

# A Chat With Daughter On What to Read

By Jack Lait.

**D**EAREST LITTLE LOIS: Long before 1931, when you will be 18 and when the letters which this is the sixth will be opened for you, your tastes in books will have developed. Into the structure of a normal girl goes a reading trait, which is integral and as indicative as a strain of character. What one reads influences in a substantial measure what one thinks, how one acts and what one does.

I do not know what books will have been written between now and that time. But there surely cannot be so many that will be so important that the vital classics for which I am to urge your predilection here will have passed beyond an appeal to your time and patience.

Among the little heritages which I shall leave will be my library, a humble and modest collection, but well loved by me to the last leaf. You will find there all the books of which I now make mention.

There are several hundred volumes now. I hope that there will be several thousand by then, for books are like flowers, good for the atmosphere they exhale, even if one never looks at one writing. Read them with charity—they were written with more hope than confidence.

First of all, I recommend to you the greatest writer, philosopher and disciple of gladness that this continent has known, Mark Twain. "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn" are familiarly boys' books. In extreme youth they are entirely boys' books. But later, when deeper sight comes, they are anyone's books. They will amuse you, they will make you chuckle, they will show you a vein of life which will have passed away before your time. Please read them both.

Then you may read "A Guided Age," an exciting story around the most faithful picture of a phase of American history that I know.

This will graduate you to "Puddin'head Wilson," in my judgment the greatest American novel, despite all its constructional liberties.

And last, when you have spent a few days reading the other Twain books and stories, his two volumes on "Memoirs of Joan of Arc," the only human and digestible account I know of this martyred saint, the handmaid of a miracle.

You will find my set of Balzac nearly intact. By your time this master of story will perhaps have outlived a popular fallacy that he is not for girls to read. The stories which gave rise to this fantastic slander I have thrown away. They were not Balzac; they were a collection of anecdotes of his time which he compiled, and they were irreverent, indelicate and unclean. But the others, for whom man produces light by gas or electricity, it gives out heat, but with this beetle all of the energy that it uses goes to make light, and none of it is wasted in heat, so you see this little beetle can create a power that man has never been able to imitate.

"Now, watch the firefly. He does not flash his light all the time as he flies, but only at intervals. He seems to store up his power and then suddenly to give it out."

"They say that in the warmer countries these flying beetles are much larger and they show a much brighter light. Travelers tell how the tropical forest in the West Indies and South America and the Philippines are at times brightly lighted by these flashing lights. In fact, they are so bright that sometimes the men fasten the fireflies on to their shoes to light the way through the forest, and sometimes the natives make a paper lantern and put a number of the fireflies inside to give them a light. They also tell us that some birds use them to light their nests."



## The Story Lady

By GEORGENE FAULKNER.

**I**T WAS a sultry summer evening and the grass was so wet after the heavy rain of the afternoon that all the children gathered in a group upon the porch.

"See those bright lights twinkling through the garden," said small John. "They look like tiny stars which have fallen down in the grass."

"Why, you little goosey! Don't you know what they are?" laughed Jane. "They are fireflies."

"What do you mean, fireflies?" asked John.

"I will catch one and show it to you," said big brother Jim, and soon he was running about through the garden regardless of the wet grass. At last he caught a tiny firefly and brought it up on the porch and turned a glass over it, while the excited children crowded about to watch it.

"Why, it is only a little beetle!" said small John in disgust.

"Yes, but watch it. Watch it move its wings," said Jim. "See the tiny light."

"It does not look so bright here as it did down in the grass," said Jane.

"No, because it is darker down there, and so the light shows more clearly," said Jim.

"Where do the fireflies get their light?" asked John.

"Under their wings," answered Jane.

"Yes, but what makes it shine, father?" questioned John.

"That is the wonderful thing about the firefly," said the children's father. "This small beetle is created that it can produce this phosphorescent light from the fatty cells in its own body, and to these cells run many tiny tubes which carry oxygen from the outside air, which is necessary for the light. The strangest thing is that this beetle can produce the light without generating any heat, and that is more than we can do, for when man produces light by gas or electricity, it gives out heat, but with this beetle all of the energy that it uses goes to make light, and none of it is wasted in heat, so you see this little beetle can create a power that man has never been able to imitate."

