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# SISTERS THREE.

By Mrs. HENRY MANSERGH, Author of "A Rose-coloured Thread," etc.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Two days later a happy party were disporting themselves on the lawn at Cloudsdale. Rex and Edna Frere had driven over to spend the afternoon with their friends, and just as Mary placed the tea tray on the wicker table, the postman came marching up the drive, and delivered the only thing which was necessary to complete the happiness of the party—a letter from Lettice!

"She has written so little lately, and her letters have been so unlike herself, that I have been quite uneasy," said Hilary, turning the envelope round and round, and feeling its proportions with undisguised pleasure. "I'll give you each a cup of tea, and then I'll read it out, while you listen in comfort."

The three years which had passed since we saw her last had dealt very kindly with Hilary. The consequential air had given place to an expression of quiet serenity which was by no means unbecoming. Her complexion was pink and white as of yore, and as she

"'LETTICE IS ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED!'"

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presided over the tea-table, her blue cambric dress fitting closely to the lines of her neat little figure, her tiny feet crossed before her, and her shining brown hair arranged in its usual fastidious order, it would have been difficult to find a more favourable specimen of a young English girl. Norah, seated opposite on the long hammock chair, was still very girlish in appearance, despite the dignity of eighteen years. She was thin and lanky, and her cheeks had none of Hilary's delicate bloom, but the heavy eyebrows and expressive lips lent a charm to a face which was never the same in expression for two minutes together, and though there could be no question as to which was the prettier of the two, it was safe to predict that few people who looked at Norah would be tempted to turn back to the study of Hilary's more commonplace features.

Edna was narrow-chested and delicate in appearance, but Rex had developed into an imposing looking personage; broad-shouldered, muscular, and with such a moustache as was unequalled in any young fellow of his age in the country-side. He wore a white flannel suit, and though there were several unoccupied seats at hand, chose to loll on the grass, his long legs stretched out before him, his blue cap pushed well back on his curly head. Nestled beside him sat Geraldine, a little taller, a little older in appearance, but with the same grave, earnest little face which had characterised her three years before. Perhaps the member of the family who was the most changed, was the tall, young fellow who sat beside Norah. Raymond had only lately returned from a two years' sojourn in Germany, where he had acquired an extra four inches, a pair of eye-glasses and such "a man of the world" manner, that it had been a shock to his sisters to find that his teasing propensities were as vigorous as when he had been a schoolboy. Faithful Bob hovered near, ready to obey his leader's commands, and take part in any mischief which might be at hand, but for the moment all other interests gave way to the hearing of the letter from London.

Hilary handed the last cup to its owner, and opening the envelope, ran her eye rapidly down the sheet. The next moment a loud "Oh!" of amazement startled the hearers into eager curiosity.

"What is the matter?"

"Oh—oh! It can't be true—it can't! Lettice is engaged to be married!"

"Engaged!" A moment's breathless silence was succeeded by a very babel of questioning.

"Engaged?" "Whom to?" "When?" "Where?" "What does she say?" "Read it aloud. Let us hear every word she says!"

But Hilary folded up the sheet with an air of determination. "Not yet. I'll read it by-and-by; but you must guess. I'll give you fifty guesses who it is."

"The painter fellow who did her portrait!"

"That what-do-you-call-him man—the Polish nobleman who sent her the verses!"

"The curate!"

"Sir Neville Bruce!"

"One of the men she met at Brighton!"

"Wrong! wrong! wrong! Guess again. Nearer home this time. Someone you know!"

"Not Mr. Rayner?"

"O, dear me, no! I should think not. He and Lettice never get on well together. Someone else."

"Someone we know! But we know so few of her friends. Only Mr. Neville, and the Bewleys, and—oh! No, it can't—it can't possibly be——"

"What! what! Who—who? Never mind if you are wrong. Say whom you are thinking of."

"It—can't be Arthur Newcome!"

"Arthur Newcome it is, my dear!" said Hilary, tragically; whereupon Raymond instantly dropped his teacup, on the grass, and fell heavily on Norah's shoulders.

"Smelling salts! Brandy! I am going to faint! Oh, my heart!"

But for once, no one paid any attention, even Norah sat motionless, forgetting to push him away, forgetting everything but the appalling nature of the news which she had just heard.

"Lettice—is—engaged—to—Arthur Newcome?"

"Lettice—is—engaged—to—Arthur Newcome!"

"But—but—we knew that he admired her in his solemn way, but she never seemed to like him! She used to make fun of him, and imitate the way he talked!"

Raymond sat up and passed in his cup for a fresh supply of tea. What was the good of fainting if nobody took any notice! "I say," he cried energetically, "fancy Arthur Newcome proposing! I'd give anything if I could have overheard him. 'Miss Bertrand! Lettice! may I say Lettice? Deign, oh deign——'"

"Oh, be quiet, Raymond, and let us hear the letter," pleaded Norah, who was on the verge of tears with agitation and distress. "I can't believe it until I hear her own words. Read it, Hilary, from the very beginning."

Hilary opened out the dainty, scented sheet, and read aloud, with an impressiveness worthy of the occasion—

"MY DEAREST OLD HILARY, AND NORAH, and every one of you—I have a great piece of news to tell. I am engaged to Arthur Newcome, and he wants to be married some time in autumn. He proposed to me a month ago, on the day of our water party, but father and Miss Carr wished us to wait a month before being engaged, so that I should have time to make up my mind. They think I am so young, but if we wait until September I shall be twenty, and many girls are married at that age. I have a beautiful ring—a big pearl in the centre and diamonds all round, and Arthur has given me a brooch as well, three dear little diamond swallows—it looks so sweet at my neck! Madge is very pleased, of course, and Mr. and Mrs. Newcome are very kind. Won't it be nice when I have a house of my own, and you can come and stay with me? I shall have six bridesmaids—you three, Madge, Edna, and either Mabel Bruce or Monica Bewley. You must think of pretty dresses. I like a white wedding, but it doesn't show the bride off so well, that's the only objection. We shall have a great deal to talk about when I come home next month, and I am longing for the time to come. It is so hot and close in town, and Cloudsdale must be looking lovely just now. Father expects to leave on Tuesday. He does not seem very pleased about my engagement. I suppose parents never are! Good-bye, dear, darling girls. I wish I could be with you now.

"Your own loving LETTICE.

"P.S. How surprised you will be. Tell me every word you said when you read this letter!"

"Humph! slightly awkward if we took her at her word!" It was Rex who spoke, and there was the same expression of ill-concealed scorn in his voice which had been noticeable on his face since the announcement of the news. "Charming epistle, I must say. So much about 'dear Arthur' and her own happiness. One must excuse a little gush under the circumstances, and Lettice was always demonstrative!"

Hilary looked at him, puckering her forehead in anxious fashion. "You mean that sarcastically! She says nothing about being happy. I noticed that myself. There is something strange about the whole thing. I am quite sure she did not care for him when I was there in spring—what possessed her to accept him at all?"

"Because he asked her nicely, and puts lots of treacle on the bread," said Raymond, laughing. "You could always make Lettice do what you wanted if you flattered her enough. She would accept any fellow who went down on his knees and swore he worshipped her. Oh, I say, fancy having Arthur Newcome as a brother-in-law! We used to call him, 'Child's guide to Knowledge,' when he was at Windermere that summer, because he would insist upon improving every occasion. We played some fine pranks on him, didn't we, Norah? We'll give him a lively time of it again if he comes to visit us, as I suppose he will, under the circumstances."

"We can't!" said Norah, dolefully. "He is engaged to Lettice, and she would be vexed. I don't feel as if I could ever play pranks again. I was looking forward to having Lettice with us when we went up to London, but now it will never be the same again. Even if she has a house of her own, Arthur Newcome will be there, and I could never, never get to like him as a brother." She put her cup on the table and walked off by herself into the shrubbery which encircled the lawn. The others looked after her in sympathetic silence, but did not attempt to follow. As Lettice's special friend and companion, the news was even more of a shock to her than to the rest, and it

was understood that she might prefer to be alone.

Ten minutes later, however, when tea was finished, Rex rose lazily from the ground, stretched his long arms, and strode off in the direction of the shrubbery. Half-way down the path he met Norah marching along in solitary state, white about the cheeks, suspiciously red and swollen about the eyes.

Rex clasped his hands behind his back, and blocked the narrow way.

"Well, what are you doing here?"

"Crying!" Norah flashed a defiant glance at him, then turned aside to dab her face with her handkerchief and gulp in uncontrollable misery, whereupon Rex looked distressed, uncomfortable, and irritated all at the same moment.

"Then please stop at once. What's the use of crying? You can't help it now, better make the best of it, and be as jolly as you can. Norah—look here, I'm sorry to bother you any more to-day, but I came over specially to have a chat. I have not had a chance of speaking to you quietly until now, and my father is driving round for us at six o'clock. Before he comes I wanted to tell you——"

Norah put her handkerchief in her pocket, and faced him with steady eyes. Her heart gave a great leap of understanding, and a cold certainty of misery settled upon her which seemed to dry up the fountain of tears, and leave her still and rigid.

"Yes?"

"We had a big talk last night, Norah. The three years is up, you know, and I have fulfilled my share of the bargain. I have known all the time what my decision would be, and six months ago I wrote to all the men I know abroad, asking them to look out for the sort of berth I wanted. On Tuesday I had a letter from a man in India offering me a good opening. You will be surprised to hear why he gives me the chance instead of all the other fellows who are anxious to get it. He knows I am a pretty good musician, I don't mean in your sense of the word, but I can rattle away on the piano and play any air I happen to hear, and he says the fellows up-country set no end of store by that sort of thing. If other qualifications are equal, the post is given to the man who can play, and make things cheerful in the evening. Rather a sarcasm, isn't it, after all the money that has been spent on my education that such a trifle as that should decide my destiny! Well—I showed the letter to my father, and he was terribly cut up about the whole thing. I had said nothing about my plans for some time back, for it seemed no use to upset him before it was necessary, but he has been hoping that I was 'settling down.' Norah, I can't do it! I hate leaving home, and shall be wretched when the time comes, but I have roving blood in my veins, and cannot settle down to a jog-trot, professional life in a small English town. If I go out to this place I shall lie low until I have a practical knowledge of the land and its possibilities, and then I'll try an estate, and work it in my own way. I have the money my uncle left me, and can make my way without asking father for a penny. He is coming over this afternoon and I am sure he means to talk to you. We didn't say anything to the mater and Edna, but he knows that you and I are friends, and that I will listen to what you say. He means to ask you to persuade me to stay at home. But—you understand how I feel, Norah?"

"Yes, Rex. Don't be afraid! If your father speaks to me I shall advise him to let you go. You have kept your share of the bargain, it is for him to keep his," said Norah steadily. "And it appears that you want to go away and leave us."

"You will live in London now for the greater part of the year. If I were at home I should only see you at long intervals. I should not settle in this neighbourhood. It would be quite different."

"Oh yes, quite different. Everything will be different now. You will have gone, and—Lettice! Rex! don't be angry if I ask you something. I will try to persuade your father to give you your way, but—tell me before you go! Has the news about Lettice had anything to do with your decision?"

Rex stopped short, and stared at her in amazement.

"This news about Lettice! Norah, what do you mean?"

"About her engagement! I always thought that you liked her yourself. You remember what you used to call her—'Lovely Lettice?'"

"Well, and so she was lovely, anybody might have seen that. Of course I liked her, but if you mean that I am jealous of Arthur Newcome—no, thank you! I should not care for a wife who would listen to the first man who came along, as Lettice has done. She was a jolly little girl and I took a fancy to her at first sight, but—do you remember our adventure in the old passage, Norah? Do you think Lettice would have stuck to me, and been as brave, and plucky, and loyal as you were in the midst of your fright? I never forgot that day. It was last night that I spoke to my father, before I heard a word about Lettice, or her matrimonial intentions."

