

limbs; how it strengthens and cheers her both in body and mind!

Of course it is something more than the charming houses, beautiful climate and scenery that makes the holiday at Babbacombe the desire of the heart to so many. It is the comfort, care, love, restfulness and consideration which each one experiences the moment she enters the home.

It is by personal intercourse and sympathy with the girls, and by advising them what to read and what to see, that the Misses Skinner help them to change mere existence into life; it is their influence which teaches them to discern the beautiful and true, as well as how to make life richer, fuller and sweeter both for themselves and others.

These ladies live close to the home and visit it every day and at all hours and if, for

love still belong to you. Don't make the girls afraid of middle life, for it is to some the very happiest part of life, the fullest, the richest, the brightest."

In this way the sisters move about among their guests, spreading cheerfulness, sowing seeds of kindness and leading them without ostentation to the highest life of all.

The girls and women who make use of this beautiful home for their annual holiday are mostly shop assistants, dressmakers and milliners, post office and telegraph clerks, cashiers and type-writers. The home is expressly for business girls; neither governesses on the one hand nor domestic servants on the other are admitted. I asked why this rule had been made and so rigidly adhered to; the answer was that the home had been established expressly for the rest and joy of business girls,

worship and family prayers in the home if there be no conscientious scruples.

A pleasing feature of the home is that a clear and simple report embodying income and expenditure is issued annually and audited by a well known man.

Of course it is essential that each visitor should bear a respectable character; this being so, there is no distinction made between those who are sufficiently well off to pay for themselves and those who are poor and come with help from subscribers; indeed I believe that no person in the home, save the Misses Skinner, knows to which class each girl belongs.

I have seen the home both in summer and winter; those who visit it in the former are able to indulge in boating, bathing, swimming, excursions and picnics; it does one's heart



THE MISSES SKINNER.

example, they find a girl regarding with interest any of the pictures and engravings which hang on the walls, one of the sisters will pause by her side and tell her something about the artist and his work; or if she finds a girl depressed and out of sorts she will sit down by her and listen to the troubles of her "daily round," and encourage her to make the most of life, begging her not to drift or be crushed by sorrow; and when, as sometimes happens, a girl says, "I don't care for myself; life is over for me," she will say, "Life is not over as long as you live in it. Pick it up again and force something out of it."

To women who have grown out of their first youth she has an occasional word to say. "Make the most of middle life; make it pleasant; dress as well as you can; don't get dowdy; keep up your courage and be bright; the time of personal beauty may have gone, but after all that is not everything, there are a lot of things left to enjoy; for example, work, books, scenery, pictures, and best of all,

and that being so they, the Misses Skinner, could not allow the holiday to be spoiled by class prejudices; for example, a governess would have but little in common with a shop girl or needlewoman, and although domestic servants are often very superior to some dressmakers, yet the former would be looked down upon by the latter and there certainly could be no harmony where these prejudices existed.

These ladies have made as few rules as possible, but where they exist they must be kept; they are intensely gentle in their dealings with the girl visitors, but they hold the reins of government with a very firm hand.

Socially the laws laid down are those of cultured society; there are books, piano, games; every girl is expected to be neatly dressed and to conduct herself with good manners such as would obtain in good society. The home knows neither creeds nor politics; Church people, Dissenters and Roman Catholics are alike admitted, but all visitors are expected to attend their respective places of

good to see the girls resting for once lazily in the hammocks under the trees with a book, or drinking tea out of doors.

The residents of Torquay show their sympathy with the purpose of the home by inviting the visitors to their beautiful houses and grounds. I was present at one of these gatherings a week or two since and had long talks with the girls who spoke to me of their "daily round," their struggles and the intense enjoyment of the holiday at Babbacombe.

Everything in the home bears witness to the taste and care of the two sisters, who have left nothing undone that could comfort and rest the girls who come to them after their long months of weary, monotonous toil.

Every detail shows their love and consideration for the tired ones.

The drawing-room overlooking the sea is beautiful and the bedrooms are extremely pretty and comfortable. Each room is called after a flower and painted and furnished to match. The sanitary arrangements are excellent.