"Now, watch the firefly. He does not flash his light all the time as he flies, but only at intervals. He seems to store up his power and then suddenly to give it out."

"How funny!" laughed John. "Think of a bird having a firefly for the electric light in its home. Please tell us some more, father."

"Well, they say that some people use them as a light in the home, for some of the natives catch a number of the fireflies and put them under glass and use them for light."

"It must give a flickering light to read by," said Jim.

"Do you know," said the children's mother, "I read one time that the Spanish ladies like to wrap these fireflies in gauze and fasten them in their hair, and then they would wear them as ornaments to court balls?"

"I should think that would look very pretty," said Jane.

"Sometimes the ladies decorate their dresses with these fireflies and wear them in place of gleaming gems," said the mother, "and sometimes they even fasten them on their slippers to serve as bright buckles, and to sparkle as they dance to and fro."

"Wouldn't it be funny to wear fireflies to a ball?" laughed John, "but that is just like the ladies; they always love jewelry."

"Never laugh at the ladies, John," said the father. "Some men are very fond of jewels, also. Shall I tell you a story that an old sailor told me? He said that he heard it when he was over in the Philippine Islands."

"Oh, do, father; please do!" shouted all the children, as they crowded about their father.

"Well, once upon a time, long, long ago, there lived a king who had great riches. He was very fond of jewels, and all of his people gave him presents of precious stones. His crown was blazing with diamonds and rubies and sapphires and emeralds. Around

his neck he wore a long rope of priceless pearls and his fingers were covered with rings.

"But his favorite ring was a small piece of jade cut like a beetle. It had been brought to him from faraway Egypt, and it was called a 'sacred scarab.' They told the king that when he wore this ring he would always have good health, for it would protect him from harm. So the king loved this ring the best of all of his jewels, and he wore it all the time."

"But one day he lost his precious ring. He could not remember anything about it, but he knew that he had it on his finger just before he took his nap."

"Let me see," he said. "I took it from my finger because my hand was warm and tired and I went to sleep out in the garden. It might have rolled away and fallen into the lake."

"Very well," said the courtiers, "we will look in the lake, and soon they were dragging in the seaweed in the small lake, but no ring could they find."

"Maybe a fish has swallowed it!" moaned the king.

"So they brought nets and caught all the fish in the lake, and the cook opened each fish, but no ring could they find."

"The king became so worried that he fretted himself into a fever. 'I know now that harm will come to me,' he groaned. Then he made a promise: 'Whoever finds my sacred beetle shall have any gift that he desires.' When the courtiers heard that they became more eager than ever. They went down on their hands and knees and crawled all over the garden, looking in the

grass and flowers, but no ring could they find.

"Possibly when you went to sleep, your majesty, a bird flew down and plucked it from your lap and carried it to its nest," said one of the courtiers.

"Then the king sat down on the bench and said: 'I laid down right here and I took the ring from my finger just before I went to sleep. I thought that I put it in a safe place, but where could it have gone! Maybe you are right and a bird has taken it. Go search the birds' nests!'"

"Soon all the courtiers were climbing in



the trees and standing on tall ladders and searching in the bushes, and although they frightened many birds from their nests they did not find the ring.

"The king was left all alone, seated on the garden bench, and he was groaning and moaning over his bad luck when suddenly he heard a buzzing sound.

"Kuzz-zz, Zumm-mm, Kuzz-zz-mm-mm," sang a noisy little beetle as it buzzed about the king's head. "Kuzz-zz, Zumm-mm, Zumm-mm."

"The king tried to brush the beetle aside. Even the bugs and beetles annoy me now that I have lost my sacred stone," he cried.

"Kuzz-zumm-mm, Kuzz-zumm-mm, Kuzz-zumm-mm-mm" said the beetle, louder and louder, as it brushed against the king's hand.

"The king grew angry and slapped at the beetle, but it flew buzzing about his ears."

"Kuzz-zumm! Kuzz-zumm-mm! Kuzz-zumm-mm-mm!"

Come-mm! Come-mm-mm! Come-mm-mm! Oh, King! Oh, King-ng-ng! Oh, King-ng-ng! Listen to the song I sing-ng-g. Do not rage and scold and frown. But gaze upon your golden crown. The lost beetle you will find. If my song you will but mind. Kuzz-um-am-zeel, Kubb-um-zeel. Look and see! Look and see-ee-ee!"

