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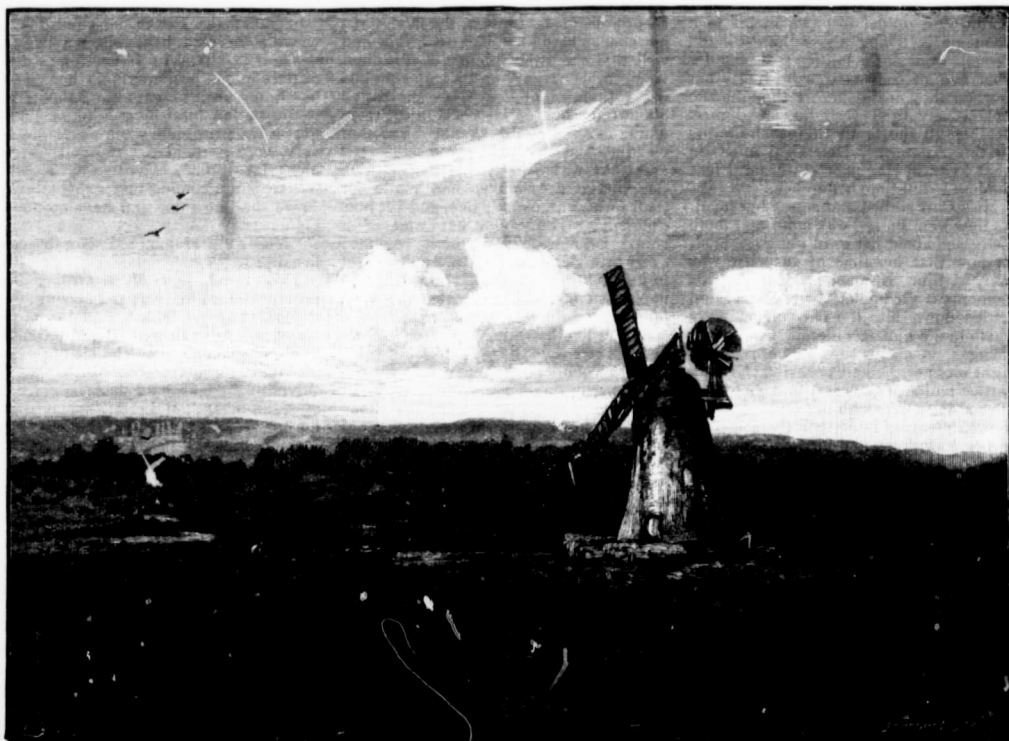
[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

MARCH.

By MARY ROWLES JARVIS.

He comes—a lion roaring after prey ;
 His cruel fangs grind fiercely in the surge
 Of snarling billows, where along the verge
 Of wrathful seas, the headlands stand at bay.
 Strange cloud-shapes wreath the hill-tops far away,
 And all the stormy winds of heaven emerge
 From their high places, and their vassals urge,
 With rush and riot, onward to the fray.
 Yet, in the wind-rocked elms, the busy rooks
 Through all the din their yearly strongholds form,
 And cheery gossip to each other call,
 And Nature works in safe and sheltered nooks,
 Assured amid the passion of the storm
 One violet in bloom will pay for all!

He goes—a lamb, whose lightsome footprint fills
 No daisy-heart with terror—from the strong
 Hath come forth sweetness, and a world in song.
 At dawn the blackbird's note the woodland thrills,
 And throstles practise sudden shakes and trills,
 The blackthorn signals April with a throng
 Of milk-white buds, its dusky sprays along,
 And all the fields are hemmed with daffodils.
 Cleansed through and through the freshened skies look down,
 And earth looks up, with love and life astir,
 Glad for the windy tumult overpast ;
 For each wild hour some root hath deeper grown,
 And every breeze that blows is harbinger
 Of Easter treasures, due to flower at last!



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“THE FRESHENED SKIES LOOK DOWN.”

SISTERS THREE.

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

CHAPTER XXI.



LETTICE'S annual summer visit was postponed this year until the middle of August, for Arthur Newcome had gained his point, as Mr. Bertrand had prophesied, and the wedding was arranged to take place at the end of September. Mr. Bertrand had done his best to gain more time, but it was difficult to fight against a man who was so quiet, so composed, and so immovably determined as Arthur Newcome. He listened to what was said with the utmost politeness, and replied to all argument with the statement that he was twenty-eight, that he was in a good position, and that he saw no reason for waiting on indefinitely. After this performance had been enacted four or five times, Mr. Bertrand's patience gave way, and he declared that he was powerless to stand out any longer, and that perhaps it was a good thing to get the wedding over, since if he had much to do with Arthur Newcome, he should certainly fall into a nervous decline.

"His very presence oppresses me. It is all I can do not to yawn in his face when he is telling those long-winded yarns. Poor little Lettice! I wonder what sort of conversation he treats her to when they are alone. I thought she looked very tired yesterday at dinner. Get her all the pretty things she wants for this *trousseau*, Helen. I must do what I can for the poor child, for I fear she has a dull time before her."

Miss Carr sighed and shook her head. As time went on she was more and more distressed about her ward's engagement, for now that his time of suspense was over, Arthur Newcome had lost his temporary gleam of brightness and settled down into the old solemn ways which made him so different from other young men of his age. The previous night was not the only occasion on which Lettice had seemed weary and dispirited after a *tête-à-tête* with her lover, but she showed plenty of interest in the selection of her *trousseau*, and in the equipment of the handsome house which Mr. Newcome was preparing for his bride.

By the middle of August dressmakers and upholsterers had received the necessary instructions, and could be left to complete their work, while the tired little bride-elect went north to recoup her energies. How glad she was to escape from London only Lettice herself knew; while at Cloudsdale, the whole house was turned upside down in excitement at the prospect of her arrival. Lettice, as an engaged young lady, a bride on the eve of her marriage, had assumed a position of great importance in her sisters' eyes, and the questions as to how she would look, how she would bear

herself, formed the subject of many lengthy discussions.

The hour came at last. Lettice was once more among them. She came rushing in, in the old impetuous way, kissing everyone in turns, and exclaiming in delight at being once more at home. There had never been any unpleasantness connected with Lettice's home-comings. Though she had lived in the lap of luxury for the last three years, she was utterly unspoiled by its influence, and so far from being dissatisfied with her own home, seemed to take an affectionate delight in finding it unchanged in every particular. Her sisters followed her from room to room, listening smilingly to her ecstatic exclamations.

