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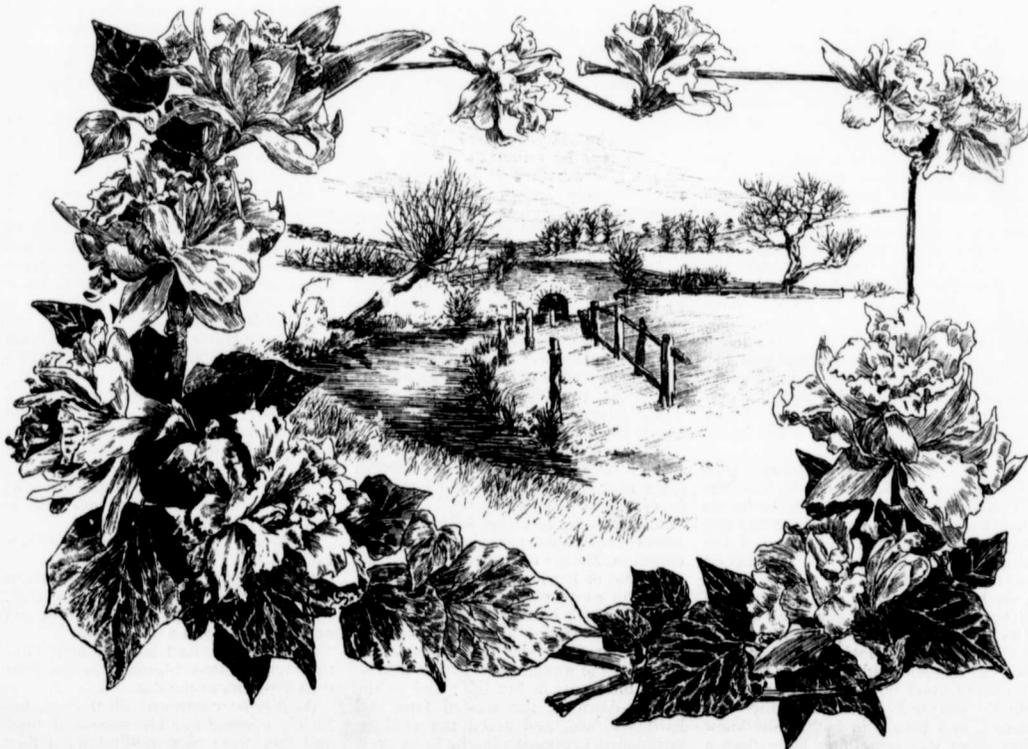
[PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE BELLS OF SPRING.

LIST! to the music over land and sea,
 What melody!
 The tinkling of the silver bells of spring,
 Faint echoing
 Of some sweet, sightless songster far above,
 Singing of love;
 Flooding the dewy lawn and grassy lea
 With ecstasy;
 And where old Winter, stripped and bare, is dead,
 The fairies tread,
 And every footstep is a starry flower,
 A perfect shower
 Of graceful, maiden, golden daffodils,
 'Neath all the hills;

While louder swells the music in the air,
 And odours rare
 Commingle with the songs from forest glades,
 And men and maids
 Loiter, with tangled hands, by quiet streams,
 To talk of dreams,
 And sip the nectar of the highest life
 To banish strife—
 Strike the great chords of universal love,
 Here and above!
 For age comes sooner than the dreams fall true
 To me or you.

WILLIAM T. SAWARD.



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LENT LILIES AND IVY.

"IF LOVING HEARTS WERE NEVER LONELY—";

OR,

MADGE HARCOURT'S DESOLATION.

By GERTRUDE PAGE.

CHAP. XXVI.
CUMBERLAND
AGAIN?

"Do you think I ought to go?" and Madge looked up questioning at Elsie, who was arranging some flowers on the table beside her.

They were in London now, in a pretty little flat in

Hampstead, where they lived with Elsie's mother.

It is just a year since Guy went abroad, and all that time Madge has heard no word from him.

For the first three months after his departure she had been in a state of mind bordering on frenzy, for the sudden awakening in her heart to hope and love, and the subsequent falling away of all her meditative habits and uneventful existence, resulted in a chaos of conflicting emotions.

At last the moment had come in which her true self stood triumphant, stripped of all its fetters, and she knew herself to be just a clinging, loving woman, instead of the hard unfeeling being of her own fantasy. And in that bitter hour of awakening, with its agonizing consciousness of foolishness and weakness, Elsie had been her unflinching support and stay.

The links that now bound these two together were those that the angels forge, when one human being in his hour of utter need leans on a fellow creature and is comforted.

No single stone had been left unturned that could help them to find the wanderer, but all their efforts had proved futile. They traced him to the West Indies, and then they lost all clue of him. Meanwhile Madge had made her home with Elsie and her mother, and was now waiting quietly until her night of weeping was passed and her morn of joy come on. For she had learnt it at last, that hardest lesson of all, she had learnt "to wait."

There had been no exaggeration in that sudden revelation on the day she received Guy's letter. The weeks as they passed only proved its truth, and deepened, broadened and widened the hitherto latent but real love that bound her to her husband; the man who had been her friend when she lost the idol of her girlhood. She saw it all at last. The chequered, entangled path of life that lay behind looked clearer now that it was removed to a distance, and she understood how she had first been blindly wrapped up in Jack, then her sorrow, and herself in both. She knew that there was something more than a mythical legend in the old story of the

voice that thundered on the mount. "Thou shalt have none other gods but Me." She knew, too, that the "Sorrow of life," because it alone ennobles and purifies and strengthens is in reality the "saving of men."

And as she looks up at her friend with an open letter in her hand, the dark eyes have a softer look in them and the curved lips are less compressed. True, her cheeks are hollow and faint lines show on her forehead, but for all that, though the world might not think so, her face is more beautiful than it ever was before.

Elsie thought so as she looked down at her and marked the slightly hesitating, plaintive expression.

"I don't know what to say," she answered, in reply to her question. "It is difficult to help you one way or the other."

A short silence followed, during which Madge rose and stood looking out of the window, with her hands behind her back.

"It isn't going to be with my stepmother I mind so much," she said, "it's the associations and memories. It will be dreadful to face them all without even you."

"Perhaps it won't be so bad as you think. Being in the old home may make things easier; is Mrs. Harcourt seriously ill?"

"I hardly know; father doesn't say much. I fancy she's had a slight stroke."

"Does he ask you to go?"

"He says he wants to see me, and now my stepmother is invalided, they would be very glad if I would go for a time."

"I think I would go if I were you," replied Elsie quietly.

Another pause followed.

"Supposing Guy comes," said Madge at last, in a low voice. "He would be sure to look for me in London first."

"I will do everything in my power, dear, as you know," replied Elsie gently, "and will send him after you as soon as possible, if I find him."

For answer Madge took her friend's hands in hers and kissed her lovingly.

"I know you would," she said, "I will go to-morrow. I have been selfish quite long enough; it is time I tried to be of a little use to someone."

Accordingly, late the following day, after the early spring evening had already closed in, Madge once again crossed the threshold of her home.

A dull sense of pain weighed at her heart, but she bravely withstood it and returned her father's welcome warmly. Soon afterwards she stood beside the couch of the woman who had caused so much bitterness in her life; and as she looked down at the wasted form and hard set face, and noted the restless, unsatisfied expression in the keen eyes, a dawning sense of pity swept over her.

"So you've come back, have you?" was the ungracious greeting. "I suppose you'll find it more to your taste now you can have it all your own way in the house."

For answer, Madge smoothed her pillow and spoke sympathetically of her long and trying illness.

"I hope we shall get on better together now," she said kindly. "I have come to look after you and father, if you will let me."

Mrs. Harcourt turned away without replying, but she refrained from any further hard speeches, and from that day a happier relationship grew up between Madge and her step-mother.

Meanwhile Elsie waited and watched in London for news of the wanderer, and a month after Madge's departure her hopes were rewarded.

She was standing waiting for an omnibus one afternoon when a tall man, with a bronzed, sunburnt face, came and waited beside her. She looked up at him, and instantly recognised Guy Fawcett, in spite of his aged appearance. For a moment she was entirely at a loss how to proceed, but the necessity for immediate action was so strongly impressed upon her that she took what seemed the only course open, and accosted him.

"Excuse me," she said a little nervously, "but I think you are Mr. Guy Fawcett."

Guy looked at her in surprise, and remembered having seen her before. He raised his hat instantly and replied—

"Yes, that is my name, but I am afraid you have the advantage of me; I can't recall yours."

"Probably you have never heard it. I was staying at the same hotel as you and Mrs. Fawcett last spring in Monte Carlo, and that is how I came to know you. My name is Merton, and I am a friend of Mrs. Fawcett's."

Instantly Guy's manner changed from one of polite curiosity to ill-concealed eagerness.

"Yes," he said, rather hurriedly, "I remember you now." A slight and awkward pause followed, then he asked without looking at her, "Have you seen Mrs. Fawcett lately?"

"Yes, until a month ago she was living with my mother and me. She is now at her home in Cumberland."

"Indeed!" he exclaimed involuntarily.

"I am sure you will like to hear about her," continued Elsie, eyeing him keenly. "If you care to come home with me now, I can tell you a great deal."

He assented, and half an hour later they were seated together in the little drawing-room at the flat.

At first he continued ill at ease, but Elsie's manner quickly reassured him, and they were soon talking as if they had known one another all their lives.

With an intensity of interest, which he no longer sought to conceal, he leaned forward and drank in every word she uttered. When she had finished her brief account of Madge's proceedings, he leaned back in his chair with a sigh and drew his hand over his eyes. They were silent a moment, then he looked up and glanced round the room.

"he has been in here?" he asked questioningly.

"She has lived here over six months."

His eyes roved lingeringly round again; he might have been trying to picture her as she had looked at various times during those months.

"You must have been great friends," he remarked presently. "Did she tell you about herself?"

"Yes, everything. I feel to know you as if you were an old friend, we talked of you so often."

A sudden glad light shone in his eyes.

"And you think she has missed me?" he asked.

"Missed is not a strong enough word. She has not known how to endure your absence."

"I wish I could believe it," he said wearily, "but it's impossible. You don't know her as I did; I had no real hold on her whatever."

Elsie leaned forward.

"I know her better than you," she said firmly, "and it is absolutely true that she is longing to be with you again."

But he could not realise it. He had so used himself to thinking the contrary that he could not yet shake off the belief in it.

He looked round the room again, with hungry yearning in his eyes.

"Is there anything of hers here that I can take away?" he asked. "Something she has used often."

"Why take it away?" asked Elsie, "when you are going to her."

"Going to her!" he repeated quickly. "No, that is impossible; you don't understand."

"Surely you have come back to England on purpose?"

"No, nothing of the kind; I tell you it is impossible. I can't believe she really wants me, and besides, I am practically penniless. No, I only came just to see how she is. I wanted to make sure she is well and comfortable, and, if possible, just to see her again. When I am satisfied I mean to go back to America at once; I have a very fair berth there."

