

Jack, but his face did not relax its gravity, and, as he turned over the pages, he knit his brows with a perplexed look.

Guy was surprised, and finally dragged himself up out of the depths of his chair. Then he stretched his long arms and legs, ran his fingers through his thick dark hair, shook himself like a huge Newfoundland dog, jerked his refractory tie back to its original position, and finally put his arm across Jack's broad shoulders, leaned over him and read the titles of the books.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he exclaimed slowly, with emphasis, adding, "The *Story of the Heavens* sounds fairly reasonable, but what on earth does *Sartor Resartus* mean?"

"Upon my word, I don't know," replied Jack shrugging his shoulders. "But that's nothing compared to the idea of a girl of eighteen choosing such books for a present. I asked my sister what books she would like and she deliberately wrote these two. What's more, she only wanted this," holding up the offending *Sartor Resartus* disdainfully, "because her other copy had got spoilt somehow, so I suppose she's known all about it a long time."

"Well, did she really though choose those? What an extraordinary thing that you should have a sister a blue-stocking. Does she dress anyhow and wear blue spectacles?"

"No, she isn't a blue-stocking at all, she's only got queer tastes. She's just

the oddest sister a fellow ever had, and one of the best in spite of it."

"Tell me about her," said Guy seating himself on the edge of the table and swinging one leg. "What a chap you are, I never even knew you'd got a sister."

"Nonsense, you must have heard me speak of Madge."

"Yes, but I didn't know who she was, and even then you only mentioned her once in a blue moon. I didn't know but what she was a maiden aunt. I'd like to hear about your home," he continued. "Have you been having a gay time? You're a lucky chap to have a home, I think, but you say precious little about it."

"I don't often go there, you see; it's so deadly dull, I can't stand it for long; besides, I've got a step-mother who wants spificating."

"Whew—" whistled Guy. "That's it, is it? well, I should bar a step-mother myself. But what about this sister who reads *Sartor Resartus* at eighteen and isn't a blue-stocking. What's she like, a bit eccentric?"

"I suppose she is, in her way," replied Jack slowly, "but she doesn't do it for effect. I can't exactly describe her, except that she has rather odd ideas about some things and is jolly nice-looking. But look here, Guy, I want you to come home with me next year, promise you will if you can, there's a good chap."

"I'd like to immensely, but I hope

your sister won't use words of more than three syllables when she condescends to talk to me, or I shall feel an awful gull. You'll drop her a hint, won't you?"

Jack laughed. "Oh! she won't do that," he said, "you needn't be afraid. I shall be awfully glad to take you because it may cheer her up a bit. She has a wretchedly poor time of it," and his face puckered again. "I felt quite miserable about her until I met you this morning. I feel rather wretched now, to be going off to have such a grand time, while she's moping up there, among those desolate hills."

"I should think she's used to it by now," said Guy, reassuringly. "It isn't likely to be so bad to her as it seems to you, after London."

Jack sighed and turned aside to knock the ashes out of his pipe.

"I don't know," he said slowly, "I've a kind of idea the mater upsets her more in a week than she would me in a month."

"Oh! it's that way is it?" remarked Guy, adding, "Well, it's no use your worrying about it now. Of course it's hard lines on a girl to have a nasty step-mother, but there's many worse things than that," with which somewhat ambiguous remark, he precipitated himself from the table, with a kind of long jump half-way across the room, and prepared to retire for the night, an example Jack was not loth to follow.

(To be continued.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MEDICAL.

"ONE WHO WANTS TO KNOW."—Earwigs do not derive their name from their traditional habit of creeping into the ear, but from the shape of their unfolded wings, which are said to resemble a human ear. The name is a corruption of "earwing." Earwigs do sometimes, though very rarely, enter the ears of people lying asleep on the ground. As a rule if they do get into the ear they quickly get out again. If they do not decamp, filling the ear with oil or water will make them float out. It is absolutely impossible for them to reach the brain. If any insect gets into the ear, and either comes out of itself or is dislodged, it does no harm.

SWIFT MIGNONETTE.—1. The "scaliness" of your face is doubtless due to scorbout. Sulphur ointment will probably cure it.—2. You cannot check severe perspiration. Wearing kid gloves increases the flow of perspiration in the hands.—3. It is usual when introduced to a person to say "how do you do," or some equivalent phrase. It is always the privilege of the lady to speak first.