"Oh, how nice it looks—the dear old place! What a sweet, sweet smell of mignonette. Oh, look at the old red table-cloth, and the ink-stain in the corner, where I upset the bottle. Oh, how lovely to see it all again! And the dear old sofa where we used to camp out all together—I have never found such a cosy sofa anywhere else. Tea! How pretty the urn looks! I love that cheerful, hissing sound! and what cream! You never see cream like that in London."

She was all smiles and dimples, and though decidedly thinner, the flush upon her cheeks made her look so bright and well that she was a picture of a radiant young bride. Hilary and Norah watched her with fascinated eyes as she flitted about the room, or lay back in the deep chintz-covered chair. What a vision of elegance she was! The blue serge coat and skirt was exactly like those which the village dressmaker had made for their own wear, exactly like, and yet how different! The sailor hat was of a shape unknown in northern regions; every little detail of her attire was perfect in its unobtrusive beauty, and with every movement of the hands came the flash of precious stones. If she had been a whit less like herself, Norah would have been awed by the presence of this elegant young lady; but it was the old Lettice who flung her arms round her neck the moment they were left alone together in their own room; the old Lettice who kissed, and hugged, and caressed with a hundred loving words.

"Oh, Norah, I have wanted you! I longed for you so, but father would not let me write. It was a horrid, horrid time, and I was wretchedly lonely. Dear, darling Nonie, I am so glad to be back."

"And, oh, Lettice, I am so glad to have you! I have a hundred questions to ask. Let me look at your ring. It is a beauty, far nicer than the ordinary row of diamonds. And are you awfully happy? I was very much surprised, you know, but if you are happy, it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks!"

"N—no!" said Lettice, slowly. "Yes, of course I am happy. It hasn't

been as nice as I expected, for Miss Carr has behaved so queerly, and father was not pleased. But, oh yes, I am quite happy. Madge is delighted about it, and Arthur does everything I like. He is very kind!"

"You funny old Lettice! Kind, of course he is kind!" cried Norah, laughing and kissing the soft, fair cheek. The flush of excitement had faded by this time, and the girl's face looked pale and wan, while the blue shadows beneath her eyes gave a pathetic expression to the sweet face. "Lettice," cried Norah, anxiously, "how ill you look! You were excited before, and I didn't notice it, but you are as white as a ghost, and so thin! Aren't you well, dear? Have you a headache? Can I do anything for you?"

"Oh, no, no!" Lettice stretched her arms over her head with a long, weary sigh. "I shall be quite well now that I am at home, and with you, Norah. I have been tired to death in London lately. You have no idea how tiring it is being engaged. I have stood such hours and hours at the dressmaker's being tried on, and Arthur and I were always going to the house. The workmen are so stupid, they have no idea of colourings. The drawing-room was painted three times over before Arthur was satisfied. I was so tired that I would have left it as it was, but he is so obstinate—he likes to have things done exactly in his own way, and he worries on and on until he gets it. I thought it would be fun furnishing a house, but it gets a little tiresome when people are so very, very particular. We will have a nice lazy time, won't we, Norah? Arthur is not coming up for three weeks, so we shall be alone and have no one to bother us."

"Ye—s!" stammered Norah confusedly.

This novel way of regarding the presence of a lover was so amazing, that it took away her breath, and before she recovered, Miss Briggs entered the room and there was no more chance of private conversation for the present.

Nothing could have been sweeter or more amiable than Lettice's demeanour during the first week at home. She seemed to revel in the simple country life, and to cling to every member of the household with pathetic affection. She went into the kitchen and sat on the fender stool, talking to the cook and inquiring for "your aunt at Preston," "the little niece Pollie," "your nephew at sea," with a kindly remembrance which drew tears from the old soul's eyes. She made dresses for Geraldine's dolls, trimmed Miss Briggs' caps, and hovered about her father and sisters on the watch for an opportunity to serve them. Everyone was charmed to have her at home once more, and fussed over her in a manner which should have satisfied the most exacting of mortals; but sweet and loving as she was, Lettice did not

look satisfied. The grey eyes seemed to grow larger and larger until her face seemed all eyes, and her cheeks showed a faint hollow where the dimples used to play. One miserable night too, Norah woke to find Lettice sobbing with her head buried in the pillow, and heard a pitiful repetition of the words, "What shall I do? What shall I do?" But when she inquired what was wrong, Lettice declared that a tooth was aching, and sat up in the bed and rubbed her gums obediently with a lotion brought from the medicine cupboard. Norah blamed herself for doubting her sister's word, but she could not help noticing that the toothache yielded very rapidly to the remedy, and the incident left a painful impression on her mind.

Norah was not the only member of the household who was anxious about Lettice's happiness. Mr. Bertrand had a serious conversation on the subject with his eldest daughter one morning when Lettice's pallor and subdued voice had been more marked than usual.

"I can't stand seeing the child going about like this. She looks the ghost of what she was five or six months back, and seems to have no spirit left. I shall have to speak to her. It is most painful and awkward on the very eve of the marriage as it were, but if she is not happy—"

"Perhaps it is only that she is tired, and feels the prospect of leaving home," said Hilary, and at that very moment the door was burst open and in rushed Lettice herself, cheeks flushed, hair loose, eyes dancing with merriment. She and Raymond had just played a trick upon unsuspecting Miss Briggs with magnificent success. She was breathless with delight, could hardly speak for bursts of laughter, and danced up and down the room, looking so gay and blithe and like the Lettice of old, that her father went off to his study with a heartfelt sigh of relief. Hilary was right. The child was happy enough. If she were a little quieter than usual it was only natural and fitting under the circumstances. He dismissed the subject from his mind, and settled contentedly to work.

One thing was certain, Arthur Newcome was a most attentive lover. Lettice contented herself with scribbling two or three short notes a week, but every afternoon the postman brought a bulky envelope addressed to her in the small neat handwriting which was getting familiar to every member of the household. Norah had an insatiable passion for receiving letters, and was inclined to envy her sister this part of her engagement.

"It must be so lovely to get long, long epistles every day. Lettice, I don't want to see them of course, but what sort of letters does he write? What does he talk about? Is it all affection, or does he tell you interesting pieces of news?"

Lettice gave the sheets a flick with her white fingers.

"You can read it if you like. There is nothing private. I must say he does not write exciting letters. He has been in Canterbury, and this one is a sort of guide-book about the crypt. As if I wanted to hear about crypts! I must say I did not think when I was engaged that I should have letters all about tombs and stupid old monuments! Arthur is so serious. I suppose he thinks he will 'improve my mind,' but if I am to be improved I would rather read a book at once and not be lectured in my love letters."

She had never spoken so openly before, and Norah dared not let the opportunity pass.

"Oh, Lettice, dear, aren't you happy, aren't you satisfied?" she cried earnestly. "I have been afraid sometimes that you were not so fond of Arthur as you should be. Do, do speak out, dear, if it is so, and put an end to things while there is time!"

