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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

TWO-ACRE ESTATES, OR VILLA FARMS.

THE HOMESTEADS OF THE FUTURE.

By DORA DE BLAQUIÈRE.

THERE are two weighty questions much debated at present, in every family where there are young people of both or either sex growing up, and needing some provision to be made for their future living and maintenance. If the family fortune be not enough to supply more than a certain amount of education, or a few hundreds of pounds for an outfit and settlement, the questions of "Where shall we send him? What shall we do with her?" become even more puzzling still. Formerly it was only the boys who had to be thought of, now the girls also claim their share of education; which, if not professional, must be one of an advanced and excellent kind, or they cannot expect to compete with their fellows in life. Every girl does not want to be a doctor, and the profession of a nurse is much overstocked; the Civil Service will not provide for every one; and though music and the arts take some, perhaps, off our hands, we are still confronted with the question, for boys as well as girls: How can they make a living in the world of to-day? What a relief from these anxieties it would be were it once demonstrated without a doubt, that an opening



VIEW OF FOUNDER'S HOUSE, WITH OUTSIDE SEAT FOR WAYFARERS.

A book-cupboard is fixed above it, over the doors of which are these words—

*"A quiet resting-place—
Refreshment for the mind."*



LARGE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE STOREHOUSE WITH DWELLING-ROOMS OVER.

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exists at our very doors, without any very great expenditure of money, which would answer equally for ourselves, if we needed it, or for our children; and that the training is one both inexpensive and not difficult to obtain.

Now one of the things which has been talked of for years, discussed from every possible point of view, and finally recommended by a Prime Minister of England, as a panacea for the distresses of the farmer, has been, what is known as *La petite culture*, the cultivation of fruit, flowers and vegetables, in fact, any and everything which can be grown in a small way by personal supervision and personal labour on a small amount of ground. Only a few weeks ago, as you have probably seen in the daily papers, at a Horticultural Show held in the grounds of Hawarden Castle, Mr. Gladstone spoke on this subject, and read a letter which had been sent to him by a farmer who had adopted his advice about small culture, and had found it useful and profitable too. I have cut out the letter because it is valuable as proving the case from the farmer's side. The letter is as follows:—

"DEAR SIR,—Some years ago, in a speech made at Hawarden, you suggested that, under

certain conditions, farmers should devote a part of their land to the culture of fruit and flowers. I am pleased to say that I took your advice, especially with regard to flowers, and that for the past three years, although I have largely increased my growth, I have received many more orders than I have been able to supply. You will, I am sure, be pleased to hear that I send cut flowers to dwellers in our large towns at a cost to them of something like fifty per cent. under what they formerly had to give; also that I am able to pay my workpeople twenty per cent. higher wages than they used to receive when the land was worked for purely agricultural purposes. In addition to this, I put by a very substantial profit for myself."

The side of the question that interests us at this moment is not the farmer's, however, but how and where we ourselves can manage to see and hear enough on the subject from people who have tried the experiment, to convince us that here, indeed, lies the land of promise for any one fond of out-of-door pursuits, and gifted with industry, perseverance, and a small amount of money. About eight years ago a London tradesman, Mr. R. K. Goodrich, thought he would like to go back to the country, make a home there, and live a more natural and probably a happier life. Being active and industrious, he also thought he would try to do a little profitable market-gardening and fruit-growing; so he got hold of a bit of land at Methwold, two and a half miles from Stoke Ferry Station on the Great Eastern Railway, and built a house and set to work; and then so prospered, that he told his story to several interested listeners, and soon found many who wished to do as he had done; and so arose the Methwold Fruit Farm Colony, a co-operative community, numbering at present about fifty settlers

who own in all about one hundred and sixty acres in plots of from one to ten acres each. Field was added to field, beginning with two acres, then ten acres, then successively ten, thirteen and a half, two, nineteen, forty-two, thirty, and twenty-eight. None of the settlers would have embarked on the work of fruit farming or any other form of *petite culture* in an isolated situation, and it is probable they would have failed in it if they had; while failure in a colony, Mr. Goodrich thinks, is impossible. Some people, of course, may discover their unfitness for the new life, and may leave it; but not if they be educated and personally fitted for it.

All sorts and conditions of men and women are found amongst the settlers; all of them living left the city in search of a healthier and better life. Everyone is perfectly free, and yet it is practically a co-operative community. Each settler buys what land he likes and does what he likes with it; and at the base of the whole thing lies, I think, the English love for a freehold, and freedom with it. The land costs £30 an acre, and I was told

that there is a scheme in consideration whereby a person can buy even a foot of land at a time just as he is able to earn the money, a kind of penny in the slot scheme applied to land!

The colony, as at present working-out, is on the lines of freeholding by small capitalists; which means, people who have either saved or owned sums from £250 to £500. For the first-named sum you can purchase two acres of ground, plant and stock it, and build a good and pretty house, which means a rent of about £10 or so. What has been done at Methwold could be done in a hundred other places; and here is an opening for our boys as well as our girls.

With 1,200,000,000 eggs being laid all over Europe, as Mr. Gladstone says, it would be a very good thing if six hundred millions of them could be laid in England. The same history of foreign importation is told of butter, of apples, and of everything eatable that we consume. This latter is a crop so extremely well suited to all parts of this country, and it was so celebrated for the best kinds of apples, that it seems as if we ought to do more for

market. There are about a hundred agricultural labourers in the parish of Methwold; and the colony not only works itself, but employs much labour; indeed, it is said that if the whole parish were worked in the same mode of intense cultivation, a thousand labourers would be wanted; and what prosperity this would mean for all England it is not difficult to foresee.

And now I feel sure that the question is coming, Can a living be made upon small estates? and this is exactly the question Mr. Goodrich thinks is answered at the Fruit Farm Colony. When brains are united with the virtues of the soil, and clever and enlightened men and women with scientific knowledge set to work, they have, and will produce marvellous results from small areas. Be idle covering their own tables with food, they have in addition grown as much as possible for sale. New ideas are constantly being taken up, and lately osier beds have been planted, and workshops for many village industries are being erected, such as the making of jams, grinding and storing peat, for preserving apples, potatoes, onions, etc., and the colony is even attempting to make its own homespun cloth, and, in addition, will undertake tailoring.

An Institute and Reading-room is proposed; the institute being for technical instruction and lectures on all subjects connected with the objects of the colony, to which the library and reading-room will be attached. The lecturer of the Norfolk County Council gave lectures on Horticulture last winter, and this summer has been appointed to give object lessons to the residents in the colony; nor must I forget to mention, that the National Thrift Society have arranged to open, if they have not already done so, a Thrift Industrial Home for the education of boys. In this school, which has a staff of practical instructors, all branches of work will be taught, so that two or three years will suffice to teach all that is requisite for the management of a small combination farm, with a fair prospect for the future. The entire cost for one year's training is to be £25, including board and lodging. After this it is expected that a boy will be able to earn his own living in the colony.

Girls have a provision also made for their education in Horticulture, besides the lectures at Methwold and other places; in the college at Swanley in Kent; bee-keeping, poultry-farming, dairy-work, etc., can be learnt; terms inclusive about £70 per annum. There is also a course at the Crystal Palace School of Science.

Methwold has already started its small newspaper, called *The Methwold Express and Village Industries Gazette*; and here one may read the opinions and ideas of the colonists. I find that there are lady farmers as well as gentlemen, and that many more are expected to take up their residence on their estates of two acres.



Cottage of limestone and bricks, with a well of good water, two hundred fruit trees: planted on two acres, worth about £250, which can be paid in instalments.

ourselves. But alas! the English farmer who owns an orchard is quite the exception; and if there be one, the apples grow just as they will; little science is expended on the trees to ensure a good crop, and few farmers understand even the A B C of fruit-growing.

And now I must tell you what the Methwold colonists do to make a living. They grow vegetables, fruit and flowers; they keep cows, pigs, poultry and bees. They make butter and jam, sell eggs, and supply beehives, poultry-houses and rustic furniture, and send to all parts nice little parcels of honey, jams, apples and vegetables priced from 5s. to 10s. carriage paid. Here the co-operative system comes in, for in making up these parcels, many settlers contribute, for one has an article which another has not; and here is the advantage of collective small proprietorships. There is now quite a large trade done between Methwold and London, and hundreds of packages are sent up weekly. In fact the colony is unable to supply its many customers, and it is hunting the surrounding country for produce that could not find a



SISTERS THREE.

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

CHAPTER IV.



REX FREER'S mother wrote a grateful letter to Mr. Bertrand, thanking him for his hospitality to her son, and arranging to drive over for Rex on the following Saturday afternoon, so that Hilary's anxiety was at an end, and she could enjoy the strange boy's society with an easy mind. After Norah had broken the ice, there was no further feeling of shyness. When Rex hobbled downstairs at ten o'clock in the morning, he ensconced himself on the old-fashioned sofa in the sewing-room, and remained there until he adjourned into the drawing-room for the evening. The boys came in and out as they pleased. Miss Briggs coddled him and brought him cups of beef tea, but it was upon the girls that he chiefly depended for amusement. In the morning they were busy with their household duties; but, as regular lessons had not begun, afternoon was a free time, and while Norah drew, Lettice carved, and Hilary occupied herself manufacturing fineries for the London visit, a brisk clatter of tongues was kept up, in which the invalid took his full part. The sound of five-finger exercises would come from the school-room overhead, but so soon as four o'clock struck, the Mouse would steal in, in her little white pinafore, and creep on to the corner of the sofa. She and the "strange boy" had made friends at once, and were on the best of terms.

"I wish you lived with us for ever!" she said one afternoon, looking lovingly in his face, as he stroked her wavy locks.

"And I wish you lived with me, Mouse," he answered. "I should like a little sister just like you, with a tiny pointed chin, and a tiny little nose, and big dark eyes. You are a real little mouse. It is exactly the right name for you."

"No, it's my wrong name. My true

name is Geraldine Audrey. It's written that way in the Bible."

"Dear me! that's a big name for a small person. And who gave you that name," asked Rex, laughing. But the child's face did not relax from its characteristic gravity as she replied—

"My godfathers and my godmothers, and a silver mug, and a knife and fork in a case, with 'G. A. B.' written on the handles. Only I mayn't use them till I'm seven, in case I cut my fingers."

Dear little Geraldine Audrey! Everyone loved her. She was always so desperately in earnest, so unsuspecting of fraud, and her little life was made a burden to her in the holidays by reason of the pranks of her big brothers. They sent her into village shops to demand "a halfpenny-worth of pennies," they kept her shivering in the drive staring at the lions on the top of the gate-posts, to

see them wag their tails when they heard the clock strike twelve; they despatched her into the garden with neat little packets of salt to put on the birds' tails, and watched the poor mite's efforts in contortions of laughter from behind the window curtains. The Mouse was more sorrowful than angry when the nature of these tricks was explained to her. "I fought you told the truth," she would say quietly, and then Raymond and Bob would pick her up in their arms, and try to make amends for their wickedness by petting her for the rest of the day.

On the third day of Rex's visit, the weather was so tempestuous that even Raymond and Bob did not stir from the house. They spent the morning over chemical experiments in the school-room, but when afternoon came they wearied of the unusual confinement and were glad to join the cosy party downstairs. Norah had a brilliant inspiration and suggested "Chestnuts," and Master Raymond sat in comfort, directing the efforts of poor red-faced Bob, as he bent over the fire and roasted his fingers as well as the nuts. When half a dozen young people are gathered round a fire, catching hot nuts in outstretched hands, and promptly dropping them with shrieks of dismay, the last remnants of shyness must needs disappear; and Rex was soon as uproarious as any other member of the family, complaining loudly when his "turn" was forgotten, and abusing the unfortunate Bob for presenting him with a cinder instead of the expected dainty. The clatter of tongues was kept up without a moment's intermission, and, as is usual under such circumstances, the conversation was chiefly concerned with the past exploits of the family.

"You can't have half as many jokes in the country as you can in town," Raymond declared. "When we were in London, two old ladies lived in the

house opposite ours, who used to sit sewing in the window by the hour together. One day, when the sun was shining, Bob and I got hold of a mirror and flashed it at them from our window so that the light dazzled their eyes and made them jump. They couldn't see us, because we were hiding behind the curtains, but it was as good as a play to watch first one, then the other, drop her work and put up her hand to her eyes. Then they began shaking their fists across the road, for they knew it was us, because we had played some fine tricks on them before. On wet days we used to make up a sham parcel, tie a thread to the end, and put it on the side of the pavement. Every one who came along stooped down to pick it up, then we gave a jerk to the string and moved it on a little further; they gave another grab, and once or twice a man overbalanced himself and fell down, but it didn't always come off so well as that. Oh, it was capital sport!"

"You got into trouble yourselves sometimes. You didn't always get the best of it," Norah reminded him. "Do you remember the day when you found a ladder leaning against the area railings of a house in the white terrace. Father had forbidden you to climb ladders, but you were a naughty boy, as usual, and began to do it, and when you got to the top, the ladder overbalanced, and you fell head over heels into the area. It is a wonder you were not killed that time!"