"So it was; I forgot that!" Norah smiled with recovered cheerfulness, for Rex's words had lifted a load from her mind, and the future seemed several shades less gloomy than it had done a few minutes before.

"And if you went, how soon?"

"As soon as possible. I have wasted too much time already. The sooner I go the sooner I can make my way and come home again to see you all. Three or five years, I suppose. You will be quite an old woman, Norah."

"Yes; twenty-three. Lettice will be married, Hilary too, very likely. The Mouse will be as big as I was when you first knew us, and Raymond a doctor in practice. It will all be different!" Norah's voice was very low as she spoke the last words, and her face twitched as if she were about to break down once more.

Rex looked at her with the same odd mingling of tenderness and vexation which he had shown a few minutes earlier.

"Of course it will be different! We are not children any longer, we can't expect to go on as we have been doing. What was the Vicar's text the other Sunday? 'As an eagle stirreth up her nest.' I liked that sermon! It has been very happy and jolly, but it is time we stirred out of the old nest, and began to work for ourselves, and prepare for nests of our own. I am past twenty-one, my father need not be afraid to trust me, for I can look after myself, and though the life will be very different out there, I'll try to do nothing that I should be ashamed to tell you, Norah, when I come home."

Norah turned round with a flush, and an eager, outstretched hand, but only to behold Mr. Rex marching along on the edge of the very flower-beds themselves, in his anxiety to put as much distance between them as possible, head in the air, and a "touch me if you dare" expression, at the sight of which his companion gave a dismal little smile.

That was Rex all over! In spite of his masterful ways, he was intensely shy where his deeper feelings were concerned. To say an affectionate word seemed to require as painful an effort as to drag out a tooth, and if by chance he was betrayed into such an indiscretion, he protected himself against its consequences by putting on his most "prickly" air, and freezing the astonished hearer by his frigid tones. Norah understood that having shown her a glimpse of his heart in the last remark, he was now overcome with remorse, and that she must take no notice whatever of the indiscretion.

(*To be continued.*)

# RAMBLES WITH NATURE STUDENTS.

By Mrs. BRIGHTWEN, Author of "Wild Nature Won by Kindness."

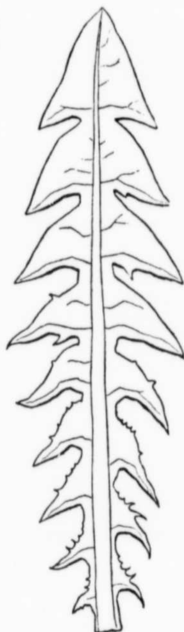
## March.

### Whitlow Grass (*Draba Verna*).

Early in this month I found, on an old wall, the pretty rosettes of one of our very early spring flowers, the whitlow grass, which is not a grass at all, but a miniature plant seldom more than three inches high, and sometimes so small that it only occupies a space that might be covered by a shilling.

WHITLOW GRASS.

RUE-LEAVED SAXIFRAGE



DANDELION LEAF.

On a tiny central stalk it bears a few white flowers which droop gracefully when the air is moist, the petals quickly fall away, and then small oval seed vessels appear; these, when mature, shed off two outer husks, leaving a white membrane which divides the seed vessel, just as one sees it in the seed vessel of the common honesty.

During February and March the whitlow grass may sometimes be seen growing in such profusion on old ruined walls as to give the effect of a slight fall of snow.

Another charming little annual which haunts old walls is the rue-leaved saxifrage (*Saxifraga tridactylites*). It rarely exceeds three inches in height; a dainty little plant with white flowers, three-lobed leaves thickly covered with viscid hairs, upon which small insects may often be found entangled.

When the flowers are over, the stem and leaves become of a rich red tint, which seems frequently to be the case with plants exposed to full sunlight as they are when growing upon rocks or walls. We may prove this by trying the experiment of keeping two specimens of this plant in pots and placing one of them in a sunny spot and the other in shade. We shall find that the latter will continue to be green and fail to attain its natural crimson colour.

### The Dandelion.

Dandelion flowers are now making such a bright glow of colour by the roadside that we will choose them for our subject of study to-day.

The plant takes its name of dent-de-lion from the form of the leaves, which are so deeply cut as to resemble teeth; more especially perhaps in the spring is this the case, as later on in the summer they become less sharply indented.

The flower-bud rises from the centre of the plant to nearly a foot in height, then it opens and becomes fertilised by insects. As soon as this process has been completed, the flower closes up and the dead petals and calyx leaves remain like a pointed roof defending the seed from rain. Now the stalk bends down until it lies flat upon the ground, where it remains about twelve days. By that time the seeds are matured, and the stalk again rises to an upright position. The calyx leaves now turn back until they are parallel with the stem, and the beautiful downy globe is formed and expands until it is a fluffy ball of seeds hanging so loosely that the lightest breeze can waft them into the air.

The seed itself is worth examination. When after a longer or shorter flight a seed touches the ground and falls into some crevice, it might still be dragged out by the wind and carried away, but this is guarded against by some spiny projections on the upper part of the seed which tend to hold it securely in its place.

### The Nuthatch (*Sitta Europœa*).

The nuts we throw out at the windows for the squirrels are frequently shared by the nuthatches. These pretty birds abound in my old garden, and in the course of years they have become so extremely tame, that they will almost take nuts out of our hands.

An old oak tree on the lawn near by is much used by these birds; they ram the barcelonas into crevices in the rugged bark, and, whilst they hang head downward to gain the greater force, I hear the birds' loud hammering going on, and afterwards find the empty nut-shells from which the kernels have been extracted still remaining in the interstices of the tree bark.

The loud call-note of this bird is one of the early signs of coming spring. It is hard to believe that the small feathered creature that we see creeping up a tree-stem like a grey mouse can be filling the woods with so much sound.

Its mating call-note is a clear sharp cry, several times repeated, at short intervals, and maintained throughout the early spring months.

One ancient lime-tree near this house has frequently been the nesting home of four species of birds. In the highest hole some starlings established themselves. Just below, a smaller cavity was taken by a pair of nut-hatches. Some jackdaws appropriated another opening in the stem, and lower down a neat round hole was bored by a green woodpecker.

These various lodgers all appeared to live harmoniously together, and they allowed me to watch them as they flitted in and out on family cares intent. The green woodpecker was the most wary, and would seldom allow me more than a hasty glimpse of his bonnie crimson head and golden green plumage.

The nuthatch has a curious habit of closing the entrance to its nest with layers of mud until only a very small hole remains. The illustration shows a case in point. The bird had made its nest about twelve inches down a hollow tree trunk, and then, with infinite labour, it brought yellow clay sufficient to close up the tree stem, leaving but a small hole for ingress and egress.

It is said that the male bird keeps its mate

NUTHATCH AND NEST.

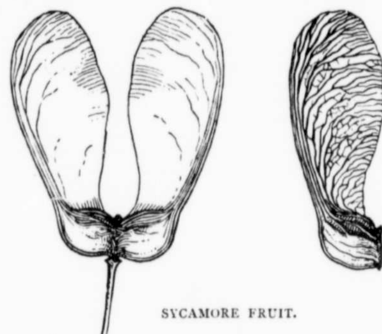
upon the nest, and feeds her through the entrance hole until her eggs are hatched. I have not seen this myself, and can only give the fact as stated by others.

### Tree Seeds.

The high winds which usually prevail in early spring, perform a very useful office in scattering the seeds of trees and plants.

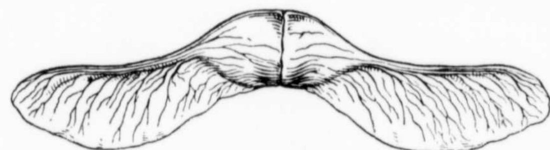
The hornbeams, sycamores and maples were unusually full of fruit last autumn, and their dried bracts and seeds are now lying thickly strewn over the lawn. Some of them are already sprouting and showing tiny cotyledon leaves.

The winged part of the sycamore fruit



SYCAMORE FRUIT.

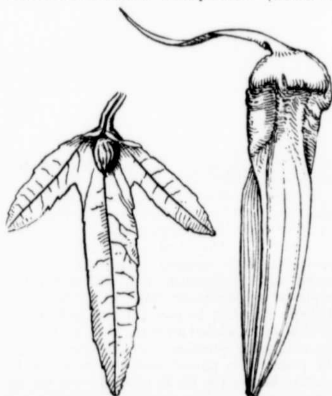
(botanically called *Samara*) has in many cases become a delicate piece of lace-work, the action of rain and wind having made it into a skeleton; the heavy end is entangled in the grass, and out of the seed-case a young rootlet is finding its way into the ground.



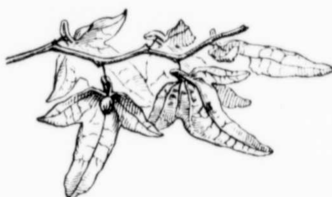
MAPLE FRUIT.

Later on I shall be able to find and record the unfolding cotyledon leaves, which are curiously rolled up within the seed-case.

The maple fruit is also two-seeded, and somewhat resembles the sycamore (which is



HORNBEAM. ARAUCARIA SEED.



HORNBEAM SAMARAS RIPE.

a maple), except that the two *Samaras* are joined at a different angle. The fruit quickly divides, and each seed has then a fair chance of germinating.

The hornbeam *Samara* is like a three-pointed leaf, the sharp-angled nutlet being attached to it at the lower end. Each bract in the cluster seems to prepare for its flight by breaking off from the stem, and then hanging by a hair-like thread, so that a passing breeze may easily detach it.

The araucaria, when well established and growing vigorously, will sometimes produce its huge cones in England.

There are male and female trees; the cones of the former will shed out more than a wineglassful of yellow pollen.

The strange-looking seeds which fall out of the fertile cones are sure to attract attention as they lie on the grass by their peculiar form and large size.

### Poplar Catkins.

The flowers of various species of poplar are now appearing and form an interesting subject for study.

I have obtained to-day the catkins of the aspen (*Populus tremula*), the abele or white poplar (*P. alba*), the Lombardy poplar (*P. nigra*) and the grey poplar (*P. canescens*). A slight shower had brought out the perfume of the buds and blossoms of the balsam poplar or tacamahac (*P. balsamifera*), which has very conspicuous catkins of a bright reddish-brown.

As most of these trees flower mainly on the upper branches where we cannot reach the catkins, we must be content to pick them up, as I did to-day, beneath the trees, where they look extremely like red and brown caterpillars.

Poplars are all diœcious trees; that is, bearing flowers with stamens on one tree and flowers containing pistils on another, usually growing near by. This makes their study rather puzzling, and it is further complicated because the willows are now in flower and there is a certain resemblance between them; we may, however, always recognise poplars by their drooping catkins, whilst willow flowers are invariably borne upright upon their stems. The male catkins bearing the stamens are usually the most conspicuous, and often they appear earlier than the female flowers.

By dissecting a specimen poplar catkin from each tree, we can readily trace the different parts, the fringed scales bearing the stamens and the small woolly stigmas which catch the pollen-dust brought to them by the wind.

Poplar catkins are usually fertilised by the wind; they contain no honey, and are therefore unattractive to insects. The willows, having

WHITE POPLAR (FEMALE CATKIN).

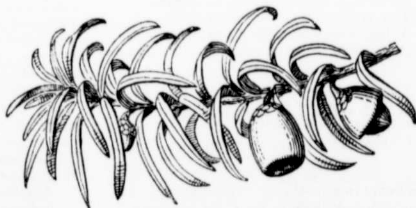
WHITE POPLAR (MALE CATKIN).

small honey glands, offer three lures to the insect tribes—colour, scent, and honey—hence we may be sure to find bees and flies frequenting their early blossoms.

### The Yew-Tree.

The male blossoms of the yew-tree are now fully out, and, as a passing breeze shakes the branches, they send out clouds of yellow pollen. I never see this happening without recalling Tennyson's interesting allusion to this "smoking" of the yew-tree.