"An end! What do you mean? I am to be married in less than a month, the house is ready; how could I put an end to it? Don't be foolish, Norah. Besides, I do care for Arthur. I wish sometimes that he were a little younger and less proper, but that is only because he is too clever and learned for a stupid little thing like me. Don't talk like

that again, it makes me miserable. Wouldn't you like to have a house of your own and be able to do whatever you liked? My little boudoir is so sweet, all blue and white, and we will have such cosy times in it, you and I, and Edna must come up and stay with me too. Oh, it will be lovely, I am sure it will. I shall be quite happy. I am glad father insisted upon having the wedding up here, it will be so much quieter than in a fashionable London church with all the rabble at the doors. Dreadful to be stared at by hundreds of people who don't know or care anything about you, and only look at you as part of a show. Here all the people are interested and care a little bit for 'Miss Lettice.' If only Rex were to be here! It seems hard that he should leave home just a fortnight before my wedding."

Norah sighed and relapsed into silence. It was all settled about Rex's departure by this time. The Squire had given way, Mrs. Freer and Edna had wept themselves dry, and were now busily occupied in preparing what Rex insisted upon describing as his "*trousseau*."

"I have one hundred and fifty 'pieces' in my *trousseau*; how many have you in yours?" he asked Lettice one day, and the girls were much impressed at the extensiveness of his preparations, until it was discovered that he counted each sock separately, and took each suit of clothes as representing three of the aforesaid "pieces." Having once given way, the Squire behaved in the most generous manner, and at his suggestion, Rex was to travel overland to Brindisi, spending a month in various places of interest on the continent; in order to do this and catch the appointed boat, it was necessary to leave Westmoreland at the end of August. Ten days more, and then good-bye to Rex, good-bye to the happy old days which could never come back again! Four days more, three days, two days, one day—the last afternoon arrived, and with a sinking heart Norah went to meet Rex in the drawing-room for the last time for long years to come.

(To be continued.)



PUZZLE COMPETITION.

No Puzzle Poem this month. Instead, we invite our readers to convert the following verses into a puzzle. There are no restrictions as to the form the puzzle must take. If pictures are employed, due allowance will be made for inexpert draughtsmanship, for this is not a drawing competition. The prizes will be awarded for the most ingenious efforts. If the Puzzle Editor can be tempted back to puzzle life he will act as judge.

SIX GUINEAS will be given in prizes; one being reserved for competitors living abroad.

The rules are few but important:—

1. Only a single sheet of paper or card may be used.

2. Only one side may be written upon.
3. The name and address of the competitor must appear at the top of the paper or card.
4. The puzzles are to be sent as soon as finished to The Editor, GIRL'S OWN PAPER, 56, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.
5. The last day for receiving them will be April 15 from the United Kingdom; and June 18 from Abroad.

A BAIT.

The Puzzle Editor has flown
(Although he cannot fly),
His whereabouts is quite unknown,
Because he is so shy.

He disappeared the very night
His last report was penned,
Perchance he thought by wingless flight
His puzzle work to end.
If happily this puzzle bait
Should tempt him from his lair,
No more he'll underestimate
His victims' wild despair.

CONSOLATION PRIZE, 1896-7.

This is awarded to
IDA RAFFORD,
to whom a guinea will be sent if she will forward her address to the Editor.

FROM MARCH TILL MAY.

By W. GORDON STABLES, M.D., C.M., R.N. ("MEDICUS").

"The stormy March has come at last,
With winds and clouds and changing
skies,
I hear the rushing of the blast,
That through the snowy valley flies."



So uncertain is the weather during this month that it is universally dreaded by those who are delicate. Many and many a young girl has come safely through a hard wild winter, only to succumb to the searching, biting blasts of March.

Probably the greatest danger lies in the fact that for days, sometimes, the weather is so mild and

balmy, we can hardly believe it is not summer itself, instead of early spring, and then suddenly it changes, skies lower dark and gloomily, bitter winds rage and roar through the still leafless trees, and the air is filled with whirling sleet or snow.

March may therefore be called to its face a most deceitful month, and we need have no difficulty in proving the charge.

I myself am not much of a man for fires at any time, but a "blink" in my wigwam looks cheerful during the winter months, and my beautiful St. Bernard, Fair Helen of Troy, likes to lie on a bear's skin and warm her nose thereat. But the first few days of March have at times been so delightful, that it was a pleasure to do my writing out of doors altogether, taking a turn now and then through the orchard or the gardens.

"Heavenly weather!" everybody that passed would be saying.

The violets and primroses and the forget-me-nots all around the borders would seem to be making the same remark.

And the early bees and butterflies were singing it, or sighing it.

Tired of brain-work on days like these I have laid down my writing-board, and, whistling on my dogs, come sweeping around me like a hairy hurricane, I have gone off to the woods for a ramble, just to see how many tender wee wild flowers were gazing with upturned faces, at the fleecy clouds and the sweet ethereal blue of the sky, and to note how buds and burgeons were coming on, and try to calculate how soon the woods would be clad in leaves of drooping green.

Yes and probably before I got home the wind would have changed to boisterous north or colder east, and be moaning drearily among the trees overhead, with here a patch of sleet and there a flying flake of snow.

Well, I attribute the fairly good health I enjoy and the excellent appetite I have for my oatmeal porridge at six in the morning, chiefly to two facts. I am no sooner out of bed than I have my sponge bath. Cold, of course; for

often in winter, hard though my fist is, I have to use a dumb-bell to break the ice. Secondly I wear woollen underclothing, not only in winter, but in summer as well, and I will tell you why. Wool is a non-conductor of caloric, that is, it obstructs the passage of heat. Therefore in cold weather it conserves the body's warmth, while in the summer-time it protects the whole system from the sun's fierce rays.

But treacherous though the month of March may be, we must not speak too unfavourably about it. For March is the month of hope. Shakespeare says—

"The miserable have no other medicine,
But only hope."

Well, a glorious medicine it is, and if March brings the delicate and the weary only this, it is to be forgiven for a great deal. On fine days now a weakly girl, if she lives in the country, can hear the birds singing, such happy, happy songs; she can list to the croodle of the wood-pigeon and loving murmuring purr of the turtle-dove in the ivy or cedar; she can see the blue shy eyes of the violets opening to the light; the primroses in bloom and scenting all the air around, and, by the wayside or in the woods many a wild flower bursting into blossom, and banks snowed over with anemones. To all this her heart must respond, and the hope that leads to health, will find a resting-place within it.

Well, I should like the delicate, even during this uncertain month, to have all the fresh air and all the sunshine it is possible to get.