Raymond chuckled softly, as if at a pleasant remembrance. "But I was not, you see, and the cook got a jolly fright. She was making pastry at a table by the window, and down we came, ladder and I, the finest smash in the world. There was more glass than flour in the pies that day!"

"But father had to pay for new windows, and you were all over bruises from head to foot——"

"That didn't matter. It was jolly. I could have exhibited myself in a show as a 'boy leopard,' and made no end of money. And I wasn't the only one who made father pay for new windows. When Bob was a little fellow, he broke the nursery window by mistake, and a glazier came to mend it. Bob sat on a stool watching him do it, and snored all the time—Bob always snores when he is interested—and as soon as the man had picked up his tools and left the room, what did he do but jump up and send a toy horse smashing through the pane again. He wanted to see the glazier put in another, but he hadn't the pleasure of seeing it mended that time. He was whipped and sent to bed."

"We—w—w—well," cried Bob, who was afflicted with a stammer when he was excited, "I didn't c—c—ut off my eyelashes, anyway. Norah went up to her room one day and p—played barber's shop. She cut lumps off her hair wherever she could get at it, till

she looked like an Indian squaw, and then she s—s—snipped off her eyelashes till there wasn't a hair left. She was sent to bed as w—well as me."

"They have grown again since then," said Norah, shutting one eye, and screwing up her face in a vain effort to prove the truth of her words. "I had been to see Lettice have her hair cut that day, and I was longing to try what it felt like. I knew it was naughty, but I couldn't stop, it was too fascinating. Oh, Lettice, do you remember when you sucked your thumb?"

Lettice threw up her hands with a little shriek of laughter. "Oh, how funny it was. I used to suck my thumb, Rex, until I was quite a big girl, six years old, I think, and one day mother spoke to me seriously, and said I really must give it up. If I didn't I was to be punished; if I did I was to get a prize—I forget what it was now. I said, 'Well, may I suck my thumb as long as ever I like to-day, for the very last time?' Mother said I might, so I sat on the stairs outside the nursery door and sucked my thumb all day long—hours, hours, and hours, and after that I was never seen to suck it again. I had had enough!"

"It must be awfully nice to belong to a large family," said Rex wistfully. "You can have such fun together. Edna and I were very quiet at home, but I had splendid times at school, and sometimes I used to bring some of the

fellows down to stay with me in the holidays. One night I remember—hallo, here's the Mouse! I thought you were having a nice little sleep on the schoolroom sofa, Mouse. Come here and sit by me."

Geraldine advanced to the fireplace in her usual deliberate fashion. She was quite calm and unruffled, and found time to smile at each member of the party before she spoke.

"So I was asleep, only they's a fire burning on the carpet of the schoolroom, and it waked me up."

"Wh—at?"

"They's a fire burning in the migggle of the carpet—a blue fire, just like a plum pudding."

There was a simultaneous shriek of dismay, as work, scissors, chestnuts, were thrown wildly on the floor, and the Bertrand family rushed upstairs in a stampede of excitement. The schoolroom door stood open, the rug was thrown back from the couch on which the Mouse had been lying, and in the centre of the well-worn carpet, little blue flames were dancing up and down, exactly as they do on a Christmas pudding, which has been previously baptised with spirit. Bob cast a guilty look at his brother, who stuck his hands in his pockets and looked at the conflagration with smiling patronage.

"Phosphorus pentoxide P₂O₅," he remarked coolly. "What a lark!"

"It wouldn't have been a lark if the Mouse had been stifled by the nasty, horrid fumes," said Lettice angrily. "Get some water at once, and help us put it out, before the whole house is on fire."

"Water, indeed, don't do anything so foolish. You mustn't touch it with water. Here, it's only a square, pull the thing up and throw it through the window into the garden, that's the best thing we can do," said Raymond, dropping on his knees and setting himself to pull and tear with all his strength. Bob and the girls did their best to assist him, for the Bertrands were accustomed to help themselves, and in a very few minutes the carpet was lifted, folded hurriedly in two, and sent flying through the window to the garden beneath. After which the tired and begrimed labourers sank down on chairs, and panted for breath.

"This is what comes of chemical experiments," said Hilary, severely. "I shall ask father to forbid you to play with such dangerous things in the house. I wonder what on earth you will do next."

"Have some tea. This sort of work is tiring. I'm going downstairs to ring the bell and hurry Mary up," said Raymond, coolly. "It was absolutely impossible to get that dreadful boy to realise his own enormities!"

(To be continued.)

BICYCLING TO HEALTH AND FORTUNE.

By LAWRENCE LISTON, M.D.

PART I. THE MACHINE.



ERTAINLY one of the most remarkable and important additions to our lives during the past years has been the pneumatic bicycle. In town and in country alike go where we will, the

ever-present bicycle is to be seen in the roads, in the streets, at railway stations and even on board steamers. The large majority of present-day girls ride, and the object of these articles is to point out,

if possible, the way of getting the greatest benefit from the exercise, and of avoiding its pitfalls and dangers.

The bicycle was a closed book to any but hardy men until the introduction of the pneumatic tyre, which immediately rendered propulsion easy and stopped nearly all the old injurious and uncomfortable vibration; fortunately also at about the same time many

County Councils adopted the use of the steamroller on country roads, and nowadays it can only exceptionally be the case that a girl of ordinary physical endowments cannot ride a bicycle. That this exercise has exerted a favourable influence on the health of those who indulge in it, with discretion, there can be no shadow of doubt; the increased appetite, the ability to sleep soundly, the banishing of dyspepsia, the reddening of poor pale cheeks, the feeling of well-being and increased physical strength tell loudly the tale of restored and perfected health. It must be always remembered, however, that these much desired ends are only to be attained by care and discretion in riding, and that results the very reverse may be suffered through ill-directed over-exertion. So great are these benefits which the bicycle brings that the toy of fashion has become a necessary element in the life of most girls in the country, and a never-failing source of recreation to those who live in towns. Let us see then how we can best make use of this wonderful health-giving mechanism, and think over the points that have to be considered in its use.

First of all the machine; this thing which is going to be your *alter ego* must be chosen with care. Don't be in a hurry to buy any bicycle which the seller may first bring to your notice, but wait and think over the pros and cons quietly. You cannot go far wrong if you buy one of the high-grade standard manufactures of English renown, and if cost be a grave consideration, you will often do better to buy a second-hand last year's machine of well-known make, rather than a new one of unknown or inferior manufacture. Be sure that the machine is of the right

height for you; it is positively harmful to ride a machine, the pedals of which you can only just reach with effort, and it is absurd and may be dangerous to have the saddle pillar and handle-bars raised to a great height on a machine which is too small for you. In a machine which is of the right size, you should be able, with the saddle at its lowest, to ride comfortably, and there should never be any occasion for dangerous elevation of the handles on which the hands should rest comfortably, the elbows being only slightly bent. The weight of the machine should not exceed thirty pounds with all "extras" for ordinary girl riders up to nine stone; a heavy machine means greater fatigue in riding, though often a very light machine conveys vibration from inequalities of the road with greater intensity. No standard English maker is likely to supply a "lady's safety" built so lightly as to be dangerous. It is of first importance that a suitable saddle should be fixed to the machine, one which gives rise to no sort of injurious pressure or sense of discomfort at the end of a long ride. Considerable ingenuity has been expended to meet this want, and it is an open question whether it has been thoroughly satisfied even yet. It is a pity that the word "saddle" was ever applied to this particular part of the bicycle, "seat" would be much better, and those forms of apparatus which are "seats" rather than "saddles" are as a rule to be preferred. As regards the position of the saddle, the point or most forward part of the saddle should be in the same vertical line with the hindmost pedal when the pedals are horizontal; the height should be such that the under

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part of the lowest pedal can be just touched by the upper surface of the foot, the pedals being vertical.

The pedals themselves should be "rubber" pedals and not "rat-trap" as it is termed, and it is important that they should have a reliable fastening to the cranks.

The tyres must, of course, be pneumatic; in a really good bicycle the tyres are always of a standard make and quality; but especially for girls it is important to have tyres that are little liable to puncture, or those which, in the event of injury are repaired easily and without the use of any great force. Mud-guards are a necessity, as is a dress-guard and gear-case in a woman's machine; these three important adjuncts should be perfectly satisfactory in size and adjustment; the mud-guard should be sufficiently large to keep all mud off, and the dress-guard should efficiently protect the dress from the hind wheel; the gear-case which covers the chain and chain-wheels should allow of free movement of those parts, and be, as nearly as possible, dust and water-tight. In many machines, more especially the American varieties, absurd little useless mud-guards are fitted, and in lieu of a gear-case an open string-work is stretched over the chain and chain-wheels. As the splashing of a modern bicycle chain with mud tightens it, such machines are only of use in fine weather, and our English girls will very likely not be satisfied with that. Avoid such machines.

Now I come to speak of the most important piece of mechanism in the bicycle, and that, curiously enough, is the one which prevents it from running. I mean the anchor of your ship, the brake. No girl should ever, in any conceivable state of things, ride a machine unless it is fitted with a powerful and efficient brake in perfect working order and requiring but little force to apply it effectually. This important piece of machinery will be your mainstay in crowded thoroughfares, your salvation down steep hills, it is the only part of the machine that permits of your "altering your mind" in a moment, and it greatly helps you should you wish to dismount suddenly and safely. Very many indeed of the dreadful accidents of which we read are due either to the absence of a brake on a machine or temporary oblivion of its existence on the part of the rider.

The next point which will demand careful attention is the "gear" of the machine. It may be as well, perhaps, to have a clear understanding as to what is meant by a high or low gear. In the old days of high bicycles the front wheel of course made one revolution with each corresponding revolution of the pedals, and as the rider desired to obtain as much speed as possible in his machine, he invariably rode as high a bicycle as he could in comfort bestride, for it is evident that a wheel of a diameter of 63 inches would cover more ground in one revolution than one say of 56 inches diameter.

When the safety bicycle was invented, with its small (26 to 30-inch) wheels, it was of course necessary to attain a reasonable speed with the small wheels, and to do this the driving-wheel was made to revolve more than once to one stroke of the pedals. If, then, in pedalling once, the driving-wheel is forced round sufficiently frequently to cover the same ground as say a 56-inch wheel, that wheel is said to be "geared to 56." Nowadays 54 would be regarded as a low gear, and anything over 63 as a high one.

For girls, and particularly for those who are bicycling to regain health, the gear should never be high, because a high gear, though

implying greater speed, involves much harder work; for in gearing, what you gain in speed you lose in power. Many considerations have to be taken into account: the strength and physique of the rider, and the character of the roads which she will for the most part ride. A low-gear machine will mount hills more easily than a high one should the rider not be very strong. I do not think that a woman's machine should ever be geared above 59—this is a good average gear for a country with steam-rolled roads and moderate hills. Much pitiable nonsense is written about the graceful appearance of a girl on a high-geared machine, with the slow revolutions of the feet and the resulting high speed. People say that it looks so easy. It is not easy unless you are very strong, and the girl who rides a machine geared too high for her merely does herself a little harm every day, until at last there is a final collapse. Those who cycle to regain or maintain health will choose a low gear. These then are the main matters of importance which you should attend to in the purchase of your machine. All your wants can be satisfied, and you should not bring away from the shop any machine which does not absolutely fulfil all your requirements.

Having purchased your machine, the next thing is to learn to ride it, on another. Never mount your own new machine until you are proficient in riding, mounting and dismounting. It is idle to theorise about learning to ride a bicycle. I never met any one yet who, having tried, could not learn, and I have met very few indeed but those who, as the result of their first day's experience, thought it impossible ever to learn. It seems so hopeless and it comes so suddenly. Do not let your instructor tire you by taking you for too long a time; one hour's lesson a day is quite enough, and each lesson will involve frequent rests. When you have learnt all he can tell you, you will come home and ride your own machine. Now the good to be got out of bicycle-riding depends, as many other things do, on attention to what seem trivial details. How these "trivial details" affect our lives. What a dreadful thing a slight friction is anywhere in our bicycles; the whole harmony of the running is disturbed, and slight lack of attention to little details may mar the whole experience of cycling, and the incessant little annoyances do much more harm than the mere physical exercise does good.

Some people seem to take a sort of insane pride in loudly attesting the fact that they know nothing of the structure of their machines; this is a difficult mental attitude to appreciate, and the attainment of such profound ignorance is attended with undeniable experiences on the occurrence of accidents to the machine. Look well after your machine; attend to its wants and it will serve you faithfully, and by its beautiful smooth running will give you health and strength instead of incessantly annoying and irritating you. Let us now consider a few of the very easily understood things which make all the difference.

