

ODE TO KITTENHOOD.

KITTEN mine! how full thy face is
Of the most perplexing graces.
Wingless butterfly thou art,
Lightest throb on Nature's heart.
When I o'er thy sweetness rave,
Or of thee affection crave,
Thou dost give a toss of scorn,
Followed by a—rosy yawn!
I could censure if I would
Such coy pranks of kittenhood!
Life is a chromatic scale
Of scampers after mouse and tail.
And thy gladness never wavers,
Breaking out in sharps and quavers.
For thy days together flow
One perpetual Allegro!
Oh! that Music's measure could
But describe thy kittenhood!

Then that sidelong pirouette,
Dancer never rivalled yet!
And my poet's tongue must fail
To convey that witching tail.
Now a note of exclamation!
Now a curved interrogation.
Point, to indicate each mood
Of a changeful kittenhood.
What a serpentine emotion
Thrills thee at some novel notion;
Head to tail there runs that shiver
In an undulating quiver.

Then to roll—a ball of fur
With a liquid, crooning purr.
Life to thee is all so good,
Optimist of kittenhood!
Thou art but a Merry Thought,
Luring pleasures out of nought.
Shivering shadows thou dost woo,
And the dancing sunbeam too;
For all shadows are to thee
Potent deep reality!
And all the trees in every wood
Just made for blithest kittenhood!
Was thy little silken gown
Spun from floating thistle-down,
With its rings of light and dark,
Each a tiny water-mark?
Wavelet thou from Fairy ocean,
Ever in a bright commotion.

Thou, for wonder, daily food,
In thy dainty kittenhood.
What a spell of witchery lies
In those wide-orbed saucy eyes!
Magic little mirrors blue
That the sky has looked into.
Art thou fay or prison'd Peri,
Thou that never seemest weary?
Not yet art thou understood
Through each maze of kittenhood.
Shadeless glancing kittenhood!
Blue-eyed dancing kittenhood!

V. R.



HOW TO TAKE CARE OF OUR SIGHT.

By "THE NEW DOCTOR."

THE friendships made at school sometimes last throughout life, but too often they cease to exist when schooldays are passed.

When I was at school I had one great friend, and for the six years during which we were at the same school we were inseparable. The day came when we had to leave and henceforth we followed different paths in this maze of life. My friend moved to Edinburgh and I remained in London, so we did not see each other for many years. Later he went to Sandhurst to study for the army, and about the same time I entered upon the study of medicine.

The other day, whilst walking in Regent Street, I met this man, who had been so dear to me at college. He had altered a good deal—he is past thirty now, and very careworn. When he had spoken on indifferent matters I asked him how he had got on in the army. He was a clever man and I felt sure that he had been successful. He told me that he went up for his examination, passed high up in the list and was highly delighted with his success. But he had to pass the physical examination, and here he failed; his eyesight was not sufficiently good for the service. He failed, the whole of his special education had been wasted, and unfortunately, as so often happens in such cases, his career was hopelessly ruined.

I had noticed, when I first saw him, that he wore glasses, and on looking closer at them

I could tell that he had a high degree of error of refraction. He was so short-sighted that without glasses he was unable to read.

Why had he not found out that he could not pass the physical examination, and so saved himself from the expense and trouble of an education that would be useless to him?

I did not tell him how foolish he was not to have had his sight tested before he entered Sandhurst, but I shall say now that no one should enter for the services without being certain, at the time he enters, that he can pass the physical tests.

This is a girl's paper, I know, and girls cannot enter the services, but nearly all of you have brothers, so that this subject will not be without interest for you.

Having given this caution for your brothers and sons I will now give some other warnings which, I hope, will be of use to yourselves.

How terrible it must be to be blind! But it is not so hopeless as it was in the time of our fathers. The science of ophthalmology, that is the study of disease of the eye, has advanced by more rapid strides than any other of the varied departments of the art of healing.

The result of this increased and gradually increasing knowledge of the eye is having great results. Blindness itself is very much less common than it was formerly, and now most cases of incipient blindness can be

stopped, if timely steps be taken; and complete blindness cured when it has once developed. Let us look forward to a time when blindness will be no more.

We all love our eyes. Let us not abuse them. They are given to us to use, and to use carefully. What is their chief use? Undoubtedly to enable us to educate our minds by reading. So many books and pamphlets are published nowadays that no one can have any difficulty to find matter to read. But the material at hand must be sifted; it is wrong to read everything. But it is not my place to tell you what you should read, but how you should read.

A few points about reading are not out of place here, as it is very necessary to attend to them, which most of you do unconsciously.

Never read in a bad or flickering light. Always have the light at your back so that it may shine upon the book and not into your eyes. Hold the book you are reading at the distance from your head at which you can read best. This distance will depend upon your age and whether or not your sight is perfect. Never read very small or blurred print—there is no necessity to do so now that paper and printing are so cheap. Never under any circumstances read with one eye-glass, and do not read for too long at a time, so as to tire your eyes.