But nevertheless I would have them avoid all chance of catching cold. How can a girl do so? I shall try to tell her. But I must at once say that she cannot do it by over-coddling.

To begin with she should remember that it is sudden changes from warmth to cold that often works such deadly mischief, especially if the pores of the skin are open, and probably perspiring. Many a strong and healthy girl has not only caught cold, but lung disease, that ended in death by coming out from a warm close ball-room, or even church, and standing for a minute or two in the cold air, instead of keeping walking or moving to encourage the circulation.

Churches, I am sorry to say, are often badly ventilated and over-heated, and after coming out from them on a cold winter's or spring night, and standing for a time bidding friends good-bye, one is very apt to catch a deadly chill.

I repeat that it is the suddenness of the change which works the terrible mischief, not the actual lowness of temperature. It is a fact well known to men of science that plants, and even the lower forms of animal life may be frozen, and recover again if the change from the high temperature to the very low and *vice versa* be very gradual, and it is not quite beyond the bounds of possibility that even a human being might be thus treated, were the freezing process slow enough, and also the reaction.

The reverse of this is true. During my cruises to the Arctic Regions, while making journeys across the great ice-pack, my companion would have an eye to my face and I to his. (N.B. That isn't meant for a pun.) If either of us noticed a white spot on his fellow's cheek or nose, a halt had to be called at once, for that spot was a frost-bite and the halt was called that gradual action might be induced. Now one of three things must take place in

such a case. If the spot were left, there would be death of the part and an ugly ulcer; if a strong stimulant were used to rub with, action would soon be restored, but of so violent a character as to produce a huge blister and ulceration would follow! but if the part were quietly rubbed with snow, the blood would return to the spot so gradually, that neither pain nor any other bad result could possibly follow.

I trust these simple illustrations will render my meaning plain, that one must avoid sudden extremes of either heat or cold, if one would retain health, and avoid lung troubles, which are undoubtedly the greatest drawbacks to this uncertain climate of ours.

But extremes of all kinds should be avoided if a girl is to be well in spring-time. I shall now mention a few of these by way of warning, and be it remembered that I have the delicate in my mind's eye as I write.

A bed-room should be just moderately warm, certainly not hot. If so the sleeper is apt, unconsciously, to toss the bed-clothing off, then about three in the morning the fire goes out, the cold comes and the mischief is done, so that she need not be surprised if she has a hacking cough next morning. Pretty early in the evening the bedroom windows should be opened wide, the fire after this will ventilate the room.

Never go into a very cold bed if delicate. Have it warmed, if only by means of a square stone bottle of boiling water, placed in the upper not lower part of the bed, at first anyhow. Do not press the feet too much against this bottle, especially if they are cold, else the reaction will be much too sudden, the nerves will be irritated, and perhaps the foundation laid for a good crop of chilblains.

If delicate, linen or cotton sheets are most dangerous. Let them be wool by all means. While wandering in my caravan, even in summer, I invariably sleep in rugs, and though windows and even doors may be left open, I never catch cold.

The very delicate should, in March and even in April, have a bit of fire lit in the morning before turning out. If they cannot stand the cold tub which is so bracing, a warm bath should be taken every third night.

Rest is good for those who are weakly, but too much rest in bed will render them weaker than ever.

Too much sleep is also an extreme to be avoided.

Sleeplessness may be treated simply enough by having the forehead very well with cold water before going to bed; by taking a very hot foot bath, a little supper and a glass of hot water with the juice of half a lemon in it.

Get up pretty early and take the juice of the other half in a glass of pure cold water.

Take breakfast soon, your system wants feeding and is willing to be fed early in the morning.

But avoid extremes in eating. If one breakfasts at eight, and is not hungry for luncheon or dinner at half-past one, it is a sign that too much breakfast has been eaten. Do not eat new bread nor fancy bread for the morning meal, though well-fired rolls may be wholesome enough. Avoid much meat, and fat and all oily fishes. Coffee is best for breakfast if well made and clear—chicory or not, according to taste. The very best of butter and plenty of it. Good milk and oatmeal porridge are excellent. Just one warning about the porridge; do not boil too long, and add salt. Porridge without salt is simply a

poultice, yet I see Englishmen at hotels eating tiny plates of what they imagine is porridge, and with sugar! Porridge should always be made with the best medium oatmeal.

Tea is *not* a cause of indigestion if it be good. I have a pint and a half of strong tea every night at five, but it is the best, and so my appetite is good and my blood as pure and clear as my conscience.

Mind this, you are more apt to catch cold when the body is weak. Never therefore expose yourself when hungry.

Always change the clothing when damp, even from perspiration, but let the fresh under-clothing you put on be warmed.

Avoid an excess of clothing outdoors or in. Heavy clothing not only causes fatigue but weakens the perspiratory system.

I used to recommend silk for summer underwear, but I think that light wool serves equally well, and some say better.

Do not remain in a hot room, when visiting, a moment longer than you can help. People who live in such rooms are ruining their health and getting old before their time. I can tell women of this sort, even on a railway platform. They may not have many deep wrinkles, but the skin of the face is kiln-cracked—if you can understand me, just one mass of tiny wrinkles, moreover there is

evidence that the layer of fat beneath is soft and boggy.

Avoid wrapping up the neck too much by day, but a light comforter should be worn at night.

Anæmic or bloodless girls may use iron in some weak non-constipating form. A pill of carbonate of iron may do good, or an oxide. Or even quinine and iron, but the effects should be watched, and if it seems to heat the blood too much or cause restlessness it should be avoided.

Finally, if you want to get well and strong, or if you are well and want to keep so, look upon fresh air indoors and out as your very best friend, not even second to food itself.

WHITE LILIES

A MEMORY.



MORNING I have been reading an article entitled "How to Discourage Your

Minister." The author is a well-known writer who understands the subject he deals with, and his recipe, briefly put, is something like this: Indifference; aversion to new or improved methods; unkindly and undue criticism; superior intelligence; cold patronage; lack of sympathy. These ingredients, well mixed with the necessary supply of cold water, and frequently applied, are sure to be efficacious. There is no possible chance of failure. Alas! that many, too many, know by bitter experience how completely successful it is.

Once had the honour to know a man—the memory of whose hand-clasp makes me proud yet after the lapse of many years—a man who "failed." And every time I hear him spoken of in this way, I remember that "some men's failures are eternities beyond the successes of other men."

He was young, and earnest, and bright, with high ideals of life in its joy and sorrow. Life to him was no dream, but a great and glorious thing, solemn in its responsibilities, exceedingly beautiful in its vast resources, a gift from his Father, to be used for the glory of that Father's name. Ay, as I write, I can hear the young voice with that heart-touching quiver in it, which was always there:

"Teach me to live; 'tis easier far to die."