For some time Elsie continued to press her point, but he only shook his head sadly and remained unconvinced. He had never seen Madge as she was now. He only remembered her as of old.

Then for a few minutes poor Elsie was utterly at a loss how to proceed for the best, but finally decided to resort to stratagem.

"If you could call to-morrow evening," she said, "I could give you a new photograph of her that has only just been taken. I went for it to-day, but the photographer said it wouldn't be ready until to-morrow."

"Yes, I'll come," he said readily. "I should like to hear more about her, and if there's anything else I could have, you'll let me take it, won't you? I shall probably have to return this week for fear of losing my berth."

Elsie assented, and then he rose to go. "You will leave me your address?" she asked anxiously.

"I have no particular address, only the hotel," and he gave the address of that.

Then he thanked her for all she had told him, and went away with his now

habitual downcast expression and bent shoulders.

And Elsie, as soon as he was out of sight, hurried to the nearest post-office and sent a telegram to Madge.

CHAPTER XXVII. THE REUNION.

It was after dark when Guy bent his steps to the flat the following day, and slowly mounted the stairs to Mrs. Merton's floor.

Elsie herself opened the door to him, and, in spite of his usual indifference to external circumstances, even he noticed a half-mystical expression on her face.

"I have got what you wanted," she said, after giving him a warm greeting. "I left it in my room; if you will go into the drawing-room, I will fetch it," and she indicated the room to him.

He entered at once, and she quietly pulled the door to behind him. For one moment he was a little embarrassed to find the room was not, as he supposed, unoccupied, for in the dim light he saw the tall slender form of a woman, with a beautiful pale face and luminous dark eyes.

Then suddenly he was conscious of a delirious, rushing sensation in his head, while his heart beat almost to suffocation. He took a step forward and exclaimed hoarsely, "Madge!"

"Guy!" she answered, tremblingly, and held out her hands to him with a child-like, beseeching gesture.

That was all. The next moment she was folded in her husband's strong arms, and her night of weeping had passed. In after years, during which time only strengthened their love and knit them yet closer together, Guy would laughingly declare that that evening was his real wedding-day.

[THE END.]

IN THE TWILIGHT SIDE BY SIDE.

By RUTH LAMB.

PART VI. CONFIDENCES.

"The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy" (Proverbs xiv. 10).

SINCE we began our twilight talks, my dear girl-friends, many things have helped to bring us into closer union with each other. Not the least amongst these is the confidence which many of you have voluntarily placed in me. So to-night we will talk about one of the crying needs of our human nature—the longing for a friend in whom we can confide at all times.

Do you not agree with me that a full heart must overflow? A channel must be found through which its joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, its longings, anxieties, and forebodings, may find vent in sweet confidences. If we have a tried and faithful friend, whose willing ear is joined to a warm heart and a sympathetic nature, we are rich indeed. In such a case, confidences are not only sweet, but they are wise, and they leave us feeling the happier and richer for what we have imparted. Many high qualities go to forming the character of such a friend as I have mentioned. Unsel-

fishness, patience, sound judgment and freedom from prejudice, play no mean parts in combination with those I have already named.

Think what demands we make on both patience and unselfishness when we expect our friend to listen to long details which have no interest for her, personally. We are not often sparing of words when we speak of what concerns ourselves. Consequently, it can only be unselfish affection and a longing for our happiness which have made the listener equally patient and anxious to lighten our troubles and to rejoice with us in our joys.

But, oh! how much do the patient listening and unselfish sympathy mean to the over-full heart that has found relief in words.

She—for as I am talking to girls—I picture the speaker as a girl, exclaims in a glad tone, "I knew you would feel for me and that I might trust you. What a comfort it has been to me to open my heart to you. I feel ever so much happier and richer too for knowing that I have one true friend, who really cares for me and who would lift the burden from my shoulders if she could. It is specially sweet to think that, when opening my heart to you, I ran no risk of having its secrets laid bare to any other."

The friends part, but the memory of kindly words uttered, of the look of honest sympathy and of the warm hand-clasp which accompanied the farewell, remains with the anxious one to her lasting comfort.

The trouble is still there. Perhaps the prospect of its removal is but a distant one. But the bearer of the unseen load steps more lightly on the daily round of duty; the head is held more erect, the tears are dried, and hope repeats the old saying that "there is a silver lining to every cloud."

In the case of a great happiness, the heart that rejoices overflows with eagerness to claim sympathy.

Have you ever thought, dear girls, that you make a greater claim on the disinterestedness of your friends when you ask them to rejoice with you, than when you seek their sympathy in a time of sorrow? When we are happily placed ourselves, it is easy to say kind words to those who are less fortunate, and voluntarily to lift part of another's load.

There is often a sort of inward and selfish satisfaction, of which we are hardly conscious, in contrasting our own favoured lot with that of the friend who appeals to us for sympathy.

Does not the knowledge of her toilsome

life, her anxiety about making ends meet, the bereavement she has experienced, and even bodily suffering bring into more vivid relief the greater advantages you possess?

Perhaps your life is one of ease and comfort. You may have never known an anxious moment in regard to the supply of your daily wants. Parents are indulgent, friends plentiful and kind, vigorous health makes every movement a pleasure, and the future tempts your gaze by its fair promise.

Is it not natural to think of all these things, as a sorrowing friend tells the story of her trouble, with quivering lips and tears which will break their bounds, though she tries hard to restrain them?

Surely under such circumstances sympathy is easy. If it is of a practical kind and costs you anything, it is only what you will never miss. What is easier than for you to give kind words, to mingle a summer shower of tears with the bitter ones your friend is shedding. You are the happier if you weep with those who weep.

If, however, positions are reversed and your heart is heavy, whilst your friend's is light and full to overflowing with a great joy in which she seeks your sympathy, your task is not so easy. Such a call bids you put self aside and crush out every envious thought as you look on at her feast of happiness, feeling the while that you would be thankful indeed if the crumbs from such a banquet might fall to your lot.

At first sight it seems easier to rejoice with them than do rejoice than to weep with them that weep, but in practice it is otherwise. Our natures need a great deal of schooling before they get rid of the vein of selfishness which hinders us from giving a full and honest sympathy to those who rejoice.

Since we began our twilight meetings an opinion which I formed long ago has been repeatedly strengthened and confirmed. It is this, that people, especially young ones, generally give their confidence to friends outside of home. Many would sooner confide in absolute strangers than in those who are most closely united to them by the ties of kindred. At the first glance it seems as if there might be something wrong, especially between parents and children, when such is the case; but I am by no means sure of this. It is only sometimes that all the members of a family are also confidential friends, and the young find it difficult to overcome a certain shyness and timidity which hinder them from opening their hearts to their parents. The difference in age and pursuits is so great. The heads of the family seem to tower above their children, as the full grown trees do over the pliable saplings round their roots. Sometimes, too, their opinions are so firmly fixed, that no circumstances will induce them to bend a little in order to bridge over the wide gap between mature age, childhood and youth.

All the while those young shoots are so pliable that a child's hand can bend them in any direction, but at the same time they are hard to break. All of us know that, who have tried to tear a young shoot from the parent tree, and surely this fact teaches a lesson to the elders as well as to the young.

The union between parents and children ought to be a strong one, a bond not easily broken. It behoves us elders to guard it carefully, to draw our young shoots more closely to us, by loving care and by cultivating a spirit of trust in those young creatures whose training God has entrusted to us. It is worth our while to take every possible pains to win and to deserve the full confidence of our children.

They will trust some one. They must satisfy the natural craving for sympathy to be found in every human heart. Let us take care that they may not be able to find any human friend so ready to listen, to cheer, to

sympathise and to help as ourselves. Let us also trust our children so far as it is possible, in order that they may trust us in turn.

And oh, let us be as faithful in dealing with the young as we should be if trusted by an older friend. Let us never forget that the confidence, even of a child, is a sacred thing and not to be violated.

I know, and I am sorry to write it, that mothers do not always consider this. They regard the child's trust, not as a thing to be lovingly cultivated and prized when won, but as a something they have a right to claim and even to betray if they choose.

Never whilst I live shall I forget the effect produced on my mind when I was little more than a child, by a mother who uttered some half-jesting, half-taunting words to her daughter, in connection with a girlish secret. The daughter had opened her heart to her mother in full expectation of sympathy, and her sweet confidence had been turned into a subject for laughter, in the presence of a still younger girl.

What a look of disappointment, indignation and pain combined came on that daughter's face as she stood for a moment gazing at her mother; then turned from her without a word, but with her heart full of bitterness. We walked rapidly side by side for some little time before she spoke. Then came the words, "I will never trust my mother again; never. To think she could make game of me, and before you. She was a girl once and had her little confidences, I daresay, like mine. I wonder if she was ever treated as she has treated me. No. If she had ever felt as I do, she could not have been so cruel."

I tried to say something to comfort her, but of what use could my words be? She only answered, "Never mind, dear. I shall get over it in time, and I have learned my lesson. Try to forget what you heard; though I am not afraid of your telling it again. Only, I should not like you to learn to doubt your mother, because of what you know of mine."

It is sad to record it, but the incident I have given built up a wall of separation between the mother and daughter which was never removed, though the former, bitterly regretting her breach of faith, tried to efface the impression it had made. In the eyes of their neighbours they were an indulgent mother and a dutiful daughter, but outsiders did not know that the inner self of the one was as a sealed book to the other.

Do any of you, my girl-friends, ask why I have told you this, seeing that the warning it gives is for parents, not for you? I answer for more than one reason. First, because I have touching proofs that our gatherings include many mothers, as well as an ever-widening circle of girls. Only a few days ago I met a lady who has grown-up children. After a little talk on other subjects, she said, "You would not perhaps guess that I always sit with you and the girls? In the Twilight Side." I look forward to our talks, and I find them quite as helpful as my daughter does."

Many mothers have said similar words, and letters have come from dear friends of mature age who are dwellers in far-away lands, containing the same testimony. These facts have induced me to say a warning word about the sacredness of a child's confidence. A still stronger inducement came with the thought that on you, the young daughters of to-day, will devolve the sweet and solemn duties of wives and mothers in the future, so a word with regard to such responsibilities cannot be deemed out of place.

Do not let the one sad incident, just related, discourage you from confiding in those who ought to be, and I trust are, nearest and dearest to you.

It often happens that there is a mutual

longing on the part of both mother and daughter to speak to each other on the most important of all subjects—of God, the salvation of the soul and the life to come.

The seeking soul on whom the first ray of divine light has dawned, rejoices in the sweet experience and longs that others may share it, especially those of her own household. If, cheered by the sweet messages of invitation, promise and encouragement in God's word, which have become realities to her through the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, she sets a first trembling footstep on the "narrow way," how she yearns for the companionship of all whom she loves. She wonders how others feel at this solemn starting-point, and yet, with her mind full of her new-born joys and hopes, her lips are sealed towards her mother. Mothers are often as reticent, and though ready to speak confidentially to their children on the things of this present world, they are slow to open their hearts about things eternal.