This steed of yours is not a very exacting creature, but certain things constitute your duty towards him, and if you fail in it you will suffer. All delicate machinery requires lubricating with oil to insure its smooth working, and the bicycle, as an excellent example of delicate mechanism, exhibits this same want. At various parts of the machine there are oil-holes or lubricators. When the machine is ridden regularly every day it will require oiling once in every hundred miles traversed. It is almost as harmful to use too much oil as to use none, so only give each hole a few drops

at a time. Always oil the machine when it is clean, and not during a dusty ride, or you will perhaps enable dust to work into the bearings with your oil. I don't think that anyone can thoroughly clean her bicycle in less than an hour; if you have been out in the mud it is best to clean the machine before the splashes are dry. If by any chance the cleaning has been put off until the mud is dry, you should wash it off by means of a sponge frequently dipped into warm water. If you do not thoroughly soften the mud before removing it you will injure the enamel. Remember that the source of that wonderful spontaneity of movement in a bicycle is the perfect state of its bearings; the bearings are the things which above all you must jealously guard from all enemies—more particularly web and dust. You will always know where bearings are in a good bicycle, for at each "bearing" there is an oiling-place. Be very careful, then, in cleaning the bicycle with a sponge and warm water that none of the water trickles over the bearings, and in cleaning the edge of any part containing bearings, be particularly careful not to wipe dust or damp into the bearing. I have known of an instance of a groom, who, regarding the cleaning of a bicycle as comparable with that of a carriage, turned on a hose over the machine, with the result that it was almost completely ruined.

In cleaning the spokes of the wheels, then, wipe from the hub to the rim always from above downwards, that is to say, always keeping the spokes you are cleaning with its distal end towards the ground. Carefully dry the enamelled parts with a soft dry cloth or wash-leather. The plated parts are best cleaned with whiting or any good plate-polish. Having cleaned the whole machine, see that it is stood in a dry place.

Whenever you oil your machine, if any drops remain outside the bearing wipe them carefully away, for they have a great affinity for dust and may take it into the bearings. If the machine is only ridden infrequently, it should be oiled on each occasion before starting out.

Though oil is a very good thing for the bearings, it is an uncommonly bad thing for the tyres of a modern bicycle. Oil acts harmfully on rubber, so you must be especially careful not to let any get on your tyres. Before riding, it will always be necessary to see that your pneumatic tyres are properly pumped up; they should be pumped so hard that, in the case of the back wheel, you can just dimple them with your thumbs, and in front a trifle less hard. If the tyres are pumped too hard you get no advantage as compared with a solid tyre; if they are pumped too soft they are much more liable to injury from stones or glass in the road or street, and the machine is more prone to slip sideways or "skid," as it is termed. For girls a very useful form of pump is the "stirrup" pump, as it entails very much less work on the user than the ordinary form of pump. The main points in the care of the machine are these: 1. Keep all parts clean. 2. Oil regularly all bearings. 3. Keep dust and water out of the bearings. 4. Keep oil away from the tyres. 5. Keep the tyres blown up. 6. Store the machine in a dry place.

Do all these things, and never lose sight of your bicycle for any lengthened period, and your steel steed will serve you swiftly and silently. Having thus run over the main points in the choice and care of the machine, it remains for us to speak in the future of the rider who would bicycle to health and fortune.

(To be continued.)



"IF LOVING HEARTS WERE NEVER LONELY—";

OR,

MADGE HARCOURT'S DESOLATION.

CHAPTER IV.

JACK TRIES TO IMPROVE THINGS IN GENERAL.



S though by rule, no sooner had Madge crossed the threshold of her home, than her face and manner changed visibly. Jack noticed it at once and wondered at it, for they had not even heard their step-mother's voice yet.

She seemed to withdraw into herself entirely and became almost taciturn, while a hard expression crept over her features.

All tea-time she remained silent, except for a few commonplace remarks, and as it seemed her wish to be unnoticed, Jack took the conversation upon himself and chatted gaily throughout the meal.

After tea they all went out on the lawn, and Jack settled himself for a lazy evening. Madge prepared to do the same, but, as she expected, she was not destined to go unmolested.

"I am surprised, Margaret, to see you settle yourself in that manner," remarked Mrs. Harcourt severely, "after spending the whole day on pleasure. You had better practise for an hour first and then get your work."

"If I have spent the whole day on pleasure I am sure I have earned it," was the somewhat bitter rejoinder. "Surely when Jack is at home I might have a few holidays."

"Holiday indeed!" replied Mrs. Harcourt, "why, it's all more or less holiday for you. It's a very bad thing for a young girl to pass a whole day in amusing herself. Jack doesn't want you for an hour, and you know I never allow you to neglect your practising."

"Not when I ask?" he inquired, with good-natured emphasis. "I always want Madge every minute when I am home."

"Then it is very absurd of you," replied Mrs. Harcourt tartly, without relaxing, adding, "come, Margaret."

For one instant Madge hesitated, then drawing herself up with a haughty air, that ill became her age, she went indoors without a word.

Jack watched her and there was a glow of pride in his eyes. He turned to

his step-mother, who was knitting vigorously beside him, her thin lips tightly compressed in their habitual manner, and remarked—"Don't you think Madge is growing into an uncommonly handsome woman?"

"Woman indeed!" was the short reply, "what nonsense, she's a mere child."

"At any rate she doesn't look a child, nor act and think like one."

"No, she takes far too much upon herself, and has altogether too high an opinion of her own abilities. It's all those ridiculous books she reads, I can't think why her father allows it. If he would but let me choose her reading for her!"

"But surely a girl of eighteen is old enough to choose her own books?"

"Certainly not, especially when she has such tastes as Margaret has. In fact she reads too much altogether. I have the greatest difficulty to get her to take any interest whatever in household or village matters."

"It isn't her nature, you see," said Jack thoughtfully, watching the smoke from his cigar with a perplexed look on his face. "What's the good of trying to make a girl do what she evidently isn't suited for, it only bothers her; anyone can see she isn't happy."

"H'm! and I suppose you think it's my fault," said Mrs. Harcourt sharply. "Why don't you go and complain to your father that I ill-treat your sister?"

"Because I'm not such an idiot," was the cool reply. "I didn't say it was your fault at all, I merely made a remark. Do you yourself think Madge is happy?"

"I think if she isn't she ought to be, with such a good home. If she would only think a little more of others and less of herself it would be better for her. I'm sure I try to do her good, but she's as obstinate and hard as a rock; moreover she thinks she knows best."

Not wishing to increase his step-mother's ill-temper, Jack let the unkind speech pass and again pressed his point.

"What I mean," he said, "is, that this place is so dull for a girl; it's enough to drive anyone melancholy mad. Why can't she visit with the neighbouring families and see a little life?"

"Because neither I nor her father consider her old enough. When she is the proper age she may go into society, but at present she is best learning her home duties. It's absurd of you to make yourself uneasy about her, for she's a most thankless girl. I sincerely hope you won't put any fresh notions about being dull into her head."

This was too much for Jack, and in a quick voice he exclaimed, "Oh, hang it all, I'm not going to sit still and hear Madge abused by anybody. She is anything but a thankless girl, and if

you'd try and understand her a little instead of worrying her so, you'd soon find I am right."

"Thank you for your advice," was the sarcastic reply. "You are wonderfully generous with it. Times are indeed changed if young men are to dictate to their parents, and they to give way to obstinate daughters' whims and fancies. I was not aware that I was speaking in abusive language of my husband's child."

"Oh, all right," quoth Jack hastily, shrugging his shoulders. He was far too indolent to care to raise a storm, and quickly tried to appease it. "I didn't mean any offence, I'm sure, I humbly beg your pardon," and he stooped to pick up her ball of worsted which had rolled to his feet.

Mrs. Harcourt relaxed somewhat, remarking, "You're a wonderfully cool young man, Jack."

"So I'm often told," he replied laughingly, "and to prove it, what do you think I'm going to do now?"

"I don't know that I should be surprised at anything," was the rather dry reply.

"Well, I'm going to fetch Madge for a stroll," and as he spoke he stretched his long legs, yawned lazily and proceeded to get on his feet.

"You will utterly spoil her," snapped his step-mother, "I expect she will be completely unmanageable by the time your visit is over."

"Well, well, young folks will be young," he replied merrily, and went in search of his sister.

"Stop that wretched strumming, Madge, and come out, do," he exclaimed, as he entered the drawing-room. "There's going to be a ripping sunset, just your kind, all blue and red and yellow and dreamy. I shouldn't wonder if it didn't start you writing poetry. My word," he continued, as Madge rose and shut the piano with a malicious little bang, "just fancy if you were to turn poetess and want me to listen while you read your verses, you'd drive me crazy; you're not likely to do it, are you?" and he put on an expression of unspeakeable anxiety.

Madge slipped her arm through his and led him off, saying gaily, "If I do, I shan't waste my genius on an intellect like yours. You'd never understand a line."

"Never mind, you can't smoke a pipe," he laughed, "and I don't believe you'd know which end to hold a gun."

Just then Madge remembered her step-mother's injunctions and stopped short. "What about that work?" she asked, with a slight frown.

"Oh, never mind about that, I've made it all right with the mater."

"I don't know that I should have bothered about it, if you hadn't," she answered coolly, "unless it were for

peace and quietness. I've made up my mind to be docile while you're here, Jack, in order to keep her in a good humour."

"That's right, it's much the best way," he answered, adding, as they strolled leisurely out of the grounds, "I've been having a rare old time while you were practising."

"You haven't been talking about me, have you?" she exclaimed anxiously.

"Yes, and we both got angry."

"Oh, you shouldn't, Jack. You'll be certain to offend her and you'll never do any good. You won't get that money out of father unless you are very careful. You really mustn't mention me again, promise you won't."

"I don't know, Madge," he answered seriously, "I want to do something for you. I want her to let you go out a bit and have more life."

"It's no use and you mustn't say any more," she replied with emphasis. "If you get into trouble for interfering and spoil your visit, what shall I feel then, do you think? I should be wretched about it; indeed, Jack, you must leave me to fight my own battles. I'm not really so badly off as you think," she added with a little effort. "I don't let myself care about things, it's much the simplest way. All I want you to do is just to love me better than anyone else in the world."

"It's easy enough to do that," he said affectionately, "but I hate to think you are unhappy."

"I'm not always unhappy," she said, looking away from him, "and when I am, maybe it's often my own fault. Don't think about it," and as she spoke she determined to try her hardest to be gay all through his visit, that he might go away with a different impression of her.

She began that very evening, and chatted away bravely as if her heart were as light as a feather.

She even watched the sun sink silently behind those lonely, far-away hills in magnificent splendour, without a sigh, or, what Jack would have called an outlandish remark.

As they entered the house, however, a little later, a slight shudder passed over her, for she seemed to realise more fully the difficulties of the task she had set herself, and she felt her heart sinking as they joined their parents.

Their reception was not encouraging. "You seem exceedingly gay this evening, Margaret," remarked Mrs. Harcourt, looking up. "It is a poor compliment to your father and me, that Jack's visits should be the only occasions upon which you condescend to be cheerful."

Madge bit her lip and with an effort smothered the quick retort that rose to her mind, taking up some fancy work and sitting down in silence.

But Mrs. Harcourt would not let the subject drop. Her step-daughter's silent indifference was far more aggravating to her than a quick answer; she could not take things calmly herself and she disliked anyone else to do so.

"I hope you feel highly honoured,

Jack," she said with an ill-concealed sneer.

"Not at all," he replied gaily. "Why, it's the easiest thing in the world to make Madge laugh. Tell her a good joke and there you are. You should try it sometimes, mater. I expect you know no end of capital jokes, if you would only tell them."

A slow smile fluttered round Madge's mouth for an instant and she bent lower over her work.

"Don't talk nonsense, Jack," said Mrs. Harcourt quickly, trying to look severe. "I declare, you never grow a day older or wiser; you're a deal more like a silly schoolboy than a grown man."

"Talk nonsense, indeed! well, that's nice, when I was trying to help you out of a difficulty. I'm quite sure, if you two started joking with each other, the effect would be ludicrous in the extreme," and he looked at his sister with a desperately wicked twinkle in his merry eyes.

"Very impracticable help you suggest too," answered Mrs. Harcourt, ignoring the last part of his speech. "The fact is, Margaret bestows her smiles where she bestows her love, and that is with those she happens to fancy, instead of those who do the most for her. One would almost fancy she thought ingratitude a virtue."

Jack flushed up hotly in an instant and looked at Madge, but she, with her lips tightly compressed, stiched on in silence and seeming unconcern.

"Someone else is talking nonsense, now, I fancy," he remarked, quickly turning on his heel and walking to the window, too much annoyed to think what he was saying.

"Thank you," replied Mrs. Harcourt haughtily, "I must say your fine London friends have made you exceedingly polite."

"Oh come!" he exclaimed, shrugging his shoulders resignedly. "Let's have a game. Come and play Folly v. Wisdom, eh?"

Madge rose slowly, but she did not break through her sudden reserve, and spoke little for the rest of the evening, going to bed as soon as the game was finished.

There was no light in her room, and without getting one she quietly closed the door, and walked straight to the broad, low window-seat, where she usually sat to read or think.

It was a glorious night, and the girl leaned her head back wearily against the window frame and gazed up at the stars. Such a proud, bitter young face it was, pale and tired, yet beautiful, in spite of the cynical curve of the delicate lips and the stony glance of the dark eyes.