And away back over the years memory goes, and lifts the veil which tenderly cover days that belong to the past.

It was early spring-time, and little green shoots were relieving the sombre brownness of the trees and hedges. On the hillsides here and there a sweet golden-hearted daisy lifted its face to the sun, and crocuses peeped out in the garden borders. The birds sang their spring-time songs; and birds and trees and flowers seemed to give promise of something far more beautiful and melodious yet in store. The glorious summer would follow the spring, and then the golden harvest.

One sun-bright day, when the daisies smiled more sweetly, and the birds sang more gladly, and the clouds were light and fleecy in the sky, a young minister was ordained to his first charge. Of the sacredness of that day to his heart who shall speak? In the evening a large hall was filled to overflowing. The passages were blocked; people were sitting in the window-sills, and never before, nor since, did any minister get such a welcome from that congregation.

I think I see him now, as he stood on the platform, while a lady, in gentle motherly fashion, put the handsome new gown on his shoulders—a slight boyish figure with an earnest, trustful face pale with excitement. Cheer after cheer resounded through the hall; again and again the multitude of people raised their voices in a shout of welcome; and he stood there, his trembling fingers gripping nervously the front of the black gown, trying to find utterance. What! is that a tear in the steadfast blue eyes? Oh, but his heart was full. What would he not do for this people?

Ay, it was a bright beginning. Hope was strong and the prospect was fair. The church, in that village nestling among the hills, was beautiful; the surrounding country picturesquely romantic, with its rivers and glens and heather-clad slopes. The congregation were unanimous in their choice, and the minister was all that a minister ought to be—which is saying much. A bright beginning; and the delicate spring-time would soon merge into the full flush of summer. Was anything wanting to complete the already fascinating picture? Just a trifle; only sympathy with a young, over-sensitive heart. But that little thing, by its presence or absence, is big enough to make or mar a life.

The enthusiasm had been genuine—while it lasted—and then the congregation speedily settled down to their old practical routine. They knew nothing about the lights and shades of a shy, reserved, sensitive nature, and cared as little to try to understand it. They were comfortable and contented themselves, and it never occurred to them that their young minister required or wished for a little encouragement or friendliness. They had appointed him to their church, and it was his duty, and privilege, to shower all his friendship and sympathy on them, together with the outcome of his varied talents. In return for this they paid him a fair salary, attended church regularly, shook hands in a condescendingly-warm manner when they met him—if they troubled to stop at all—and patronised him when he called.

I don't believe they really meant anything by it. It was just their way, and with some of them it was the result of mere thoughtlessness. But my heart aches as I think of many

lonely hours when that young life was longing for a touch of real love and sympathy. What need to enter into details? The breach, hardly perceptible at first, gradually widened by careful adherence to the afore-mentioned recipe. None of the elements were a-wanting, and extras were added judiciously.

Of course, there were a few loyal-hearted folks who loved their minister, and tried to encourage him in the work he was so faithfully endeavouring to perform. But even these few, with all their real sympathy and fellow-feeling, did not see with clear eyes till afterwards, when it was too late. I myself have many regrets. The little action I might have done, the kind word I might have spoken more often than I did—these come back with a sting now. I remember one evening I set out to pay him a visit, taking with me a little gift which I thought he would like. But when a few yards on my way, some strange impulse made me hesitate. "Perhaps he does not wish me to call; he might not care for anything that seemed like intrusion. I had better wait till some other time," and—I am ashamed to say it—I turned back. It's years ago; and yet how sorry I feel when I think of that evening.

In a little note-book of mine he once wrote some verses. I have the page yet, treasured with other things that are very dear to me:—

"Scorn not the slightest word or deed,
Nor deem it void of power;
There's fruit in each wind-wafted seed,
Waiting its natal hour.

A whispered word may touch the heart,
And bring it back to life;
A look of love bid sin depart,
And still unholy strife.

No act falls fruitless; none can tell
How vast its power may be;
Nor what results enfolded dwell
Within it silently."

I thought the verses pretty at the time, but I did not then read between the lines. Afterwards, when my eyes were opened, I understood; and now they ring with mournful cadence, as the cry of a lonely human heart.

The days slipped by. Spring passed, and then the rose-crowned summer, and the golden autumn. Winter's snow covered the hills, and by-and-by it too melted away, and again it was early spring-time, with its little green shoots on the trees and hedges. The church among the hills was just as beautiful as ever, the congregation as flourishing. But—oh! that "but." The strain upon one young heart had been too severe; and at last—after months of discouragement and silent suffering, after

numberless struggles, not the less noble because unavailing; to overcome and feel things less keenly—his place was empty.

The congregation had done their work well; and if the grass were waving above one grave to-day, they would not be guiltless. But, in the Father's loving kindness, the heart so sorely bruised was not broken utterly. There was yet, in another sphere, service for the bright young life; a life made perhaps still more useful just because of the experience gained at who can realise the cost!

A failure? When I first knew him I was undecided in the matter of salvation; and, shortly after he left, the remembrance of some words, and an indefinable something about

the brave, mysteriously-chequered life were strong instruments used by the Lord to draw me to Himself.

I always remember the last words I heard that wishful voice say—

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
The strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle,
The next, the victor's song.
To him that overcometh
A crown of life shall be;
He with the King of Glory
Shall reign eternally."

What a ring of triumph crept in at the third line, and grew stronger and stronger

with each succeeding line. A little while after he held my hand, and we looked into each other's eyes and said "good-night," a good-night which was to last for years, though we did not then know.

A failure? Nay—but in the Father's eyes a bright success. Spring and summer and autumn and winter have followed each other many times over since that good-night was said. The flowers he loved are near me as I write of him—the pure white lilies with their delicate subtle fragrance. As to the memory of the man whose life I regard as nobly beautiful, the man who was, and is my friend, I bring my tribute—the white lilies of remembrance.
ROSI MACLEOD.

IN THE TWILIGHT SIDE BY SIDE.

By RUTH LAMB.

PART V.

WHAT IT IS TO BE RICH.

"Let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord" (Jer. ix. 23, 24).



TOUR last meeting, dear girls, we began our talk with the question, "What is it to be rich?" We sat a little longer than usual without answering the query, though I think we were all convinced that the mere possession of money does not constitute true riches. These must be of a more lasting character than houses and land, or gold and jewels.

We have all known instances enough of persons who have suddenly, and from unforeseen causes, lost all their worldly wealth. Have you ever thought that people may retain it and yet, from varying causes, be very poor?

I will repeat a little incident of my girlish days, told long ago, and doubtless forgotten by those who heard it. But the incident suits my purpose and will serve to illustrate my meaning.