At the close of a gathering of mothers some years ago, I was spoken to by a dear woman, a widow and the parent of a family of daughters, some of whom were grown up. After speaking of the manner in which her heart had been stirred by the message of God's infinite love in Christ, and of her resolution to become His true disciple she said, "The worst of it is, I feel so lonely. I have no one at home to speak to. It would be such a comfort to have a friend that I could open my heart to."

"Would not your daughters be glad if you spoke to them? Is there not one that would be likely to feel with you in this matter?" I asked.

"I don't know. They are good, steady girls and hard workers. I have had no trouble with them. But somehow I feel shy about speaking to the young ones. It seemed easier to speak to you."

Only a few days later one of the speaker's daughters asked for a few words with me, and from her lips I heard the same story repeated that her mother had told—of the Gospel message brought home, the self-dedication, and the great longing for a companion to whom she might speak of what was in her heart.

"Why not speak to your good mother?" I said.

"I didn't like. She's very good to us, but—"

There was a pause which I well understood, but you will easily guess the result of these two confidences. The mother and daughter were brought into closer union than they had ever known before, and afterwards walked hand in hand, and heart to heart, as followers of Jesus.

There comes to my mind another little incident which took place in a Scotch hydro where I was staying some years ago with my husband and children. A great number of young people were guests at the same time, and added to the brightness of a well-ordered temporary home. Amongst these was a fine young man of about twenty-five, who was always pleasantly conspicuous for little thoughtful kindnesses to the older people. I was passing along a corridor, work in hand, in search of a cosy corner when he spoke to me.

"You are going to sit for awhile, are you not?" he said. "Do come to this window recess. There is no such another cosy corner in the house."

He straightened the cushion, placed a footstool, then asked, "May I have a chat with you whilst you sew?"

"Certainly," I said, wondering a little what had induced this stalwart young fellow, in all the pride of early manhood, to forsake the tennis and the boating in order to talk with me.

I soon enlightened me. "I have none

of my people here," he said, "and I was just longing for a talk about home and my dear old father and mother. You see, we are all very fond of each other, and when I am absent from home, I just get brim full of longing to talk about them, especially the old folks, to someone who understands. I saw you and your husband together, and I said to myself, 'I will have a talk to that lady if I can manage it. She will understand.' I waylaid you this morning on purpose."

I am not going to repeat the talk which followed, but many a time since have I pictured that dear lad's bright, honest face and the loyal affection and reverence with

which he spoke of his parents and his home. I was proud that he had chosen me to be his listener, believing that I could enter into his feelings, and I often think of his words, "One can only talk of the old folks and home to those who understand."

Is it not so with you, dear girl-friends, who have learned to say of God, "He is my Father," and of the home above, "I am distant from it, but I have a share in it; not on account of any deservings of my own, but because I believe in Jesus, and He bought for me a place in His Father's house of many mansions, when He hung on the cross for my sake."

Do not you and I want to talk together about our new-born hopes, our fears of failure, our difficulties and the stumbling-blocks which lie thick on the narrow way? Of efforts which have proved vain, of triumphs too, I trust, for I am sure that many are in earnest and seek the strength from God of which they are in hourly need. I have your written words before me, and at our next meeting I hope to touch upon several subjects that will have a common interest for us all. Ask God, my dear ones, that a special blessing may attend the effort to be helpful to each other.

(To be continued.)

DICK HARTWELL'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER IV.

"Of course it's very painful, Dick; the worry of it has made me quite ill," said Minnie, in a weak voice. "But I've never got over something which happened several weeks ago. My trust in you was shaken. If you had really, really loved me, you could not have thrown away five pounds on a strange girl. It is best for us to say good-bye."

She held out her hand, and at that moment the bells began to ring for the eleven o'clock service. It was time to go. Never more would he walk to church with Minnie; there was not another word to be said. She had expected, perhaps, that this parting scene would have a different ending. A look of surprise crossed her face when he held her hand for a second, and then left the room without uttering even a farewell.

He walked away from the house, and on and on, till he came to some wide fields where the corn was gathered into sheaves. Then he followed a narrow path, just under the hedge, where the sweet little pink blossoms of the wild convolvulus grew close to his feet. Overhead was the great pure sky. Beyond the corn-fields lay the broad sheet of blue water, glittering and heaving under the morning sun. The fields changed to waste land and coarse grass, and then to shingle, strewn with seaweed and shells and bits of driftwood. At last he came to an old wherry, drawn up high on the beach, and sat down in its shadow to think and rest.

The waves came rolling in with a quiet rush, but they only told him what he knew already. He had got to go on living; the waves had to come plashing in upon the shore; everything had to keep on at its life-work. This was what the sea said to Dick to-day; and he sat there listening to its voice until he grew strong and calm again.

On Monday Minnie sent a little packet containing the money for the piano fund. In the evening of the same day Dick handed it over to the hospital. It had been saved up to minister to someone's pleasure; it should be used to alleviate some one's pain.

His gift brought him into contact with the hospital workers, and showed him where to find the sorest need. Self-denial was nothing new; Minnie's unsparring demands had first taught him to practice it. So he continued to live frugally, and helped the needy in a quiet way, becoming all the richer for that silent giving.

He did not meet his false love again. His heart warned him that he must avoid her if he would win peace.

At the beginning of October she became Mrs. Dobb, and went away with her husband to London. By this time the man who had loved her was growing accustomed to the sense of loss; and yet there were many days when he was lonely and sad.

One gloomy evening in November, when he had just finished tea, a heavy foot came slowly up the stair. The door opened, and there stood Minnie's father, looking very old and careworn. Dick rose at once to greet him.

"I suppose you're surprised to see me," Mr. Brace began. "I don't wonder that you keep away from us, Dick; but we've missed you. And now my poor boy has sent me here!"

"Tom? Is anything the matter with him?" Dick asked.

"Yes—a good deal. He caught cold last month, and keeps on getting worse. Seems to me he's sinking, Dick—sinking fast. He wants you to come and see him."

"Of course I'll come, directly." Dick was getting into his overcoat while poor old Brace looked round the comfortable little room.

"You must be very lonely, Dick," he said. "But there are worse troubles than loneliness."

"A hundred times worse," Dick answered, as they went downstairs together.

They had only half a mile to go, and the faithful heart of one of them beat faster as they approached the well-known house. Tom was in the front room, which had looked so gay when Minnie was at home. It did not look gay now; the presence of an invalid had wrought changes. There were medicine-bottles on the mantelpiece, and a shrunken figure in an easy chair. The tinpot piano was gone—Minnie had sold it before she went away—and Mrs. Brace had put a shabby work-table in its place. And yet, in spite of the medicine-bottles and the shabbiness, the little room was more home-like than it had ever been before. The mother soon slipped out, giving Tom the opportunity of being alone with his visitor.

"You're such a good fellow, Dick," said the sick boy. "I was sure you'd come like a shot. You used to say I knew too much for my age; and Minnie always vowed I was a listener and a spy. But I wasn't. Seems to me I heard things without listening, and saw things without spying. That's how I was built. All the time that you went on loving, I knew what was coming. And you were a rare one to love!"

Dick did not care much to listen to this talk, but he was too kind to stop it now.

"At first I thought you were silly. If I'd been a big, strong fellow, I said, I shouldn't have been so easily taken in. And then I began to see that it wasn't such a fine thing to be cute. If you had been different, you'd have escaped a lot of pain—that was clear enough. But you'd have had a colder sort of life, and— and I shouldn't have asked you to come here."

"I'm very glad to come," Dick said; "and I'd like to do something for you, Tom, if I knew how."

"You are doing something for me all the time. You stopped me when I wanted to say things against Minnie. She had used you very badly, but you forgave her, and just went

your way in silence. Well, she hadn't been kind to me; but what were my wrongs when I compared them with yours? You didn't preach; you lived!"

Dick was mute with astonishment. He had never dreamt of being a pattern to anyone. But the lad must not go on over-estimating him, he thought.

"Tom," he said gravely, conquering his natural reserve, "I'm not as good as you fancy. Don't make any mistake, there's a dear chap. I did get into a downright fury when Minnie threw me over. And then I remembered that she had some reason for being angry about the five-pound note."

"Oh, that was only an excuse!" Tom broke in.

"I don't know. She had really something against me. The money had been saved and set aside for her, and she had a right to have it. If a man is engaged to a girl she ought to be the first in his thoughts—always. Mind this when you get older, Tom."

"I shall never get much older," Tom answered; "and if I did, I shouldn't get engaged. Living with Minnie has set me against girls. She was awfully pretty, and I would have got fond of her if she had let me. But I was always 'that horrid boy.' Nothing that I did was right. She never gave me a kind word, and she won't care when I'm dead!"

It was the sadly common story of family discord. The sister, with her power to bless, might have been the angel in the house. But Minnie had never wanted to be an angel.

"We won't talk about dying," Dick said hastily. "We shall soon have the spring here again, and you'll get out into the sunshine. Now cheer up, lad; I'll come in the evenings and help you through the winter."

Dick was not the man to forget a promise. The long winter days, so dreaded by the Braces, turned out to be some of the happiest they had ever known. Minnie was no longer there to monopolise Dick; they had him all to themselves; he was a son to the old couple, and a brother to Tom. All that had been lacking in the home-life they found in him. He too had dreaded the winter, but it proved to be a time of usefulness and peace.

The spring came, but its sunshine only visited Tom in the little garden. He sat out there among the early flowers for a few minutes every day. But before the lilacs were in bloom he had given up the invalid chair and taken to his bed. Dick was with him to the very last.

A great loneliness fell upon him after Tom was gone. He did his best to comfort the father and mother, conscious all the time that his own life was empty and bleak. In the fair, sweet evenings he took to strolling down to the quay again and holding silent communion with the sea. When his thoughts went straying away to Denmark he did not call them back. He felt that he would have

given anything he possessed to know how Miss Bendon fared. Was she struggling still? Had she conquered circumstances? It was such a pity that he knew only a little bit of her life-story; such a pity that he must never try to help her again.

"There's rather a down-hearted look about you, Hartwell," said Hedley, the junior partner in the firm. "Want a holiday, don't you?"

It was sultry weather. Dick's bronzed face was paler than usual, and his steady grey eyes were a little dull. But he was not the man to complain.

"Well, sir, I may want freshening up a trifle," he admitted. "Perhaps I can get away in August for a couple of weeks."

"How would a trip to Denmark suit you?" the other asked.

Dick looked at him curiously. He fancied that he saw a twinkle in his eye; had Hedley been practising thought-reading?

"Very well indeed, sir," he replied as he turned away.

The days went slowly by; there was an early harvest, and reapers began work in the sheltered fields stretching down to the shore. Nothing was changed; the narrow path on the edge of the fields was just the same; the little convolvulus had done its best to comfort him last year, and its sweet pink face smiled up at him again in the old winsome way. Things grew and blossomed and lived their lives, obeying the universal law. Dick looked down tenderly at the small, creeping flowers, but he did not gather them—they were too frail. He left them there to sweeten the wayside.