It was not to weep that Madge sat there in the darkness, neither was it to pray, though a womanly touch, or a word of true sympathy might have called forth a flood of tears. For the time had not yet come when she had ceased to feel—as yet she was only striving after it, believing, in her restless unhappiness, that such a fatal opiate would be balm. The aspect of absolute

indifference with which she received her step-mother's cutting remarks was but an assumed one at present; in reality they cut deeply, and she was but learning at an early age to act.

It is a lesson we all learn sooner or later, some more and some less. Not all the cleverest artistes are on the boards of the world's big theatres. There is one theatre, bigger than all, where the actors come and go, do their part, then vanish; and though they act, as no professional ever acted before, and though they spill their heart's blood with very earnestness, when the curtain has once fallen they are never recalled.

And often no faint gesture nor word of applause encourages them; no adulation nor admiration helps smooth the difficult path; no touch of sympathy drives the bitterness from tears; and no sense of "something achieved" pierces the gloom of declining powers. With aching hearts and tired eyes they make their bow and retire in silence, and ere their footsteps have well died away, another has taken their place and acts with the same grim earnestness and desperate reality, only to pass in their turn out through the dark night to The Silent Land.

But as Madge sat alone, gazing into the night, hard, bitter thoughts swelled in her heart and she let them throng in upon her and wrap her round, for it was dark and there were no spectators, so what need to act?"

She did not tell herself she didn't care, she only clenched her white hands, bit her lips, knit her brows, and gazed hard at the stars. She let herself be her real self, as we do sometimes, when it is dark and we are alone.

Presently she rose with a sigh and proceeded listlessly to light her candles and prepare for the night.

The dread clouds of mystery and all the great inexplicables of life were beginning to fold in, with a cruel relentless grasp, on the lonely girl, and she had, or thought she had, no one to go to and no one to guide her footsteps into the only path that leads to rest. One could see by the quiet hopelessness in her eyes that she had already gone some way down into the dark valley of doubt and scepticism.

But there was one thing she made up her mind to, more firmly than ever, before she finally lay down. It was that, whatever happened, while Jack was at home she would be gay, even before her step-mother, if possible. Afterwards—well, no matter at present.

Neither did she fail, for, hard as the struggle proved, her love was stronger and carried her through.

During the coming fortnight, day after day, her laugh was heard mingling with Jack's; and, day after day, she received her step-mother's hard speeches in silence, and made an effort to please her.

And night after night, as she sat in her old seat on the window-sill, her young heart grew harder and yet more hard.

(To be continued.)

THE GENTLE LEADER.

BY THE REV. CANON WILTON, M.A.

LIKE Christiana with her little band
 Of gracious children round about her pressing—
 The model of a mother, blest and blessing,
 Amidst her little ones I see her stand,
 Onward she leads them with a gentle hand,
 Wisely commanding, tenderly caressing;
 Her life-long happiness in them possessing,
 She gives the life-long labour they demand.
 Thus as she moves about her path serenely,
 Training those fresh young hearts for God and Heaven,
 I hold her office to be more than queenly:
 For to the glorious angels who stand nighest
 The Almighty's throne, such "little ones" are given
 To tend on earth for service of the Highest.



THE SORROWS OF GIRLHOOD.

BY LILY WATSON.

PART I.

"THE Sorrows of Girlhood! What a sentimental title!" we may imagine some adult reader exclaiming.

Girls, in the heyday of youth, with life in its infinite possibilities stretching far before them, with all the beauty of the world of nature, of literature, of art, of love, waiting to reveal itself in the bright future—what business have they with sorrow?

The association of ideas does, in truth, seem an incongruous one. Charles Dickens, whom many superior people now are beginning to despise and declare they cannot read, has sketched a delightful picture of an afflicted maiden in Miss Julia Mills, the confidante of Dora in *David Copperfield*, and "comparatively stricken in years—about twenty, I should say." This young lady is "understood to have retired from the world on her awful stock of experience, but still to take a calm interest in the unblighted hopes and loves of youth." We smile at her repeated allusions to the Desert of Sahara, and her journal with its parentheses, kept to console David Copperfield in his separation from Dora . . . "Quoted verses respecting self and young Gazelle, ineffectually. Also referred to Patience on monument. (Oy. Why on monument? J. M.) . . . Drew ideal picture of D. C. on verge of tomb . . . Fainting of D. and glass of water from public-house (Poetical affinity; chequered sign on doorpost; chequered human life. J. M.)."

All the story of this young lady is deliciously amusing, and it is so, of course, chiefly because of her youth. It would not be particularly funny for a woman of fifty to write in her diary about "chequered human life," but the incongruity of a girl of twenty doing so

strikes the reader at once, and the woes are seen to be of the sentimental kind. Sentimentality is the exaggeration or it may be, the feigning of emotion. It arises from a wish to indulge or display that feeling of which it is the abuse, merely for the sake of the idle luxury to be found in such indulgence.

There are not so many sentimental girls now as there were half a century ago. A healthier tone of feeling has come into vogue. Outdoor exercise and rational mental training have done much to banish melancholy and morbid imaginings from girlhood, and I may say at once that it is not of such fancied or petted sorrows that I wish to speak. Any girl who feels a tendency to sentimental griefs about nothing in particular had better try to brace herself by cold bathing, vigorous outdoor exercise, and sound mental work, and above all, not seek consolation in the indulgence of her emotions.

When all this has been said, the truth remains that there are sorrows and troubles peculiar to girlhood; all the more keen, perhaps, because they are not taken into much account by other people. There is nothing more trying than to suffer when you know you are expected to be very cheerful, and when no ground is supposed by others to exist for anything but happiness. And it is strange, perhaps, but true, that there are many troubles of which a girl does not care to talk even to her mother. There may be different reasons for this. It is not always easy to express one's inmost feelings to the nearest and dearest of the home circle, perhaps by very reason of the familiarity that exists; or an unselfish daughter knows that her mother has enough to worry about, without any additional distress on her account. So, dear readers, let the writer try to

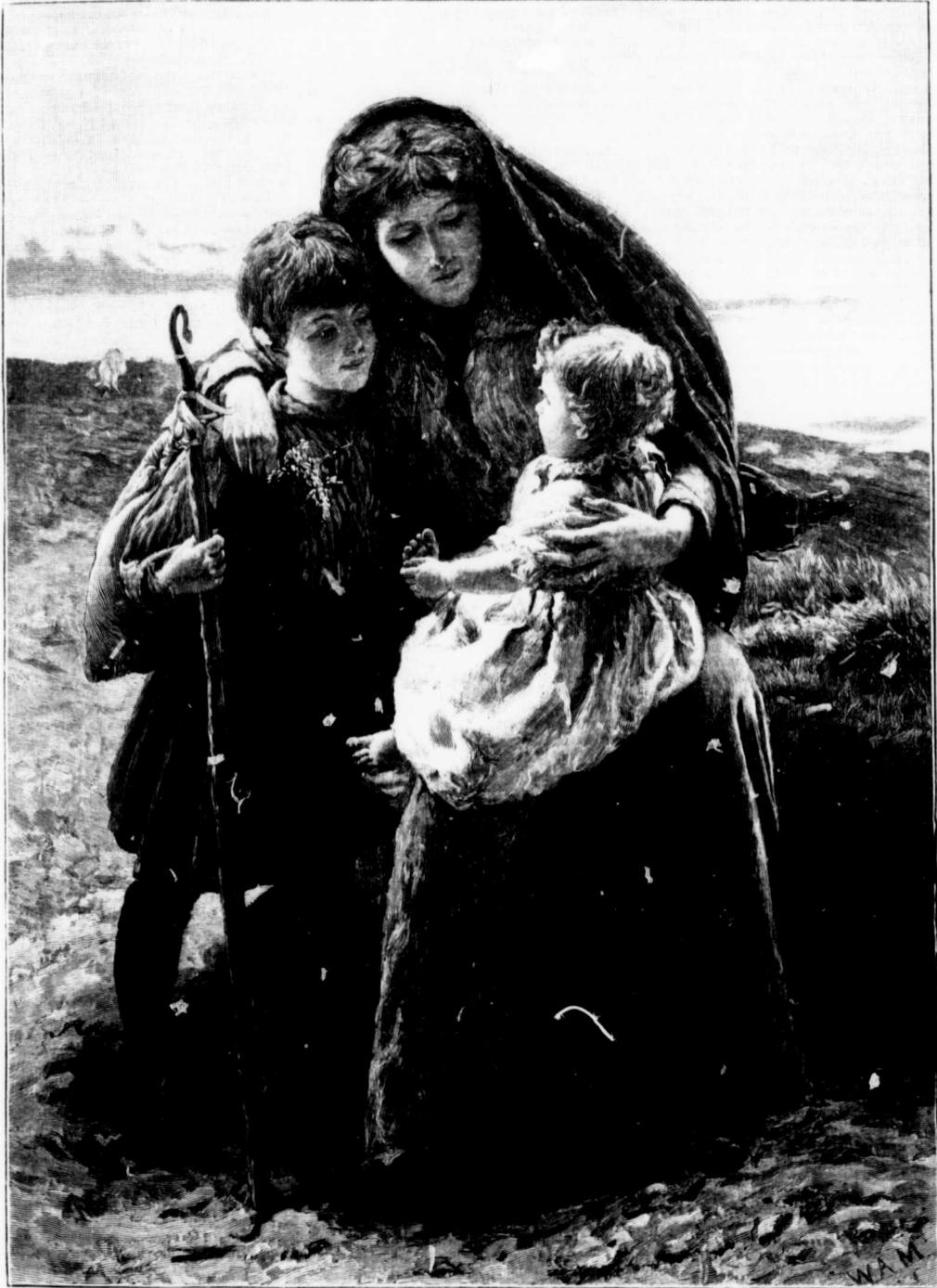
"mother" you if you have any sorrow in which she can help you a little, and no one shall be the wiser for the comforting.

First, then, there are the sorrows which may have a physical basis, and of these let us take "plainness" first of all.

What a source of distress "appearance" is to many a girl who reads this page! And how keenly she is aware that to mention her grief would make her ridiculous! What sympathy does a girl receive who frets because she is plain? She would, if it were known, be rebuked for her vanity, and informed that "Beauty is only skin-deep," and "Handsome is that handsome does." These two remarks have never seemed to me at all to the point. Beauty may only be "skin-deep," but what of that? It is a most desirable possession all the same; and right acting will not supply to a girl the coveted treasure she does not possess. It is a terrible trial to be passed over, to lose what makes life bright and happy, because of the turn of a feature, the trick of a glance; and if this be true in the case of ordinary plainness, what must it be when any actual deformity exists?

It is absurd to ignore the fact that it is important to be able to charm. Friendship, success in life, love, are all greatly dependent on the power of attracting others. We need not fall back here on the outworn theory that a girl's one business in life is to "get married;" for whether she wishes to marry, to be a hospital nurse, a High School teacher, a clerk, a private governess, a fixture in her father's home, it is of no slight consequence for her, and for those with whom she comes in contact, that she should not be repellent in aspect.

"This makes my case all the harder," the girl who is distressingly conscious of plainness may say.



"THE GENTLE LEADER."
(From the painting by W. A. Menzies.)

By no means. There are consolations, and I am going to try to administer them to any girl who, strictly between ourselves, is inclined to confide her grief to me.

The first consolation is that, as a means of attraction, beauty is not all-important, as the girl who is not beautiful is apt to suppose. The best-loved women are often plain. The author of *John Halifax* wrote a story—perhaps not a very great success—called *The Woman's Kingdom*, in order to prove this. Fiction cannot prove such a point; but in sober fact I have known plain girls—and very plain girls—succeed everywhere in social life. They were never neglected for an instant in gatherings of young people; they married happily and soon, and enjoyed troops of friends.

"They were rich," says some cynic. They were nothing of the sort. They were simply of the kind described by the misused adjective "nice;" bright, unselfish to a degree, full of the tact that wins confidence, never self-conscious, never at a loss, and always able to talk pleasantly. They could at once outshine any beauty of the "icily regular, splendidly null" type. This is literally true, and I could give names did I choose.

The form of one's features is outside one's own control; but matters of more consequence to personal charm are within one's own control.

Once again I disclaim the theory that a girl's happiness depends upon her marrying. But it does depend on her being able to gain affection in whatever walk of life she selects. Both men and women are influenced by appearance, but both, I repeat, are more susceptible to the charm of manner and disposition I have described. Nothing can be more disastrous to a plain girl than to say in effect: "I am too ugly; nobody cares for me," and enfold herself in a sullen gloom. She is avoided then, it is true, but in nine cases out of ten the avoidance is due to her unpleasant behaviour rather than to her personal defects.

Very few faces are so plain that there is no charm anywhere about them, and I have known even a sadly-marred countenance sweet to look upon by reason of its beautiful expression.

It is every girl's duty to make the best of herself, and girls who think themselves plain, ought to be, if anything, more careful in every little detail than their sisters of acknowledged beauty. How often one is sorry to see a girl who evidently has so poor an idea of her appearance, that she thinks it not worth while to take any trouble about it! She may have one good point but she omits to make the best of it. If, for instance, she has abundant hair, it is screwed up anyhow. Then she holds herself ill. There are few girls who could not cultivate an erect and graceful bearing if they chose, but one of the first results of the consciousness of plainness is an awkward, ungainly carriage.