As long back as memory will take me, I call to mind the figure of an old man, or at least one who always seemed old to me, for he was more than sixty when I was born, and always slender, pale and frail-looking. He was deemed a very rich man, and he took great pains to sustain his reputation by constantly boasting of his wealth. He might not have been credited with riches—for he gave nothing—and, though just in his dealings, he demanded as well as paid the uttermost farthing. It was his delight to be able to say that each night he went to bed knowing that he was richer than when he rose from it in the morning.

I do not mean to say that he denied himself the necessaries of life. Indeed he had his carriage and a favourite pony for riding, though he seldom drove. These were signs of opulence, and he would not dispense with them as such.

In order that people might be convinced of

his riches, he used to carry documents in his pocket which proved this, and he often exhibited them with no little pride, especially to those who were comparatively poor.

How well I remember seeing the old man's face of triumph as he did this once in my own home. He was over four-score and I was but a girl, yet I noted the sarcastic grin on the withered, old face, as he alluded to the folly of a neighbour who had lost largely through his over-trustfulness, combined with a very kind heart.

"I trust nobody and nothing but what is legally secured and as sound as the Bank of England," said the old man, in an exultant tone, as he restored the precious papers to his pocket and buttoned his coat over them. Girl though I was, I was stirred by a feeling of mingled contempt and pity for this man whom everyone knew to be so hard and grasping. He was so old too, and, in a little while, people would be saying how much he had left and by what grasping and hoarding the wealth had been amassed which was no longer his.

I think my mother was a little afraid I should say something to displease her visitor, for she remarked that she had not seen him driving or riding out lately.

"I can do neither," he said. "If I do I get the cramp so horribly that I suffer torture the night through."

"I hope you sleep well after walking, at any rate."

"I wish I could. I feel drowsy, but the moment sleep comes, I am tormented with the most horrid dreams. Visions of things that never could have happened plague me so, that weariness and wakefulness are better than sleep with such company as it brings me."

The old man had risen to go, when I suddenly exclaimed, "How poor you must feel, though you have so much money, and how rich you have made me feel, though I have so little!"

"What do you mean?" he asked in an angry tone.

"I mean that I have youth and health, and bright spirits, and power to enjoy so many things that you may not value perhaps, but which no amount of money could buy. I can walk well, so I do not need a carriage; but if by chance I ride or drive, I have no cramped limbs afterwards. When I am tired I sleep soundly, and I am never disturbed by bad dreams. I am happy without having a lot of money—happier, I think, than some people who have a great deal—though for my mother's sake I might be glad to have more."

I should probably have said more, but the

old man turned, and with a profound bow, congratulated me on my possessions; bade my mother good day, and left the house.

My mother felt constrained to lecture me for my outburst, but all the time I am sure she agreed with me.

Not long afterwards people were wondering at the great sun left by this man, who had begun with nothing but a dogged determination to become rich.

That word *left* strikes one sadly, does it not? Surely those, who have set their affections on things on the earth, and have no treasure beyond it, are poorest of all!

Let us think now how rich we are in things which money cannot buy. Have we youth and health, or are we in mature age, with our minds clear and our senses unimpaired? Are not these things better than plenty of money; inasmuch as no money can purchase any one of them, if once lost?

Think what it would be to lose—hopelessly, sight or hearing, speech or the power of motion. To have wealth and to know that by spending every penny you cannot recover the priceless gift. Think what it is to have unclouded reason, and thank God for it, with a full heart. Have you a bright, hopeful temperament which, whilst it notes the clouds overhead, or the mist that hides the face of the sun, yet says, "The clouds will pass away. The sun is there. The mist will disperse. I will possess my soul in patience whilst thankfully remembering past mercies, and looking trustfully for a renewal of them."

Oh, the blessedness of being rich in health, in faith, in hope, in youth, or in a maturity which, looking back, is rich in sweet memories of which none can rob us.

People may retain their wealth and find out how powerless it is to buy what they most need. Let me ask each of you, "Have you loving friends around you, whom you love? Are you one of a bright home circle, each member of which enters into the joys and sorrows of all the rest?" If so, you are rich indeed, however little of this world's goods you may possess.

Doubtless you sometimes wish to be richer for the sake of the others who are so dear to you.

Indeed, money is a good gift, and to be rightly valued for the sake of the comforts it can buy, and its power to purchase ease of mind and alleviation of suffering in many cases. But there are so many in which it is powerless, and if we do not possess it, we do well to look round and to note these, in order that we may thank God more earnestly for the good things He has given us. Would you exchange the wealth of family affection, the bright, hopeful spirits, the power of enjoying

the beauties of God's beautiful world, the strength to work, the ability to gladden others by the exercise of special talents; the sound mind, the health of body, for anything money could give or buy?

I seem to hear a chorus of young voices answer "No. A thousand times, no." And I can imagine an unuttered prayer going up from many a heart, "Lord, let me keep the riches I have, and make me contented with the portion Thy love has allotted to me."

I was once talking to a dear lad about riches. He was but a lad, still, he was thoughtful beyond his years, and he had a way of opening his heart to me. You young listeners may like to hear what was the decision of one younger than most of you, on the subject of riches.

"I suppose," he said, "we should all like to have a bit more money if we could get it by wishing for it; but I've been looking about me a good deal lately, and I can't help feeling that I should not like to change with any one I know, if I had to take all he has along with the money."

Then he began to give instances. One gentleman had great estates, but he had lost his only son and had a sick wife whom no expenditure of money could restore to health.

Another, similarly endowed, had a family—all girls but the eldest, and he, poor lad, heir to great estates, was imbecile. A careless nurse had let him fall when an infant, and had concealed the accident for fear of the consequences to herself. The child's intellect and the parents' hopes were ruined by this deceit, and there was a shade of sorrow always hanging over a luxurious home in consequence of it.

Looking into the busy world of commerce, my boy friend noted how rich men went on toiling as if they were chained to their places of business, and many of them seemed to find time for nothing but money-making, and pleasure in nothing but owning it.

Round and round his circle of acquaintances the young mind roved. Of course, he found good, unselfish, rich people, but still there was always something that hindered him from wishing to change with them.

Could he give youth, even with poverty, for hoar hairs with wealth? Would he change his vigorous health for money with a frail body? Would he barter his generous nature which impelled him to use his little unselfishly, for the sordid spirit of the man who, having much, thought only of self in the spending of it?

"I would not change with anybody that I know," was the conclusion he came to, and I am sure he was right.

The lot which is chosen for us by Him who cannot err is the best. It is our duty and privilege to turn everything we possess to good account, instead of spending our time in vain repinings and envying those whose wealth is of a different kind from ours.

