

THE GENTLE ART OF BRINGING UP A BOY.

By Mrs. Moses P. Handy.



"Put the bad boy in a barrel," said the desperate philosopher," and feed him through the bung-hole."

The rest of the family are glad to have out of the way. "Boys always have dirty fingers," so sister is in terror when the small boy's hands come near her work or books; mother is too busy patching trousers to have time to talk to him; besides, he is sure to wake the baby. Cook will have none of him, and he and the nursery maid are always at odds. If he is a city boy his father, probably, is scarcely acquainted with him, and if of the country, has but little time to do more than to watch that the boy does not shirk the chores required of him. Perhaps he has a way of asking questions—most bright boys have—and his ceaseless "Why?" is a torment to his elders, who are not always willing and able to explain. The boy may be fond of books and will read by the hour to the delight and peace of the household. In that case who directs his reading? There are books and books, and the danger of the dime novel and sensational story paper are dire. The boy had better never know his letters than use the knowledge to read such stuff.

All this time the boy is growing nearer manhood, nearer the time when he must be the joy of those to whom he belongs, or their grief and curse. There can be no middle course. If the twig is not patiently and prayerfully kept straight evil influences will bend it their own way, and the crooked tree will bring forth bitter fruit. "Even a child is known by his doings," and a fruitful cause of disappointment in children is that so few parents take the pains to study their characters and discover their natural bent. No two leaves are exactly alike and no two children are ever cast in the same mould. Every mother has cause to wonder at the difference between her children in taste, in disposition and in "parts." It is a common saying that all children love play, but what plays? Watch your own little ones with their toys. One is happy for hours with a set of building blocks, from which he evolves all manner of wonderful structures, while his brother with the same material never gets beyond a tall tower or a train of cars and tires of the toy in a little while. Another will weave a romance about a picture which his brothers and sisters in all likelihood cast aside after a hasty glance. A wise mother will keep all these things in her heart, and in training the child the parents will consider his particular talents.

Still it must be remembered that only the very few are possessed of genius, and it is not worth while to spoil a good mechanic to make a poor artist. That Captain Cook, who was meant for a dry goods clerk, ran away and became a famous navigator is no reason that any dissatisfied salesman may do the same and meet with like success. If Andrew Johnson rose from a tailor's bench to be the President of the United States it was not without hard work to gain an education. Buffon declared genius to be patience intensified, and Sir Joshua Reynolds was used to assert that patient perseverance would make any one a painter. Other wise men differ with them and know that for as much as training counts it is not all. No amount of skilful manipulation can weave a silken fabric from the cotton fibre nor fashion a Sevres vase from common clay. Nevertheless it is a long step from unbleached sheeting to India mull, and common clay is susceptible of much diversity in the handling.

When a child is born that child is given into the hands of the parents to be trained for life and eternity. It cannot be made over and the material altered; the thing is to do the best with that which is already there; it may be improved or it may be spoiled by wrong management. Many boys are injured by overstrictness; an overstrung bow relaxes readily, but many more are spoiled by overindulgence, and more yet by too little attention. The father is striving to provide for his household, the mother is a Martha cumbered with many cares. Her energies are taxed to the utmost to keep house and children tidy.

Her boys at school must look like others,
She says as she wearily darns their hose,
For the world is quick to censure mothers
For the least neglect of children's clothes.

She does not often get time to sit down and talk to them, and to play with them is something beyond the range of possibility. So the boys grow up on the outside of their parents' lives, unknowing of the father-love under the stern exterior nor how the mother's heart is bound up in her children. Reckoning up the duties of a faithful house mother they seem too much for any one woman to bear. It is only by taking them up one at a time that they may be accomplished.

THE knack of managing boys is not given to every one, and so in many households they form a discordant element. A healthy, active boy has an astonishing capacity for mischief, is noisy and obstreperous, with a faculty for kicking out shoes and wearing out the knees of his trousers, simply appalling to a mother, especially if she is by no means sure where the money for new ones is to come from.

Yet the boys are the men of the future, and on their training depends the weal or woe of the nation. The coming voter and law-maker is in the nursery and schoolroom of to-day, and the lessons taught him there will surely bear their fruit, for good or evil, in the years to come.