Too often the "plain girls'" hat and dress are chosen with no view whatever to the tints of her complexion and colour of her eyes. There is an art in all these little matters which is worth studying, but she has not thought it necessary to give any attention to it. What a marvellous difference this makes! The plain girl, of all girls, cannot afford to neglect the make and the hue of her frock, the shape of her hat, her gloves and her boots. These apparent trifles may make all the difference as to whether she is attractive or repellent in her personal appearance; and I am not ashamed to reiterate, this is a matter of importance. No matter how learned, how highly educated, how conscious of inner superiority, a girl may be, she has no business to neglect her looks. They are, as Aristotle said, the best credential, "better than any letter of introduction."

I need not explain how absurd it is to

devote too much time and thought to exterior details, for after all they are but the herald of the inner nature; if that is poor and mean, it is a commonplace to say that the most fascinating aspect will pall and prove a bitter disappointment.

This side of truth has been so much insisted upon that perhaps the other side has been a little overlooked—that the most estimable and worthy young woman finds it difficult to impress other people with her good qualities, unless she has something about her of personal charm.

So, while I sympathise sincerely with girls who are weighed down by a consciousness of their own plainness, I can honestly encourage them, and urge them above all things not to sink into a state of discontent, but to "make the best of themselves" in every possible way, avoiding morbid self-consciousness, but trying just to be as kind, and unselfish and agreeable as they know how. The rest will take care of itself.

Ill-health—the second half of our subject—is a far more serious trouble. Here again we can rejoice in a more rational tone of thought in modern days. There used to be a sort of unexpressed idea abroad that there was something "unladylike" and unfeminine in robust health, and that it was interesting to cultivate a delicate pallor and have a small appetite. A certain class of religious fiction, in which the heroine was wont to wear a hectic flush and sweetly fade away to an early grave, promoted this nonsense, and many young girls liked to imagine themselves prone in their last sleep, on a white couch thickly strewn with lilies, hands crossed upon their breast. This rubbish—mischievous rubbish too—is happily being swept away. Tennis, rowing, and swimming, even cricket, bicycling, outdoor exercise of every kind, is creating a different ideal. If I chance now to address a girl hovering on the borders of invalidism, let me urge her to take care of her health by every means in her power. There is so much advice on this subject given in THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER that I need not enlarge; only suggesting the thought to a would-be unselfish girl, that it is the truest kindness to other people not to overtask strength, and neglect hygienic laws.

"If I be dear to someone else

Then I should be to myself more dear.
Shall I not take care of all that I think,
Yea, ev'n of wretched meat and drink?
If I be dear,
If I be dear to some one else."

This advice needs emphasising; and it may be said, in passing, to London girls, that tea and white bread and butter do not form a properly nutritious meal!

If there be one surviving of the class of girl who is inclined to be hypochondriacal, to lie about on sofas, to be continually taking her own temperature by a clinical thermometer, to assume languishing airs, I must beg her to fight against the tendency before she becomes an invalid in real earnest.

Setting aside the girlish *malade imaginaire*, now happily fast becoming extinct, let me acknowledge at once that to inherit a weakly frame, to be handicapped in the journey of life by some physical defect one is unable to help, is a most terrible trial, and calls for the exercise of the very strongest self-control, devotion, and patience. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness." No one, not even the kindest and tenderest nurse, can quite enter into the feelings of an invalid; can understand how long the hours are when sleep is impossible; how weary the confinement indoors becomes, day after day, nor how occupations pall; how hard it is to avoid letting drop the peevish word, the bitter complaint, when other girls are carrying on their

free and happy life all around, and some—perhaps not very serious—physical ailment is ever present to fetter and disable. Is it not hard to repress the bitter inward outcry, "Why hast Thou made me thus?"

It is hard. But again there are compensations; and it is well to remember that when one is young there is more hope of recovery than often appears. Then again we must try to grasp the fact, especially important in this very material age, that, valuable as physical health may be, it is not everything. Some of the best work of the world has been done by delicate and suffering women. The greatest women poets of England—Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina Rossetti—were both physically frail, and the former, before her marriage, was a prisoner to her couch, contemplating death as her only deliverer. The greatest—or one of the greatest—women novelists, Charlotte Brontë, was of poor health, and the story of her sisters is well known. The exquisite lines of Anne Brontë may be quoted here—

"I hoped that with the brave and strong

My portion'd task might lie,
To toil amid the busy throng
With purpose pure and high;
But God has fixed another part,
And He has fixed it well;
I said so with my oreaking heart
When first this trouble fell.

These weary hours will not be lost,

These days of misery,
These nights of darkness, tempest-tost,
Can I but turn to Thee,
With secret labour to sustain
In patience every blow,
To gather fortitude from pain,
And holiness from woe.

If Thou shouldst bring me back to life,

More humble I should be,
More wise, more strengthened for the
strife,
More apt to lean on Thee;
Should death be standing at the gate,
Thus should I keep my vow:
But, Lord! whatever be my fate,
O let me serve Thee now!"

These words express far better than I can do the "sweet uses of adversity" found in frail health.

"But Anne Brontë and the others you have named were women of genius," some one may reply. "Of what good can I be?"

The great temptation besetting the girl-invalid, especially when hope grows dim, is to feel bitterly "I am of no use. I am only a trouble to those about me." Often the secret repining goes on so far as to say, "I wish I were dead."

The very greatest good possible for man or woman to accomplish may be wrought by an invalid who turns her suffering to the account of character-discipline; who presents to others the lovely spectacle of a nature purified by pain, heroic in self-sacrifice. No active work in the world can be of half so much consequence as this; to reveal to those around one something of the Divine grace and might. "Can religion do this?" they ask; and honour in silent reverence its power, which by Divine alchemy can so transform base metal into gold.

Is not this worth while? It is a difficult task; but the sufferer who sets her whole nature to it, trusting in a strength higher than her own, and never yielding to despair, may yet be able to deserve the exquisite praise given to Caponsacchi by Brownings' "Pompilia."

"Through such souls alone
God stooping shows sufficient of His light
For us i' the dark to rise by."

"A GIRL OF GRIT."

CHAPTER III.



It is not necessary to tell how Helen went the next day to her old home, or how tactful she had to be with Harold not to arouse his suspicions. She had many difficulties to contend with, but she had surmounted difficulties, such as an eight-mile walk under a midday sun before now, for their old home was eight miles from the nearest railway station,

and she could not afford a cab.

When she reached the village which lay in the valley which Mount Rule House overlooked, she stopped at a little white-washed cottage and knocked. The door was wide open, so Helen walked in before the woman, who was washing at a tub which stood on a chair, had time to answer. When the woman saw her, she dropped the shirt she was washing, and held on to the tub as if she had been shot.

"Well, Miss Helen, if that isn't your sweet self. You could have knocked me down with a feather when I saw you standing there; but, sakes alive, how hot and tired you look! Sit down, miss, sit down!"

She dusted a chair for Helen with her apron and asked her if she would like a glass of milk. Helen gladly accepted the offer, and in a minute or two she was making a good lunch off some fresh girdle cake and milk. After answering a marvellous flow of questions, Helen got to the point she had come for.

"Is Davis in, Mrs. Leith?"

"He'll be here in less than five minutes, miss, he always comes home for a bit of something hot at one o'clock."

The words were no sooner spoken than Davis appeared at the door. He was as much astonished to see Helen as his wife, but, man-like, he was less eloquent.

"And what may you want, miss?"

"I want you to come up to Mount Rule House with me, Davis."

"And what can I do for you there, Miss Helen?"

"Davis, do you remember a hole in the floor of the lumber-room that you mended about a year before we sold Mount Rule? It was a big hole made by the rain dropping through the skylight that was always open."

"Indeed I do, miss, and I remember how angry Master Harold was when it was mended, young man though he was. He said that that there hole had been his best friend when he was a little chap. All sorts of things used to get brushed in that hole, and what a child is tired of one day, he thinks a powerful lot of two days after."

"Well, Davis, it's one of the things that got put in that hole that I want to get now. Will you come up as quickly as you can and open the floor? You can do it, can't you?"

"Yes, miss. I can do it, but what about the master?"

"Oh, I have got his leave! I asked him yesterday."

"Then I'll come, miss, for I'm right glad to see you back in the old place."

As Helen passed through the village with

Davis, her progress was impeded by kindly greetings from all the villagers. There was a word to be spoken here, and a friendly hand-shake there, and Helen's impatience to get to work was so great that she had no little difficulty in hiding her desire to hurry on. One thing she gladly accepted, a large bunch of flowers from a well-stocked cottage garden.

"It will be a bit of country to take back to Master Harold," the woman said as she gave them to Helen, who was still in their eyes the daughter of the "big house." When Davis and Helen passed through the gates of her old home they stopped talking. The rough working joiner saw and understood, with the fine feeling that often lies under rough clothes, the girl's emotion. There were the dear apple-trees she had climbed as a child, and there the smooth grassy lawns stretching as far as the eye could reach, and over yonder to the left the cherry orchard ripe with Kentish White Hearts. Helen clenched her hands tightly and closed her eyes a moment, for the sight of her mother's bedroom window had blinded them with tears. At last they came to the front door, and the great bell pealed through the desolate house. When the caretaker came—she was a stranger to Helen—she showed her cousin's card with his permission to go where she pleased and do what she liked.

"Come straight upstairs to the lumber-room, Davis," Helen said. "I have no time to spare, though I should like to look over the dear old place." As she walked up the wide oak staircase followed by Davis, she noted the old familiar landmarks of her childhood. There was the patch on the stair-carpet that no amount of clever manoeuvring would hide. How well she remembered her poor mother twisting it and turning it at every spring-cleaning to bring the best pieces to the front of the stairs, and there was the post still out of the bannister which had suddenly given way when Harold was hanging his legs through them. Not a single thing was altered, and there was the same horrible stillness in the big house that there had been the morning her mother had died. A little shiver passed through her, and she hurried up the long top flight of stairs. When they reached the old lumber-room which had been her play-room as a child, the room of all others which held all her happy childish memories, she stopped and told Davis to go first.

"It's like taking a step back in one's life, Davis," she said. "This room was made into a lumber-room when I was at college, and I've scarcely been in it since; but it was my castle when I was a little child."

When Davis turned the key in the door and opened it, a breath of fresh air greeted them. It came from the little opened skylight, right over the spot where the old hole in the floor had been. The new wood which had been put in to mend the hole was beginning to discolour, and a few dead leaves were lying on the floor.

"These come from the old copper-beech, Davis; they always used to blow in when the wind was this way."

She sat down on the top of a packing box and watched Davis begin his work, and while she watched him her mind travelled back to the day she had hidden her treasure in the floor. She had suddenly learnt that she possessed, unknown to any one, an object of some value, but of what value she did not understand.

A fear lest her cousin should see it and desire to possess it, seized her, and so prevented her telling anyone of the trophy she

had found amongst the things which were handed over to her as of no value in the legacy her uncle had left her.

Her meditations were suddenly broken by Davis exclaiming,

"There now, miss, I think I've done that there job pretty sharp, and I hope you'll find what you want."

Trembling with excitement Helen jumped down from her perch and knelt down on the floor. "Hand me that stick, please, Davis, I can't reach it with my arms." He handed her a stout walking stick she had taken from the hall downstairs for the purpose.

"There, I can't reach it even yet, I must get down as I used to when I was a child—flat on my face, or I shall never reach it."

Davis smiled kindly at the girl who was trembling with excitement, and wondered what on earth she had hidden in the floor all those years, and had only remembered now.

"It must be quite six years ago," he said, "since I mended this hole."

"Ah, I remember it was on this side I put it," and Helen pushed the stick along the opening, but she felt nothing.

"Can I do it for you, miss?"

"No, thank you, Davis, I know my position isn't a dignified one, but only I myself know where it is. Ah, there, did you hear the stick knock against something tin, that's it!"

With a good deal of skilful handling of the stick Helen at last managed to draw the tin box to the opening in the floor, and with trembling hands she lifted it out. She sat up with the box on her lap, and commenced untying the string with hot nervous hands. Just for one moment she looked up to the blue overhead, which showed through the skylight, and prayed that she might find her treasure safe. Quietly she sat beside the big hole in the floor with the treasure she had drawn out of it clasped in her hands, just as she used to sit when she was a little child. Even at that moment she remembered the day she had put in her hand and had drawn out the beautiful fair-haired wig off her favourite doll. She recalled how bitterly she had cried when one day she found her elegant lady doll minus her hair. Her cousin had skilfully dislodged the beauty's fair wig from her woman's head, and the wig was nowhere to be found.

"Now, Davis, you must share my secret. Come and see!"

The lid of the tin box was a tight fit, and Helen's fingers were too nervous to unfasten it, so Davis took it from her. When it was opened Helen lifted off some paper and looked in.