How did you and I feel when our first watch or pretty ornament was given to us? We were constantly consulting the one, or changing the position of the other in order to show it to the greatest advantage. In a little while the sense of wealth in these possessions left us, and we used them almost unconsciously. So it is with those who are richest, in a worldly sense. The high-born lady goes about in a simple serge dress and carries with her no thought of the sparkling treasures resting in her safe at home.

The possessor of many carriages walks from choice and for health's sake. The owner of many country seats has often less enjoyment out of them than those have whom he permits to wander in his wide parks at will. The humbler wayfarer, with health, sight and power to move freely, revels in the beauty around him. He sits under the shade

of glorious trees, and listens to the songs of birds, and the hum of bees, feeling that for the time at least all these good things are his, without cost and anxiety about their maintenance.

Such possessions often weigh very heavily on their owners. More than once I have heard friends say, "How I wish I could give up this large place, but I cannot. It is left me on condition that I live in it, and it costs so much that I am poor, though I am called rich, and the worst of it is I have nothing to give."

A man I knew was asked, "Why do you not live in a larger house and keep a carriage? Your children are settled in the world and you can well afford it."

"My wife and I have grown so used to walking that we prefer it, and we thank God that, now we are past middle life, our old Darby and Joan rambles can be continued. If we require a carriage we can hire one. As to our house! It is too large, or would be but for the young people's visits. We can only occupy one room at a time, and if we old folks were inclined to sulk, we could have an apartment each and there would still be a sitting-room to spare. All the dainties in the world would not tempt us to eat another morsel, for our tastes are simple. We have food 'convenient for us,' and it would add nothing to our pleasure to know that wardrobes were overflowing with garments beyond our power to use."

"It is of no use talking to an old philosopher like you," said the first speaker, and went his way.

If the other had told what was in his heart he might have said, "I should be miserable were I to spend so much on my own surroundings, as to be unable to give comfort to the needy out of the abundance God has given to me."

Surely all the vast wealth of the patriarch Job gave him less real happiness even in possession, than did the power to say, in his season of deepest affliction, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me. Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor."

How delightful it is to think that you, my dear girl friends, may each in your little way earn the right to say words like those which the patriarch said, though you have not Job's wealth. There are a thousand ways in which you can realise his blessedness. You can think of the old and easily wearied when you are going about your own business, and by carrying a message or making some little purchase, you can be feet to the lame.

Your nimble fingers which ply the needle so swiftly, can be exercised for one whose trembling hands will not allow her to darn a stocking or put on a button, or a patch. Your voices will sound like sweetest music in the ears of one who loves God's word, but whose failing sight will not allow her to read it.

That unlettered old body—in her tiny cottage, who is not able to read the letter from her son in a far-away land, and who wishes she had been young in the days when children were taught, as now—will be very grateful for your help in deciphering and answering the precious epistle. Your eyes will shine more brightly and your heart will be glad when she thanks you and, in her trembling tones, asks that God will bless and reward you, though she cannot. If you have given an hour to a lonely neighbour at a cost of some self-denial, and it may be, listened to querulous complaints

patiently and given cheery words back again, you will return to your own bright home and enjoy it the more for knowing that, in a little way, you have helped to bear another's burden.

How we enrich ourselves by every cheery word, kindly act or bit of self-denial exercised for Christ's sake!

Picture again the face of that little child to whom you gave a toy of your own devising, or the garment made out of a mere fragment of material!

Are you not richer for the memory? And do we not all find that we have much real wealth at our disposal, and that we can enrich others by the use of it, if we only have the will?

I could go on and on, but time flies and I have yet to say a word about the best riches of all—the only kind which we do not leave behind when we close our eyes on this world and all its fleeting treasures. Let us cull together a few fair flowers of heavenly wisdom, before we reach the best of all.

"There is that maketh himself rich yet hath nothing, there is that maketh himself poor yet hath great riches." "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." "By humility and the fear of the Lord, are riches and honour and life." "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

Thus wrote the wise king and the inspired prophet of old, and all through the Old Testament Scriptures we can find the same teaching, which, whilst it points out the littleness of worldly wealth, shows how great and enduring are those riches which are the portion of every true disciple of Christ and child of God.

Christ became poor that we, through His poverty, might be rich. To believe in Jesus, to dwell in Him and He in us, to know something of that "love of Christ which passeth knowledge," is to be rich indeed, however poor we may be in another sense. Is it not by the gift of the Holy Spirit that we are able to realise our riches? By this divine influence we discover our true wealth, for we see something of the riches of God's goodness towards us, the riches of His glory, the riches of His wisdom and mercy, and the riches of His grace. We find out all about the rich inheritance which awaits us, not here, where riches take to themselves wings and flee away, but one that is eternal, in the heavens. One not bought with corruptible silver and gold, but "without money and without price" so far as we are concerned. The same price which redeemed our souls from death, won for us this incorruptible inheritance—and that was the precious blood of Jesus, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

In Christ we are rich now. Rich in faith, in hope, in that peace which passeth all understanding, and with the power to enrich others by imparting to them of what we have received. As disciples of Christ it is our duty and privilege to become rich in good works done for His sake, and, though poor ourselves, like the disciples of old to make many rich, by telling what great things God has done for us.

Farewell for to-night, dear friends, each and all. Have we not solved the question "What is it to be rich?" I pray that you and I may realise in all its fulness "What it is to be rich."

FROCKS FOR TO-MORROW.

By "THE LADY DRESSMAKER."



A NEW SKIRT.

THERE seems a very decided fancy for princess dresses, many of which have already put in an early appearance, both in velvet and fur at the various skating rinks, and, indeed, anywhere where the extremists in fashion congregate. Together with the princess is seen its half-sister, the long and graceful redingote, both of them admirably adapted to suit tall and slight people, and both quite certain to be much seen this year. The very advanced amongst the ladies' tailors say that the coats with waistbands will absolutely vanish—at least, from the fashionable world—but in spite of this prognostication, I have seen some very pretty bodices and coats of this kind, though the Russian pouching effect has disappeared and the basques look longer. There are very large revers to all these coats or blouses, which are generally made of some bright velvet; old rose, green, and almond and white, being all of them favourite colours; and they may be edged round with a tiny rucking of black chiffon, one of those puffy edgings that were seen so much last season, and which promise to be equally fashionable this year also. The bodice has also very frequently three fancy buttons, and fastens on one side, as I see it often, with a metallic belt, and I think silver ones will be quite as much worn as ever. For now that many people have purchased these very artistic silver belts, they will not be willing to give them up so soon. Besides, the ordinary girl has not a very large dress allowance, and must manage to dress herself well and smartly within it. The sleeves are, of course, either shaped in a square or are pointed at the wrist, and are generally finished with a frilling of lace inside.

