

If loving hearts were never lonely,
If all they wish might always be,
Accepting what they look for only,
They might be glad, but not in Thee.

Well may Thy own beloved, who see
In all their lot their Father's
pleasure,
Bear loss of all they love, save Thee,
Their living, everlasting treasure.

Well may Thy happy children cease
From restless wishes prone to sin,

And in Thy own exceeding peace
Yield to Thy daily discipline.

We need as much the cross we bear
As air we breathe—as light we see;
It draws us to Thy side in prayer,
It binds us to our strength in
Thee."

These lines came to her as a revelation.
She marvelled at the freshness of the
thought and appropriateness to her own
condition.

"If loving hearts were never lonely
They might be glad, but not in Thee."

And in her heart a new light came and she remembered the words that even her stepmother made her commit to memory: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you." Who could say that the Comforter was not about to enfold her in His Almighty wings?

(To be continued.)

VILLAGE HOMES FOR LADIES.

By H. B. M. BUCHANAN.

PART III.



IN this article I shall make a few suggestions as to how I think ladies, while living in their village homes, can obtain healthful and interesting outdoor occupations, and at the same time add a little to their incomes. Remember I only throw out suggestions; as to whether my suggestions

are suitable and workable will depend upon experience, and each individual's own inclination and aptitude.

There must be a radical alteration in the method of farming in this country very shortly, of that I am quite sure.

In the face of foreign competition, not very much longer can the farmer act independently of the farmers around him; that was all very well when wheat was certain of producing 40s. per quarter and over, and all other agricultural produce was at like paying prices. To-day farmers must combine in order to supply the markets with the best quality of produce, but principally that the produce may be uniform in quality.

With a view to get the cheeses of my tenants direct into the hands of the large London provision merchants, without the intervention of the factor or middle man, I interviewed a few of the heads of the largest provision merchants. In every case the complaint against the English farmer was the want of uniformity of quality, and in course of conversation in effect, they all said the same, namely, "that they felt sure that the English farmer had nothing to fear from foreign competition, if they produced the best quality and took steps amongst themselves to secure the quality being fairly uniform."

The Danish farmers, from being in a most deplorable condition, are now in a state of comparative prosperity, because they combined amongst themselves to form cooperative societies, in order to secure a uniform quality of bacon; the Danish bacon consequently by being of a uniform quality commands the

confidence of buyers, and therefore fetches a paying price. It is the same with the Danish butter; as one large buyer said to me: "Danish butter, I grant you, is not equal to the best English, but from January to December it is alike, and our experience has taught us that if a consumer gets used to a certain quality of butter, if you introduce a better quality, it will not be liked so well." Normandy and Brittany butter is established in the English markets for the same reason, namely, that it is always of a nearly uniform quality.

The movement amongst farmers towards cooperation in some few districts has already begun, and I am very sure that in the near future it must become universal.

This combination, cooperation or whatever you like to call it, means the formation of large cooperative factories and societies, whose formation and working will require a large body of paid workers. The produce from the farms of a district will have to be collected daily or so many times per week, and this will entail a careful and frugal organisation, it will also entail a heap of correspondence, the keeping of many books and accounts.

Could not a lady-tenant take part in all this, and by doing so add a little to her income.

Workers will have to be paid, and ladies make good clerks and book-keepers, and I have a shrewd suspicion when they had mastered their facts, that they would be very efficient in buying and selling.

But it is in fruit-growing (especially apples), early flower-growing, and in poultry-rearing, that I think a lady-tenant could employ her spare time most pleasantly and profitably.

To my mind there is nothing more deplorable than the present state of the English orchards. It is a sight that makes me sad and savage. Sad at the mournful sight of the poor, deformed, weedy, moss-eaten trees and neglected soil, and savage at the carelessness of the farmer and landlord that has allowed such wicked neglect.

What fruit is more in demand than an apple? What fruit is more wholesome and more varied in flavour than an apple? For years I have eaten an apple or so every day, and so I can speak with authority as to their merits.

At one time I was under the impression that an apple was indigestible to eat before going to bed, but when I was persuaded to try it for myself, I found that it was not only indigestible, but a good digestive, and of great benefit to the general health.

The public are beginning to find out these virtues of the apple for themselves, and as a consequence the demand for the fruit has been on the increase, and this increasing demand has been met from abroad, to the benefit of foreign growers, and to the lasting disgrace of English agriculturists.

There is no shred of truth in the statement that the best quality of apples cannot be grown in the English climate. The climate and soil are exactly suited to them, but to grow the best qualities (it is only the best qualities that can pay) it requires painstaking care and up-to-date knowledge.

Frosts occur in every climate that grows an apple; most foreign growers think themselves fortunate if they get one good year out of four, which is a smaller proportion of good years than what usually falls to the apple-grower in England. Why should not a lady-tenant begin apple cultivation on a small scale, of course, at first, gradually increasing it as she gathered experience and success.

I have before me an admirable book on fruit-growing by B. Wells, price one shilling. Mr. Wells, for many years at Crawley in Sussex, has been successful as an apple-grower, and in addition to his valuable personal experience, he is evidently enthusiastic in his belief in apples, and that as good, if not a better fruit, can be grown in England, than in any other country of the world. Mr. Wells is also, and rightly so, full of indignation at the stupid neglected condition of the English orchards.

An apple orchard takes twenty years before it reaches its full bearing powers; but the young trees from the first produce a certain quantity of fruit, and if the trees are planted far enough from each other so as to allow strawberries and fruit bushes, black currant for preference, to be planted between each tree, the produce of the whole orchard (provided the best quality is grown) will show a profit almost from the first.

Mr. Wells shows by figures that there is no comparison between the profits of an acre of fruit garden and an ordinary acre of hops, potatoes and other root crops. The cereals are of course quite out of it.

Mr. Wells says, "As to the cost of production of apples, compared with that of other crops, which has been estimated as most profitable, as hops, potatoes, or other root crops, if the comparison is made over a series of twenty years, the profits will be very much in favour of the apples. For six tons of potatoes at 50s. per ton, £15 per acre; while heavy costs are incurred in the production for culture, manure and labour, and that every year for twenty years, without accidents, the amount would be £300; while the value of the crop of apples at Glewstone Court, for the year 1805 amounted to £85 per acre, which was within nine years of planting; there are eleven more years to come in the series of twenty, during which time the vigour of the trees will increase, which gives a prospect of greater crops; this shows there is no comparison, the prospects of the returns being so immensely in favour of the apples and at a much less cost."