

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MEDICAL.

MISERABLE.—We have always treated questions on "blushing" and "nervousness" as fully as our space will permit; for both are exceedingly common, and their causation and treatment are involved in great obscurity, for so many physicians have passed them over with—"Oh, it is nothing!" But the great discomfort, and often misery which these two neglected diseases cause, render them worthy of being carefully studied. As a complete description of these troubles would fill a volume quite as large as the year's *GIRL'S OWN PAPER*, we can only give brief hints from time to time. But we take it for granted that every correspondent who asks us questions on these subjects has read the answers on these points which have lately appeared in this paper. The first point that we insist upon is that neither blushing nor nervousness can be cured by drugs, and it is merely wasting health and money to take any preparation, whether patent or pharmaceutical, to "cure" these conditions. We do not say that drugs are useless here; but that they cannot of themselves cure the condition, and when they are taken it is usually to help the cure by very indirect means. We will only talk of blushing this time. What is blushing? It is a sudden relaxation of the blood vessels of the face. The vessels relax, and fill with blood, causing the face to become red and hot. It differs from "flushing" merely in the time that it lasts. Blushing is a momentary affair. It may be caused by affections of the heart or blood, thus it is exceedingly common in anæmia. It may also be caused by indigestion, constipation or other unhealthy condition of the alimentary tract; and it may be due to purely mental causes. Before treating blushing it is therefore absolutely necessary to know which of these three causes is at work; if either of the former, treating the cause (anæmia, indigestion, etc.) will stop the blushing. If the cause is purely mental, as it is in most cases, it is necessary to know under what circumstances the blushing occurs. The age is important. In young girls it is usually a very transient business; but when it persists over twenty-two it is more difficult to treat. The sex of the patient is also exceedingly important, but we will not enter into that point now. Do you blush when speaking with your friends, or only in the company of strangers? Do you blush only when speaking to those of the opposite sex or when you are conversing with anybody? Do you blush when with girls of your own age? And *why* do you blush? You may think this a ridiculous question, but it is a very important one and often gives the key-note to treatment. Do you blush when you speak to a person merely from a slight thrill of excitement? such as would happen when you are introduced to a stranger, especially if you are unaccustomed to society. In such cases, after a short preliminary blush, conversation runs smoothly and the blushing does not recur. Or do you blush constantly during conversation from fear you are not equal in brilliancy to your companion, or from fear of saying anything indiscreet? This is a far more serious thing than the former, and is much more difficult to get the better of. We cannot give you such practical advice, for you furnish us with such scanty information that we do not know what form your complaint takes. If you have indigestion, anæmia, or anything of the kind, this must be seen to according to the advice we have given in this paper *ad nauseam*. If not, you must find out all about your condition, and pay attention to the following rules. Whenever you speak to anyone think of the conversation and do not think about yourself or your blushing propensities or what the person to whom you are talking is thinking about you or your blushing. If you can carry out this advice you will soon be cured. Do not worry about the preliminary blushing, of which we have spoken above, it is nothing serious and will pass away when you get a little older. Do not sit in a corner and say nothing to anybody until you have spoken to, but seek to join in conversation whenever you can; not pushing yourself forward and trying to assume a free and easy manner which you do not feel, but taking a rational interest in conversation and chiming in when you have anything to say of interest or importance to the subject of discussion. "Speak when you are spoken to" is all very well for children, but it is a fatal policy for nervousness or blushing.

JACK O' HAZELDEAN.—Read the answer to "Miserable." It is worrying over your condition which prevents you from getting better. "You know that it makes others feel and say things, etc." We are perfectly sure that it does not. We very much doubt whether any of your comrades ever notice that you blush unduly. Pay attention to the advice given to "Miserable" and you will soon get better. Ichthiol is used for blushing and does, to a slight extent, benefit some people, but we do not advise its use except in certain cases. Blushing due to nervousness cannot be cured by drugs, but it can be cured by mental training.

H. S.—That the lumps that came in your throat were due to decayed teeth is highly probable, and we strongly advise you to have your teeth seen to. The wisdom teeth often take many months to appear and frequently do not develop fully at all. The lumps in your throat were probably inflamed glands, due to your decayed teeth. We cannot say that we have ever heard of gas producing serious after-effects, and if it does, they must be very rare, for we have seen gas given many hundreds of times. There is one form of goitre that does produce nervousness as a symptom, but we cannot say whether you suffer from this variety or from some simple goitre. Read the answer to "Miserable." If you find that you cannot follow the advice that we gave to that correspondent try to get away for a short holiday—preferably at the sea-side. By all means continue the baths during the summer if they do you good, and take a fair amount of exercise every day or a little gymnastic exercise in great moderation. You will probably get much better as you grow older.

J. D. W. MOWBREY.—We have already given an answer in this column to another correspondent who asked for information on this subject. This answer you will doubtless have read since writing your letter to us. The question of the relative value of brown and white bread is an open one upon this—white bread is more digestible and more nutritious, but brown bread is less likely to cause constipation than white bread. In the answer to which we referred these premises were inquired into. Personally we declare emphatically in favour of white bread, especially when indigestion is present. At the present time this is the opinion most commonly held among medical men. All the authorities that you quote, as well as many others holding the same views, are known to us. It is from clinical experience alone that such questions can be settled, and it seems to us, both from our own experience and from that of the most successful clinicians whose work we happen to know, that usually, if not always, white bread is to be preferred to that made of whole meal.