"Ah, Davis, thank God, it's all safe and sound! Look, that's what was hidden here all these years!"

Davis looked, and an expression half of pity, half scorn, came into his eyes. "Well, miss, I did think as it would be a piece of jewelry, or something of that sort. But I never see'd such a thing to take on like that about. It ain't no interest to me, miss, but I'm glad I've done the job for you, and now I suppose I must fix up the hole again."

Helen thanked him and offered to pay him, but he refused to take any money. "It's been real pleasure, Miss Helen, but I wish it had been som't of more value." Helen smiled and said to herself—"Ah, he doesn't know, he doesn't understand, but I had to show it to him, and now I'm free to keep the real surprise for Harold." So with a kindly farewell she left Davis to do over again the job he had done six years ago.

(To be concluded.)

PLAITED RIBBON WORK.

WORK with plaited ribbons enjoys such constant favour that readers to whom it is little known may well be glad to hear of it.

There is no doubt but that the growing popularity of the work is largely owing to



Fig. 1

the beautiful and tempting ribbons which are now to be found in so great a variety. No great expense is entailed by pursuing this fascinating little craft, as in patterns which need many yards of ribbon, a plain material is sufficient, brocaded and fanciful varieties being employed but scantily, since they are themselves so decorative that extra elaboration seems superfluous.

Some of the easiest plaiting patterns are also the most effective. A check or draught-board design can be made with two colours only of ribbon of the same width and make. The weaving can be done either in an embroidery frame, the rim of a slate whence the inside has been removed, or even on a board. Whatever support is chosen must be covered with braid lashed over and over, or, for a board with any soft thick fabric to which the strands can be pinned. Many pins must be provided, especially for a large piece of work, as each strand of ribbon used needs pinning down at both ends.

Having ready then the frame and two colours of ribbon, the next thing is to cut the latter into lengths suitable for the piece of weaving to be done. A little extra must be allowed than will be required for the finished work, as the ends have to be cut away, it being impossible to weave quite up to the limits of the ribbon.

For the chequer design as many strips as will be required for the width are to be cut



Fig. 2

from one coloured ribbon and stretched in the frame side by side, fastened at each end with a pin as before mentioned.

To perform the actual weaving a special needle is to be bought, but where small

should be placed side by side, touching one another, just as were the others, and they should be fastened down to the frame at both ends in the usual way. This pattern is the easiest of all to execute, all that is necessary

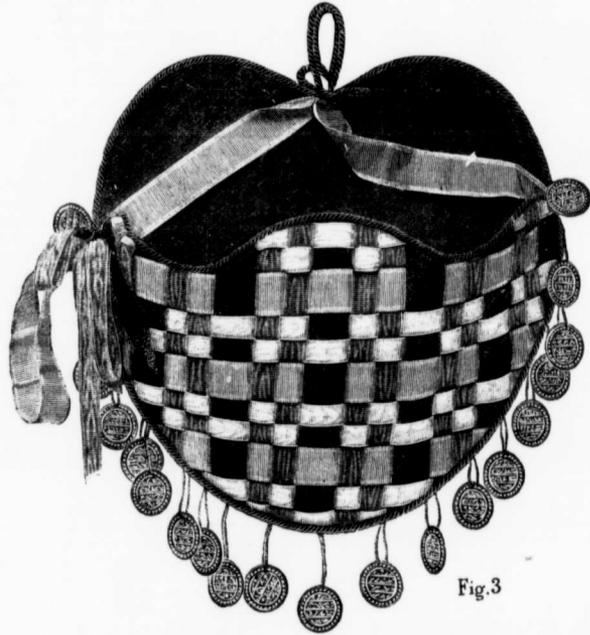


Fig. 3

quantities only of the work are likely to be done a large-eyed flat bodkin or no-crease ribbon threader answers well.

To continue the chequer-pattern, thread each one of the other strands of ribbon through the bodkin in turn, and pass it alternately over and under the first set of ribbons to form the weft. The second ribbons

to remember being that the weft ribbon must in every line be passed under the warp ribbon which it passed over in the preceding row, and *vice versa*. Fig. 1 shows a small piece of the pattern worked.

The result of the weaving should be a firm interplaited (and therefore double) piece of work, which can be released from the frame

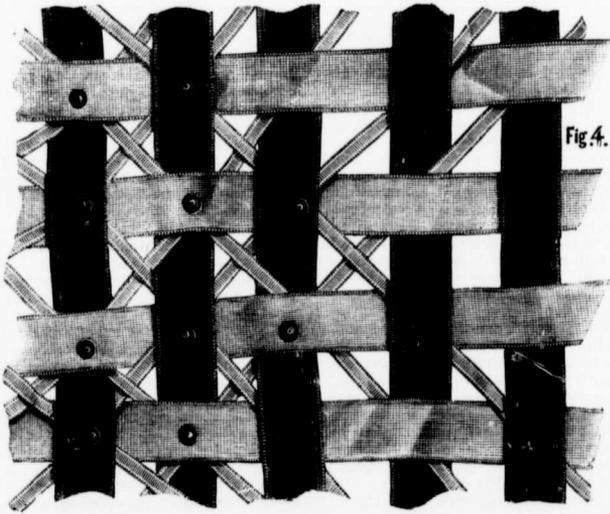


Fig. 4.

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by removing the pins and made up much as is any ordinary piece of silk or satin.

A stripe (see Fig. 2) is as easy as a check to make. For this also two colours of ribbon are necessary. Cut these into lengths as usual and fasten them into the frame, but this time let the coloured bands which form the warp be used alternately, and not be of one hue. The weft also consists of first a ribbon of one colour, then one of the next all down, these being always passed over the warp-ribbons which are of the same colour as themselves. If they are passed under these the result will be a chequer like the first one shown, though obtained in a slightly different way.

So far it has been taken for granted that squares have been woven, and for these a frame of suitable size has no doubt answered well. But for tiny or irregularly-shaped pieces the use of too large a surround means a considerable waste of ribbon. There is a special make of frame intended for such weaving, the size of which can be altered, but the same result can be obtained by nailing a flat piece of wood across, or even by very tightly stretching a length of stout braid over the frame. For fanciful shapes a board is convenient, though the weaving is less easy to remove from it if loosely done than from a frame. Open weaving (to be mentioned later) needs mounting on silk or some other fabric, and it is easy to tack the ribbons down to this before taking them from a surround, but difficult to insert it between them and their solid background.

Close weaving on a board can be most economically managed, when a fanciful shape is required, by cutting the outline from paper, pinning this to the board and laying the ribbons over it, extending them but a little way beyond it and there pinning them down. When the work is lifted the paper is easily moved. Study the wall-pocket shown at Fig. 3 as an example of close and fancy weaving. The front is mounted over stiff buckram and the back is a heart-shaped piece of card, covered and lined with brown silk.

For the weaving were used: seven strands of black-ribbon velvet three-quarters of an inch wide, twelve of green moiré nearly half-an-inch, the same amount of white moiré,

and three lengths of deep orange ribbon three-quarters of an inch wide. Begin with the centre warp (upright) strand of black velvet, and on each side of it pin down two green, a black, two green, a black, two green, and, lastly, a black strip.

For the weft threads orange and white are to be used; thread the top white over the centre black stripe, under the next and over the last green on each side of it. The second white ribbon passes over the threads passed under before, and under those which were

and sequins, threaded on gold tinsel, dangle round the bottom of it. Bows and ends of the ribbons are arranged at the back of the pocket.

The second form of plaiting (open-weaving) deserves a few words. In this the ribbon strands are put more widely apart, permitting a background of silk to show between them. A specimen of this style of weaving is seen at Fig. 4, where wide and narrow ribbons are used transversely as well as down and across. The white warp threads should be secured each its own width distant from the next, and the weft ribbons are threaded over and under these. The first set of narrow ribbons passes right across the work diagonally, under the weft but over the warp lines.

The second narrow set crossing with these is arranged to come also under the weft and over the warp lines, and falls naturally over one of the former set of diagonal ribbons in every open space. A sequin keeps the strands together at each spot where they all meet. The last illustration shows the same pattern worked more closely as embellishment for the front of an open coat. The background is black satin, the wider ribbons and sequins are heliotrope, while the diagonal strands are pale green.

It has been shown that ribbon work is adapted for small articles of dress as well as to fancy trifles. The colourings can be greatly varied, and a bold or delicate effect be secured at will. The variety of patterns is quite bewildering, as a few trials and a study of fancy-straw weaving will soon show. Squares, diamonds and zigzags can be made of many kinds both in close and open weaving. In the latter the pattern of an ordinary cane-bottomed chair works out effectively.

As the finished work, lined if necessary, is equal in texture to a thick make of silk or brocade, it follows that it will serve in many cases for which these fabrics are also used: for mats, belts, covers for books, caskets, or fancy baskets; for *bonbonnières*, sachets, book-markers, pot-covers and a thousand other purposes it answers well.

It is pretty and modern, and readers are again advised to try it for themselves, and see how far better is the look of the real work than that of pictures into which colour cannot be introduced.



covered; this band is seen in the side curves also. The orange bands which come over after every pair of white ones pass also over and under, alternating with the last ribbon threaded; in fact this simple rule suffices for the entire work, which results in little squares formed by the green and white ribbons and bolder details added by those of greater width. The completed weaving should be carefully laid on silk-lined buckram and stitched to the heart-shaped back.

A cord is carried all round the wall-pocket,

HINTS ON HOME NURSING.

FOOD

is required for two purposes. 1. To replace loss. 2. To supply warmth. All food for invalids must be carefully served, in as tempting a manner as possible. Milk is a perfect food and contains all the elements necessary to keep the body in health, and therefore frequently forms the staple article of diet ordered in sickness. It is more easily digested if boiled and less likely to contain germs of disease. A small pinch of bicarbonate of soda, or a little soda water added takes off from the cloying sour taste in milk, so disagreeable to some invalids. If allowed the milk may be thickened with gruel, arrowroot, cornflour, or Benger's food may be made in the following way: one tablespoonful of the Benger and four tablespoonfuls of cold milk, stir into a

smooth paste, add one pint of hot milk and place to stand for fifteen or twenty minutes. It should be then boiled, stirring all the time, and is ready for use.

THE WHITE OF AN EGG

in half a pint of milk makes a nourishing drink, or white of egg and one ounce of cream to half a pint of water is very nourishing, and can often be retained where ordinary milk causes diarrhoea and sickness.

TEA

made with milk poured over it when quite boiling instead of the boiling water generally used, and only allowed to stand for three minutes, will often be allowed to a patient who is getting tired of a milk diet.

BEEF TEA

must be carefully made, and the best way to make it is to take one pound of lean beef to one pint of water; cut the meat up into small dice, removing at the same time any pieces of fat or skin, place the meat in a stone jar, and allow it to simmer on the stove or in a cool oven. The beef tea must not be allowed to boil, it should stew slowly for about three hours, and then be strained. When cool any grease that may rise to the surface should be removed before being taken to the invalid.

EFFERVESCING LEMONADE.

The juice of two lemons to one pint of water. One level teaspoonful of soda bicarb. will cause this to effervesce when required for use.

OUR NEW "G. O. P." YEAR.

By GORDON STABLES, M.D. ("MEDICUS").



MOST beautiful old Scottish love song keeps ringing in my ear as I sit down to write this paper. It is published by Cameron of Glasgow, in a beautiful wee five shilling book containing hundreds of the most charming of Scotch songs and music. The name is "The Lyric Gem of Scotland." The name of the song is "Time Wears Awa'." I wish, girls, I could give you the music. Never mind, the first verse I must quote—

"Oh, but the hours rin fast awa',
Like Kelvin to the Clyde,
I see on its bonnie gowan* bank
I woo'd thee for my bride.
My ain dear love so sweet and young,
So artless and so fair,
Then love was a' the grief we knew,
And you my only care.
The voices o' those happy days,
Steal on our dreams by night,
And cherished memories rise and glow
Wi' their departed light.

CHORUS.

Time wears awa', time wears awa',
And winna let us be,
It's stolen the roses from your cheeks,
The blythe blink from your ee."

Isn't it bonnie, girls? Ah, what a thing music is! Without my fiddle and my guitar by my side, I should never write a story. Music cheers one, and somehow my guitar is always in exactly the same frame of mind that I myself am.

But that song is also sad and plaintive. Never mind, if you but take the advice I am going to give in this simple paper, time will be in no hurry to steal the roses from your cheeks, nor the blithe blink from your eye either.

Much of what I am now about to say I have said before at one time or another, but at the commencement of a new volume, we always have a host of new readers, and my advice to them, I flatter myself, will be interesting.

The rules of health are indeed very simple, and happy indeed are those girls who obey them. It is a bit of a struggle at first, and you may fail for a time to get into the straight path, but persevere. Remember King Robert Bruce and the spider. Should you fail and fall back a score of times, just start up and try again, and shortly habit will become second nature.

I never yet knew a girl, who, strictly obeying the laws of health, needed either medicine internally, or cosmetics to face and hands. Of course I do not say a word against any attempt a girl may make to aid beauty, if the applications are simple and not injurious, and during the new "G. O. P." year, I hope to give many hints on beauty and strength.

