

**AUSTIN HALL; OR, AFTER DINNER
CONVERSATIONS, BETWEEN A
FATHER AND HIS CHILDREN, ON
SUBJECTS OF AMUSEMENT AND
INSTRUCTION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649068814

Austin Hall; Or, After Dinner Conversations, Between a Father and His Children, on Subjects of Amusement and Instruction by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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AUSTIN HALL.



CHARLES THE SECOND IN THE WOOD AT BOSCORREL.

©

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LONDON:
BALDWIN AND CRADOCK,
1831.

PREFACE.

TO PARENTS.

“Tell me with whom you live, and I will tell you what you are,” said the satirist. And why? Because it is by conversation, by daily intercourse, that character is chiefly formed.

The royal road to knowledge is that of oral communication: you prove the necessity of this when you first puzzle your children with essays and grammars, and then resolve the difficulties into question and answer; and Franklin justly remarks that you must even converse with your own judgment, by putting an argument into a regular *pro* and *con* statement, ere you can know justly and clearly how to decide on any subject.

Familiar intercourse with our children is the best mode of education. If we add to their pleasures, and participate in their occupations, by showing them that we too read, and that information gives zest to our conversation, as well as employment to their school hours, we shall then see them more instructed and less

pedantic; they will then neither hate reading as tiresome and anti-social, nor boast of it as a merit; they will be ashamed of ignorance rather than vain of knowledge; they will learn to interweave and connect the subjects of their reading, and will be taught to use that moral lens which forms the light of truth, by the concentration of the most opposite colouring.

I give you here the plan of a daily hour of society which we all enjoy and improve by, and not less the elders of our family party than the children. By associating with them, we get into "true nature and simplicity of manners, so much nearer innocence—that is truth,—and infancy—that is openness;" and, whilst they profit by our experience, and become enlightened by our knowledge, we are purified by their guilelessness, and our affections are re-animated by their generous ardour. The union of a family party must ever be beneficial to the different ages of which it consists; and those who are employed in preserving their children from the corruption of evil communication will find their society in turn a powerful corrective of that worldly-minded spirit which gradually obtains possession of the best and noblest,—which is first prudence, but finally selfishness.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

FIRST CONVERSATION.

	Page
SATURDAY EVENING	5
Miscellaneous.	
English Archery.....	8
When discontinued in War.....	9
Ancient Bow of Goat's Horn	ib.
Divination by Arrows	10
Charmed Arrows	11
Classical Mention of Giants.....	15
Modern Patagonians	16

SECOND CONVERSATION.

SUNDAY EVENING	30
Age of the World—a religious Era	31
Account of Events in Profane History, contemporaneous with the most remarkable Epochs of Sacred History ...	32
Trade of the Israelites with Tyre	34
Examples of Obedience to Parents from Scripture.....	36
History of the Rechabites—their Obedience	38

	Page
THIRD CONVERSATION.	
MONDAY EVENING	41
History of the Residence of Charles the Second in Scotland	43
His Escape after the Battle of Worcester	47
His Adventures at Boscobel	53
At Moseley	58
Lord Wilmot's Devotion	61
<hr/>	
FOURTH CONVERSATION.	
TUESDAY EVENING	63
Narrative continued from Clarendon	67
The Monk Huddleston, Miss Lane, Colonel Windham, Mrs. Hyde, &c. assist Charles	70
Character of Charles after the Restoration	92
<hr/>	
FIFTH CONVERSATION.	
WEDNESDAY EVENING	96
Miscellaneous.	
Anecdote of the infant Daughter of Charles the First	97
Real Adventures of Robin Hood	98
His tragical Death by the Treachery of a Monk	104
<hr/>	
SIXTH CONVERSATION.	
THURSDAY EVENING	105
Miscellaneous.	
Observations on Climate	106
Varieties of the Human Race	108
Remarkable Dwarfs	110
The Dwarf Baby, who was nursed in a Shoe	112
The last Court Dwarf	ib.
Pigmy Wedding at the Court of Peter the Great	113
Moral Reflections	114