> "O brother, I have seen this yew-tree smoke,
> Spring after spring, for half a hundred years."—*The Holy Grail.*



YEW BERRIES.

MALE FLOWERS OF YEW.

The female blossom is on a separate tree, and it may be at some distance away; the wind therefore carries the fertilising pollen far and wide, and in due time it reaches the other flower, which will eventually produce the beautiful wax-like yew-berries.

I used to think that the showers of pollen, which make the ground under the tree look yellow with its abundance, was an instance of needless waste; but I have now observed that many species of flies and solitary bees are extremely fond of pollen and feed greedily upon it, as well as use it to store in their nests for their young grubs to feed upon when hatched.

Doubtless in this way the tree is able, all through the early spring, to afford the winged creatures an abundant supply of needful food until they are able to obtain honey from the summer flowers.

### Willow Catkins.

As one of the tokens of coming spring, it always gives me a thrill of pleasure to note for the first time the silvery willow buds appearing. As the dark brown bud scales begin to open and reveal the silky down within, then, as the sun gains power, these outer scales fall off and the pure white catkins become conspicuous. They daily grow in size, until, attaining maturity, they are covered with pollen of a rich golden yellow. This pollen is highly attractive to the newly-awakened humble bees. These may be seen clustered upon the blossoms, not only feeding themselves, but carrying away provision with which to store their cells.

It is interesting to observe that while the willow has only one bud-scale, the lime-tree has two, and other trees usually have many outer coverings for the bud.

The male and female catkins are shown in the illustration, and, as I have said, they grow on different trees which are usually found within a short distance of each other, so that the wind may carry the pollen from one tree to another in order to fertilise the flowers.

A small low-growing species of willow called sallow, which, by the way, grows abundantly on our common, is the kind which is most frequently gathered for decoration at Eastertide. This custom dates from the time when palm-branches were strewn before Our Lord when He was riding into Jerusalem.

The real palm, of course, is still used in Eastern countries for church decoration, but as we in England have no tree with either fresh green leaves or conspicuous blossoms flowering at Easter, the willow, with its pretty golden catkins, has been called palm and substituted for it for many generations. A passage of Goethe on this subject has been thus translated:—

"In Rome, upon Palm Sunday,
They bear true palms;
The cardinals bow reverently,
And sing old Psalms.
Elsewhere their Psalms are sung
'Mid olive branches;
The holly-bough supplies their places
Among the avalanches;
More northern climes must be content
With the sad willow."

With reference to that last line it is rather curious that from the days when captive Israel hung their harps upon the willows of Babylon, the tree should have been regarded as an emblem of sadness, and yet, in later times, it should have changed its character and become a token of joy and gladness.

We possess from thirty to forty kinds of willow in Britain ranging from trees eighty feet in height down to the dwarf species which abound on northern moors and are only a few inches high.

I have gathered sufficient of the white silky down from the willow seed-vessels on our common to stuff a sofa cushion, and in fine weather the air is filled with the light fluffy seeds which are thus carried far and wide.

We owe to the willow the valuable medicine salicine, so much used for the alleviation of rheumatic pains. A preparation of salicine crystals forms a beautiful microscopic slide, and when shown with the polariscope exhibits exquisite rainbow colours.

MALE. FEMALE.

SALLOW CATKINS.

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# AN OLD CORNWALL ROMANCE.

By C. A. MACIRONE.

## CHAPTER II.

"Cornwall's wrecked-devoted shores,
Her barren hills, and russet moors;
Where languid verdure tints the vales,
And sigh, through chasms, the summer gales"—*Polwhele.*

Cornish proverbs: "Speak little, speak well, and well will be spoken again."
"Be silent, tongue."
"Look twice before you leap once."

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Travelling in the days of Henry VI. was a very different affair to the rapid locomotion of the present day. There were wild moors and forests, lonely wastes to pass, rivers to ford or ferry, little hamlets clustering round the castles of the nobles were the only resting-places—few and far between. The towns were the centres of the rising trade of the country, of the cathedral life and that of the universities. Among the bridle-paths men urged their difficult way in companies; for it was seldom safe for an honest or well-to-do man to travel alone. All travelling was dangerous across wild, uninhabited country. There were few roads, except the great Roman roads—from one old Roman colony to another—and the need of getting food and shelter for the night often made a journey a very anxious and circuitous business. Besides, all travelling had to be on horseback, and the horses needed food and rest.

It was a pleasant journey they took across moor and heather, through woods and forests, by ferry and river, jogging along from dawn to nightfall. They had fair weather and a prosperous home-coming. The merchant had noted the intelligence, and, still more, the modesty and discretion with which the child had spoken when he met her first, and on the road he often whiled away the time by answering kindly her questions as to the journey and the places they passed, and also in trying to prepare her for the life to which he was taking her.

She was a keen observer, though a silent

one, of the respect paid to her master, and the higher comfort of the new position she held; and when he spoke to her of the kind and gentle mistress to whom she was going, and the duties of the household she was entering, she felt she would devote herself, please God, to the one, and take a zealous part in the labours of the other.

The rude, rough country inns were no trial to her who had lived in such hardness and poverty, and the towns and churches were wonders to the peasant girl who had felt the little church of Wike St. Marie so grand.

What would her parents say to the daily comforts of her present life, to the beauties of the buildings she saw. Truly she would let them know the good things she had been allowed to enjoy, and the blessedness of the new life of usefulness and well-being which had been opened to her.

What might she not do for her father, whose little flock of sheep she had tended so often, wishing them so many more for his sake; for the dear mother whose poor, thin winter gear she had so often yearned to make warm and soft and plentiful; for the scanty wood fires in the little hut, which she might be able to replenish with a noble wood-stack beside the door?

Thinking too of the Cousin John, her young lover, for whom she might weave bright hopes for the future, and to whom she might perhaps be able to send good news—perhaps (for he had taught her to read and write) some of the books she had heard him wish for so hopelessly. Dreams! dreams!

But one thing assuredly this noble girl did not dream, that her name, Thomasine Bonaventura, would be handed down through centuries to come, amongst the chronicles of her native county as one of its benefactresses, and her life be remembered as an example of what one true woman can do for the good of her people.

Her county of Cornwall is rich in memories; a few names have been already mentioned, but it may be well to remember also such as, though distinguished for their eminence in science or philanthropy, are possibly fading from the recollection of our too busy times.

We should not forget Ralph Allen, the distinguished man of business and philanthropist, of whom Mr. Pitt wrote, "I fear not all the example of his virtues will have power to raise up to the world his like again." His organisation of the post office was a remarkable service to his country, and he used the immense fortune he gained in the noblest manner. We must also remember the Arundells of Lanherne, Trevice, and Jolverne, ecclesiastics and warriors; the Bassets of Tehidy; Admiral William Bligh, F.R.S.; Henry Bone, R.A., the enamellist; the Boscawens; Rev. Dr. William Borlase, F.R.S., the antiquary; Davy, the man of science; Admiral Viscount Exmouth; Samuel Foote, wit and dramatist; Trevethick, the engineer; Vivian, the soldier; Incledon, the singer; Richard Landor, the explorer; the Killigrews (diplomatists, warriors, courtiers and poets); Opie, the painter; the St. Aubyns (of Clowanse and the Mount); the Rev. Henry Martyn, B.D., the Christian missionary and oriental scholar; the Grenvilles of Stow (heroes by sea and land); the Trelawneys (mentioned in the old saying), "A Godolphin was never known to want wit, a Trelawney courage, or a Grenville loyalty"; and lastly, the Godolphins of Godolphin, statesmen, jurists and divines.

In those days a household was a very different thing to govern and supply from the households of our days. Now the trouble is assisted by numberless inventions and handicrafts.

The household books of those days throw a great light on the home-life of the upper classes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There were then scarcely any of the fruits and vegetables now in common use among the poorest people. They have been brought over sea from warmer countries and naturalised here by care and toil.

The larder, especially in winter, depended chiefly on salted meats and salted fish (often very dear). Many diseases arose from this diet. Wheaten bread was a luxury for the richer classes; and all households had to prepare and make what was needed at home. Not only the daily bread had to be made, but the daily beer to be brewed (for then, remember, there was neither tea, coffee nor cocoa in England), and the daily butter and cheese to be made.

The still-room, too, was a very important affair, with its distilling of spirits and cordials, herb-medicines and essences; these last by no means a matter of luxury, as the sanitary arrangements left much to be desired, and the difficulty of getting water told upon the work of the laundry and the baths. The napery at that time also was very rich, and in large households (sometimes in small ones) had to be woven and spun at home.

Lastly, and most exacting of all the duties of the ladies of the family were the tapestries and hangings and embroideries (of which exquisite examples are still remaining), besides the making of clothes for the household, and the gathering in of the daily supplies.

The Duke of Wellington once said, "I have several generals I can trust to win a battle, but I don't know one I can rely on to feed my army—I do that myself."

Well, these households had to be fed and supplied and kept in health and well-being by the organisation of the mistress; and we may the better feel the difficulty of this when we remember that there were then no stores of preserved food of any kind such as we have now; no tinned meats or delicate *entrées* of fish or fowl, fruit or preserves to be had for love or money. There were no factories where hundreds of workmen are busy in making cakes, biscuits, etc. No large laundries where machines are so kind as to spare almost all manual labour while they tear and destroy our pretty under-garments so effectually, that it is a great temptation to buy them at the cheapest store, and forget (alas!) that it is blood-money that we so spend, and that our machine-stitched linens are tainted with the sweating system which makes their price possible.

In these old households there was much to be done, but the variety of the work was great, the food and shelter, though perhaps rough, was in plenty, and there was (what we may be permitted to allude to and regret) an amount of training and discipline which women now at the head of households have such cause bitterly to miss, and hopelessly to desire.

In reading a list of household effects of a merchant in the days of Queen Elizabeth, we may make a slight extract to show what those home productions were which cost so much toil and lasted so well.

"Tapestries, hangings of silk, fringed napkins (the list of silver goblettes, etc., is too long to quote), naperie, diaper borde cloths, cloths with fringes, diaper napkins, linens of all kinds."

The kitchen apparatus was large, chiefly of brass, which had, of course, to be kept bright and ornamental; but the bedroom furniture, or rather the want of it, must be left to the imagination—coffers for clothes, vessels of wood, iron and brass—no china or commonware. Cups and glasses began to be used only in the reign of Henry VIII.

Into this very busy world of work the peasant girl came, little more than a child, for she was only thirteen years of age, and the travellers arrived at their journey's end after being only a fortnight on the road—a speed so satisfactory and unusual that it was Dame Bunsby's emphatic remark "that she really thought they must have flown."

"Her mistress received Thomasine with a kind and hearty welcome, and ratified by her daily approval her husband's choice of the Cornish maid. When she was first told that her name was Bonaventura, and her husband explained it signified good luck, she said, 'Well, sweetheart, when I was a girl, they used to say that the name was a fore-sign of the life, and God grant that thine may turn out so to be.'"

The anxiety of her mistress as to her qualities and capacities was gradually and effectively appeased by the ease with which the girl learnt, and the zeal and industry she showed—most of all by her earnest sympathy with, and devotion to, her mistress which relieved her gradually of all care and fatigue. Like the Hebrew servant, in whose wisdom and fidelity his master learnt to put absolute trust until he had put everything into his hand—for all that he did prospered—so this girl gradually won the love and confidence of her employers, so that in a few years she became the manager of the whole household, and all that she did also prospered. But her care and love, though it prolonged and soothed the suffering life of her mistress, could not cure the sickness under which she suffered.

"Her death drew nigh, and, with the touching simplicity of the times, she told her true and tender husband, with smiling tears, that she thought he could not do better than, if they so agreed, to put Thomasine in her place when she was gone.

