

The Home

Other People's Children

The baby changed in its cradle so that another baby might receive the benefit of its rank and fortune has been the corner-stone of more than one novel. But the real baby of to-day, who suffers the misfortune of growing up in the home in which it was born, under the discipline of its own father and mother, is much more truly an object to arouse the pity and commiseration of the public. Who is there among us who could not bring up the children of relatives, friends, or neighbors much better than their natural trainers! There is something peculiar about the clearness of vision one has when other people's children are the objects of observation. To the disinterested outsider the question arises why this wisdom is not used for the benefit of the home children; but perhaps this question is due to ignorance of the whole subject of the training of children. Certain it is that on no subject does universal wisdom find expression with such perfect freedom, such undoubted faith in the speaker's own ability to give final judgments, as when the children of the other family are under consideration. There may be doubts of the home theology, economics, social status, individual abilities, but never is there a quiver, a throb, of doubt when the question is about the kind of education or management or training that would improve the children of the other family. That the authority or authorities who decide the régime of the other family is or are making a tremendous if not fatal error is a foregone conclusion.

Doubtless the solution of the problem would be the exchanging of families for so many months of the year. The advantage would be double. One's own children would be seen in perspective, and one's relative's, friend's, or neighbor's children would get the benefit of this clarified wisdom that is now lost in words written or spoken.

Every adviser knows that his words of wisdom to his neighbor on the best way to bring up his family are seed sown on stony ground. This exchange of families, for certain periods of each year, would reduce friction, and certainly ought to increase fellowship, and reap untold good for the rising generation. Rising they would then in truth be, not merely physical elongations of humanity. Of course the children would have to go untrammelled by clothes, books, or toys on this migratory pilgrimage, that the benefactor of the Nation might be free to put in force his system that is to change the future of the unfortunate children given into the other family. It may be that his wisdom will be reflected after a time into his own home, so that in the course of a few generations each father and mother shall meet the standard of the other children's parents, and it will be safe to train the children in their own homes; but for the present, salvation for the children is to have them trained by the other parents!



A Short Talk About Talking

By a Talker

Freddie skips into the kindergarten one morning, his face, voice, and manner indicating unusual enthusiasm. Off come overcoat and mittens, that he may reach his pocket.

"I've brought something for us to talk about!" he announces triumphantly, and brings forth a tin whistle.

The kindergartner smiles in sympathy, and the whistle is the starting-point for an animated, instructive conversation. Now, why should not Freddie go on all his life accumulating interesting things in his mental pockets and producing them, on proper occasions, to talk about? And Freddie's sister, too?

To an observer of children, there seems no good reason why the power of easy, genuine conversation should cease at any time of life. Yet many fail to expect and encourage it in young people. A thoughtful lad, who had peculiar opportunities for meeting many people, if asked about any individual, would reply, "I don't know him; he never talks with me;" or, "Yes, he is a fine man; he is a friend of mine; he always talks with me when he meets me." For him, all mankind was divided into those two classes. A modest girl of thirteen expressed to her brother great admiration of one of his student companions, and added, "He is the only one of your friends who thinks I am worth talking with."

I know a village the social character of which has been greatly raised because a pastor recognizes this duty of elder to younger people, and arranges to bring them together frequently in informal, joyous ways. The gain is mutual. The elders are less reticent and careworn; the younger ones show finer manners, and true manly and womanly qualities. These young people are passing successfully, because naturally and unconsciously, through the "awkward age," and will find out for themselves the principles which govern the best social intercourse.

What are some of these principles? As all the senses can be finally resolved into one, the sense of touch, so these all group themselves under one head—Love. This, however, has various manifestations.

Freddie showed one form: sharing; willingness to bring forth for the common enjoyment one's own stores of thought, information, experience, and anecdote, or to be in the leisurely, receptive attitude of mind which makes the most of that which is offered by others.

Another is illustrated by a remark of Mrs. H——, when characterizing a dear deacon who had just passed away: "He was always interested in us, and he always found some way to let us know it." Absence of self-absorption, sincere sympathy with others, are happy secrets of the best conversation.

So, also, is that tact which soon finds the beloved subject on which some otherwise silent person is able to become eloquent. An honest belief in human nature, the faith that each man has some inborn grace all his own, some experience of life which only he can interpret, serves the same end.

Call upon your invalid neighbor, a man of few words. You really wish to cheer him, therefore it is not well to dwell upon his ailments and the deprivations incident to illness. You use up the weather, the new church, the latest newspaper sensation—if it chanced to be a decent one—in about two minutes. "What next?" you mentally ask yourself.

Now skillfully manage to mention Washington or the year 1864. See his eye glisten, his form straighten! You have touched the chord which is always ready to vibrate. How you are repaid by the flow of reminiscence, the little revelations of character, the poetic atmosphere which gently enfolds all these memories! For, mark you, the old soldier seldom seems to recall his hardships in detail, nor the ghastly sights of the battle-field. He sets before you the aspect of the country, the wit and courage of comrades, the sound sleep after some long march, the kindness shown in the hospital, the noble traits of the commander. He is always interesting, because he himself was part of it all, and you are ready to be so too, in imagination.

This diligent search for a key to the individual life is the duty of a teacher as character-builder; why is not the same loving effort to be made for the sake of brightening and uplifting social life?

It is one proper incentive to mental activity, careful reading, and thorough assimilation, that one may be well furnished for useful intercourse with one's fellows. Yet this is but a part of a more inclusive principle: that the

best influence, after all, is that of a noble personality enriched with the highest gifts, which does not exert itself, but exhales blessing as naturally and unconsciously as perfume proceeds from a rose.