"VALERIA ITALICA."—A spider nevus "need not necessarily be small; in fact, some are of large size. If the spot which troubles you corresponds to the description of the spider nevus, that is, a red centre with radiating lines leading from it, the whole disappearing when pressed upon, a spider nevus it is whatever its size. There are other kinds of nevi or "mother's marks," and a large number can be removed by surgical means.

A. J. S.—You might try ichthiol, but we cannot tell you what result to expect. Calomel is considered to be injurious to the teeth, and if taken in enormous doses constantly repeated may do some injury to the teeth. As it is given at the present time its effect on the teeth is nil. It is not only non-injurious but is one of the most valuable drugs we possess.

"A BOOKWORM."—Unless your eyelashes are unhealthy or the lids are not in a good condition you can do nothing to make your eyelashes grow longer. If the lids are sore you may find boracic lotion useful.

A LOVER OF THE "G. O. P."—If you derive benefit from peroxide of hydrogen by all means continue to use it. It is perfectly harmless.

A PLAIN GIRL.—We are afraid that we cannot help you much. Soap does not make the skin dry. Perhaps some simple preparation, such as vaseline, applied in the evening might do some good.

LELA.—The symptoms you mention may be due to organic heart disease, but they may also be due to anæmia or nervous disease of the heart, or to several other causes. We strongly advise you to overcome your prejudices and have your heart examined by a physician. This alone can settle the question, which is one of vital importance to yourself.

J. Y. K.—We are afraid that your fingers will not return again to their previous condition; but still, they may improve. Massage may do them good. If you have massage done by a professional it is exceedingly expensive, but you can do it yourself. All that is necessary is to gently rub the fingers in the direction of the veins, that is, begin at the tip and gently rub upwards. Never reverse the direction.

E. M. W.—No; it is not etiquette to offer a present to a physician who has attended you free of charge because you cannot afford to pay him. If you know him personally it is a different matter. We need scarcely remind you not to forget to thank him.

INQUIRER.—It is absolutely impossible to tell you what is the matter with your spine without any details. "Spinal weakness" may be almost anything. No one could be certain as to what diseases you without careful investigation.

MISCELLANEOUS.

ROCHDALIAN.—The number containing the article on "Swiss Darning" is that for May 15th, 1886, No. 20, vol. i., pp. 314, 315, by Marie Karger. If you advertise for the number you will, no doubt, obtain it.

JEAN VERTAUB.—We have answered your question before. The phrase "cock and bull story" is a corruption of "concocted and bully story"—the catchpennies sold in the streets being vulgarly called "cocks;" and "bull" is derived from the Danish word *bulle*, which means "exaggerated." What is called an "Irish bull" is a ludicrous blunder, which comes to the same thing.

JANIE.—The English lady-novelist who has published the greatest number of books of that description, so far, is Mrs. Oliphant, over and above six (or more) biographies, and contributions to periodical literature. Her novels are seventy-six in number; Miss Braddon following next with about twenty less. Amongst men-writers of such-like fiction Mr. John Black heads that list with thirty books; and Mr. Besant follows with twenty-seven. But even Mrs. Oliphant's prolific brain has been thrown into the shade by some of our transatlantic cousins; and Lope de Vega, the Spaniard, who flourished between 1562 and 1635, surpassed all our modern novelists in the extraordinary number of his publications, and, probably, all who preceded him in any age of the world.

DOLLY.—Sleeping with the head to the north has been a question attended with much superstition in various and very many parts of the world. In Japan a diagram of the points of the compass is usually pasted on the ceiling of the guest-room that they may avoid making any mistake. In all four quarters of the world the opinion prevails of its sinister effects; but on the contrary, in this country, our views are guided by a consideration of the influence upon us of the electric currents, which are credited to flow from the North Pole, and thus prove conducive to better sleep when the head turns that way.

CONSTANT READER.—Although we have already answered your letter, we have, since then, obtained the first legal opinion on the possibility of changing your Christian name when already registered at your baptism, and find that it could not legally be done. The name registered is unalterable, but you may call yourself by any "fancy name" you please. Should a copy of your baptismal registry be required on matters of business, for marriage, to accompany certificates, or to be inserted in wills, it must correspond exactly with the Christian name registered, or the change of name will invalidate the document.

NESTLES.—We have always placed the tin of condensed milk, when opened, in a basin of cold water, and kept it covered with a wetted cloth. It must be kept cool, and of course the water must not get into the milk. It would keep good for quite a week, if not more.