"Tell her it was my last wish." This gentle desire so uttered—her strong and grateful feeling towards the master who had taken her, as she expressed in her rural speech, "Lean from the moor and fed her so that her very bones belonged to him," weighed with her. She thought of the happy home he had given her, and the power she would gain to make the latter days in the old hut at Wike St. Marie prosperous and calm.

With such feelings and impulses we cannot wonder that Thomasine yielded to the last wish of the mistress she loved, and the master to whom she owed years of happy usefulness, and consented to become his wife—a position which promised her a future power to be a blessing to the dear home far away, which she knew to be so poor, so dependent on her for cheer and comfort.

(*To be continued.*)

## GODMOTHER'S SECRET.

By LIZZIE MILLER PENGELLY.

DEAR Godmother Dorothy Grant is dead,
And a year has passed since she went to rest;
Just a long, long year since her will was read—
A year since she left me her old oak chest.
I opened the lid and I peeped inside
Full many a time in that long, dark week,
While the clouds of November, dark and wide,
Frowned on the wild wind's shrill whistle and shriek.

And then, when I emptied and searched it through—
The old chest, rubbed bright by the hand of Time—
Quaint, curious relics were brought to view
Of godmother's girlhood, godmother's prime—
Bright pieces of satin and old brocade,
A high-heeled slipper, an ivory fan;
And, deep in a sandal-wood box inlaid,
A note to her grandsire from Good Queen Anne;

Some gems, and a wimple her mother wore,
With a silken jess, and a falcon-ring;
A Bible of sixteen hundred and four,
And a song that godmother used to sing;
An embroiderèd waistcoat, last of all—
Unfinished, and wrapped in a silken square—
With a string of pearls in a casket small,
Old letters, a ring, and a lock of hair.

They were grandfather's letters! Through and through
I read them, and scanned the waistcoat again.
If all that my grandfather wrote were true,
Then how came grandmother Grandmother Frayne?
Gentle and good was grandfather's wife—
She was Godmother Dorothy's dearest friend.
Did grandmother know why godmother's life
Was lived all alone to its sweet, bright end?

And the half-wrought 'broidery seems to speak
Of godmother's grief-stricken, tearless eyes,
Of the chilling blanch on each wild-rose cheek,
And the sobs she never allowed to rise.
"Ah! Godmother Dorothy, sweet and mild,
I fear I could never be true like you!"
I murmured; but Cousin Irene smiled—
"True love must for ever and aye be true!"

And her fair face shone with a happy light.
"Love could not die in a year and a day,"
She thoughtfully said, as her eyes grew bright,
And methought that tears were not far away.
Fair Cousin Irene's white finger bears
A big signet ring, with a queer old crest;
And methinks I see in the smile she wears
A shadow of godmother's old oak chest.

## PRACTICAL POINTS ABOUT CLOTHING.

By "THE NEW DOCTOR."

"You should always wear flannel next to your skin, as it prevents consumption."

"You should never wear flannel next to your skin, for it produces eczema."

These two "commands" were given on the same day to the same lady by two physicians. The man who gave the first advice was a chest physician, the other a skin specialist. Which was right? I don't know. But I do know that both were wrong; not in the nature of the advice itself, as this was right enough from the very limited point of view of each, but in the positive way in which they gave it. Opinions are known to differ, and in nothing do they vary so greatly as in medicine.

If the first physician had said, "I advise you to wear flannel next to your skin as it reduces the liability to consumption;" and if the skin specialist had said, "In some people flannel produces great irritation, and for them it is better not to wear it," nothing more would have been required. The lady would wear the flannel, and if it caused no irritation, she would continue to wear it; if it caused inconvenience she would discontinue its use. She would have received good advice, and in either case she would have acted rightly.

As it happened, however, she was, as was not unnatural, rather doubtful as to whether she should or should not wear flannel. Thinking that if she got a third opinion, she would have, at all events, two against one, she asked my advice about the matter. I felt very much inclined to suggest a compromise and advise flannelette! But one must never joke in medicine. If I had given her this advice she would have told her two colleagues. The first would very likely have said that flannelette is no good for the purpose, the other that it produces worse irritation than flannel. So I should have had to answer both.

The truth is this, that what suits one person, does not necessarily suit another. It is therefore useless to lay down laws about every article of dress. But there are certain articles of attire about which there are no two opinions. These are what I am going to talk about to-day. At another time, perhaps, I will go into the question of the more disputed points about dress.

Have you ever heard of growing pains? Perhaps you have had personal experience in this matter. But did it ever strike you as peculiar that pain should occur especially during growth. But these growing pains do not stop when the body is full grown. I know an old lady of seventy who suffered from "growing pains" (according to her own statement). The truth is that these pains are not due to growth although they may occur during youth. "Growing pains" was the name used by our grandmothers for a great variety of affections, especially rheumatism and flat-foot. This latter is the commonest condition that gives rise to pain in the legs during youth; especially is this the case in large cities which are paved with flag-stones.

Let us talk about flat foot, as there is no condition which is more common amongst girls of all ages.

The shape of the natural foot is very curious and has little resemblance to that member as it occurs in most boot-wearing persons. If you look at the foot of a classical figure you will see that only the heel, the outer border of the foot and the balls of the toes touch the ground, while the greater part of the sole is above the level of the ground. The inner border of the foot does not touch the ground anywhere, and forms an arch with the convexity looking upwards. The four outer toes form a straight line, but the great toe turns inwards towards the middle line of the body, that is away from the other toes. All the toes are straight and the second toe is the longest. What a contrast to this is the foot of an ordinary English girl who has worn

[*From photo: Copyright* 1893, *Photographic Union, Munich.*

"QUAINT, CURIOUS RELICS WERE BROUGHT TO VIEW."

ill-fitting boots from infancy! Usually, if not invariably, the feet of Londoners are more or less flat. The inner border of the foot instead of forming an arch with the convexity upwards forms an almost straight line, often descending right on to the ground during walking, and occasionally showing a slight projection in the centre. This is the condition of flat or splay-foot.

If we were to examine the feet of every inhabitant of London we would probably not find that the great toe turned away from the others in more than a dozen at most. In a large number this toe is forced against the others, often overlapping or being overlapped by them. Sometimes a "bunion" becomes developed upon the ball of the great toe. One of the toes, most often the second is very commonly bent up and squeezed between its two fellows constituting "hammer toe."

These are some of the "peculiarities" of the civilised foot, and I will proceed to inform you how we have acquired these various modifications.

There is simply no question, that the shoemaker is responsible for the shape of our feet, and a very serious responsibility rests upon him for the evil he has wrought by his various "improvements" upon nature.

Take the foot of a classical statue and place by the side of it a boot; let it be square-toed, round-toed, pointed-toed; high-heeled, low-heeled, or heelless, a man's boot, a woman's boot, a girl's boot, a boy's boot, a child's boot, an infant's boot, a golosh, a dancing shoe, a slipper, a shoe, a boot or a Wellington, and you will be at once struck by the fact that not one of these various orthopædic instruments bears the slightest resemblance to the shape of the foot it is intended to "strengthen." Yet notwithstanding their various names, they are all made on much the same pattern, which is the foot of the shoemaker's imagination.

Now take off your boot and look at your foot whilst you move it about in all possible ways. You will observe there is very free movement at the ankle and at the balls of the toes, but that the whole of the sole of the foot is practically immovable. Now take your boot in your hand and try and bend it. With the slightest touch the boot bends in two at the waist, but there is no movement elsewhere. Here we have a boot, a support for the feet, in which the only movement allowed is one which the normal foot cannot perform. What do you suppose will happen in this struggle between boot and foot. Unfortunately the foot gets the worst of it, and for the following reason. Although there is no movement at the waist of the foot there is a joint there which allows a slight gliding movement. When a person walks with boots on, this joint is dragged open at every step and the sole of the foot instead of being a firm arch to support the weight of the body becomes a weak yielding pad. I do not mean to say that every boot bends at the "waist," for occasionally one meets with boots that do not do so. But these are great exceptions.

Now look at the toes of the statue and at the extremity of the boots. In the former the toes do not form a straight line, like the tip of a square-toed boot, nor a rounded summit as in round-toed boots, nor an acute angle as in pointed-toed boots, but a line gradually rising from the little to the second toe and then slightly decreasing again towards the great toe. The inner border of the foot is perfectly straight.

As I was writing this morning a girl came to see me who was very flat-footed, and I advised her to have her boots made with some resemblance to the member they were intended to hold. She answered: "People would think I was mad if I walked about with such odd-looking things on my feet."

The shape of the boots is responsible for most of the deformities of the toes which are so common. The bent-in great toe, hammer-toe, corns and bunions are all due to wrong boots.

Personally I believe boots with pointed toes are no worse than those with square toes.

I have not yet finished with boots. There are other points about foot-gear that require to be looked into. There are tight boots, loose boots, high-heeled boots and others which must be criticised.

Tight boots do not in themselves do much to deform the foot, but when the boots are both tight and misshapen they work havoc in a very short time. The special danger in tight boots is that the foot is liable to be pressed upon and little blisters to make their appearance at the point of pressure. These blisters protect the foot, and so far are of service, but if they burst dirt is liable to get in and produce very serious mischief. If ever you get a blister on your foot leave it alone until it bursts and then keep the place scrupulously clean and apply some antiseptic preparation every night. New boots even if they are not tight often produce blisters.

It is almost unnecessary in a girl's paper to say anything about boots that are too large, except that these are really much worse for producing blisters than those that are too tight.

I would not say much about high-heeled boots even if I dared, for it is useless for a physician to tell women not to wear high heels. He will simply be disobeyed; so he must put up with what is insisted upon and make the best of it. When all has been said against high heels there is not much fault to find with them. They do help to produce flat-foot; but what boots do not? There is, however, one great objection to high heels—not so much in boots as in shoes—that is that the heel is liable to give way and wrench the ankle, giving rise to severe strain of that joint which tends to weaken the ankle, especially if it is often repeated.

As we are on the subject of flat-foot, let me just say a word or two about treatment. I have not told you everything about its cause, but I will do so at another time when talking of exercise. If you have flat-foot which really gives trouble, such as the "growing pain" mentioned above, or inability to walk far, it will be advisable to do something to prevent it going any farther. First look to your boots—if they bend at the waist, discard them and get others in which the waist is especially strong, if possible strengthened with steel bands. If your feet are very flat a pad may be advisable. These pads can be got at almost any boot-maker; but it is difficult to get them to fit exactly, and unless they do so they are very uncomfortable. As a general rule I do not advise them. The second point is exercise. As I shall say more about this at another time, I shall only briefly state that walking, running, dancing and jumping intermittently with periods of rest with the feet elevated are good. Sitting and, far more so, standing are bad. Walking on tip-toe is very beneficial in the early stages of flat-foot.

The next articles of attire that I am going to talk about are garters. I have heard that lately these "constrictors" have given way to suspenders, and I am very pleased that they have done so, as you will see what unpleasant conditions they may cause.

Somebody (who I have not the least notion, but I sincerely hope that he was not a physician) lately circulated the idea that garters should be worn below and not above the knee. This is a very curious mistake. Garters above the knee do little or no harm, whereas if worn below the knee they impede the circulation and produce varicose veins and other highly undesirable conditions. The circulation in the legs at its best is the weakest in the whole body, and in those whose occupation necessitates much standing is extremely liable to become incompetent. It then only needs the help of garters below the knees to press upon the veins of the leg to set up a very serious state of things, which renders the leg so feeble that the least injury results in great ulcers which do not readily heal.

If garters are worn at all they should be worn above the knee, and they should be very loose and elastic. They should be white in colour by preference, or else dyed by aniline colours, not by mineral substances, as these often set up irritation which may go on to eczema.

I now come to the everlasting cause of feuds between women and physicians. I refer, of course, to corsets. The other day I was talking with a celebrated "fashionable" doctor, who told me that he had fought against the practice of wearing tight corsets for years and that during the "wasp days," as he expressed it, he lost many patients through his determined stand against the fashion of the day. But, he added, chuckling, I have got the best of it at last.

