

MRS. GRUNDY'S GATHERINGS.

HOME EXERCISES.

WE only repeat an established truism, familiar to us all, when we say that there is nothing which conduces so much to the health and consequent happiness of our fair friends as moderate exercise, or voluntary labor. We very naturally compassionate the condition of those who are compelled to work at some sedentary occupation from "early dawn" to the mid-watch of the night, for a mere subsistence, shut in from the freshness and healthfulness of the morning and evening breeze; from the brightness of the sun, at this season of the year, from the enchanting loveliness of nature. And yet, we can scarcely feel less compassion for those who voluntarily fall into idle, listless, and enervating habits, which not only destroy the buoyancy and elasticity of the mind, but absolutely deform the beauty and paralyze the energies of the body.

However unfashionable the sentiment may appear to some of our more than usually romantic and fastidious readers, we shall not hesitate to confess the fact, that we seldom meet with a more agreeable sight on a bright sunny morning, as we trudge to our daily labor through a fashionable part of Toronto, than to behold the daughters of some of our opulent citizens dusting the sills of the windows, brush in hand, or with broom in hand, sweeping the hall or parlour carpet. There is that in the bright eyes, and in the rosy flush of their cheeks, as they sparkle and bloom from beneath the closely drawn bonnet or hood, which to us are irresistible evidence of health and cheerfulness. There is something, indeed, in such a sight, not merely encouraging on account of the assurances it gives of the practical wisdom which pervades the whole family circle—but also of the industry, comfort, peace, dignity, and purity of mind which reign over all within the little kingdom.

But besides a class of fashionables who may not choose to take regular exercise at the brush or broom handle, there is another unhappy class, the members of which, either through ignorance of, or inattention to the requirements of their bodies, or through forced mental labor while yet in their childhood, have in fact lost the muscular power to apply themselves to such voluntary labor as we have been describing. To both these classes, with whose necessities, infirmities, and prejudices we have been made somewhat familiar, we propose to recommend for their consideration, and for their adoption, should they follow our advice, a series of practical exercises which, we verily believe, will have the most beneficial effects on their systems, whether diseased, deformed, or simply suffering from the absence of those physical energies, and that buoyancy of spirit, which exercise scarcely ever fails to reproduce in those who apply themselves to it prudently, in time, and with a will.

We shall here endeavour to explain to our readers the use of an instrument formed of two elastic bands, which is furnished with a hook and handle, or a catch, and can be fixed upon any object, either in or out of doors, and be at once

ready for use without delay, such as the corner of a table, the handle or frame of a door, window-sill, or bed-post. The hook acts somewhat in the manner of a "claw," or pair of "dogs," viz.: the greater the strain the firmer the hold, and out of doors can be attached to the top of a wall, railing, or branch of a tree. The exercises to be performed by it are varied, numerous, entertaining, and exciting. They may be increased to upwards of two hundred, and have been recognized in England, where the instrument was first introduced, as the most conducive towards the full development of the bodily frame, and the increase of muscular power.

In the future notices of this subject, we shall avail ourselves of the opportunity which will be afforded of impressing upon our readers not merely the importance of the exercises it embraces, to the healthy, but to those who are laboring under diseases of the chest and spine. The information in relation to the origin and formation of such diseases will be drawn from unquestionable authority, and will be interesting to parents as furnishing the means of prevention, as well as affording to the afflicted the most probable means of relief, if not of cure.

PARIS FASHIONS.

THE ball given on the 23d, at the Ministère des Travaux Publiques, affords us an opportunity of describing to our readers the newest fashion, for *bals*, which will as usual shine in London, Baden Baden, Vichy, and the Pyrenees. The return of the fashions worn during the Empire such as head-dresses *à la Grecque*, bringing to our recollection the bad taste of that period, had been for some time apprehended; but we are happy to learn that the flattery will not be entertained.

Bonnets are worn almost covered with small flowers, such as *polyanthus*, *roses pompon*, &c. The fronts and crowns are literally covered with flowers without leaves—a bunch on each side, and inside are bunches that are lengthened so as to come round the face. The bonnets this year are very much trimmed, the face seeming buried in a mass of flowers, ribbon, tulle, blonde, &c.

For half-dress, percales, book-muslins, and printed muslins are worn, with flounces or stripes; they resemble *barège* and *mausseline de soie*, and have the advantage of being light wear in very warm weather. They are printed in different ways, so as to make up as "redingotes" for morning; the bodies being also printed for this make. "Albanaises" are likewise printed cross-wise in various widths. All these dresses are made up full in the waist, and worn with long sashes; but they cannot be made up with tight bodies.

For the country we cannot say too much in favour of white muslins; they wash admirably. Bows of ribbon, tastefully placed, form an elegant dress. Dark ribbons completely change the appearance of the dress; with pink or blue petticoats the dress appears metamorphosed for travelling.

The number of flounces varies from three to seven; they are scolloped large, round or pointed.