One evening he had been working rather later than usual, and felt more tired than ever. He did not go straight home to his lodgings, but turned down the narrow street leading to the quay. The first sight which met his weary eyes was the big, white Danish schooner at her old moorings, and the jolly face of Peter Jensen looking over the side of his ship.

There was nothing remarkable in the return of the *Helsa* with another cargo of red pine. But Dick was conscious all at once of being lifted up, and taken completely out of his gloomy self. He was making straight for the skipper, when a soft voice said quietly—"Mr. Hartwell, I am so glad to see you again."

She was standing close to him, looking up at him with the sweet, dark eyes which no

longer showed any traces of tears. Not dressed quite as she had been a year ago; but wearing a suit of cream serge, and a red band round her sailor hat. And by her side was master John, grown stout and rosy, posing as a jovial British seaman; but Dick had scarcely a glance for him.

"This is—a great joy!" said the poor fellow, speaking out the inmost thought of his heart at last.

"We wanted another voyage," said Miss Bendon, rather rapidly. "The sea always sets us up, doesn't it, John? You will be glad to hear that we have got over our troubles, Mr. Hartwell. My sister is quite well, and she is married again."

"Really!" said Dick, uttering the first word that occurred to his dizzy brain.

"Yes, really. She has married Mr. Browne, a rich ship-builder in Copenhagen. As for me, I don't work as hard as I did, for my uncle in India is very kind. He is a tea-planter, and my brother is with him. But you are not looking quite well, Mr. Hartwell."

"It's the heat," said Dick vaguely. "I shall soon get all right again."

"I hope so. Do you know that we are likely to meet at the Hedleys' house? Mrs. Hedley is a distant cousin of mine, and we have only lately discovered the connection. The world is full of surprises. Well, John and I must be off to our lodgings; we have engaged some pleasant rooms near the sea."

Dick felt as if he were in the middle of a dream, but he had just sense enough to call a cab and put Miss Bendon, her nephew, and her other belongings into it. She told the driver where to go, and smiled her adieu from the window as they drove away.

The whole world had undergone a startling change; he went home looking five years younger, but did not ask himself why he was so absurdly happy. It was enough to feel glad. He was not the sort of man to take his joy in his hand and turn it over and over to see what it was made of. The next morning he was up early, and set off to his work feeling as strong as a giant. Hedley met him at the office door.

"Hullo, Hartwell!" he cried, "you look as fresh as paint. Will you come and dine with us this evening at half-past seven, just in a homely way? My wife says she wants to know you."

Dick gladly accepted the invitation. He had always got on extremely well with the junior partner, but he wondered why Mrs. Hedley wanted to know him. He knew her by sight as a bright-faced young woman, but he did not dream that she had noticed him. She was, however, the kind of woman who is given to noticing. She had watched him going to church with Minnie Brace, and had thought him far too true a gentleman to be tied up to that over-dressed girl. And she was right. Dick was verily a gentleman by descent, as well as by nature. The last branch of an old tree, he had inherited the best qualities of the ancient family from which he had sprung. Strong, simple, manly and wonderfully tender, he was a knight *sans peur et sans reproche*.

He dined with the Hedleys that evening, and met Miss Bendon again. Mr. Hedley had a quiet talk with him after the ladies had left the table.

"Hartwell," he said, "we don't want to lose you—that goes without saying—but Browne has written to us, asking if you would suit him as manager. If you stayed with us all your life we couldn't afford to pay you such a salary as he can give, and we don't think we ought to stand in your way. What do you mean to say to his proposal?"

It was a splendid proposal; there was only one answer. Dick's heart was almost too full for speech.

"I shall miss you, Hartwell," Hedley went on. "But I know you ought to get out of this pottering place. As long as you stay here you'll be morbid and dull. There is a time to be bound, you know, and a time to be free."

Dick understood the kind hint conveyed in the words. And perhaps he understood it better still when they joined the ladies, and Miss Bendon's dark eyes met his.

"So you have accepted my brother-in-law's offer, Mr. Hartwell," she said, a little later. "Then I think there was some truth in the gipsy's prediction after all. Your good fortune has come to you across the sea."

As soon as she had spoken her face reddened suddenly. The Hedleys tried not to smile. Dick was radiant. And the brightness that came to him at that moment has never faded; it will stay with him to the end.

SARAH DOUDNEY.

SISTERS THREE.

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

CHAPTER XXV.

THE light was still dim the next morning when Hilary woke with a start to find her father standing by her bedside. Even in the first sleepy glance she was struck by the pale distress of his face, and sat up hurriedly, pushing back the hair from her face, and murmuring a confused, "What—what—what?"

"My dear, I am sorry to disturb you, but I need your help." Mr. Bertrand seated himself on the edge of the bed, and took the girl's hands in his. "Hilary, a great trouble has come upon us. Lettice wishes to break off her engagement. She cannot bear the idea of marrying Arthur Newcome. There will be no wedding on Thursday as we expected."

Hilary stared at him with dazed eyes. Her awakening from sleep had been so sudden, and the news was so over-

whelming, that it was some moments before she could grasp its full meaning.

No wedding! But the preparations were made—everything was ready. It could not be stopped at the very last moment. She drew in her breath with a quick, frightened respiration.

"Oh, father! is it true? Is she sure? Does she really mean it?"

"I am afraid there is no doubt about that, Hilary. Now that she has summoned up courage to speak, she acknowledges that she has been unhappy all along. She is in great distress, as is only natural. Norah is with her. I put off disturbing you as long as I could, for you have had too much fatigue lately, but I need your help, dear. You must get up at once. We have some painful duties before us."

"Oh, father—Arthur! What will he—how will you—?"

Mr. Bertrand drew a sharp sigh. "I have wired to him to stop all prepara-

tions, and come down himself by the early train. He will be here this afternoon. Poor fellow, he has been cruelly used. I am bitterly ashamed. I have told Mary to bring you up a breakfast tray at once, and here she comes; so eat as much as you can before you get up, and then come to me in my study. Be brave! Remember I rely on your help!"

"Yes, father," said Hilary tremblingly, and the next moment Mary entered the room; her rosy face awed and frightened, her ready tongue silenced by the seriousness of the situation.

That breakfast seemed like a hideous nightmare to Hilary. Every moment brought a fresh pang of recollection. In every direction in which her eyes glanced, they lighted upon some object which accentuated her misery—the long dress box, in which the bridesmaid's finery lay ready for use; the pile of letters on the table; the hundred and

one etceteras of preparation. Could it be possible that they were all for nothing—that she must now set to work to undo the labour of weeks? And the misery of it all; the humiliation, the dreadful, dreadful publicity! Hilary leapt out of bed in despair, unable to remain idle any longer, dressed with feverish rapidity, and ran downstairs to join her father. As she reached the foot of the staircase, Mr. Rayner came forward to meet her. Their hands met in a close, sympathetic grasp, but neither spoke during the moment that it lasted. Then came the sound of a heavy footstep on the tiled floor, and the village joiner crossed the hall on his way to complete the erection of the tables in the dining-room. He touched his cap to Hilary as he passed, and the girl drew back, growing pale to her lips.

"Oh, he must be stopped! I can't do it. It is too dreadful!"

"Leave it to me. It's so seldom I can do anything—do let me help you now. Go to your father, and leave all this to me." He led her forward unresisting to the study, where her father greeted her with an exclamation of relief.

"Ah, here you are, dear. Sit down. We must get to work at once on this wretched business. I have sent off notes already to the vicar and the curate, who will stop preparations at the church; the domestic arrangements I must leave to you; and there will be notes to write to all invited guests. Rayner will help and Raymond also. I will draw up a form which you can copy, but the letters must go off by the afternoon post, so the sooner they are written the better. Newcome will be with us before many hours are over—"

He broke off with a sigh, which Hilary echoed from the depths of an aching heart.

"I will go at once and speak to the servants. I will set them to work to put the house in order, and hide all the preparations out of sight, and then come back here, and get the writing done first of all."

"That's my good girl!" said her father warmly, and they kissed each other with sympathetic affection.

Poor Hilary! She had need of all her courage to enable her to go through that morning's work. The servants received her orders with tears of distress and disappointment. Norah came stealing out of the room with the news that Lettice had cried all night long, could not be induced to eat, and lay on her bed icy cold, and trembling as if with

an ague. Miss Carr was too much upset to be able to leave her bed, and Geraldine's straightforward questions were for once agonizing to the listeners.

"Has Lettice been naughty?" she inquired. "Has Mr. Newcome been naughty? Will she never wear her pretty dress? Shall I never wear my dress? What shall we do with all the presents? Shall we have to send back the cake?"

"Oh, Mouse, be quiet, for pity's sake," cried Hilary in desperation. "If you ask any more questions you must go to bed. It's very naughty and unkind;" at which unexpected reproof Geraldine's eyes filled with tears.

"I didn't mean to hurt your feelings, Hilary; I only thought if you didn't want it, perhaps Miss Briggs's sister in Scarborough might like some cake—"

"Come along with me, Mouse, and I'll give you a swing in the garden," said Mr. Rayner, coming to the rescue for the twentieth time. His presence was a comfort to every member of the household, and Hilary could never think of that dreadful morning, without recalling the quiet, unobtrusive way in which he watched over her, and shielded her from every possible aggravation. When afternoon came, he insisted upon taking her to a quiet little coppice near the gates, so that she should not be in the house at the time of Arthur Newcome's visit; but from their seat among the trees they heard the sound of wheels as the fly turned down the drive, and knew that the dreaded interview was at hand.

"Lettice begged and prayed not to see him, father says, but he insisted that she should go down. He said it was only due to Arthur. Fancy what it must be to the poor, poor fellow, to lose her at the last moment, and to have to go back to London and explain everything to his friends—when the house is ready and all preparations made. I feel so angry and humiliated, that I can't be sorry for Lettice. She deserves all she suffers!"

Mr. Rayner did not answer; and they sat in silence for five or ten minutes, at the expiration of which Hilary stole a timid glance at his face, and ventured a question.

"Are you sorry?"

"Sorry for your sister? Yes,—intensely sorry!"

"You think I am hard,—unsympathetic?"

"I think you are hardly in a fit state to understand your own feelings to-day. It has been a great strain, and you have kept up bravely and well."

Hilary's lip trembled, and she covered her face with her hands. "Oh, I don't want to be hard, but it seems so dreadful! She had a whole month to think over it—and then to bring all this misery upon him at the last moment. I feel ashamed. Surely, surely, it is easy to know whether one cares or not. If I were engaged—?"—"Yes?"

"Oh, I don't know—I should never, never promise to marry anyone unless I loved him with my whole heart; but when I did, I'd stick to him if the whole world were against us."

"I believe you would." Mr. Rayner hesitated at the end of these words as if he were about to say something further, but the hesitation ended in silence, and presently Hilary leapt to her feet and began to pace up and down.

"Oh, let us walk about. I can't sit still. I am too nervous. If we go along this path we shall not meet anybody, and it will pass the time. I can't bear to think of what is going on inside the house." So for the next hour they walked up and down, trying in vain to talk upon outside topics, and coming back again and again to the same painful theme. At last the sound of wheels came to their ears again. The fly could be seen wending its way down the country lane, and Hilary lost no time in running home to rejoin her father in his study.

