellent from infancy, when he would struggle to smell the "uffs" in the garden, as he called the flowers. He already goes rides on father's bycotch, and shouts the word if he only sees a bicycle bell lying on the settle. His daily airing is taken in the mail-cotch, unless it is very wet, when he rides gleefully in the donkey-cart.

"The destroyer," as we sometimes call him, is a very warm-hearted little man, and much can be done with him by simple corner-punishments. He wails for some time in retirement, and then says tentatively, "Solly bad," hoping to come out, and truly conscious that it was not right to pour his Mellin gaily over the breakfast-table, or to illustrate the remark of "Wine-glass, fro' it." One day Agnes tumbled and howled in a room hard by. Tom thought Agnes had been naughty, and said appealingly, "Sister—corner—c'ying—solly bad." But though a devoted brother at heart Tom is not sentimental, and will sturdily punch sister if she climbs into the lap of "mya mummy," as he calls his mother. He is as yet unacquainted with fear, and when hardly one and a half years old he staggered off down the drive on his own account. Some large cows were passing, and father watched ready to help Tom's hasty retreat. So far from fleeing before the enemy, Tom picked up a stone and threw it at them, shouting "Shoo." In the warm summer days a hue and cry was raised for the vanished treasure, and he was discovered by mother outside the gate, sitting comfortably in a wet ditch, and bathing his gold head with rare ecstacy.

Tom's vicarious penitence reminds me of Agnes' early grasp of Plato's ideal theory. Father had been hearing her say her prayers, and after blessing many friends, he asked her if she wished anything else blessed. "I've chairs," she suggested. "Why, what good could a blessing do to them?" said father, "Make vem into arm-chairs," said Agnes deeply.

Certainly Mr. Norman Gale is right when he sings—

"The gods who toss their bounties down
To willing laps
Neither forgot the violet's scent,
Nor planets in the firmament
The outposts of a mystery!
They gave to man the undefiled
Bright rivulets and waters wild;
They wrought at goodly gifts above,
And, for the pinnacle of love,
They fashioned him a little child."

I hope that Mr. Editor will have his wish and receive many stories about other children as wise and as foolish as Tom and Agnes. If the babies themselves never know that they are listened to they will grow up as naturally as Harry, Isabel, and Alice in the bran-trough, and have the blessing which will make them grow into the arm-chairs they were meant to be.