VICTORIA.—We often have to repeat that indigestion cannot be cured by drugs! Leave medicines alone and pay attention to the other means mentioned in the article. The cure of constipation is in the main identical with that of indigestion; but it is advisable in the former condition to take such articles of diet as green vegetables, fresh and stewed fruit, prunes, etc., in moderate quantities. For constipation, as for indigestion, the less you take drugs the more quickly will you get over the trouble. But, unfortunately, it is frequently necessary to take some form of aperient. The best of which for chronic constipation is the pill of aloes and nuxvomica, the composition of which we have frequently given in this column. Read the answer to "J. D. W. Mowbrey."

GIRLS' EMPLOYMENTS.

CONSTANCE (Hospital Nursing).—You will observe our reply to "Kathleen." If you earnestly desire to become a nurse and are now twenty-four, it is probable that you know your own mind. You are not too old for admission to the North Eastern Hospital for Children, Hackney Road, Shoreditch, E.; Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, W.C. (one of the largest), or the Belgrave Hospital, 77, Gloucester Street, S.W. At the last-mentioned there is a premium of £25 to be paid. It is not at all necessary to have a knowledge either of Latin or music. Even if your health has not been quite good lately, it quite possibly would improve under conditions of life in which you were happily employed. Although the hours are long and the work fatiguing, there are many girls who are distinctly benefited by the regular life and the active exercise. Let us hope it may be thus in your case.

A. M. D. (Training as Children's Nurse).—The address you require is the Morland Institute, 20, Holland Park Avenue, London, W. As you write from Ireland, and Liverpool is therefore nearer to you than London, you may like to know that the Liverpool Ladies' Sanitary Association, 8, Sundor Terrace, Upper Duke Street, Liverpool, is arranging a course of training for ladies as children's nurses, which, we have reason to expect, will be satisfactory in every respect. The course is to occupy over a year, and the fee for training will be £20. You could write to the Secretary at the address given for further particulars. It would be wise, however, to wait a couple of years yet before beginning this course of special training, as you are only just fifteen. Meantime you should continue your general education.

Mrs. T. C. C. (Emigration to South Africa).—We are much obliged for your letter. Unfortunately we cannot undertake to forward letters; it would increase our labours too seriously. We are glad to note that you say, "there is great scope for good respectable girls in Cape Town, if they are willing to work and are trustworthy, and they are well paid. As to the life there, it is charming."

COUNTESS (Employment Abroad).—If your friend wishes to undertake missionary work, she could write to the Secretary of the Women's Missionary Association, 19, Delahay Street, Westminster, S.W. For women qualified to act as missionary teachers in the Indian Zenanas there is some demand. In Australia there is little demand for teachers, as the women's colleges are excellent, and native-born Australian women can therefore undertake the greater part of the educational work. The term "certificated" which you apply to your friend is somewhat vague; but if it implies the highest educational qualifications, it might be worth while to seek teaching work in Cape Colony. But this suggestion would be useless in the case of many women possessed of only mediocre educational ability. A reply to your second question is hardly in place here; but we may say for your convenience that a young lady placed in the position of hostess should follow the natural instinct by trying to make her guests of either sex feel at home. She need not necessarily herself talk a great deal to the young men, but she should introduce the latter to some of the ladies present, so that every one may have some one to converse with. There is no hard-and-fast rule that a gentleman must always speak first or carry on the greater part of the conversation, and even if there were it would be disobeyed in such a case as this. The supposition is that a girl in her own home knows all the company present. Young people of both sexes are apt to be rather shy and self-conscious; but girls on the whole conceal their embarrassment better than youths, and have a larger supply of general chat; and it is desirable therefore that, without seeming to take too much upon themselves, they should keep things going as far as they are able.

KATHLEEN (District Nursing).—For all special kinds of nursing, whether District, Army, or any other, it is necessary first to take a course of training in a general hospital. For district nursing a year's general training in an infirmary would be accepted; and this would perhaps be easier to manage than the hospital training, as the large hospitals are so besieged with applicants. Write to the matron of any large London Infirmary (such as the one at Kensington, Chelsea, or St. Marylebone), and ask whether you could be admitted as a probationer.

IVY (Hospital Nursing).—See reply to "Lora" (No. 677). Probationers are not usually required to pass any entrance examination, but must be able to fill up a form of application to the satisfaction of the authorities. Regular probationers pay no fees, but undertake to remain in the hospital a certain length of time. The minimum age when probationers are eligible varies from twenty-one to twenty-five, twenty-three being perhaps the most usual.

OUR NEXT STORY COMPETITION.

STORIES IN MINIATURE.

Subject:—"THE G. O. P. SUPPLEMENT FOR OCTOBER."

A PENNILESS PAIR, by SARAH TYTLER.

We offer three prizes of TWO GUINEAS, ONE GUINEA, and HALF-A-GUINEA for the three best papers on our "Story Supplement" for this month. The essays are to give a brief account of the plot and action of the story in the Competitor's own words; in fact, each paper should be a carefully-constructed *Story in Miniature*, telling the reader in a few bright words what *THE GIRL'S OWN STORY SUPPLEMENT* for the month is all about.

One page of foolscap only is to be written upon, and is to be signed by the writer, followed by her full address, and posted to The Editor, *GIRL'S OWN PAPER*, in an unsealed envelope, with the words "Stories in Miniature" written on the left-hand top corner.

The last day for receiving the papers is October 20th; and no papers can in any case be returned.

Examiners:—The Author of the *Story* (Sarah Tytler), and the Editor of *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER*.

The Report of Supplement Story Competition, entitled "A Sailor's Bride," will appear next month.