He was standing with his arms resting upon the mantelpiece, his head buried in his hands, and when he turned to meet her, it struck the girl with a stab of pain that for the first time he looked old—an old man, tired and worn with the battle of life.

"Well?" she gasped; and he answered with a long-drawn sigh.

"Well—it is over! The most painful scene I have ever gone through in my life. He wouldn't believe me, poor fellow; then Lettice came in—he looked at her, and—the light died out of his face. It was very painful. He was brave and manly. I admired him more than I could have believed possible, would not blame her, or hear her blamed. He said very little. Stricken to the heart, poor fellow, and I could do nothing for him. He has gone back to town to stop preparations. I would have given my right hand to help him."

"Father, dear! You look so ill! It has been too much strain. What can I do for you now? Let me do something!"

"Send in Rayner to have a smoke with me. How glad I am that he is here. He is a comfort to us all!"

(To be continued.)

EASTER MORN.

ALLELUIA!

Empty is the tomb,
Hence, away with gloom;
Body and soul are reunited
That His flock be unbenghted.

Alleluia!

The stone is rolled away
Where the dear Saviour lay,
Sinners and saints look hence for Him whom
God vouchsafed to Mary's womb.

Alleluia!

Angels in white declare
Death to be vanquished there;
Let all in faith raise high thanksgiving
Now we are one with the ever-living.

Alleluia!

Empty is the tomb,
Away for aye with gloom;
Body and soul are reunited
That His flock be unbenghted! C. P.

FROCKS FOR TO-MORROW.

By "THE LADY DRESSMAKER."

THE frocks both for to-morrow and to-day have so much decreased in width, that we, the happy wearers, will certainly make some small savings thereon. The last ones from Paris, made of course with unflounced skirts,

measure only three and a half yards round the feet, and the flounced ones, with what the French call ruffles *en-forme*, which means flounces cut to shape about the same. I believe they are made by many dressmakers by cutting

out a skirt, and then cutting it up into the width of the flounces needed. This gives the exact shape which to-day's fashion requires, namely, plain in front; and while remaining without fulness at the top, becoming wavy at the edge, without falling into pleats. The skirt of the spring is absolutely tight-fitting, and shows no gathers, even at the back, where what fulness there is, is carefully concealed under a perfectly plain piece of the skirt. Below this one can see that there are gathers, because the back shows the fulness.

For young people, or for anyone who is slight of figure, this new fashion answers well enough, but those who are in the least degree stout must beware of it; though I am assured that good and careful cutting will do much to avoid the tight-looking strained effect which is so unbecoming. Trains not very long will be again worn by day as well as night; and the new skirts are made entirely separate from their linings, the latter being just like another skirt, with accordion-pleated flounces on the outside; so that when the dress is raised it looks like a second gown below. In view of the number of transparent materials which are being shown in the shops, it is evident that we are to be rather extravagant in the way of silk linings, unless we have been clever enough to find amongst our old gowns certain ones which can be dyed and made up with some small help from new materials. I have already seen rose-pink, yellow, and grey, used as under-skirts, and bodice-lining, for some of the new grenadines; and with the addition of a little jet and *chiffon* ruffles they are very pretty indeed.

I must try to exhaust the subject of making dresses while I am writing on it, and therefore must not omit to tell you about the making-up of one material over another, and of two different colours. Thus one sees grey satin over pink or blue satin; the front of the skirt (grey) being cut in apron shape with a back of the pink satin; the bodice of grey satin with white lace, and bows of pink velvet. Cloth dresses cut in polonaise style are made up over skirts of silk, foulard and taffetas—a supple silk, which has this season superseded foulard.

I wrote about the Princesse gowns last month, I think, and we have not seen many as yet here, but they will make an appearance later on with bodices much be-trimmed, lace yokes, and even sleeves, and many frills on the fronts. In short, this season Dame Fashion says we are all to be willowy, trailing creatures, slim and slight, leaving no room either for stout people or for those who use the bicycle, and take much out-door exercise, for who could ride a wheel in a trailing skirt?

An old-fashioned style of trimming revived is that of stitching flat bands of silk in a different colour from the dress. Thus a grey cashmere had bands of tartan silk, which were edged with a small galloon.



HATS, AND THE NEW SKIRT.



SPRING BODICES.



FLOWER TOQUE AND CLOTH CAPE.

Embroidered linens and cottons have also appeared for dresses, and they are, some of them, very pretty. Embroidered cashmeres and cloths are also seen, but are very expensive and require much silk lining to make them wearable.

Some of the prettiest of the new gowns are in black, a black serge tucked all over, with an orange silk vest and a white lace tie looked well. Black *crêpon* has come in again, and is much admired, with wide satin stripes woven into it. The new *crêpons* are more expensive than the old, and look more silky. The silk linings for grenadines and *crêpons* are not lined, so that they are not heavy, even though they be flounced, either with two or one deep flounce. About four and a half yards is said to be the correct width for these gowns; and, so far as I can see, they are really the most useful ones that have come out this season.

Our illustrations give a good idea of the bodices to be worn this spring, so far as we

have seen them. The central figure wears a dress of grenadine and *chiffon* bodice, with white and black *guipure* laid over it; two frills of the *chiffon* are round the shoulders and neck, and the sleeves are full. The *guipure* is repeated on the skirt, in two panels, one on each side. The figure on the left wears one of the new morning, or breakfast, jackets. It is made either of flannel, *vyella*, or of silk, according to the season, and is a useful and comfortable little garment. The right-hand figure shows the new form of the *moujik* or Russian blouse, which is now cut without pouches, either in front or behind. This one is of velvet, cloth, or *matelasse*, for wearing in the chilly spring days, and is trimmed with strappings of the same piped with satin, or white cloth. This jacket represents the last idea that I can find in the way of out-of-door dress; and we seem to cling to the band and basque, both for blouses and gowns. The newest basques are sewn on the band, and the blouse

or bodice can be worn without it or with it, as it may be preferred.

But the Eton jacket is still with us, and is much braided and frogged, and so is the three-quarter jacket, and the covert coat, and a short jacket with strapped seams. The new covert coats are of white cloth, and these will be much worn in the country. The *senorita* jacket is also seen; so, though there are many changes, the old friends stay with us.

So far as capes are concerned, I think they will always hold their own, for they are so useful; especially so when at an afternoon tea, we can drop them off and so avoid colds. The new cloth cape is shown with a flowery toque, the latter being a needful addition to everyone's wardrobe, in view of the agitation against hats at places of amusement. They offer no difficulties to the home milliner, for the small wire shapes, or straw shapes, can be obtained for a trifle, and flowers and a bow of velvet are all that remains to be procured. Small flowers, such as violets, forget-me-nots, or wallflowers, make very pretty ones; but those of roses, in several shades, are much liked; and I have seen a very pretty one made of black roses with yellow centres, with yellow velvet bows.

The various shapes of hats are shown with the new skirt, and a rose toque mixed with lace and feathers. The velvet cape is one which can be worn quite late in the spring, as it is only trimmed with ostrich feathers and white *guipure*. The dress shown was of two satins, a grey and a pale grey blue, the outer skirt being of the grey and the under of the blue. The bodice is of grey, with velvet bows of blue, and white lace. So many dresses in two colours are being shown and will be made up in woollens, such as cashmere and fine cloth, as well as in silks. Many dresses have double *ruches* of silk at the foot, while two rows of satin ribbon, forming tiny flounces, are seen on others. I should think there will be much rebellion over the long skirts, especially with the under linings made separately, as the attempt is absolutely hopeless to lift them up in the street. One cannot get hold of both at once. Bicyclists too, will object to longer skirts, so I daresay they will be left to very best afternoon gowns only.

Feather boas are more fashionable than ever, and can be obtained in colour; but black, white, or black and white, are the most usually worn, and in the evening have been delightful companions to protect one from the cold of picture-galleries and concert-rooms. There are numbers of detachable collars however made of velvet, silk and lace, with *ruches* of silk gauze and *chiffon*, and many of them will be used this spring.

Blouses are quite as needful as ever to our comfort, and as they seem to be sold at the most wonderfully cheap rates, it is hardly worth while to make them. Tucks are in great favour for them, and so many of them fasten at one side with a frill, that that style seems to be almost a uniform. I notice that the popularity of tartans, and all kinds of fancy checks, has not quite departed, and black and white shepherds' plaids are much liked for blouses; also black and white stripes, which are made with *guipure* yokes and black velvet trimmings. One never grows tired of black and white, and it is always a becoming mixture to people of every age.

The spring colours seem to be pearl-grey, otter brown, bright cherry colour, and a new blue called *seves* blue. Navy blue will be in great favour, and all the shades of dull green. Sashes will be worn on all our dresses, or at least, will be very popular. The newest are of *moiré* ribbon, and they are worn with long ends, a little on one side of the front, and the ends are either fringed or else have a tiny frill. Sashes for evening dress are made of very gauzy materials, and are very graceful, especially with satin.

WHAT TO COOK, AND HOW TO COOK IT.

PART VI.

THE STAFF OF LIFE. SOME CAKES AND A FEW BISCUITS.



BREAD making of bread—or the care of it—comes as part of the daily routine of every-day life, it is literally daily bread. We have to consider not merely its manner of making and baking, but the kind of bread which best

proves our staff of life. Undoubtedly the fine white bread on the baker's shelf, especially that which has been baked in a tin, is not this; the best constituents of the flour have been eliminated that appearances, or that taste which approves the appearance of whiteness, may be satisfied.

The flour for making a white loaf that shall be wholesome while yet it is white, should be of a yellowish tinge, rather granulated, and one that does not hold together. This makes a strong and elastic dough. The most wholesome flour for family use is undoubtedly pure wholemeal, but if thought too brown it may be mixed with an equal quantity of white flour.

Of the brands of patent wholemeal bread with which we are all familiar there is much to be said in praise. Malt and cereals of different kinds are included with the wholemeal flour, all of which are nutritious; this kind of bread cannot be so well made at home.

Next to the importance of carefully choosing flour, and purchasing it from a miller, not from a baker, comes the selection of a reliable brand of yeast, German in preference to brewers' harm. It must be perfectly sweet even if not perfectly fresh, although freshness is a desideratum likewise. There are many makes of German yeast but few that surpass the "D. C. L." brand.

Sweetness and lightness, but not puffiness, are the points to achieve in making a good loaf; a fairly quick oven is essential too; it is well to test the heat by a thermometer. For square or round quarter or half-quarter loaves 360° Fah. would be right; for fancy bread, rolls, or long French loaves and cakes about 400°.

If milk is used for mixing the dough it should be first scalded then cooled; if milk and water, pour boiling water into the milk; if water only boil it first, then use it when it has cooled to the right temperature.