With all due deference to this most able physician, I cannot help thinking that the edict of fashion has had far more influence on the circumference of the waist than all the warnings and prognostications of the medical faculty. In no case can a man convince a woman against her will, and a doctor is by no means an exception to the rule. But by gentle advice one may be heard when stronger measures would be resisted.

There is no doubt that very serious conditions often follow from tight lacing. If one were to take a circle round any part of the human body none would include more vital organs than the waist. The lungs, liver, stomach, and great masses of nervous matter which innervate the abdominal organs are all included by the waist. None of these organs will stand pressure. Yet but a few years back it was the custom to force the waist into the smallest space for the sake of fashion. Serious results often followed the practice, and most fortunately it was always painful, and rendered both eating and digestion difficult. The very natural result of this is that the fashion is gradually dying out, and how fortunate it must be for those fair ones whose appetites are ordinary and not birdlike!

I do not wish you to think that I condemn a waist on principle or object to the use of corsets. I only crave for half an inch more for the poor organs that are kept working all day and night and receive no better treatment than to be squeezed out of all resemblance to their rightful shape.

About hats I have little to say except that I could never understand how it was that more people were not injured by hat-pins. I have noticed that, if a tall man and a woman of middle height are standing together, his eyes are on a level with her hat-pins. It wants little in a crowd for an extra-far projecting hat-pin to do very considerable injury to those standing by. Surely sheaths can be obtained for the points of hat-pins, and it is the duty of every woman to use them. I lay particular stress on this subject, as I have lately seen a woman whose eye had to be removed owing to damage done by a hat-pin.

Whilst on the subject of hats one might refer for a moment to baldness. As everyone knows, this is very much more common in men than in the opposite sex. The reason for this, I feel almost certain, lies in the headgear. A man usually wears a stiff hat with a hard rim, which he rams down on his head, while the hats usually worn by women are soft and fit loosely.

The great blood-vessel that supplies the scalp, namely, the temporal artery, lies against the projection of the temple. If you force a stiff hat on your head this artery gets compressed between the hat rim and the bone. More than this, the veins are also pressed upon, so that the blood supply to the scalp is seriously interfered with. The result is that the hair is not properly nourished; it becomes brittle, or very thin and soft; the hair follicles strike work, and baldness ultimately ensues.

The fact that some men who wear top-hats become bald while others do not, though at first apparently contradictory, the above statement really goes far to prove it. Those whose heads are broad—that is, those in whom the temples are prominent and the temporal artery exposed—are the more likely to become bald. The fact that baldness is common amongst the "top-hat-wearing" class and comparatively rare among "cap wearers" also favours this view. There is another point that I have often observed among gentlemen who are not bald; that is, that there is often a distinct line of demarcation in the hair corresponding with the rim of the hat. Above this line the hair is soft and thin, below it is thick and hard.

When I went out yesterday afternoon I saw a woman with a veil of a most remarkable pattern. It represented a web spun by a spider. Two flies and a something—I do not know what—were represented on that part of the veil that covered her right cheek, whilst an enormous spider quite concealed her left eye. Now this may be a great novelty, and perhaps an object of admiration and envy for some of her friends; but, as far as I am concerned, it was the ugliest thing I ever saw disfigure a lady's face. But it is not for its beauty or ugliness that I call attention to it, but because the great spider over one eye is injurious to the sight. It is often stated that veils are bad for the eye-sight, but this is not the case, a simple, slight veil doing no harm to the sight if it is not worn too close to the face.

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# HOUSEKEEPING IN LONDON.

By "A GIRL PROFESSIONAL."

## CHAPTER V.

### TURNINGS AND SEAMS.

WE may pass by a few months, as, though full of many changing and varied experiences there were few of them that need to be recorded here. The most noteworthy of these changes was the bachelor's loss of her post, which happened in the early part of that summer, and so cut off one of the few resources we had, and made it more than ever necessary to bend every energy to maintaining the house and keeping its inmates. Feeling how greatly we depended on it for the chief part of our income, I endured many smaller trials and put up with a good many things of which no one else knew; it was worth something if only to preserve a home, at least until other ways and means of maintaining one should open out.

There was no thought of taking holidays that year; a Saturday to Monday trip to the seaside had to suffice; indeed we had no opportunity for holiday-making, as early in August Mrs. Norris received the visit of another son, a student in Germany, and his "visit" was prolonged until the beginning of October. He added considerably to the work of the house, and only very reluctantly could be persuaded to add to its funds, indeed, if he had not been cornered and forced to pay up, we should have been left with nothing but the doubtful honour of having entertained a—defaulter—unawares.

The other ladies were both away for a short time, and their board money was accordingly stopped; but as our receipts had been fairly regular up to this time we were able to lay in a few tons of coal in August before the prices were raised. It gave one a certain feeling of security to feel that the coal cellar was so well stocked, and it was fortunate for us we had it so, as the winter proved to be exceptionally severe. After Christmas the weather set in for keen frost that intensified every day. One after another the pipes were attacked, and the water-supply gave out as the main became frozen in the road. We were compelled to have our water brought by cans from the stand-pipe in the road at stated hours in the day, employing a poor man for the purpose to whom the few pence he could earn in this way represented his whole living. There was much distress abroad in those weeks, and if we could keep a warm fireside and a well-supplied table, we had cause to be thankful. We were well into the middle of February before the frost broke up, and it was March before our pipes were restored to use again; like every other householder we had a plumber's bill to pay, but our damages were less serious than might have been expected.

To add to the difficulties of this time, which now, as we look back upon it seems like a nightmare, the influenza claimed us amongst a host of other victims. Mrs. Norris was the first to be laid up, and she kept her bed for a fortnight, and her room for nearly a month; requiring our constant attention by day and her son's devotion in the evening.

She was barely convalescent when our mother was attacked and took to her bed, and the very next day I succumbed myself. The bachelor, who had a temporary appointment in the North of London, was compelled to give it up and act as nurse and housekeeper, and for convenience sake mother and I shared one room and one fire. Our doctor was called in and seemed to find it rather a joke at first and chaffed us on our miniature hospital. But by the third day it was no joking matter as far as our mother was concerned, and I was compelled to leave my bed and take up the reins again, as she required constant watching and care. When the crisis was past there followed seven long weeks of anxiety; such very slow progress was made, and what was gained one day seemed to be lost the next. It was close upon Easter before she was able to come downstairs again, and so soon as she was fit she left us to pay a long visit into the country; this, happily, putting the final touches to the cure. As I accompanied her down and stayed a few days, the rest and change completely restored me also.

After this long and trying winter the house needed a thorough turning out and spring-cleaning. We were fortunate in having met with a woman for day-work who proved a veritable treasure, and has been a stay ever since. We called her *La dame Blanche*—a play on her proper name of White—and she truly worked like a good fairy, quietly, unobtrusively, and conscientiously. Under her care we speedily regained spotlessness, and when the summer sunshine came were able to enjoy something of a respite, especially as Mrs. Morris departed with her married daughter and children to a house by the sea, leaving us her son-in-law as her representative, and he, being most frequently out in the daytime was less trouble than herself. We rather enjoyed the three months of his stay with us; he was very good company at table, and made a better balance of parties, as young Mr. Norris brightened up when supported by one of his own sex, and the other ladies, though professing to think Dr. A. a humbug, were on their mettle with him, so to speak, and exerted themselves to be as charming as they could. We ourselves, as lookers-on at the play, often found it highly diverting.

Both gentlemen took their holidays in the month of August, and as the ladies also happened to be away by the middle of the month I was persuaded to join my brother's family at Deal, and spent with them a very happy and restful week. The bachelor kept house meanwhile, and at the beginning of September went down to the country to spend a few days there; thus we both had a break in the routine of daily life, a much needed one too.

With mother's return a new difficulty arose. Having a servant to sleep indoors had, of course, taken off one of the bedrooms on the top floor; we did not wish to lose the maid as she suited us very well and wished to stay; but mother's comfort must be studied too.

Mrs. Norris had been very trying latterly, and had taken advantage of us in so many ways, that as we happened then to make acquaintance with another possible tenant—through a mutual friend—we thought seriously about giving her notice to quit.

The new applicant was a single lady of very uncertain age but of good family, a family of whom we had had some previous knowledge, and when she finally agreed to terms and settled to come to us we approached the difficult task of telling Mrs. Norris to go. I should explain that by taking one tenant in place of two our difficulty about rooms became settled, as the two sisters moved on to one floor, and left us the top of the house entirely to ourselves; as this arrangement was also made with but a slight reduction of terms in the case of the new-comer, it was apparently a very wise move. I say apparently, for alas, it proved a very mistaken move and one we had sincerely to regret ere we were much older. But though wisdom comes to all with experience, we can only pursue what seems the best course at the time.

Mrs. Norris was much aggrieved and taken aback by such an unexpected move, she professed herself utterly *désolée*, as indeed I truly believe she was. Doubtless she foresaw that her easy times were drawing to an end, as she might not meet with a home so much to her mind again; moreover, having been born and bred in this neighbourhood she had a genuine affection for it. When she finally departed it was with tears in her eyes, but after we had got rid of the last of those debatable goods of hers and swept up the *débris*, we on our side heaved a deep sigh of relief. Altogether there could not be much regret for us to feel.

The new inmate began to prove less eager to come after the coast was clear; she was touched

with the craze of æstheticism, and found it imperative to have the walls repapered and the floors repolished, etc. As the paper was still good and little damaged we naturally objected to removing it, whereupon she consented to do it at her own expense, and chose her own colour and design. All her furniture was new, much of it costly, and she ransacked the warehouses in search of it, while we had to endure any amount of bell-ringing and carrying in and out of goods, besides the needless trouble and expense of having workmen indoors for nearly a fortnight. However, by the end of the month she was safely established and we had got somewhat used to her ways. With regard to these, if Mrs. Norris had been trying this lady was doubly so, and expected attention during every waking hour of the day. The maid was nearly run off her legs, and I could hardly secure an hour to myself many days. Still, as her payments were good and she was more profitable on the whole, we might have endured her idiosyncracies hoping to run more easily as we grew accustomed to the effort, had she not proved treacherous as well. Full of freaks and fancies she pined for incessant change, and quickly wearied when she found herself one of a quiet and regular household.

In the first weeks of her stay a grown-up niece paid her a visit, and together they interviewed a physician on her niece's account. The latter, apparently a most robust young woman, was supposed to be in the preliminary stage of consumption, and a voyage out to Australia and back was advised for her, to be taken without delay.

This suited the tastes of both ladies exactly, and they were in high spirits at the prospect, losing no time in booking their passages as they wished to travel in one particular ship. That she was leaving us in the lurch and breaking up her newly-made home seemed of no consequence to Miss A. She was careful to give her due notice when paying her monthly rent, so that we might not legally claim more than that from her, but to our appeal for compensation for the expense and the trouble to which we had been put on her account, she was completely deaf. Unfortunately we had no written contract to bind her, and so could not force her in any way.

In another month she was gone, her furniture also, and we were once more left with empty rooms, that, too, at a time of the year when very few people care to move, and though we advertised and answered advertisements, and put up a card over the door in orthodox fashion, yet we had four long months with those empty rooms haunting us. Not that there were no applicants for them, but very few who came found them suitable. This was a hard time and a difficult lesson to learn. We were sorely put to it to make our expenses and meet rent and rates with the small income which was ours, and it seemed but little short of miraculous that we did meet and fulfil them as they fell due. No doubt it was a lesson we needed to learn, and the forty pounds it cost us was perhaps not too dearly paid, but it was a hard time indeed, scarcely less hard, though in a different way, than the preceding winter had been.