"The king snatched off his golden crown and, sure enough, there on the top ornament hung his precious ring.

"He called all of his courtiers to him and said: 'I promised to give anything that was desired to the one who found my ring. You have failed in your search, but a tiny beetle has helped me, and so now I must reward him, for he has found my ring. When I stretched out to take my nap I removed my crown and placed it by my side, and then I hung the ring upon it for safe-keeping. But when I awoke I put the crown upon my head and I forgot the ring. This tiny beetle has brighter eyes than any of you and he saw my ring and buzzed the secret to me.'

"Now, my little friend," said the king as he stretched forth his hand, "what reward can I give you?"

"The tiny beetle alighted upon the ring and rested upon the scarab shaped like himself. 'He was a lost beetle,' he murmured softly. 'I am sorry for lost beetles, for I sometimes get lost myself in the dark-

ness. The gift I desire, if it please your gracious majesty, is this: Will you please let me and all of my family carry lanterns under our wings? For sometimes when we go out after dark to visit our friends we lose our way. You are grateful because I found your lost beetle; please help me so that I may never be lost again."

"Little winged one, you shall have your wish," said the king, "and I will give you the lanterns to carry." Then the king waved his golden wand over the beetle three times, and he said: "Henceforth you and all your family shall flash forth bright lights from under your wings."

"And so the people in the Philippines still tell this old tale when they see the fireflies flashing their little lights."

"Oh, thank you, father," said all the children in chorus.

"Now, do let this little beetle fly home, Jim," said Jane.

So Jim lifted the glass and the firefly flew back to join its friends in the garden. "It is time that my small fireflies fly up to bed," said the mothers.

"Just think, those little beetles can do something that we cannot do. They can give light and no heat," said John.

**Whoever finds my sacred beetle shall have any gift that he desires!**

**His Need**

For three successive nights Newpaw had walked the floor with the baby. On the fourth night he became desperate and bought a bottle of soothing syrup.

"Why, James," exclaimed the wife when she saw the bottle, "what did you buy that for? Don't you know it is very dangerous to give a child anything like that?"

"Don't worry," was her husband's reply. "I'm going to take it myself."

**As Good as New**

Mrs. Brindle—Now, Mary, I want you to be careful. This is some very old table linen—been in the family for over 200 years, and—

Mary—Ah, sure, ma'am, you needn't worry, I won't tell a soul, and it looks as good as new, anyway.

**Funny and Satisfying**

"Your clerks seem to be in a good humor," remarked the friend of a city merchant.

"Yes," replied the merchant. "My wife has just been in and it tickles them to death to see somebody order me about."

# CARTOONAGRAMS

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By CHARLES A. OGDEN

## The Mohammedan and the Buddhist

① Here we see a worshipful Mohammedan on his knees, prostrating himself in accordance with his religious customs.

② Now, if we just turn the picture upside down—

③ —we see an Oriental worshipper paying homage to Buddha.

## But Who Wants to Play With a Playful Bull?

① Customers of this department of weirdness may give the queer animal to the right any name they choose. We can't think of a name—

② —so we are going to add a few more lines to the picture this way.

③ Then a little shading gives us a picture of a man and a playful little bull.

And now you arrive at the holiday in bookland.

Beginning from the left of the second shelf from the topmost you will see a row—not nearly long enough—of stories. Your daddy has read them each many times. Some folks have flattered him with a charge of imitating them. If he did it was because he imbibed the irresistible spirit of them, not because he sought to purloin their precious thoughts or mimic their inimitable style.

They are the works of O. Henry, a man who died too young and left us only snatches of his soul's inspirations.

Of all that the past gives to its children can think of no one thing that is a more precious bequest than the artworks of O. Henry, the man who filched a title which had seemed secure upon the brow of De Maupassant, gently slid it off and took it with him to a premature grave to crown with it an adorable memory of a man with a heart.

The books that I recommend to you have been among my favorites. My daughter should love them all. And if they give you half the pleasure that they have afforded me, I shall be happy. And as you read them, remember that I loved them.

Affectionately,  
DADDY.  
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