To set the "sponge" is the first proceeding after the flour is weighed out and a "well" has been made in the centre. Two ounces of good yeast will be sufficient to raise six pounds of flour; make a thick cream of the yeast first by mixing it with warm milk and water; a teaspoonful of sugar is useful at this stage. Set the yeast at the back of the stove to rise for a few minutes. As soon as it is properly working mix it with enough of the flour in the "well" to make a thick batter, then leave to rise again for about ten minutes. By this time the mixing and kneading of the whole mass may be begun. Kneading is the most important part of the whole process of bread-making. In large bakeries this is done by machinery and done far better than by hand; perhaps we may yet see the same or a similar invention brought out on a scale small enough to make it practicable for a family baking.

The right consistency of the dough is only obtained by practice, but when the kneading process is finished the ball should be firm

and elastic, not sticking to the hands or to the pan.

Cover with a soft cloth and set to rise in a temperate place, free from draughts. The bread which is put to rise at eight o'clock in the morning ought to be ready for the oven by twelve. It should by then be about double its original bulk. If it becomes over light it will ferment, and the bread will be sour. For this reason it is not advisable in small households to knead the dough over night; the long, even if slow rising will take the nourishment and sweetness from the flour.

Salt is best added with the water or milk, as it becomes more evenly distributed by this means. Wholemeal flour will take rather more yeast, more salt, and more water than white flour; it must be more lightly handled also and baked quickly at first, afterwards slowly.

Do not knead the dough again a second time when on the rolling board, but shape it to the form required; place in greased tins or on well-floured baking-sheets and put in the oven at once.

A fair sized loaf of either brown or white bread—say of two or three pounds weight—will take the best part of an hour's baking.

For fancy bread take a small quantity of flour, say two pounds, and add to it an ounce of yeast mixed to a cream, an ounce of dissolved butter, the whole of an egg lightly beaten and sufficient warm salted milk to make a soft dough. Beat rather than knead this, until it is full of air. Let it rise, then take off small pieces of the dough, pull or shape them as desired, brush over with milk or dissolved lard, and bake in a very quick oven to a decided brown.

Bread-sticks or pieces of light dough pulled out very thin and brushed over with water, are preferred by those who suffer much from indigestion and are unable to take bread in the ordinary form.

When buttermilk is used for mixing bread it is well to add a little soda to it, and use baking-powder in preference to yeast.

Some of the best of our modern cooks are not advocates for much cake-making at home. Except for the plainer kinds such as lunch, seed, or rice cakes, it too often means a conglomeration of rich stuffs that are harmful rather than beneficial, and costly into the bargain.

With so many substitutes for butter and eggs one is naturally mistrustful as to the composition of factory-made cakes, yet as far as lightness and good baking is concerned these are more to be depended upon. There is no cake so wholesome as that which is made from a portion of the bread dough, to which good stoned raisins, shred peel and sugar with a small but sufficient quantity of wholesome dripping or butter have been added and worked in. This, when well-baked, will harm no one, and it may benefit many.

For afternoon tea, small cakes approaching the biscuit order are always better liked: for an invalid or for a children's festivity a home-made rice cake is excellent.

A Hungarian tea loaf is another of the "sweet and light" sort that deserves high recommendation, and then we have crisp biscuits that are the delight of all. Let us specialise on a few of these.

A word first as to the order that should be followed in the mixing of a cake, as upon the right way of mixing success will depend.

Briefly then—

1. Beat together the butter and sugar until they make a cream.
2. Add the well whisked eggs.
3. Add the flour gradually, beating all the time.

4. Add fruit or whatever flavouring is given to the cake.

When baking-powder is put in it must be rubbed into the flour; if soda, it should be dissolved in lemon juice or milk and stirred in last.

The oven door should not be opened too frequently after the cake has been put in; and if either top or bottom heat seems too fierce shield with paper or an inverted tin.

American Stars are pretty and wholesome little cakes for afternoon tea. Beat together a quarter of a pound of castor sugar and the same weight of butter, then add the whisked yolks of four eggs with a teaspoonful of grated lemon rind, and half a wineglassful of orange flower water. Beat in six ounces of dried and sifted flour, and lastly stir in briskly the whisked whites of the eggs; beat all together for ten minutes, then pour into an inch deep baking tin that has been previously greased, let the mixture three parts fill it. Bake rather quickly to a pale brown, when done cut into stars or diamonds and ice the top of each with pink or white soft sugar icing.

Almond Biscuits.—Half a pound of pounded loaf sugar, half a pound of sifted flour and half a pound of fresh butter, two ounces of ground almonds and a few drops of essence, with two yolks of eggs.

Rub the flour, butter, sugar and almonds together first, then mix with the eggs into which the essence has been put. Make into a stiff paste and roll out on a floured board into a thin sheet, stamp out and lay on a baking tin and bake in a rather slow oven to a pale brown.

Cocunut Macarons.—Mix together a quarter of a pound of desiccated cocunut and the same weight of powdered sugar, make into a paste with the whites of four well-whisked eggs and a few drops of fresh lemon juice. Drop in small pieces on to a buttered tin and bake in a brisk oven for twenty minutes. When cold store them in an air-tight canister.

For those who are fond of the nut *Chestnut Cones* will be a welcome dainty.

Boil, peel and pound half a pound of chestnuts, add three ounces of flour, two ounces of dissolved butter and two beaten eggs, a drop of vanilla essence if liked; roll into the shape of walnuts, brush them over with beaten egg, and bake in a quick oven to a good rich brown. Let them cool on a sieve.

The following is an excellent recipe for a superlative *Rice Cake*.

Rub together four ounces of dried flour and eight ounces of rice flour. Beat together to a cream eight ounces of butter, eight ounces of castor sugar and the juice of half a fresh lemon with the rind grated. Add the eggs to the butter after whisking the whites and yolks separately; beat in by degrees the flour, then at the last stir in half a teaspoonful of soda dissolved in a tablespoonful of milk; beat all briskly together for ten minutes, then pour into a mould that is lined with buttered paper, and bake in an oven that is not too hot for upwards of an hour. Rest the cake carefully on end or on a sieve to cool.

Stale bread and cakes may be made quite fresh again by gradually heating them through in a moderate oven. If the bread is very dry outside brush it over with water or milk before putting into the oven.

A folded linen cloth is better to lay over bread than a tight-fitting cover.

Finally, do not waste bread, for all crusts and scraps can be baked dry and crushed to a powder for raspings; and the better pieces of bread will make puddings, and if pulled and baked will eat with cheese.

L. H. YATES.



ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MEDICAL.

ABSAION.—It is not uncommon for the hair to comb out in girls between the ages of sixteen and twenty. We know many women who, as girls, possessed luxuriant hair, but who lost most of their hair between the ages above mentioned. As far as we know this loss of hair is very transitory, and the head soon produces hair as abundantly as before. But the hair may start coming out at any age. The cause in most cases is very difficult to discover. It not uncommonly follows a fever or severe illness, or a powerful emotion. In these cases the hair almost invariably comes back as thick as ever. Very often girls exaggerate, either consciously or unconsciously, the amount of hair that they comb out every morning. Some hair usually combs out every day during health. The best treatment is to use a stimulating pomade or wash—brilliantine is a very useful preparation. Cantharidine pomade is also excellent. But the commonest of all causes of loss of hair are the affections of the scalp, especially "seborrhea" (dandruff, scurf), which is very common. In this condition the hair is brittle and lustreless and readily combs out, and the scalp is covered with scurf. For this complaint the head may be washed in boric acid and sulphur ointment rubbed into the scalp occasionally.

FANNY.—"Stomach-cough" is a name given to a cough associated with indigestion. In every case that we have seen it has been dependent upon catarrh of the throat. We very much doubt whether affection of the stomach *per se* would ever give rise to a cough. Pharyngeal catarrh (chronic) however, is very frequently associated with gastric trouble. The best way to relieve the cough is either astringent applications to the throat or else to suck some astringent lozenge, such as rhatany and black currant. Be careful that you do not take too many of these lozenges else they will make the gastric symptoms worse—that is if you have indigestion, for pharyngeal catarrh, and therefore stomach cough has not necessarily any connection with the stomach.

PERPLEXED.—Your complaint of flushing of the hands after any excitement or after using your hands may be due to several causes. In the answer to "J. P." we discussed at some length the various causes of flushing of the cheeks. Flushing of the hands may be due to the same causes, but there are other reasons why the hands should flush. Chief among these is a morbid condition of the nerves of the arm allied to "writer's cramp." Another cause of which we have seen some cases lately is taking cold baths in the winter when the circulation is not sufficiently perfect (for the circulation has to be more than ordinarily perfect to stand the shock of cold baths in the winter). You tell us that you take cold baths every morning, attend gymnastics and bicycle, and do all in your power to improve your circulation. We think that it is highly probable that you do too much. It is not surprising that these violent measures improve either the circulation or the general health. A good walk every day, rain or shine, will do more to improve the circulation than any amount of gymnastics. The second question you ask "do gymnastics do any harm to the voice?" has to be answered on the same lines as the former question. A moderate amount of gymnastics does improve the power of the voice by strengthening the muscular power of the body and teaching you how to hold your breath for a long time. On the other hand, the chief muscles used in singing, the diaphragm and muscles of the larynx are not affected by gymnastics. Over-indulgence in gymnastics or other violent exercises will injure the voice, first by producing hypertrophy of the heart, and secondly by injuring the lungs themselves. It is not the "strong man" with huge muscles that is the healthy man, but he who has trained his mind and body in a physiological manner and has avoided excesses of every kind.

ALICE STEVENS.—Glycerine and rose-water is a preparation often used for chapped hands, and it answers its purpose to a certain extent. When the hands are red and cracked, glycerine and rose-water is too mild to have much effect. The following is an excellent preparation for chapped hands, even the most severe grades of chaps yielding to it—

Sulphate of zinc, gr. ij.
Compound spirit of lavender, ʒj.
Glycerine, ʒiij.
Rose-water ʒiv.

If your hands are chapped you should always wear gloves when you go out, especially in windy weather.

MAYFLOWER.—We cannot undertake to criticise any patent medicine or preparation for the reason that we do not always know its composition, and we will neither advise nor criticise anything under these circumstances, for without knowing the composition we can neither tell you its action nor its dangers. For your question about "glycerine and rose-water" see our answer to "Alice Stevens."

J. P.—Your cheeks get hot and red every day for three or four hours, and this troubles you. What time of the day do your cheeks burn? Is it after you have taken a walk? Remember that it is natural for the cheeks to get hot and red after you have been out in cold or windy weather. Or do you get this symptom after eating, either immediately after eating or within some hours of a big meal? If so, the flushing of your cheeks would be connected with some form of indigestion. Are you anæmic? for in anæmic girls flushing is common. We expect that you will be able to attribute your symptom to one of these causes. The difference between flushing and blushing is chiefly in the length of time that they last. Flushing is a momentary affair and is moreover due to psychical causes.