It is, however, a long lane that has no turning, and in April we received an application that was almost a demand for these two rooms. The applicant was an elderly lady, tall, imposing, by no means handsome, but evidently not ungenerous and seemingly well-to-do. She was so charmed with her first inspection of the rooms that she came again the following day bringing with her a relative to give an opinion. With the latter, a truly bewitching old lady, we fell in love at first sight, and had she been the negotiating party she might have carried everything before her. We were much amused with her advice as she gave it; her friend was somewhat against joining us at table for dinner, seeming to prefer the idea of having her meals alone.

"No, my dear," the elder lady said, emphasising her words with her fingers; "no, it will do you good to have company and conversation, better for you in every way."

Within a week this lady was housed with a quantity of what she called "charming" furniture; it seemed that whatever she took it into her head to do she would do, in spite of every difficulty, so that she had paid heavily to clear out of her flat without staying out her notice, and she also paid us a month's rent in advance on the day she arrived. Being quite unused to doing anything for herself, she sat in the midst of a chaos of chairs and tables for several days, waiting for workmen to come and fix up her belongings. We offered our help many times, and sent the maid to her assistance, but it was of little use, nothing could be done right, so she was left to bring order out of the scene as she could. When tired of bewailing the unfortunate circumstances that obliged her to do without a maid of her own, she set to, and finally emerged triumphant over her difficulties, when she invited us all to pay her a visit of inspection. Certainly there was some praise due to her, for the quantity of china and bric-a-brac was exceedingly well arranged, and the room looked well and handsomely furnished. Her bedroom was not so satisfactory, indeed that bedroom has always been more or less of an eyesore, and seems as though it always will be. A good many chests and large pieces of furniture had had to be stored, other things had been sold, and she had given us the use of many things that were really helpful, notably a servant's wardrobe, which being nearly new we put into our own bedroom, and there was a nice linoleum which just covered the kitchen floor; for these we felt duly grateful and gladly found her storage room for a quantity of smaller articles.

When she was at ease in her mind and satisfied that we had no intention of imposing upon her, we found her to be by no means unpleasant company. When it suited her to be so she could be most entertaining, and having lived much in society, being indeed a member of an old county family, she was full of anecdotes and stories. At other times she was the very opposite—obtuse, hard of hearing, and exasperating to a degree. Though at present she is still with us and apparently quite content, we are quite aware that a small offence might be enough to turn her affection into enmity and cause her to leave us on the spot, so though we run along very smoothly there is never a great feeling of certainty to be depended upon.

As this brings our history up to the present time my next chapter must deal with the practical working of such a "business" as this, as the motive in writing the history has been the hope of being truly helpful to others in similar situations.

(*To be concluded.*)

## THE FIERCENESS OF GLOUCESTER.

### A STUDY IN THE TAMING OF SQUIRRELS.

If any one wishes for a fund of never-failing amusement, let her cultivate and tame wild squirrels!

It takes some years of patient feeding and coaxing, but when the confidence of the graceful little animals has once been won, they reward their friends with never-ceasing antics and gambols, fierce little scrimmages and fights amongst themselves, and with a succession of such charming attitudes that one longs for them to sit still quietly enough to allow one to sketch them.

Very frequently I am visited at breakfast-time by as many as nine or ten of these active little rodents. They well know it is feeding-time for them, so they congregate outside the window waiting most impatiently until it is opened, then they are rewarded by a shower of nuts. Soon there are ten little furry people thoroughly happy, each flinging his nut-shells about with saucy abandon, keeping his black beady eyes fixed on his neighbours lest they should be meditating a sudden aggressive assault if opportunity occurs.

All this is charming, but the real amusement begins when the store of outside nuts is exhausted and the squirrels come trooping into the room to see what they can find. They spring upon a table, where my doves Peace and Patience reside in their large cage, and scout around to find more food.

Several of the squirrels are tame enough to take the nuts out of our hands, others boldly run off to the cupboard where their food is stored, and they have taught themselves to leap, first up to a shelf, and then into a box, where we soon hear the little marauders cracking the nuts.

But how shall I describe the amusing squabbles that go on?

One, sitting on the window-ledge, is knocked over by another leaping in; both reach the ground together and have a tussle, squeaking and grunting the while, others join in the fray, then there is a race round the room ending with a dissolving view of squirrels' tails disappearing out at the window. It is all play, for no real harm is done, it is only the effervescence of high spirits and keen appetite.

Some years ago a tame squirrel was sent to me from Gloucester to be let loose in the garden. For some time we could not feel sure of her identity, she mingled with the others and did not show any special tameness.

Of late, however, "Gloucester," as we have named her, has become a very marked character, tameness has merged into a more and more defiant aggressiveness not altogether to be desired. Whilst I am peacefully writing my letters, Gloucester springs suddenly upon my table, walks over my note-paper, regardless of the smudges she leaves behind her, leaps on to my shoulder, and with an angry growl the small tyrant intimates that nuts must be forthcoming instantly or else she will

make her claws and teeth felt in a way that I shall remember. At present I meekly obey, for peace sake, but I only hope that the time may never come when "Gloucester" will have to repent of her effrontery and find her liberty curtailed.

When an animal or bird has been reared from its early years with care and kindness it is remarkable how invariably all its faculties are developed and brought out. The native instincts remain, but being cultivated, they result in many curious traits showing unusual intelligence.

Gloucester having been petted from her babyhood is just an instance of educated ability. I must pay a tribute to her skill and perseverance by relating what I saw her achieve in my dining-room when she thought no one was observing her. The heavy oak door of the nut cupboard was closed but not latched; Gloucester wanted to get some nuts, and when she found that she could not get at them, she sprang up to the handle and sitting upon it, she pushed with all her might against the door-post and actually made the door open sufficiently for her lithe, little body to squeeze through into the cupboard. It certainly showed a measure of reasoning power, thus to carry out several varied actions in order to attain a desired end.

I do forgive the terrible virago a good deal because of her cleverness, but when she sits loudly cracking nuts on the table-cloth within three inches of my plate at breakfast-time, and yet will not allow me to take up my fork or spoon without a growl or a snap, and when I know how severely she bit a gentle little girl who merely wished to "stroke the pretty squirrel," I think my readers will agree that Gloucester carries the emancipation of the female sex to a very serious length.

Squirrels vary a good deal in their appearance according to the season of the year. They are in their fullest beauty in April and May when the fur is thick and of a rich red brown, the ears are adorned with long additional hairs called pencils, and the tails are thick and bushy. Now, in the month of June, having worked industriously making their nests (dreys) and having families of young squirrels to maintain, the little parents' furry coats show signs of wear and tear; the ear-pencils have fallen off, and all the tails have become cream colour which gives them rather a bizarre effect as they flit rapidly across the lawn.

We often see the squirrels busily stripping off the inner fibre of the lime-tree branches, of which soft material they form their dreys. The fibre is held together by small interlacing twigs of larch, and the nest is usually placed in the fork of a branch very high up in some fir-tree where the foliage is thick enough to afford perfect concealment. Sometimes a hole in a tree-stem is chosen, but wherever it is, the future home is carefully lined with moss, leaves and fibres, and is a cosy retreat for the baby squirrels.

I often wish we could see the little ones when quite small, but they never appear at the window until they are nearly as large as their parents. Nor do I quite look forward to the day when Gloucester will present to me a whole family of young persons as insolent and bullying as herself.

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# "IF LOVING HEARTS WERE NEVER LONELY——";

OR,

## MADGE HARCOURT'S DESOLATION.

By GERTRUDE PAGE.

### CHAPTER XX.

A NEW FRIEND.

IT was a dull, wet afternoon, two weeks later, when Elsie Merton hurried along the streets of Monte Carlo, and on reaching the hotel in which Guy and Madge were staying, entered and ran upstairs to her own apartments.

She was a young English professional singer, and was spending a few weeks in Monte Carlo with her mother for the latter's health.

"It is wretched out," she said, throwing off her hat and jacket and ensconcing herself in a low chair by the fire. "I am glad to see a bright fire. Have you been alone all the afternoon, little mother?" and as she spoke she took her mother's hand in hers and looked lovingly into her face.

"Yes, dear, but I was not at all lonely, I had a nice book. But I am glad you are back; I did not like you to be out in this miserable weather."

"It was not pleasant, certainly," replied her daughter, "but it is delightful to be in now; we will sit in the twilight a little while. I will make up the fire; I love to see it flicker on the walls."

Suiting the action to the word, she quickly succeeded in producing a bright blaze, and then, with a contented sigh, sank back into her chair.

It was a very sweet face, though not strictly a beautiful one, that the firelight revealed; one of those pure, strong, thoroughly English faces that it rests one to look upon.

Her features were irregular and her complexion slightly sallow; but one forgot this when gazing into the beautiful grey eyes of the young singer. Those sweet eyes which are capable of lighting up with fun and merriment one moment, and becoming thoughtful and sympathetic the next. The kind of eyes that speak sympathy in silence and elicit confidence unasked.

For some minutes after making up the fire she remained watching it in silence; then, looking up suddenly, she said: "Mother, I saw the beautiful English girl again this afternoon. I wish you could see her; I wonder what you would think of her. I can't tell you how she interests me. When I first saw her I wanted to stand and gaze at her because she was so lovely, and yet at the same time I felt conscious of something that repelled me; something about the expression of her mouth and eyes. I never saw quite such a look on anyone so young; it was both half-callous and half-defiant. But when I came to look again I felt a sudden sympathy for her. I am sure she isn't happy. I should say she has had some bitter disappointments."

"Perhaps she isn't happy with her husband."

"No, I don't think that, but I can't make them out. They very rarely go about together, but when they do he seems to show her every attention."

"I have seen him," said her mother. "I met him on the stairs this morning; their rooms are on the floor above ours. I thought he had a particularly nice face, but he looked ill and worried."

"They can hardly have money difficulties or they wouldn't live as they do. She dresses exceedingly well, and they certainly don't look like people who live on nothing a year. I should like to know her; I feel more drawn to her every time we meet. I don't think she can have many friends here, for she is always alone when her husband is not with her. Funnily enough, the parlourmaid only mentioned to me this morning that she considered them a most extraordinary couple. She says they very seldom talk, and whenever she goes in the room he is always reading the paper and she a book. She says they are 'true, cold English,' and added with delightful simplicity, 'and he be such an extinguished looking gentleman.' I felt obliged to stop her then, for I hate to hear servants discuss the visitors; but all the same, I was longing to know more about them."

"Perhaps she will unbend a little if you continue to meet her often, and help to open a way for your acquaintance," said her mother.

"I'm afraid not," was the thoughtful reply, "she looks too reserved. I shall have to manage it myself if I am to get to know her. As a matter-of-fact, I think she has probably not noticed me at all, for if she glances in my direction it is as if she did not see anything. But there, I mustn't sit idling here any longer," she continued, rising and giving herself a little shake; "I have three letters to write before post-time."

When she had finished she rose, remarking, "I will run down and put them in the hall at once, and then they cannot be forgotten."

On the way she was surprised to meet the object of her fire-light conversation, and struck by the unusual weariness of her ascent looked half-anxiously into her face as she passed. The feeling of sympathy came over her again, although Madge passed her without seeming to see her, and she hurried down with her letters and back again in order to overtake her, scarcely knowing why. But she had no reason to regret her haste, for, even as she approached her, Madge stood still on the staircase, pressed one hand over her eyes, and grasped the banisters tightly to save herself from falling.

"I am afraid you are not well," said Elsie, touching her gently. "Let me help you up these two steps and then you must come into my room and rest for a few minutes. It is the first door."

Madge started slightly and hastily attempted to move on.

"Thank you," she said quickly, "I am quite well, it was only a sudden touch of giddiness. I need not trouble you."

But even as she spoke she again reeled and had to support herself, so that it was impossible to protest further, and she suffered Elsie to lead her into her room.

"This lady is a little faint, mother," she said, as Mrs. Merton rose and came forward. "I have persuaded her to rest here a little while. I think a little rest would revive her. There is no one here," she added, leading Madge to a large arm-chair. "You will soon feel better."

