

XXXIV.

THE BRIDGE.

LET your child build mimic bridges
As his hands move to and fro ;
Germs of thought are being planted
Which in after years will grow.

Face to face, but never meeting,
Frown the river's ancient walls ;
To the far divine, the human
Through the ages faintly calls.

Banks are fixed, but man can join them,
Conquering stubborn space with skill ;
And despite life's contradictions,
Love at last learns God's dear will.

The Bridge is produced by a slight modification of the House, or of the Charcoal-burner's Hut. The two thumbs make the piers, the finger-tips of the right and left hands meet to form the bridge. The tip of one middle finger is placed under that of the other.

To find or create a bond of union between seemingly opposed and even antagonistic objects is always a beneficent and rewarding deed. Mother, be it your care to afford your child early and recurrent experiences of this truth. No one feels more deeply than you the bitter pain born of apparently insoluble contradictions, or the joy which springs out of unhopèd-for reconciliations.



Through such reconciliations the peace of heaven descends into human hearts and homes.

Family and home are themselves a mediation of opposites, a reconciliation of contrasts. They bridge that deepest of all chasms which separates earth from heaven. Teach your child, therefore, to recognise the inner in the outer; to discern in the house the symbol and safeguard of family life; to revere in him who creates the visible sign a type of Him who confers the spiritual blessing. In a word, make his gratitude towards the carpenter a point of departure for wakening his gratitude towards Him who sent the carpenter's son to live on earth, in order that the sternest contradictions of life might be solved and the abodes of men become homes of peace and joy and divine indwelling.

With this ideal in mind, lead your child to build, in play, the reconciling bridge, and thus through a uniting deed to gain his first foreboding of the truth that *in himself* and through his own self-activity he must find the solution of all contradictions, the mediation of all apparently irreconcilable opposition. Show him this truth again in your own life, and, above all, in the mediatorial life and teaching of Him who on earth was the carpenter's son. So shall the visible bridge which the child carpenter builds be one link in the chain of experience by which he spans the gulf between things seen and things unseen, and learns to recognise in the carpenter's son the beloved Son of God, the All-Father, and the Mediator between him and man.