DAUMELINCHEN.—You ask us the cause of a "dull aching pain in your right side," but you give us no other information, so that our answer can only be of a very indefinite character. A very common cause of such a pain as you describe is some derangement of the liver. This is usually accompanied with pain beneath the right shoulder. You say that you have no pain in your back. Another common cause is pressure on the liver and other organs by tight corsets. This is not at all uncommon in girls and the way to relieve it is obvious. Affections of the stomach again give rise to such a pain as you describe, but this is usually situated in the left side, but it may be on the right side. These are the commonest causes of a dull aching pain in the right side, but there are many others which are less common, the most important of which is muscular rheumatism.

GIRLS' EMPLOYMENTS.

JUDY (Emigration).—A party of fifty young women will be sent out to West Australia in April, at a charge of only £1 each, the Government of the Colony defraying the remainder of the passage money. If you are good at housework and plain cooking, this would be an opportunity worth considering. Girls are offered wages of £2 a month. The only condition is that you should sign an agreement to remain one year in the colony. If you like to investigate the matter further, you should communicate with Miss Lefroy, Hon. Secretary, United British Women's Emigration Association, Imperial Institute, W.

F. B. (Training for Children's Nurse).—The address you require is the Norland Institute, 29, Holland Park Avenue, W. If you have a fondness for children, you will find the money well spent on being trained at this Institution, as pupils who have completed the course are in great demand, and are employed under excellent conditions as a rule.

CISSIE (County Council Teaching).—The diplomas of the National Training School of Cookery, Buckingham Palace Road, would be the best for you to obtain with a view to qualifying for a post as teacher under the London County Council. You could study laundry work at the Battersea or Borough Road Polytechnic, or at any other large public institute of similar character. This is the information for which you ask; but if you will be guided by us, you will not aspire to technical teaching. A few years ago, when the County Councils came into existence, many teachers were required, and it was a matter of comparatively small difficulty to obtain a post; but now this state of things is at an end. Vacancies occur rarely, and in filling these, the County Councils are in general much more careful than they were to appoint only women of good ability, special experience, and marked talent for teaching. On the other hand, the demand for competent cooks and laundresses is greater than it ever was. If you are strong, and can stand for long hours, you should try to obtain admission to a laundry as a packer and sorter. Your services would probably not be worth anything for the first few weeks, but if you showed aptitude for the work, you would soon earn a salary of from £30 to £50 a year. Ironing is also very well paid. But if you are not strong enough for laundry work, why not become a cook? With the full diploma of the National Training School, you could command a much higher salary than the ordinary cook. We know a lady now who is working in this capacity in a large West End house. She receives £50 a year, together, of course, with board, lodging, and washing. She has several kitchenmaids under her, gives great satisfaction to her employer, and is also happy in her employment. We seriously recommend this policy to you, as, when girlhood is over, you will find yourself in a much more assured position than if you now become a teacher.

NAOMI (Typewriting).—Will you have to do arithmetic if you obtain a typewriting clerkship? you ask. No, not necessarily; but at the same time, some moderate aptitude for keeping accounts would undoubtedly add to your value. What, however, you certainly will be asked for is shorthand. Almost every employer likes to dictate letters rapidly, and much time is saved if the secretary or clerk can take down the wording in shorthand to be typed afterwards. A good general education is also a paramount requirement; for the most useful secretary is one who can write a letter in her own words when necessary. Uncertain spelling and grammar much reduce the salary which a typist might receive. Many girls have to begin with six a week, because they are only half educated or technically inefficient, and very many do not rise above £1. Too many girls in London are making the mistake of becoming typists instead of cooks, children's nurses, parlourmaids, and dressmakers. If, however, you think you have the necessary education for this employment, and a strong preference for it, we should recommend you to go to Pitman's School in Chancery Lane for shorthand; and for typewriting to one of the larger firms of typists. Eighteen would be quite early enough to begin.

NIXANOS (Training as Lady's Maid).—Dressmaking is so conscientiously and efficiently taught by Madame Brownjohn, Belgriavian School of Dressmaking, 39, Cambridge Street, Piccadilly, S.W. that we have no hesitation in giving you that address. We can recommend with equal confidence the teaching of Miss Prince Browne, The Studio, Artillery Mansions, Victoria Street. You cannot learn hairdressing "thoroughly" without serving an apprenticeship of some years. Possibly you could arrange with some hairdresser, privately, to give you a course of lessons; but you could best discover what arrangement you could make of this kind by applying to some of the leading hairdressers direct.

OUR PUZZLE POEM REPORT: "CONTENTMENT."

SOLUTION.

CONTENTMENT.

With what I have, O let me be content!
 My clothes, my food, are good enough
 for me;
 My home is clean, I always pay my rent,
 With something left for mirth and jollity;
 If false seem grandees from the Court and
 Hall,
 I know a thing or two that beats them all!
 I would not grander be than fits my lot,
 And no-one's lot will stand a cubit more;
 Pretence and hauteur form a tiresome clot
 Which blocks the way to many a heart's
 true core;
 Possessing little 's better than a throne,
 If we contented are no more to own!

PRIZE WINNERS.

Thirteen Shillings Each.

Eliza Acworth, 9, Blenheim Mount, Bradford.
 Mrs. W. H. Gotch, St. Cross, Winchester.
 Edith E. Grundy, 105, London Road, Leices-
 ter.
 Carina V. M. Leggett, Burgh Hall, Burgh,
 Lincolnshire.
 Robert H. Hamilton, 34, Leadenhall Street,
 E.C.
 Florence Hayward, 286, Kew Road, Kew.
 J. Hunt, 42, Francis Road, Birmingham.
 Miss A. C. Sharp, Lynton, Hampshire.

Most Highly Commended.

Elsie Bayley, M. S. Bourne, E. Burrell,
 Agnes B. Chettle, N. Chute, Agnes Dewhurst,
 Julia A. Hennen, Mrs. H. Keel, Annie C.
 Lewis, Mary A. Olden, Mrs. A. E. Stretton,
 Constance Taylor, Ethel Tomlinson, Kathleen
 E. Trench, Caroline Lee-Warner.

Very Highly Commended.

B. Bryson, A. J. Foster, Edith L. Howse,
 Mrs. Kemp, Madge L. Kemp, Kate Lambert,
 E. Lord, Mrs. Amy Moraine, W. H. Odium,
 A. Phillips, A. J. Rogers, Agnes M. C.
 Smith, Stuart Bostock-Smith.

Highly Commended.

Alice J. Chandler, Rosa S. Horne, Alice
 E. Johnson, F. Miller, Ellen M. Price, Ada
 Rickards, Rev. R. J. Simpson, May Tutte,
 Katie Whitmore.

Honourable Mention.

M. S. Arnold, Rev. S. Bell, E. M. Blott,
 Isabel Borow, Alice W. Browne, N. Camp-
 bell, Rev. J. Chambers, Mary I. Chislett,
 Leila Claxton, Ethel Dickson, Ethel Dobell,
 Marjorie Ferguson, "Gerda" Jennie A. Jen-
 kins, Edith B. Jowett, Elsie B. F. Kirkby,
 Ethel Knight, Bertha E. Lawrence, Marian
 E. Messenger, E. C. Milne, Lizzie E. Nunn,
 Annie B. Olver, Hannah E. Powell, Louise
 Prentice, Ida Rafford, Laura Rose, J. C.
 Scott, Gertrude Smith, Rose Carr Smith,
 Mary J. Taylor, C. E. Thurgar, Ellen Thur-
 tell, Violet C. Todd, W. Fitzjames White,
 Henry Wilkinson, Hubert Wix, Alice Wood-
 head, Elizabeth Yarwood, Edith Mary
 Young.

EXAMINERS' REPORT.

Twenty-three solutions were word perfect. Eight of these were also perfect in form and in every other respect as well. Their authors are accordingly entitled to 13s. 1½d. each, but half-pennies do not add to the beauty of a cheque, and we have reserved the whole twenty-four for future contingencies. A single mistake involving a lack of sense has excluded a solution from any mention, so good has been the work sent in. For instance: "Pretence and hauteur form a tiresome blot." That is only one mistake, but it reduces the reading to an absurdity, and its authors are unmentioned. On the other hand: "I would no grander be than fits my lot," there is also a very definite mistake, but the reading is good sense and its authors receive mention though not commendation.

In line two of the puzzle there was a superfluous m, and at the beginning of line six an unnecessary i. Several solvers have pointed out the latter blemish, but only one has referred to them both. Happily in both cases the author's intention was sufficiently obvious. Line five was the troublesome one, and we have a suspicion that a large number of would-be solvers gave the puzzle up in despair on coming to it.

One common and not unnatural mistake was the substitution of "greater" for *grander* in line 7. But the T is grand rather than great, and the original word certainly expresses the spirit of the verse better. Any girl who can truly enter into that spirit has learned a lesson which will, almost more than any other, contribute to her happiness in life.

OUR ESSAY COMPETITION: "MY ROOM."

PRIZE ESSAY (ONE GUINEA).

DEAR MR. EDITOR.

"Please to walk forward" as we say in the North. This is my sitting-room—once the schoolroom, but as our baby is now 22 years old, it is a long time since any lessons were 'done' in it. Now it is my special sanctum as I have no sisters, and the Boys do not often favour me with their presence. In shape the room is nearly square; its floor is covered with a nice thick carpet, the design being wrought in harmonious shades of brown red and gold: the ceiling is decorated. Opposite the door is a large window through which I have a pleasant view over the tennis grounds and rose garden to the pond, across which, beyond 3 grass fields, the horizon is bounded by the wood in which Piers Gaveston was beheaded—(2 miles from Warwick.) On the left-hand side of the door as you enter the room, stands a corner book-case chiefly containing the belongings of my youngest brother Ivan, books by Henty, Church, Ballantyne &c: one shelf being allotted to me as being just the right height for the various illustrated Scripture books that we occasionally use in the Sunday School. On the top of the case is a collection of odds and ends in the shape of ornaments, photo frames, big foreign shells, besides a small Japanese cabinet, and 2 wool mats made by an invalid servant.

That, is our old missionary basket, 'aspin-

aled' a light blue colour to hide deficiencies; it is never now used in its lawful capacity, but is the useful recipient of all kinds of things put there 'to get them out of the way'; scrap-books lie on the lower shelves, and there is also a wooden darning-egg belonging to our old Madame, which having lived there for years, seems never likely now to find a more 'proper' home. Over the basket, nailed on the wall, is the "Gag Chart Home Rule Bill 1893 in Committee, an object for British Electors!" The next piece of furniture—made of walnut wood—is still a joy to me: the middle portion consists of shelves protected from the dust a glass door: on these shelves lie a collection of curiosities—a good many I picked up in America the year we went to visit my brother Kenneth's ranche, but there are also articles from many other countries: I only wish they were not so crowded. In a drawer below I keep letters from my old scholars, G. F. S. girls and god-children. Lower still there are 2 big shelves on which stand 16 volumes of our dear G. O. P. some of which are not in as good condition as I should like owing to constant lending out. There are still 4 nice cupboards, the 2 on the left being appropriated by Ivan. In mine I keep my College by Post papers, account books, G. F. S. papers, also those referring to the Mothers Meeting, the School Library, the Village Nurse and the Scripture Union.