Then she gently took off her hat and unfastened her jacket. "I have some eau-de-cologne," she said, reaching a bottle from a small table. "May I bathe your head with it?"

Madge thanked her and closed her eyes, and presently a faint colour came back into her cheeks.

She opened her eyes and looked at her kind benefactors.

"You are very kind," she said, trying to rise, "but I need not trouble you any further."

"Please don't speak of troubling us," put in Elsie quickly, "I am so glad that I happened to be at hand. Won't you stay until you are rested? We shall be so pleased if you will."

"Thank you," murmured Madge, and leaned back in her chair again. Somehow she found it pleasant to sit there and be taken care of. She looked round the pretty room, bright with photographs, and at the two kind faces before her, and a momentary sense of peacefulness possessed her. But all too soon her natural reserve returned, inducing a sudden impulse to seek her own solitary apartments.

"I think I must go," she said, and stood up to take leave.

For one moment Elsie hesitated, and then, with an intensely winning smile, she said, "We should be so glad if you would stay a little. Mother and I are quite alone, and we shall like your company so much."

"Madge looked at her in surprise and then said suddenly, "I think I have seen you before; have we met anywhere?"

"Only on the stairs and out of doors," replied Elsie, "and then I thought you did not see me."

"Yes, I did, I remember now, I liked your face. It is kind of you to ask me to stay, but I am a very unsociable person. I'm sure you wouldn't enjoy my company."

"Please let us judge for ourselves," urged Elsie, and her mother added a word of persuasion, so that Madge was at last prevailed upon to sit down again.

"Will your husband be anxious about you, because we can easily ring and send him a message," said Mrs. Merton. "Perhaps he would join you?"

"He is out," replied Madge. "I do not expect him back yet."

"Are you making a long stay here?" asked Elsie, seating herself on a low chair beside her visitor.

"An indefinite one. We may go any day, or we stay for weeks. It depends upon how we feel."

"Do you like Monte Carlo?"

"I don't mind it. I would as soon be here as anywhere. I find all places are much the same."

"But surely friends and associations endear some to us more than others."

"I have no friends and no associations, except those I would rather forget."

Madge spoke with an undertone of much bitterness, and turned her face away to the fire. The gay life and throng of pleasure-seekers in Monte Carlo had not had a soothing effect upon her. And as she sat in Mrs. Merton's cosy sitting-room and felt the atmosphere of love and happiness and contentment that reigned there, a hard sense of desolation smote her.

She thought, if she had had such a mother, one who made a friend and not a subject of her child, how different she might have been now. A lump rose in her throat and tears were ready to start into her eyes, for she was tired and unwell, and her usual cold demeanour forsook her. But she was determined her new friends should know her as she generally was, so she resolutely controlled the rising softness in her heart and took refuge in increased bitterness.

After her last remark she expected Elsie and her mother to regard her in wonderment and perhaps expostulate with her.

She was surprised when instead Elsie said simply, "I am so sorry," and her mother went on quietly with her knitting.

"Have you travelled much?" asked the former, hoping to find a subject congenial to her strange guest.

"Yes, a good deal during the last year, at least since I was married. Before I never went anywhere."

"Are you fond of it?"

"Not particularly."

"Mother and I love it. We scarcely ever left London until two years ago, and since then we have seen a good deal."

"Yes?" said Madge questioningly, her interest beginning to grow. "Where did you live in London?"

"In Chelsea. I am a professional singer. I have earned my living by my voice for about ten years."

"Have you, indeed?" and now Madge turned and looked at her with scrutiny. Evidently the calm sweet eyes pleased her yet more, for she asked kindly, "What is your professional name?"

"Marie Beaufoy," replied Elsie.

"Then I have heard you sing at the Orchestral Concerts," she said. "I remember your name quite well."

"Are you fond of music?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"Yes, very; I often went to concerts in London."

"I'm sure Elsie will be pleased to sing to you if you care about it any time."

"Indeed I shall," echoed her daughter, "if you will let me, some evening."

"Thank you," replied Madge, a little hesitatingly.

She was not sure if she wished to make a friend after going so long without.

Elsie, noticing her hesitation, changed the subject, bravely determining not to be discouraged.

"Did you live long in London?" she asked.

"No, I was never there before I was married. My home was in Cumberland."

"Do you like a country life?"

"I don't mind it. The winter seemed long."

"Yes, that must be the worst of it, unless one has brothers and sisters at home for company. Have you either?"

"No." She paused, then added in a low voice, "I had one brother, but he died."

"How sad," said Elsie, in the same kind, sympathetic voice. "You must have felt it dreadfully," and she purposely avoided looking into her visitor's face. "I have always longed for a brother. If I had one and lost him, I don't know what I should do."

Madge moved a little restlessly as if the subject hurt her.

"You wouldn't do anything but just endure it," she said, in a hard voice. "There is nothing else to do. It is a thousand times better never to have had one."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Merton quietly. "The memory is a glad one, and at least it is one more dear one to greet you hereafter."

Madge did not speak, but she bit her lips hard.

"Has he been dead long?" asked Elsie gently, adding, "I hope you won't think me very rude, asking so many questions. I seem to know you so well, after meeting you so often and talking to mother about you."

Madge looked a little surprised, but in her heart she admired the girl's frankness.

"I think it rather kind of you to have troubled to be interested," she said, "and if I had a friend I should wish her to be perfectly frank. My brother has been dead eighteen months. He was killed by an accident. He went out strong and well in the afternoon, and they carried him home dead in the early morning."

Her breast heaved, and she clutched the arm of the chair so that the veins on her hand stood out.

"Oh, how dreadful!" exclaimed

Elsie, feelingly. "It must have almost killed you."

"I wished it might," was the bitter answer, "and sometimes I wish it might still."

Elsie did not reply, and there was a silence for a few moments; then Madge rose to go. Elsie rose also and accompanied her to her own door, begging her as they parted to come and see them again any time when she felt inclined.

The following evening, a good deal to her own surprise, Madge found herself again in Mrs. Merton's little sitting-room. All day long the memory of the sense of peacefulness and calm that had so struck her the previous day haunted her, until at last she had yielded to her inclinations and gone down for a second visit. Thus their intimacy grew apace, and though Madge still continued reserved, Elsie was as gentle and sympathetic as ever, which made Madge feel that she had found a friend.

When Guy returned she was seated in her old chair reading as usual. She looked up as he entered and made one or two remarks, but she did not tell him of her new acquaintances, and presently took up her book again without having noticed the unusual pallor of his face and the strained look in his eyes.

And Guy took up a paper and sat down by the window, but he did not read a word and the look in his eyes became more strained.

(*To be continued.*)

# ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## STUDY AND STUDIO.

A. Jennie Aston.—We have inserted your request under "International Correspondence." We like your writing very much, and have no special fault to find with your composition, save that "&" is scarcely admissible in a formal letter to a stranger, and it would be better to use the same tenses on page 1; "you say that any one. . . . . may write to you," not "might." You also use two "thats" close together, which should be avoided.

We regret that through a clerical error, Miss Hathway, Anderson's, Denmark Hill, S.E., was in our December number represented as Miss Anderson, Hathway's.

One Who Needs Help.—You will find the National Home Reading Union adapted to your needs. Send for full details to Miss Mondy, Surrey House, Victoria Embankment, W.C. Amateur societies are frequently mentioned in this column: see our back numbers.

Miss Clifford, 44, Hill Road, Wimbledon, sends details of an Art and Photographic competition; rules free by post for three stamps.

F. E. George.—We should suggest *The Beginner's Guide to Photography*, published price 6d.; J. C. Hepworth's *Photography for Amateurs*, 1s.; *Photography in a Nutshell*, 1s.; or Captain Abney's *Instructions in Photography*, 3s. 6d.

W. F. M.—Your poems are not suitable for publication, and we only accept the work of experienced writers. The idea of "Two Sides of a Picture" (the better poem) is good, but your "form" is defective. "Descry" and "eyes," "forms" and "storm" do not rhyme. Your last verse about the homeless poor is the best.

> "If you told them of the figures
> You could see in falling snow,
> They would mock you and make answer
> 'Tis very cold! that's what we know'."

An Old Subscriber.—Your story is interesting, to the point, and well-written. We should be rather disposed to wonder why the St. Bernard dog only came into the "Haunted Lane" at night, but that being granted, the remainder is quite probable. Many thanks for your kind words of appreciation.

Soldier's Daughter.—1. We can honestly praise the brief sketch you send us, and see no reason why it should not obtain admission into one of the small magazines. Try one of the penny weekly "home" magazines that are so numerous just now. You may do better work with practice and study, and we advise you to persevere.—2. We think you would obtain a spinning-wheel, flax, &c., at Keswick, where Mr. Ruskin has established a spinning industry. We cannot tell you the exact address, but doubtless a letter addressed "The Ruskin Spinning Industry, Keswick," would arrive at the right quarter.

Sleeping Beauty.—Your verses contain a very good thought, sometimes well expressed. Your rhymes, however, are occasionally faulty, *e.g.*, "faint" and "gate," "mien" and "seem."

Elsie.—Many thanks for your very interesting letter in reply to our criticism. A story, to comply with the canons of literary art, must not record what is exceptional good fortune, and represent it as being the achievement of "patience, courage, and faith in the love and providence of God under the most trying circumstances of adversity." The marriage of a penniless governess, over forty years of age, with the rich and charming father of a pupil, comes under the category of this exceptional good fortune, and to represent it as resulting from the above-mentioned cause, is to give false views of life; for the majority of hard-working middle-aged women, though they may be as good and devoted as Violet Hermesley, do not meet with a similar reward. We did not say, nor intend to say, that such an occurrence never did or could take place, and we think if you read this answer carefully you will understand our meaning.

Lover of Italy.—Your lines on "Italy" are not written in any particular metre, and you use "thee" and "you" alternately in apostrophising the "land of your dreams," whither we hope you may one day go.

Iris.—Feller's *Pocket Italian Dictionary* is published at 4s.; Graglia's improved *Pocket Dictionary* at 2s. 6d.; Routledge's at 1s. 6d. We always use Grassi's, but it may be out of print. Your other query is answered elsewhere.

Semper Paratus.—We append two translations, the one free, the other literal.

With Many Wishes for a Happy Christmas.

> The guileless Babe, moving by tedious means
> In time appeareth as one fully fledged,
> Forgetful oft, of friends of former days
> When he hath left his lowly cradle bed!

*Literal Translation—*

Many Wishes for a Happy Christmas.

> The Babe without guile, moving by tedious means
> Comes after a time into the great world,
> And then neither hears nor sees anyone
> When his crib is left behind!

## INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE.

Mademoiselle Marie Perraud, Quai de Retz 25, Lyons, Rhône, France, would be glad to exchange letters with an English girl. She is nineteen years old, of good family, and obtained two years ago the highest diploma for Girls' Secondary Education at the Lyons School; she is a good musician, and fond of drawing and painting.

We commend this information to Miss A. Jennie Aston, care of Dr. J. P. Aston, Richmond House, Eccleshill, near Bradford, Yorkshire, who is eighteen in the sixth class of the Salt Schools, Shipley, Yorks, and who wishes for a French correspondent.

"Robin Hood" also asks for a French correspondent.

Miss S. Ackermann, Syke Villa, Troutbeck, Windermere, would be glad to exchange letters with a German girl.

As our correspondents still enclose stamped envelopes, we must again say that we cannot undertake to answer letters privately, and refer them to the remarks in a recent number.