A lady returned somewhat dissatisfied from a round of calls in her village home. She was one from whom all mean gossip slipped off unnoticed, so she had not that to trouble her. She did not set herself a task, but, rather, responded to an intuition, when she said: "I cannot afford to waste my time in pettiness, nor to be too much cast down by the discontent and sorrow which are poured into my ears. Still less can I afford to cut myself off from my neighbors. I must just feed more upon the New Testament and Emerson. I shall be all right if I can only carry about, as part of myself, the love of Jesus Christ and the cheerful philosophy of Emerson."



A Solution Offered

A reference in these columns to the Columbian Housekeepers' Association has brought so many inquiries that we insert extracts from the constitution of that Association. The Columbian Housekeepers' Association was incorporated March 15, 1893, as the National Columbian Household Economic Association, which new name will go into effect at the October meeting of the Association. All the officers, at this writing, are residents of Chicago. The Secretary is Mrs. H. S. Taylor, 469 La Salle Avenue; the Treasurer is Mrs. Frances E. Owens, 6241 Sheridan Avenue. The management of the Association for the first year is vested in a Board of Directors numbering sixteen, all women who have been chosen for their executive ability.

The objects of the Association are:

1. To awaken the public mind to the importance of establishing Bureaus of Information where there can be an exchange of wants and needs between employer and employed, in every department of home and social life.
2. To promote among members of the Association a more scientific knowledge of the economic value of various foods and fuels; a more intelligent understanding of correct plumbing and drainage in our homes, as well as need for pure water and good light in a sanitarily built house.
3. To secure skilled labor in every department of our homes, and to organize Schools of Household Science and Service.

These are objects which appeal with force to intelligent American housekeepers.

In addition to the immediate officers of the Association there will be chosen a Vice-President for each State and a Chairman for each county of each State. These latter officers are supposed to build up the work in their own sections and report on the work under their immediate charge to the Vice-President of the State. The standing committees' duties, as specified in the by-laws, show the purpose of the Association, the aim of its projectors. The whole science of home-making is covered in the duties assigned to these committees. The establishment of Home Science clubs, intelligence offices, cooking-schools, co-operative laundries and bakeries, training-schools for servants, diet kitchens, and similar philanthropic enterprises, are to be investigated, developed, and fostered by the Association. The work assigned to two of the committees ought to make every housekeeper of intelligence a member of the Association:

4. Committee on Food Supply. The duties of this Committee shall be to prepare a descriptive list of wholesale and retail foods, such as meat, vegetables, butter, eggs, etc.; to compare New York and Chicago with other markets, and furnish statements of what articles of food are most desirable to buy, either in large or small quantities, with household recipes for cooking, and all other matters relating to household economics.

5. Committee on Household Economics in Village Communities. The duties of this Committee shall be to formulate plans to simplify housework in village communities; to suggest plans for co-operation in laundries, bakeries, and kitchens; to discuss plans for profitable market gardening, poultry and egg raising

on a small scale; to furnish information on all topics connected with housework.

The possibility of increasing in small villages the earning capacity of people who must be self-supporting ought to appeal to every intelligent person. The possibility of bringing two needs into profitable exchange is well known, and there should be organizations to accomplish this. The woman who wants money and the woman who wants chickens ought to meet when, as frequently happens, they live in the same borough.

The women's clubs in all sections of the country ought to be able to appoint committees who would form county and sub-branches of the National Columbian Household Economic Association. The feasibility of dealing with the servant question by co-operation through this Association is most evident. There will never be freedom for the housekeepers until the whole problem of domestic service is dealt with on scientific and business principles. The problem is for the mistress to solve, not the servant. And the co-operation of the mistresses to raise the grade of servants, to establish more uniform standards of duties and privileges as well as wages, will, in time, for the intelligent housekeepers and servants, be the solution. Intelligent housekeepers have long recognized that character counts for as much in the kitchen as in the parlor; that skill unsupported by character does not insure the peace and health of the household as much as character that values skill and has the intelligence to desire it. When a group of housekeepers agree on the same general line of requirements, privileges, and duties for the servants they employ, they will find that they will be able to establish standards which will decide the kind of labor that will be offered for sale, and they will become in fact, as they are in theory, employers, not mere payers of wages, cringing before those whom they pay.

There is no doubt that an employment office or bureau carried on solely for the benefit of its co-operative stockholders is within the range of business possibilities. Women have shown business abilities in the management of philanthropic and charitable enterprises that require as much knowledge as such a business would demand. It would cost in a city at least \$1,000 a year to manage such an office. Two hundred housekeepers willing to pay \$5 per year in order to make such an experiment would insure its support. Probably each and all of the two hundred members would have a capable woman, anxious to get work, who could manage the office. The head of the enterprise would have to be a woman so well known as to at least partially insure the good faith of the experiment. The members would have the right to enter the names of servants whom they had employed, with information as to their excellencies and limitations, as a guide to would-be employers; they should also, for the first year, be able to enter the names of servants who are recommended by housekeepers whose standards meet the requirement of the bureau. No charge should be made to servants whose names are entered; it must be the equivalent of being on a roll of honor for a name to appear on the employment books of the bureau. No name should be entered except on the recommendation of an employer, and always by the request of a member of the bureau or association.

The advantage of running such an office or bureau in connection with a National organization can easily be seen. It would enable a servant, when, for family or other reason, she removed to another city, to secure employment in reliable families, and give one more reliable servant to the place of removal. Prizes could be offered in the local bureau for long service, particular skill in culinary or other domestic branches, as an incentive to improvement. The whole plane of domestic service could be raised where it would appeal to girls of higher intelligence.

For the emergencies in the household, such a bureau could prove a blessing to all who used it. Extra service to meet any condition ought to be supplied through such a channel.

When the housekeepers in America combine to secure skilled labor for domestic service, their housekeeping will be brought to the level of their intelligence.