And now for the rules of health:

Food or Diet.—It is a fact that good blood is made from good food, and never from physic. Those who advertise medicines to cure all ills, by so-called blood purifiers, should be looked upon as arrant and impudent quacks. For health's sake, reader, avoid them and all advertised quackeries. No doctor

* The gowan is the wild daisy.

advertises. If he did so his name would speedily be removed from the register.

The blood must be purified, and can be purified, only by eating a sufficient quantity, at stated times, of just that sort of food which suits the system best. If any particular article of diet, or a meal of many dishes produces drowsiness, irritability, head symptoms, discomfort, eructations, or acidity, it must be avoided in future. A healthy girl should not even feel that she possesses either a stomach or liver.

Proper Mastication.—Only birds really bolt their food, because they have no teeth. It is ground up in the stomach by the stones they swallow, and nature provides them also with stomachic juices, that act upon their food as do our own gastric and salivary juices combined. If human beings do not eat slowly and masticate well, dyspepsia is sure to be the result sooner or later. It is important not only that the food should be well broken up, but mingled freely with the salivary juices before it enters the stomach.

Hints for the Dyspeptic.—Indigestion is one of those troublesome ailments that it is as much in the power of a person himself to prevent as of the doctor to cure. The symptoms are innumerable, and, unfortunately, they are mental as well as physical. Let the dyspeptic take these hints:—1, eat less; 2, masticate well; 3, avoid soups and sloppy food; 4, meat only once a day; 5, fresh air with exercise, and plenty of milk; 6, N.B., if little exercise, little milk; 7, no fatty fishes, no pork or veal; 8, white fish, fowl, game, tender mutton, or a slice of beef from a juicy joint; 9, eggs lightly boiled, raw or poached, not fried; 10, cold sponge bath before breakfast; 11, half a pint or more of hot water some minutes before the two principal meals. A squeeze of lemon may be taken in it; 12, a glass of soda water before going to bed, or plain water with the juice of half a lemon.

About Vegetables and Health.—It is the generally received opinion among scientists, that the day is not far distant when much less animal food will be used in this country than is now, and that as a nation we will be stronger, calmer, and happier for the change, and all the richer. There are people—and their name is legion—who live almost wholly on animal food. Well, we shall always have those wehr-wolves amongst us, but that ten or twenty years hence people will know more of the relative health-giving and tone-giving values of vegetable and animal diet, I have not the slightest doubt.

A change of vegetables should be used almost every day. The greener sorts, as well as mashed turnips, parsnips, and carrots, all help to cool the system and calm the mind. Stimulants will hardly be craved for if vegetables in abundance be eaten. Nuts are most nutritious, but as a rule they are oily, and therefore they must be avoided by the dyspeptic. Fruit in season, ripe and good, should be eaten before breakfast and after dinner. Oranges may be used with benefit all the year round. Best from March to June. Tomatoes always.

Ablution and the Bath.—People as a rule think too much about their livers and too little about the skin and lungs, especially those who live too freely. One cannot have any single internal organ in good working order if one neglects ablution. A girl may carefully wash the face and hands a dozen times a day, and still be, as regards perfect ablution, little better than a Hottentot. Pardon the comparison.

A warm bath should be taken every week. A cold bath every morning.

Tub or not Tub.—Should I take my cold sponge bath in hard frosty weather? This is a question I have been asked by a correspondent. My reply is "Most certainly, if you have vital energy enough in you to obtain gentle reaction by the time you have finished towelling." I do not, however, advise anyone to commence the practice of matutinal tubbing in the dead of winter. Begin in spring, and let nothing prevent you from having this glorious tonic every day of the year. There are those, of course, whose circulations are so feeble and their hearts probably so flabby that the tub might be unsafe. There are others who lack the moral courage to take it, and others again who are too lazy, bodily and mentally. This cold sponge bath, after an experience of over twenty years of it, I consider eminently tonic and bracing, not only to the muscles, but to every organ of the body. It also strengthens the appetite, improves the digestion, and accords an almost entire immunity from catarrh, and probably other chest complaints.

Clothing and Bed-clothes.—In one of my books I wrote as follows:—I do not care a deal what outer clothing is worn so long as it is not made from non-ventilating waterproof. India-rubber mantles, and foot-rotting goloshes are highly injurious. I prefer wool, and all wool, however, and I myself wear Dr. Jaeger's. The under-clothing, light in summer, thicker in winter, must be of wool if health is to be retained.

Keep the head cool and the feet warm, but do not muffle up the neck too much. The neck should be as hardy as the face. If it is so one avoids the risk of catching cold and sore throats.

Never sit in damp clothing, nor with damp, cold, or wet feet.

Avoid damp beds. If travelling, and you suspect the bed is damp, roll yourself in a rug or plaid, or pull off the sheets entirely.

The socks or stockings should be wool, warm and dry. Clothes damp from perspiration are even more dangerous than clothes that have been rained upon.

The bed-clothing should be light but warm, and the bed itself a soft even mattress.

Recreative Exercise.—Without this no one can enjoy perfect health. You may tell me that, being a working girl, you get too much of it, but I reply that hard work is not exercise.

Healthful, health-giving exercise must be taken in the open air. That is a *sine qua non*. It must be of a kind to gently stimulate the mind, and if possible it should be actually pleasurable, and calculated to banish for the time being all care and sorrow and worry whatever.

Walking exercise is very good, but your walk must have some object in it, if it be only to look at the shop windows or visit a friend. But a visit of ceremony to a distant milestone is of little value.

Everyone cannot afford to ride in a carriage or on horseback, but the latter is splendid exercise.

A course of dumb-bells taken in a judicious and scientific manner does excellent service. The irons must not be too heavy, else they stretch the joints and weary muscle and nerve. Regular motions ought to be gone through, so as to bring group of muscle after group into play. This drill should be continued half an hour at a time, morning and evening.

Boating, if spurring is not indulged in, is another good form of wholesome exercise.

Games such as lawn-tennis, football, cricket, bowls, etc., are most health-giving, for three reasons: they exhilarate the mind, exercise the muscles, and the player is breathing fresh air while engaged in them.

Being myself an enthusiastic cyclist, I can confidently recommend the tricycle or bicycle as the best form of exercise ever invented. It lightens the mind, and strengthens muscles and nerves, and throws open all the secretions, not excepting the skin. But beware of spurring up hills, which induces heart disease. Beware also of sitting in a damp skirt after coming in from a long ride. Go and change at once if your underclothing is damp. I myself always carry a change to put on at my journey's end; and if I have to ride back the same day, I change again when I get home,

after taking a cold bath, and finishing up with a cup of tea or delicious coffee.

Fresh Air.—It is very sad to think that thousands die every year, slowly asphyxiated, although this might easily be prevented, even by those who are compelled to work indoors, if they would but look upon fresh air as their best friend, keep the windows open, and make it a rule to spend as many hours out of doors every day as possible.

"Remember," says Professor Ransome, "that every breath of impure air endangers the health, and takes away energy from the body; that we cannot breathe any portion of the air that has already passed through the lungs without harbouring the seeds of that fearful disease, consumption, and that a close unozonized atmosphere necessarily weakens our powers and debilitates our systems."

Pure Water and Warmth.—Both are most

important to health. As regards the water I have to warn the reader that, with the exception of two or three, all the filters at present in the market are worse than useless, because they give people a false sense of security.

As to warmth: I myself should prefer fresh air without heat to living in a badly ventilated room, however cosy, but in winter people should endeavour to so arrange their rooms as to combine the two.

The proper ventilation of the bedroom is of the greatest importance, so too, is the airing of the bed-clothes. If you can possibly stand it the window should be partially open night and day.

And now I have done. I sincerely pray that my advice may do many good, and just as sincerely do I wish all my girls, young or not young, a happy and healthy New G. O. P. Year.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

STUDY AND STUDIO.

EVANGELINE.—Chopin's music certainly belongs to the romantic school and is dreamy enough to delight you, but it is rather difficult. You might, however, try some of his nocturnes or waltzes. We should also recommend you the following: Schumann's "Kinderscenen"; a "Berceuse" by Schütt; "Melody in G♯," Paderewski; "Lyrische Stückchen, Op. 12," Grieg; "Three 18th century Studies," Arthur Somervell. You can buy Chopin's pieces bound up together in separate parts; for example, "The Chopin Album," vols. 1 and 2, each containing fifteen celebrated pieces, nett. price 1s. 14d.; or the "Nocturnes," price 1s. 6d.; the whole list is too long to give here.

COURAGE.—We are much gratified by your letter of thanks, and by the information that you are enabled to win praise for your skill in cookery and home management, which you say you owe entirely to *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER*. We can recommend you the following songs which you can obtain set in keys suitable for either tenor or baritone: "I Arise from Dreams of Thee," "Salaman"; "One More," and "A Song of May," Lord Henry Somerset; "Still wie die Nacht," Carl Bohm; "Bois Epais," Lully; "The Devout Lover" and "Absent yet Present," Maude Valérie White; "O Promise Me," by Reginald de Koven. Some of these are also suitable for soprano and mezzo, but we should advise you in addition to choose a book of Edward Lassen's songs, one of Maude Valérie White's, one of F. H. Cowen's, and one of Ruostein's. A song we think you would like, for mezzo or baritone, appeared in the January number of *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER*, entitled "Longing," by Ethel L. Watson.

MADDELNE.—We have never heard (although we have known many foreign schools) of the arrangement you suggest, by which students take part in the household work instead of paying fees. But an arrangement that is frequently made is for an English girl to enter a French, German or Swiss school and teach her own language in return for joining the usual classes. This is called being *au pair*. We have known the plan work most happily and satisfactorily for all parties in Switzerland, at such places as Neuchâtel and Lausanne. If you have no friends who would inquire for you, would you like to insert an advertisement in a foreign paper, for example, the *Journal de Genève* (Geneva), *Feuille d'avis de Vevey*, or *Gazette de Lausanne*, Switzerland, stating your requirements? You could write first on a 1d. postcard to the office of the journal, asking the fee for insertion. In Switzerland you would be able to learn both French and German, and the bracing air and beautiful scenery lend attraction to the sojourn there.

EIN SCHÜLMÄDCHEN.—There are Scholarships connected with Queen's College, Harley Street, London, W., for girls over fourteen. Write for particulars of these, and also read Mrs. Watson's recent articles in *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER* on "What are the County Councils doing for Girls?" You might apply to C. H. Bothamley, Esq., Somerset County Education Committee, Weston-Super-Mare, or to the Secretary of the Technical Instruction Committee, Taunton, for details of Scholarships tenable at High Schools, etc., in your own County. We wish you success.

LARGO.—The sol-fa "words" for the scale are—do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, do; the vowels being pronounced in the Italian fashion—ray, mee, fah, etc. "Do" is the key-note. Many thanks for your kind words in praise of *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER*.

A STUDENT.—1. We should advise you to consult the authorities of the school where you are studying. You give us no clue as to the grade of education concerning which you wish information.—2. We cannot advise any special preparations for the hair.

W. SMITH.—In addition to Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations," and Bohn's publication, which you mention, we can recommend "Dictionary of Quotations" (English), Dalbaird; and "Dictionary of Quotations," Rev. James Wood. These contain prose as well as poetical extracts. We do not think you will find "longer quotations" given anywhere, unless you get one of the collections of miscellaneous verse of which there are so many.

EVANGELINE.—There are many instruments far more easily learnt than the piano. Have you ever heard of the auto-harp? (price, from 12s. 6d.). It is very sweet, suited to accompany the voice, and so easy to learn that you could probably teach yourself; or you might try the guitar, or mandoline. *A ne plus ultra* auto-harp (the very best) costs £5 5s.; a mandoline, from £1 1s.; a guitar, from 10s. 6d. The harp itself is easier than the piano. You could no doubt hear of a second-hand one by inquiring at any music shop; but we should hardly advise you to buy so large an instrument to begin with, as you might find you did not care to learn it after all. We sympathise with you, and thank you for your letter.

AUTUMN.—We think you must intend your communication as a joke, as such doggerel is seldom sent us, and you must be perfectly well aware, if you are fourteen, that it is nonsense—not clever nonsense either.

AN OLD READER.—Your thoughts are very sweet, but we fear, hardly original enough for publication. The "qualifications for a nurse" are good, but the subject is familiar.

AN APPRECIATIVE READER.—We sympathise with you in the feelings expressed in your verses. "Every Need Supplied" is the best of the four poems. Your lines, "I need Thee every hour," and "I cannot do without Thee," are to be found in other familiar hymns, and have doubtless been unconsciously reproduced by you. "Divine Alchemy" and "Death" are not written in any known metre. "I am" and "again" do not rhyme; and the line—

"O wondrous love, any grace"

is too long. The rules of form are very important in writing poetry. We do not wish to discourage you, as you probably find it a comfort thus to express your inmost thoughts.

ISABEL.—Your lines are not original enough for publication; and though we are sure you are sincere, the same things have constantly been said by others. Your metre suddenly changes in verse 3 of "Come Unto Me." Your ear will surely tell you that.