Here is the 'comfy' big sofa "Sophia," placed a little across the corner of the room,

to make space for the dolls house behind it; this mansion is usually kept in the attics, but was brought down for the edification of a small cousin Enid, under whose direction it has been refurbished: she was much delighted at the pranks of a mouse who paid frequent visits to the kitchen entering the edifice by a paneless window!

Below the window of the room stands "Charity" a most useful box-seat, a huge commodious article—a friend indeed: usually it is full of wool, flannel, print, or other materials in the process of turning into garments for poorer neighbours or sales.

Between "Charity" and "Sophia" is now the little table which supports the bird-cage in which ought to live my canary 'John Bull,' so-called to counteract foreign influence Johnnie having been "made in Germany;" but the little rascal usually tempts me to let him out and not content with this room he flies off through the hall to the dining-room, or to visit my mother in the drawing-room—where he is most at home on the silver table!

On the other side of the window is the 'cosy corner,' on the narrow shelf above which is a row of big photos—groups of relations—the most remarkable being the family of an aunt and uncle and their 15 children. Then comes the fireplace—with a white marble chimney-piece, and a low over-mantle of white wood. Arranged along the top, is my special hobby, a collection of tiny jugs; there are over 50 now the tallest being under 4 inches high; they also have come

* These essays are printed exactly as written, without correction or alteration of any kind.—Ed.

from all parts of the world, but are chiefly European; the tiniest about $\frac{1}{4}$ an inch high, came from Manitore in the Rocky Mountains where I was told they are used as the badges of different political parties! On the mantelpiece itself are some china ornaments, and the photos—mostly unflattering—of to girl cousins and friends. Above the old school-room clock, which never goes—is fastened a fox's brush, not the appendage of a native of these parts, but shot by my brother Arthur on a Scotch moor, where they are usually looked upon as vermin, and got rid of when possible.

Filling up the space between the fireplace and the North wall, is another useful piece of furniture; this is painted white, and consists of writing table, cupboards, shelves, and a drawer. On the very top is a case of stuffed birds—old aviary friends—and a row of rather curious pots and jugs. In the shelves I keep my history, biographical, and instructive books; while the cupboards are crowded with big books, some containing English, Scotch or foreign photos, and the others an odd jumble of notices of sales, theatrical performances, ball cards, writing games, adjective letters, Kodak photos, dried flowers, cricket scores, bits of wedding gowns, and a host of things more or less interesting to ourselves, but of

no value to anyone else. In the upper cupboard is a store of exercise paper, big envelopes, pen nibs, shop advertisements &c. mostly of a useful nature.

Between the door and this useful 'moveable,' stands "the walnut cabinet," chiefly used by my father for storing catalogues of garden or farm goods; and by its side is our dear old 6-tuned musical box, given to Dick when a restless baby of a year old; it is not in good order after its 26 years of work, and when wound up, rattles off 2 or 3 tunes in an impatient manner, suddenly subsiding into a slow drawl which is slightly exasperating—poor old box!

This brings our circular tour to an end: but before you take your leave may I ask you to look at the pictures, chiefly oilpaintings, given to me by my Father—my favourites are that peaceful snowy scene by Anderson, and that lonely little ship on a moonlit sea. You will notice there are other objects nailed on the walls—near the writing table a card of postal arrangements, another giving the time for lighting cycle lamps during 1898; several old almanacks too pretty to be hidden away; a bunch of sham carrots with a christmas inscription on it, "as times were never harder, I send a contribution to your larder"; a

"Tableau synchronique des souverains de France D'Angleterre et D'Allemagne;" and a large brass soup ladle given me by our old wedding woman—that I cannot help thinking must once have come from Warwick Castle. Then on each side of the window is a bookshelf, one my Poets Corner, the other quickly filling with lighter literature. Pinned in a tiny panel of a wee cupboard, is a paper Daily Graphic Lord Salisbury a little ahead of a ditto Lord Roseberry, a remembrance of the last General Election. I must not forget to mention this solid sturdy table in the middle of the room, nor the convenient small 4-legged one, given to me on my 4th birthday by a godmother aunt, that can be popped down wherever it is needed: nor the comfortable little chairs scattered about.

But my paper is coming to an end, so I must finish up, hoping that I have not bored you very much in this description of my dear little Sitting-room.

I declare the statements in this paper to be true.

Warwickshire.

"SIDNEY KEITH."

Dec. 31. 1897.

ADELINE FRANCESCA WRIGHT,
Wootton Court, Warwick.

"MY ROOM."

(ONE GUINEA).

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—I have a sitting-room of my own, and I love it so, that I could not resist such a fine opportunity of telling you all about it. It is the dearest little room in the world to me, where I keep all my things and where I reign supreme.

You see Mamma is the very soul of tidiness but my things have such a bad habit of lying about that her peace of mind is often threatened, and so when about a year ago I conceived the idea of turning the lumber room to account by keeping myself together in it, she gladly consented and even gave me the magnificent permission of making whatever use I liked of the lumber in it. Such is the humble origin of my room together with a little begging and perhaps a little stealing from downstairs.

It is situated on the second floor front and measures ft. 16 x 12. The wall paper is of a yellowish-pink not pretty but still light and bright. The poor carpet is wearing out its ninth life but it bravely shows a bit of pattern here and there so I am not going to disparage it. The door is opposite one window and along the wall beside it, nearly facing the other stand my "pièce de résistance," a carved open cabinet. It came from Venice and was supposed to be of oak but a chip has discovered it to be a fraud—merely white wood painted—nevertheless it is a good fraud and has a graceful appearance especially the curved supports of the upper shelves. The bottom shelves are large and serve as a bookcase, one holding newspapers magazines albums etc, the other all my bound G.O.P.'s and Lloyd's Encyclopaedia, quite an imposing array. The middle shelf rests on a drawer that has a lock a key, a perfect "treasure drawer"! Of course it contains lots of precious keepsakes and letters and souvenirs, in little boxes all shapes and sizes, my money boxes among them, although the latter rather deserve the name of empty boxes long before pay-day. The upper shelves are devoted to ornaments. A little vase, amphor shaped, occupies the place of honour, its colouring is rather peculiar being dashes and streaks of red and white on a green ground, I heard someone say it was made in Hungary but I do not know if it is

glass or china. Then there is a polished green-ear shell and on the next shelf a mother of pearl shell with a carved landscape. This I value more for its lovely iridescence than for the carving, in certain lights it shows such exquisite pearly-greens and pinky violets! The mantelpiece comes next at right angles with the cabinet. Two bronze jugs with elaborate handles and cupids playing flutes in bas-relief occupy either end and in the centre there is a piece of Venetian glass tall and slender in white and blue. I have yet two more glass ornaments on the mantelpiece, one green and the other, my especial favourite, of a pale amethyst; it is very simple in form, only a twisted stem upholding a fluted chalice, but so graceful and the colour is fairly charming in its soft mysteriousness. Beside the mantelpiece I wanted a sofa but could not get one, so I make-believe with three chairs, the two end ones turned sideways, and covered with pillows and Turkish antimacassars.

In the corner there is a black pedestal surmounted with a globe that gives the room a solemn and scholastic appearance.

Next come the windows and they are the best of all, for they disclose an ever-varying picture, not any lovely view at all, oh no, there are houses in front, but in a break between them lower down there is a patch of grass and a tree and above them there is the sky; and even in smoky, much abused old London rosy hues herald the morning sun and golden glory lingers after it.

Between the windows stands my writing table; happily it is of a good size for before tidying up time comes it is burdened with what Mamma would call: "piles and piles of rubbish." I have a pretty paper weight of glass with a Venetian view by moonlight, but for an inkstand I am obliged to contrive with a glass match-holder until some charitable friend obliges me with a better.

In the corner by the first window no less an object than a horsehair armchair displays itself. Some people would think it an eyesore, but I see nothing dreadful in it, I have had many a slide down its slippery old back and many a comfortable read in it, and it is so conveniently near my books that it is quite a

matter of course to slip into it and forget one's self in dreamland or bookland.

My books come last of all, arranged in one of those three shelved book stands to be seen in all second hand furniture shops. I have stood it on a small oblong table and made the most of it and yet the whole concern looks shabby, outwardly that is, inwardly what a store of wisdom, grandeur, sweetness and light is there! I cannot tell you how much I love my books or how much pleasure I derive from them, life would be a wilderness without them. I have not very many, as a greater part are school books, and these are not so interesting as "Trilby" or "Pickwick Papers" for example. But you must not think that my little few are all novels either, I have Macaulay's History and Essays, Cardinal Newman's "Idea of a University," which is an education in itself, Tennyson's works, Silvio Pellico's Prisons, Lamb's Essays and many others. The sad part of it is that I have not much time to spend with them. I wonder who loves her books the more: the girl who has a grand library full of them or the one who has only a spare pinch?

My room is not rich in pictures, good ones are too costly a luxury and I do not care for bad ones. Above my books there hangs an engraving of a sweet-faced Madonna after Carlo Dolce and at each side a little oil painting of a girl's head; I love these very much because they were painted and given to me by a dear old friend of ours. Then there are some very minute views of Switzerland with very large black frames, some certificates and a landscape in oils, which judging from its battered frame has endured many hardships.

I think now I have told you about fairly all the material objects of my room, as for its spiritual influences—they are indescribable—perchance guardian angels—I only know I never leave it without feeling more rested, happier, and more inspired to prove myself worthy of the dignity of a child of God.

Yours sincerely and gratefully,

LINA FRANCATI.

35 St. Oswald's Road,
West Brompton, S.W.

OUR SECOND STORY COMPETITION.

STORIES IN MINIATURE.

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

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

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

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

Examiners:—

The Author of the Story (Mrs. Lily Watson), and the Editor of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER.

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* * *

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OUR NEW PUZZLE POEM.

FLUCTUATIONS.

It  -p  and i w  ad  ad
 Sosadifeltmyheartwould 
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* * PRIZES to the amount of six guineas (one of which will be reserved for competitors living abroad) are offered for the best solutions of the above Puzzle Poem. The following conditions must be observed:—

1. Solutions to be written on one side of the paper only.
2. Each paper to be headed with the name and address of the competitor.
3. Attention must be paid to spelling, punctuation, and neatness.
4. Send by post to Editor, GIRL'S OWN PAPER, 56, Paternoster Row, London. "Puzzle Poem" to be written on the top left-hand corner of the envelope.
5. The last day for receiving solutions from Great Britain and Ireland will be May 16, 1898; from Abroad, July 18, 1898.

The competition is open to all without any restrictions as to sex or age. No competitor will be awarded more than one First Prize during the year (November 1897 to October 1898), but the winner of a Second Prize may still compete for a first. Not more than one First and one Second Prize will be sent to any one address during the year.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE of one guinea will be awarded to the competitor, not a prize-winner, who shall receive the highest number of marks during the year for Mention. Very Highly Commended to count 10 marks; Highly Commended to count 7 marks; Honourable Mention to count 5 marks.

This will be an encouragement to all who take an interest in the puzzles and who cannot quite find their way into the front rank of solvers.