## MEDICAL.

In Hope.—"There is no disease which is absolutely hopeless. There is no sufferer who does not hope to be cured." You tell us that you suffer from a cough which has persisted for over two years. This cough may be due to a most serious affection or a very trifling cause. You must therefore find out what is the cause of the cough. It is of course impossible for us to hazard an opinion on your condition without a thorough personal examination of your chest and throat. We can therefore only advise you to have a proper examination made by a competent physician. You say that you had your chest examined by a doctor last year, who said that you had a "weak chest." Have your chest examined again, perhaps signs of a more definite disease may have developed during the last few months. If nothing is found in your chest have your throat examined. Affections of the throat and nose very often cause chronic cough. As regards hydrotherapy for disease of the chest and throat, we give it as our opinion that it is useless. Whether you should go abroad or not is a question which cannot be answered except by a physician, who has personally examined your chest.

Weary One.—Everything that you mention is due to anæmia. You are almost certain to get well again. It has been said that those persons who mistrust their doctors take the longest time to cure. Anæmia is not a very difficult disease to treat, and we can answer for it, that your doctor knows what is best for you.

Pen.—Where you have heard that "blackheads are absolutely incurable" we do not know, for there is no condition that is easier to cure, if sufficient pains are taken to do so. We have never heard of "blackheads" not being cured, yet certainly twenty-five per cent. of adolescents suffer from them. You say you have used sulphur ointment for a long time, but without success. Either you have not used the ointment sufficiently long ("a long time" is very indefinite) or else you have not used it properly. It is no good simply to apply the ointment. We will repeat how this must be used. Wash your face with warm water, and use only sulphur soap. After washing, rub your face well with a roughish towel, not sufficiently hard to hurt you or peel your face. Squeeze out any very prominent "blackheads," but not more than five or six a day. Apply the ointment thickly all over the parts affected, especially about the jaws and the temples. Use the ointment every evening, leave it on all night and wash it away with the sulphur soap in the morning. We venture to suggest that if you carry out this plan you will alter your opinion on the curability of "blackheads." Face massage has often been used for blackheads. It is very expensive, and the results we have seen are very far below those which we see every day after treatment with sulphur.

Mother.—Measles is one of the most infectious diseases known. The reason why children with measles are not usually isolated as thoroughly as those with scarlet fever, is that measles is most infectious before the rash appears; whereas, in scarlet fever, the most dangerous time is during the stage of peeling, which follows the fever. It is, therefore, comparatively easy to check the spread of scarlet fever; whereas, it is next to impossible to do so with measles. Scarlet fever is not a much more serious disease than measles.

The Bonnie Briar Bush.—1. We wish we could tell you how to remove wrinkles, but unfortunately we cannot do so. We are therefore not surprised that you found the preparation which you tried had no effect.—2. When you call on a married couple, both of whom are out, you should leave two single cards.

## GIRLS' EMPLOYMENTS.

Verena (*Mother's Help*). — You ask whether a mother's help need be "accomplished?" In the old fashioned sense—certainly not. But she should be accomplished in cooking, or housework, or both. The duties of a mother's help are usually pretty much the same as those of a general servant. It is sometimes hardly an enviable post. We advise you to obtain a thorough knowledge of some one department of domestic work, so that you can offer yourself as either a plain cook, parlourmaid, or lady's maid. In the last-named capacity you ought to be a fair dressmaker.

Frances (*Dressmaking*).—We have not kept the address of the correspondent to whom you refer. From what you tell us, there is not time now for any dressmaker to avail herself of the opportunity you mention, for doubtless the business has already been disposed of.

Gretna (*Nursing*).—You are rather too young for admission to almost any general hospital. But if you are resolved on beginning work at once, and do not mind having plenty to do, you might apply to the matron of the Poplar and Stepney Sick Asylum, Devon's Road, Bromley, E. It is stated that after a personal interview with the matron and managers, and two months' trial, applicants are received for three years' training. Candidates should be between twenty-one and thirty-five years of age, and must be well educated, active, industrious, thoroughly trustworthy, of unexceptional character, and in good health. No premium is required, and the salary paid is £10 the first year, then £15, and the third year £20. Laundry and indoor uniform are provided.

# Soups.

### Brown Soup.

*Ingredients.*—One pound of bones, one carrot, one turnip, two onions, a bunch of herbs, two ounces of barley, two ounces of dripping, two quarts of warm water, twelve peppercorns, one blade of mace, pepper and salt, one ounce and a half of brown thickening.

*Method.*—Prepare the vegetables and cut them in halves; chop the bones; melt the dripping in a large saucepan and fry the bones and the vegetables; pour off any dripping that is left and put in the herbs, spices, pepper and salt, and the barley (blanched). Put on the lid and let all simmer for three hours. Strain off the soup through a colander, put the liquor back in the saucepan with the vegetables cut up small, add the thickening and stir until the thickening dissolves and the soup boils.

### White Vegetable Soup.

*Ingredients.*—One carrot, one leek, two onions, one turnip, a bunch of herbs, a blade of mace, one ounce and a half of dripping, two ounces of flour, a small lump of white sugar, one pint of skim milk, one pint and a half of warm water.

*Method.*—Prepare the vegetables and cut them into nicely-shaped pieces; melt the dripping in a saucepan, put in the vegetables, pepper, salt and sugar, put on the lid and let them cook gently for ten minutes without browning. Add the water, herbs and mace, and let all simmer gently until tender, from twenty to thirty minutes according to the age and size of the pieces of vegetables. Mix the flour smoothly with a little cold milk and stir it into the soup when boiling; take out the herbs and mace and add the rest of the milk.

### Cabbage Soup.

*Ingredients.*—A small cabbage, one onion, two bay leaves, two sprigs of parsley, two ounces of cornflour, one pint and a half of water, one pint of milk, pepper and salt.

*Method.*—Wash the cabbage and shred it small, put it in a saucepan of boiling water, and let it boil three minutes and strain the water away (this takes away any disagreeable smell); put the cabbage back in the saucepan with the onion cut small, the parsley washed and chopped, pepper and salt and a pint and a half of water. Cook with the lid off for fifteen minutes; mix the cornflour smoothly with a little cold milk and stir it into the boiling soup, and when it has thickened add the rest of the milk.

### Celery Soup.

*Ingredients.*—One head of celery, two onions, one pint of water or stock, one pint of milk, one bay leaf, one blade of mace, six white peppercorns, two tablespoonfuls of cream, salt.

*Method.*—Prepare the vegetables and slice them; put them in a saucepan with the stock, bay leaf, mace, peppercorns and salt; cook gently until tender, rub through a sieve, return to the saucepan with the stock, bay leaf, mace, peppercorns and salt; cook gently until tender, rub through a sieve, return to the saucepan, re-heat, add the milk (warm) and then the cream. Do not let the soup boil after the cream is added.

### Potato Soup.

*Ingredients.*—Two pounds of potatoes, three onions, two sticks of celery, one ounce of crushed tapioca, one bay leaf, pepper and salt, one pint and a half of water, one pint of warm milk.

*Method.*—Prepare the potatoes and onions and cut them in dice; prepare the celery and cut it small; put all in a saucepan, with the water, bay leaf, pepper and salt, and simmer till tender, sprinkle in the tapioca and stir until clear, add the milk.

### Brown Onion Soup.

*Ingredients.*—Two pounds of onions, two potatoes, two ounces of dripping, three pints of warm water, one ounce and a half of brown thickening, pepper and salt.

*Method.*—Pare the onions and slice them from top to bottom; melt the dripping in a saucepan and fry the onions in it; prepare the potatoes and cut them in dice, add the potatoes to the dripping and onions with the water, pepper and salt; put on the lid and simmer till tender; add the thickening and stir until it boils.

### Green Pea Soup.

*Ingredients.*—One pint of shelled green peas, a handful of pods, two sprigs of parsley, four shalots, two sprigs of mint, two lumps of sugar, two ounces of fresh butter, half a small lettuce, one quart of stock, two tablespoonfuls of cream, or one ounce of cornflour mixed with a little milk.

*Method.*—Melt the butter in a stewpan, put in the peas, shalots (peeled and sliced), parsley, lettuce (cut up), mint and sugar; let all cook very gently by the side of the stove for fifteen minutes; do not let it fry brown, as the soup must be kept as green as possible; warm the stock and pour it on and simmer gently until the peas are tender; rub through a hair sieve, return to the saucepan, re-heat, and if necessary, thin with a little stock; add the cream and salt. If a cheaper soup is wanted stir in one ounce of cornflour mixed with a little milk instead of the cream.

### Lentil Soup.

*Ingredients.*—Half a pint of lentils, two onions, one carrot, one turnip, two sticks of celery, a bunch of herbs, one quart of water, one ounce and a half of dripping, a piece of bacon rind.

*Method.*—Wash the lentils in several waters, prepare the vegetables, cut them in dice and fry them in a saucepan with the dripping. Add the lentils, water and rind and boil for one hour and a half. When cooked add pepper and salt.

### Palestine Soup.

*Ingredients.*—One pound of artichokes, one stick of celery, two onions, one pint of water, one pint of milk, one ounce of cornflour, one blade of mace, one bay leaf, six white peppercorns, one teaspoonful and a half of salt.

*Method.*—Prepare the vegetables and cut them in slices; put them in a saucepan with the water, bay leaf, mace, peppercorns and salt; simmer till tender with the lid on. Rub through a sieve, return to the saucepan and re-heat. Mix the cornflour smoothly with a little cold water and stir it into the soup when it boils; add the milk (warmed) and serve.

### Lettuce Soup.

*Ingredients.*—Three-quarters of a pound of lettuce, a bunch of herbs (including chervil), one ounce and a half of butter, one pint and a half of white stock (made from mutton or veal trimmings), two yolks of eggs, a quarter of a pint of cream, two spring onions (chopped), a little green colouring, a little grated lemon rind, a few drops of lemon juice.

*Method.*—Put the butter into a stewpan, and when melted add the shredded lettuce, lemon rind, onions and herbs; cook these gently in the butter for about fifteen minutes, and then add the stock and simmer gently for half an hour. Pass through a hair sieve, re-heat the soup and add the lemon juice; beat up the yolks of the eggs and add the cream. Pour upon this the hot soup, whisking rapidly all the time to prevent the eggs curdling. Return the soup to the saucepan and whisk until the soup is thickened and the eggs cooked. It must on no account boil; add a little colouring if necessary; serve with *croûtons* of fried bread.

### Tapioca Soup.

*Ingredients.*—One pint of bone stock, one pint of milk, a piece each of carrot, turnip, and onion, one stick of celery, a bunch of herbs, a blade of mace, two large tablespoonfuls of crushed tapioca, pepper and salt.

*Method.*—Prepare the vegetables and simmer them very gently in the milk with the mace and herbs for half an hour; warm the stock and strain the flavoured milk into it; bring to the boil and sprinkle in the crushed tapioca, stir until the latter is clear, which will be in a few minutes, add pepper and salt and serve.

### Scotch Broth.

*Ingredients.*—One pound of scrag of mutton, one large carrot, one turnip, two onions, two ounces of barley, one teaspoonful of salt, one tablespoonful of washed and blanched parsley, one quart of water.

*Method.*—Wipe the meat with a damp cloth and cut it in pieces; trim away some of the fat and remove the gristle. Wash the carrot and turnip and peel the onions; blanch the barley. Put the meat and vegetables in a saucepan with the water, barley and salt; put on the lid and simmer gently for two hours, skimming from time to time. Take out the carrot, turnip and onions, cut them in dice and put them back in the soup. Have ready the parsley and stir it into the broth at the last minute before serving. If a better soup is wanted use good beef stock instead of water, and use the best end instead of scrag. Trim the cutlets very neatly and serve one to each person.

### Tomato Soup.

*Ingredients.*—One pound of tomatoes, one onion, two sticks of celery, one bay leaf, one blade of mace, a small piece of cooked ham, pepper and salt, one pint and a half of water, one ounce of crushed tapioca.

*Method.*—Slice the tomatoes; prepare the celery and onion and cut them in pieces; put the vegetables in a saucepan with the mace, bay leaf, ham, water, pepper and salt, and cook till tender; rub through a sieve or colander, return to the saucepan, bring to the boil, sprinkle in the tapioca and stir and cook till clear.