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MISCELLANY.

BY FLORA BULLOCK.
 For The Courier.

"It was a long way," said Little Lord Fauntleroy. "But Dearest, my mother, was with me and I wasn't lonely. Of course you are never lonely if your mother is with you."

When I read this passage the other day and smiled audibly,—a trick that one acquires when reading to little folks who can not see,—the Boy squirmed in his seat, threw up his head half combatively, and blurted out, "You bet that's just right. It's the truth."

The Boy is just between being little and being big. When he goes home for vacation no one expects to see him again until the new term is well on its way. This tradition dates from the time when he came, a very lonely little blind boy, to be one of the babies of the House, and the bigger boys nicknamed him "Feel Bad." Even yet the children say, "Oh, he won't be back for three weeks," and they are generally right. Now, tardiness is a cardinal sin, in the estimation of any right-minded school-ma'am, and penalties and penances should make grievous the way of the offender. Yet I fear that the next time the Boy straggles in long after the beginning of a term, I shall smile—perhaps not audibly—and ask him if he had a nice visit with his mother.

Sometime, after you have come to take life rather calmly, to read books critically and without much appetite, so that you think not a book in the wide world will tempt you to lie awake after your appointed bed time, just pick up a story like "Little Lord Fauntleroy" and read it to the children. Read for only a brief hour each day; do not let them know what is coming,—bribe the household, if need be, not to tell them; and always arrange to stop just before some important climax. The breathless interest and absorbing fascination you can arouse in the little folks will perhaps puzzle you. Holding such power in your hands will make you feel like a fairy god-mother, only you must share the glory with the story-writer, but why should you be surprised? Do you not remember the nights when you trembled into bed by the last sputterings of your lamp, arose with blood-shot eyes very late in the morning, and were soundly rated by the pater familias and mayhap by your conscience? What matter if the book were only an Augusta Jane Evans Wilson wonder or an E. V. Roe romance. The blessedness of actually losing yourself in something, forgetting the clock and the parental admonitions, thinking not of the past nor of the future, harassed by no burdens—what a blessedness it was!

Turn from your Darwin and your Spencer, your Guizot and your Fiske, fascinating as they all are in a grown-up

way, and read a good story book to—no, *with*, the children. There may come to you again a glimpse of that fair kingdom of happiness and self-forgetfulness which you fancy you have left among the put-away things of childhood.

The Queen was something of an "old fogy"—that, in my humble feminine estimation, constitutes one of her claims to glory. They tell us that she persisted in wearing an old shawl of the fashion of her younger days. From her pictures he who glances may know that the ancient lady's bonnets were heir-looms of the past. There was no modern freakishness about them, and they would have looked well on any good English grandmother who goes a marketing. Imagine gorgeous Elizabeth ever covering her proud red head thus, though she had lived to be an hundred.

One could almost be sure that Victoria tried to make her grandchildren wear "stogies," and would hear none of "buttoned" shoes; that she looked with horror upon bicycles, and could not be coaxed to talk into a telephone; that she ate with her knife and drank tea from her saucer. The biographers have not informed us, as yet, in regard to these minor details.

Some day we shall know more about her little ways of life, and then we may honor her as an "old fogy"—one of those pillars of goodness who prop the world with old-fashioned ways, while we younger generations are experimenting with new things.

The Coon cat.

The rearing of coon-cats is a coming industry. Coon-cats are worth today from five dollars to one hundred dollars apiece, and the supply does not begin to meet the demand. Exceptional specimens have been known to fetch two hundred or even three hundred dollars. At the present time all of them come from Maine, simply for the reason that the breed is peculiar as yet to that state. Their popularity is such that the business of breeding them has been rapidly growing during the last few years in that part of the country, and one shipper, not very far from Bar Harbor, exported in 1899 no fewer than three thousand of the animals.

Strange to say, there are comparatively few people south or west of New England who know what a coon-cat is. If you ask that question "down in Maine," however, the citizens will seem surprised at your ignorance, and will explain to you, in a condescending way, that the creature in question is half raccoon—the descendant of "a cross between a coon and a common cat." Coon-cats have been recognized as a distinct breed in Maine for so long that the memory of the oldest inhabitant runs not back to their beginning. You will find several of them in almost any village in that part of the world.—Saturday Evening Post.

Harry Von Tilzer has composed a beautiful song—Excelsior, for sale by Shapico, Bernstein & Von Tilzer, 53 Dearborn St., Chicago.

"Charlie never swears."

"Why, doesn't he ever fuzzle?"—Town Topics.

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