In too many homes the boys are regarded as necessary nuisances, whom



"When the 'Scalp King' of the dime novel threatens his young life—"

But whatever is neglected do not let it be the boys. They grow out of the mother hand soon, very soon. Now, therefore, while they are yet in the home nest let the teaching be done. Leave off a few ruffles and tucks, tax your nerves to bear with noise, try not to mind the prints of dirty feet and fingers, a few minutes' work will make them clean; be patient and loving and your reward will surely come in after years if not now.

Boys will be boys, but not for long,
Ah, could we but hear about us
The thought how very soon our boys
Will learn to do without us,
How soon, but stern-voiced, bearded men
Will gravely call us "mother,"
Or we be reaching, empty hands,
From this world to the other.

MRS. M. P. HANDY.

ANECDOTES OF CHILDHOOD.

THIS has been called the era of the new womanhood. Is it not the era of the new childhood? It is not alone in a Congress of Mothers, or in meetings of teachers, that the child is studied and discussed. Some time ago that dignified body, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, gave special attention to the subject of childhood, when Professor Edward S. Warren defined "paidology" as "so much of anthropology as relates to the study of childhood or man, germinating, so to speak, feeling its way up into the light of conscious intelligent participation in surrounding civilization."

The young mother is sometimes perplexed when she discovers how oddly her instructions have been misunderstood, for the child can reason only when it knows.

"See, mamma, see, he's just like the Apostle Paul!" cried a little girl who was watching a sleight-of-hand performance in which the magician produced a variety of articles from an old hat. The mother inquired, and the child explained. "Don't you remember, you made me learn those verses in the Bible where from Paul's body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs and aprons?" The little girl, who could repeat many chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, had confidently believed that the body of the Apostle actually manufactured an unlimited supply of healing articles.

"I want to show you God's grave," said a boy of three years. He led the visitor to the grave of his father. He had been told that his dead father was in Heaven. He had been taught to pray to God as our Father in Heaven, and his mind was bewildered.

"Mamma," cried a little girl, "Sallie's cut herself down to the skin we'll have when we get to heaven." The mother found that her little daughter had cut her finger to the bone. This accords with the impression of another child that the soul is a shrivelled white core in the middle of the body.

The misconceptions of children are sometimes very poetic. A weeping willow was pointed out to a child who was sent to the country by a fresh air society. In the morning, for the first time in her life, she saw the bright dew drops on the grass, and cried out that the tears had been shed by the tree.

Some Boston school children of the age of six replied to questions asked that butter comes from buttercups, honeysuckles grow on pussy willows, kittens grow on pussy willows, when the cow lows it blows its own horn.

Some children like to show off by using long words. A girl of nine years wrote to a friend of her mother to announce the arrival of twins in the family, and thus apologized for the defects of the letter: "Please excuse my eligible writing, because the abounding events of the past week have upset my equalverlyman."

When a child must be punished, it is very important to make sure that it quite understands why it is punished, for children are often embittered by a sense of injustice. Parents sometimes punish children for wilfulness, though what appears to be disobedience really arises from lack of comprehension of something commanded or prohibited.

The child is sometimes wilful and resists authority because the authority appears to be unjustly exercised. "I remember an occasion when I thought my mother was very unkind," said a middle-aged woman. "A little friend and I were rolling down a bank and filling our hair and clothing with sand.

My mother very properly put a stop to the sport, but I was unable at that time to see that she was justified. It seemed to me that my right to the joy of my young life had been wrongfully infringed."

Good health in a teacher is of very material importance to the children under her care. Teaching is undoubtedly a great strain, and the tired, nervous woman readily becomes irritable. The irritability is inevitably communicated to the teacher.

The truism that example is more effective than precept was exemplified in the case of a little girl who was discovered jumping up and down in a rage. When some one inquired what was the matter she burst out with, "Oh, I'm just so mad I don't know what to do! And I wish I was my own papa; I do wish I was my own papa, for I'm brimful of little swears, and they won't let me say them!"



"Catch the boy and warn him when he is in the clutch of the 'Red Terror.'"