"And 'neath the shelter of his wings"

is a line of different cadence from

"Ye shall enter where all sorrow."

We do not think it wise to devote a "great part of your time" to composing poetry, as at your age you should read the work of illustrious writers and store your mind with treasures.

MARY.—Your lines do not rhyme and yet are not in any metre suited to blank verse. You should not write "what you think to it," but "what you think of it." The French use the former mode of expression, but not the English. To write lines of different lengths below each other is not to write poetry, or even verse.

TOPSY.—1. Your verses show that you need to study the rules of poetic form. "A Sketch" is not written in an recognised metre so far as the first verse is concerned, but improves later on. The lines of "Sunset" ought, considering their length, to rhyme. In "One Summer Evening" the rhymes are often incorrect, e.g., "deadened" and "reddened," "planted" and "demanded," "broken" and "open."—2. Your work would not at present be accepted for publication in any quarter. The one consolation we can give you is that "Sunset" shows you have an observing eye and some power of description. You might succeed better in prose.

GILGILT.—The only way to obtain "reviewing work" is to apply to the editor of any periodical for which you wish to write. But, as you invite our judgment, we must candidly inform you that the specimen you enclose "would never do." "The within-reach-of-all-sum of id" is not an English mode of expression; you use the words "little work" twice consecutively, and your praise is quite indiscriminating. Reviewing is a difficult art, and the critic needs to be, as far as possible, above criticism in his *technique*.

PERSISTENCE.—1. We have read "A Dream-Journey" with much pleasure. Certainly do not "stamp out your impulse to write," but encourage and foster it by every means in your power, taking care, however, to read meanwhile "the best," not as your letter suggests, good, bad, and indifferent. Life is short, and you cannot afford to waste time. Cultivate your brain and your literary taste in every possible way.—2. The faith that would be endangered by reading Carlyle and Emerson must be of a very feeble kind, and likely, sooner or later, to collapse. We should consider that their thoughts were helpful to the growth of character in the best direction, though it is not necessary to take all they say for granted. Emerson, however, is immeasurably the greater of the two. He is a "seer," and cannot be studied too earnestly. We wish you success worthy of your name.

MISCELLANEOUS.

MAGGIE could purchase a fairly good silk for about 3s. 6d. to 4s. a yard, perhaps less. It would be better to have a little trimming of white lace at the neck and wrists, and a full bodice with satin sash and ribbons.

H. M. W.—For the removal of copying and marking inks, wash the stained parts with a strong solution of bleaching powder, then apply a cold solution of oxalic acid, not too strong, and rinse repeatedly in cold water afterwards.

F. E. W.—We could not possibly give a testimonial or certificate of merit to any trade association, nor say that "they are all they represent." But we think you would probably act wisely in taking some lessons at the place you name.

NORTHERN EVERGREEN.—1. We do not care for green toilet-mats nor covers, and should prefer them of white with an embroidery in green silk on them. Everything connected in this way with the toilet table should be of washing materials. The "bed-spread" may be of green cretonne to match the covering of the furniture. You had better purchase mats and table-covers ready outlined and prepared for working.—2. Indigestion arises from so many causes, you had better go back for a year or two of the "G.O.P.," and read the articles by "Medicus" on the subject. Eating too fast without sufficient mastication, or when over-fatigued, are all causes of discomfort. Perhaps taking a pint of hot water half an hour after a meal might do you good.

CONSTANT READER.—1. Residing in such a city as Edinburgh there must be many excellent corset-shops within easy reach of you where you could be fitted satisfactorily.—2. You had better fulfil the divine command without delay. It is wrong that you should have grown up and still continue in such a course of rebellion against your Divine Master's command.—3. On the question whether having had your name registered as Eliza, you could have it changed to Elizabeth, with a second annexed to it, you should consult a lawyer, or perhaps you could obtain information from the actor of your parish.

MAJESTY.—Such paintings can be advertised in the *Bazaar Exchange and Mart*, and through that useful paper you can obtain an opinion as to the value from an expert. You had better obtain a copy and see. The painter's name is not to be found in any of our biographical dictionaries, and you must have made some mistake; but there are many painters unknown to fame, or only locally-known men of course.

LEFT LILY.—The most fashionable material at the present moment seems to be cashmere, and nothing could be prettier than a grey one, for a wedding, with white satin trimmings for your dress. Also a grey hat, or bonnet, with white and grey feathers, and chiffon or tulle. A bolero jacket would be pretty with a white satin, or a white muslin with satin ribbons for a blouse or front. This would be useful afterwards.

YOUR COOK (Nini Novgorod).—We are pleased to hear our young Russian "Constant Reader" enjoys our paper so much. To make "cross buns" you will require 1 oz. of fresh German yeast, 3 lbs. of fine flour, 8 oz. of good butter, and a small pinch of salt. Rub the butter and salt well into the flour. Turn the yeast into a basin, and beat it up well with a tablespoonful of moist sugar till it be a liquid. Add a pint and a half of milk (or water) and two well-beaten eggs. Then mix all with the flour so as to make a batter. Sprinkle a little flour over the dough, cover the bowl with a cloth, and let the dough rise before the fire for a couple of hours. Then knead it up well with 1 oz. of sugar, 1 lb. of washed and dried currants, and spice it with grated nutmeg. The mixture may then be divided into buns, to be laid in rows on a baking-tin, flatten them a little on the top, and make two cross-cuts on each, and let them rise before the fire for ten minutes and then bake in a quick oven. The quantity, as given above, will make about three dozen buns.

K. M.—There is a Home of Rest, at 88, a week, at Broomfield, Lindfield, Hayward's Heath, apply to the Lady Superintendent. There is another at 78, per week, Holly Cottage, Wiley, Godalming, apply to Miss Hall-Hall, Witley Manor, Godalming; and another at Brighton, at 88, a week, for two weeks' residence, Hampden Cottage and Home of Rest, 11, Michell Street, Dorset Street, apply to Mrs. Scott, 15, German Place, Brighton. One specially for young women in business is at Bickley, Kent (Buckingham Cottage), also at 88, a week, and no special limit of residence. Apply to Miss Lyell, 9, Cornwall Gardens, S.W.

ANNOUS.—You do not give any information as to the position and private means of the young couple who propose to emigrate to Canada. That country offers very many advantages. For gentlemen there are few appointments open, as there are so many young men native-born who secure such, and the banks are full of them. But respectable young people, taking out good testimonials and introductions from their clergy and others, may find employment in shops, manufactories, on railways, and other places. The locality you propose to select seems well chosen.

SHEILA and B. H.—First wash the ivory with warm soap and water. If there be spots from wine or fruit scrape off carefully with very fine sandpaper. Immerse in a weak solution of chloride of lime and water, place it under glass, and expose it to the sunshine. "Sheila's" writing is good for her age. For taking wine stains out of linen, refer to our Indexes. Try holding the article in boiling milk while boiling on the fire, or spread the stained part of wine-marked tissues over a bowl or basin, rub some common salt into it, and pour boiling water through it.

A DUTCH GIRL.—There is an excellent Baedeker for Great Britain; you could not have a better guide, and you will find plenty of small and inexpensive local guides to most of the tourist's haunts in England and Wales.

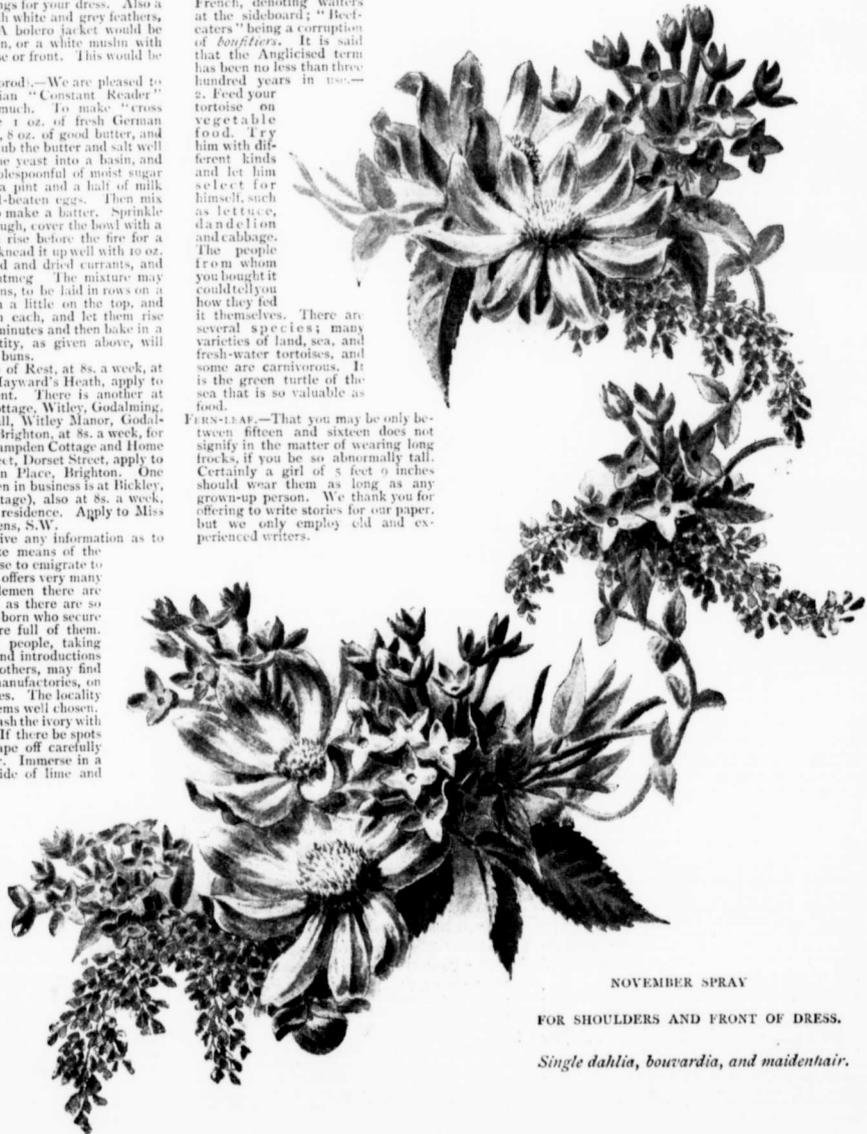
THESPIS and FLORA.—We do not answer such questions as yours. Our advice would be select a different occupation, one less full of temptations and dangers of all kinds. "Thespis" should remember that she is only a minor, and it should be regarded as both a sacred duty and an important object in her daily life to give some return and proof of gratitude and love to her parents, and to conform to any wish of theirs, even when costing some self-sacrifice, remembering that such an act is pleasing to God also, for they are "over you in the Lord."

M. K. E.—There seems to be much misconception about the meaning and scope of the word "Mahatma." Professor Max Muller in the *Nineteenth Century*, in an article called "A Real Mahatman," says it is a very common Sanskrit word, meaning, literally, "high-minded," "great souled," "noble." Thus it does not represent an adept, nor one possessed of supernatural powers, as has been imagined.

CANTON.—1. The Women of the Guard are called "Beefeaters," because it was a part of their duty to wait at the royal sideboard, *buffet* being the French term for the latter; and *buffetiers*, in Norman French, denoting waiters at the sideboard; "Beefeaters" being a corruption of *buffetiers*. It is said that the Anglicised term has been no less than three hundred years in use.—2. Feed your tortoise on vegetable food. Try him with different kinds and let him select for himself, such as lettuce, dandelion and cabbage. The people from whom you bought it could tell you how they fed it themselves. There are several species; many varieties of land, sea, and fresh-water tortoises, and some are carnivorous. It is the green turtle of the sea that is so valuable as food.

FIFTEEN-FEET.—That you may be only between fifteen and sixteen does not signify in the matter of wearing long frocks, if you be so abnormally tall. Certainly a girl of 5 feet 6 inches should wear them as long as any grown-up person. We thank you for offering to write stories for our paper, but we only employ old and experienced writers.

J. L.—1. "The Freedom of the City" is obtained in different ways. By patrimony, if born after the admission of the father, and having obtained their majority; by free presentation; and by purchase (with or without the interference of a company). But, if the person desiring the "freedom" be carrying on no business, nor holds any premises within the City or its liberties, would have to pay upwards of £27 fees.—2. The origin of the sum charged as a solicitor's fee fixed at 28, 40, 68, 80, and 138, ad., is to be sought for several centuries ago; and the explanation seems to be found in the representation respectively in those sums of the money then current, 2s., the mark, half-mark and quarter-mark. **SUSANNA** should certainly leave her father's and mother's cards, when she pays a visit on an "at home day," unless with very intimate friends, when it may be omitted sometimes.—3. Visitors staying in your house may accompany you, if you like to take them. You must be careful in introducing them to the lady of the house when you go in, and make any explanation of who they are, that may make the visit acceptable to her.



NOVEMBER SPRAY

FOR SHOULDERS AND FRONT OF DRESS.

Single dahlia, bouvardia, and maidenhair.