There is an immense feeling for the use of white cordings and white silk braids, especially on black materials, serge being specially honoured. In this connection, strappings are much used, and edged with the white cording they are certainly very smart. These serge gowns are generally made with a large-sized round collar, which is rather open at the neck, and this space is filled in with a chemisette of white chiffon or of white satin, with white lace over it, and surmounted by a high neck-frill of lace and satin, the satin being put on in a double frill with the lace over it.

Amongst the prophecies for the future, which I have heard during the month, is the coming of flounces. These are declared to be "an undoubted fact," a slight exaggeration when they have not yet arrived! But still I am bound to say, that a great many of the thin materials for evening dress, are already ornamented with small frills, or several deep flounces. I am afraid all the small-sized folk will complain a great deal of this new fashion, for flounces are very detrimental to little people. They decrease their apparent height, and add much to dumpiness of figure. With the present style of dress, the tall women and girls seem always to score, but the smaller ones have a chance too; for the plain, tailor-made gowns suit nearly every one. The modern flounces are not put on all round the skirt, in a straight line, but show a tendency to be shaped into a point in front, from the waist-line at the back. I am not sure that this line is becoming to the figure, nor indeed any line of the sort, which seems to fall forwards, towards the front. In our illustration of a new skirt, we show the more graceful line which drops at the back as well, and it will be seen at once that this conduces to slighthness of appearance, and a graceful line.

There has been much talk about the new skirt, and all kinds of things were told of it, *i.e.*, that we were to be "tied back" once more, that we should have the old umbrella back again, that very original umbrella skirt, with next to no fulness at the top, and extending to, at least, six yards of material at the edge.

None of these things have really occurred. We have the new skirt, and it is certainly cut very tight at the top; fitting also closely round the hips, but it flutes gracefully enough at the feet, and will be found very pretty, I think, when worn.

Tailor-made gowns are always in, and the change in them is very small. We have the

rather long, tight-fitting coat, generally double-breasted in front, but as the season advances, this will not be required for warmth. The fashionable colours appear to be grey, fawn, drab, and a light shade of lavender-blue; white, purple, and dark blues are also much liked; and I see that green still finds many adherents, and is undoubtedly both seasonable



IN THE FIRST DAYS OF SPRING.

and becoming, and looks its best with the white pipings I have mentioned.

Another skirt which I have lately seen is a kind of over-dress, with an under-skirt, which seems to presage a return to the old double skirt, which was worn years ago. The over-dress is darker than the under one. The fashion of using jet embroideries on net for skirts and lining them with a colour, or with black, has spread wonderfully. There were quantities of these embroideries sold at the winter sales, and though they were far from cheap they were eagerly purchased; for most

feel inclined to turn the cape up to display it. The collar is very high, and often lined with velvet, and having a frill of lace inside. I think we shall see numbers of such capes this spring.

Our picture, "In the first days of spring," shows a very pretty dress of a purple mauve cashmere, with a velvet jacket to match it in colour. The edging of it is a narrow band of ermine, and it has also a band and clasp of silver at the waist; and was worn with a white felt hat, much covered with violets. We have as many of these costumes of cashmere and

and are sewn on the waist-band—an excellent plan, by which you can wear either the basque or a band with the blouse. But, personally, I always consider that the addition of the small basque is more becoming and relieves the sometimes patchy effect of a bodice and skirt which do not match each other.

There seems no fear that the blouse will go out, for I hear of thousands being manufactured, ready for the spring; and I see that a very favourite new material for them is silk serge and also a species of lustre, of which ordinary ones are made. This is in plaid tartans of every imaginable kind and colour, and will answer for all ordinary purposes, as it will wear as clean as an alpaca.

I also hear of the manufacture in England of any number of dress improvers of wire, and, indeed, that they are already to be found in some of our West End shops. I am sorry to hear it, but at the same time, I cannot see how a dress improver can be worn when our skirts are to be so very tight-fitting at the top.

I see, in a daily paper, that in New York they have started an eminently practical thing, *i.e.*, a Rainy-Day Club, composed of women for the purpose of advocating the use of a rainy-day skirt in wet weather. This club has been most successful and is spreading over other parts of the States. The test of membership is, that members pledge themselves to wear skirts four inches from the ground in rainy weather, and some of the enthusiastic members advocate the establishment of a fine for the punishment of those who fail to comply with the rule. This plan seems far more sensible than to wear the divided skirt, which was the platform of the Woman's International Union, and which held a meeting lately. It seems to me, that the nation in general has already expressed an opinion on the divided skirt; as a costume for cycling it is certainly a failure, and every one has quite decided in favour of a short skirt as being in every way more suitable to the tastes of Englishwomen.

I do not know whether Englishwomen will desert their favourite dogs for a calf; but I see in the Italian papers that Signora Crispi has appeared at a recent festival in Sicily, accompanied by a tame calf, very prettily adorned, which followed her as tamely as a dog! The coat worn by the calf was made of a skin of dyed vellum, much begilded of course. The worst of this fashion might be that it may spread to the taming of other animals, and we really do not know where it might stop.

This will not appear so eccentric when we recall the loathsome fancy exhibited here, in our own country, at one time during the last century, when certain fashionable women, obviously courting notoriety, adopted little sucking-pigs in the place of their lap-dogs, and actually carried them about in their arms in the street! Yet such an inane vagary was of a piece with the wearing such preposterous and unclean erections on their heads; and representations of a coach-and-four as a patch upon their cheeks or foreheads. Truly, Society had become effete through an overweening vanity!

It is also reported from Paris that one of the novelties will consist in having landscapes painted on the soles of our boots and shoes! Where they will be visible, save in church at one special service only, is not told us, as certainly we should not see them in any position but kneeling, and they are evidently not intended for pedestrians. There is only one thing that reconciles one to the infinite vagaries of fashion, and that is, that so many earn a comfortable living by ministering to all kinds of odd tastes and eccentricities.



BODICE IN WHITE LACE AND BLACK CHIFFON.

women saw in them the means of reviving an old dress, or of achieving the manufacture of a new one, which would make a great effect at a smaller cost than that at which a good gown is usually obtained. The net is very strong, and the embroidery well done, so that a certain amount of wear may be looked for from them; and those of white, embroidered in black and silver, or green and silver, were quite beautiful for the evening.

Do not imagine that capes have gone out of date, they are too useful. There are many new ones of satin-faced cloth, generally drab or fawn in colour, and frequently ornamented with gold braid. The lining is generally extremely beautiful; so handsome, that one

velvet, or velveteen, as ever, this spring, and I notice that grebe has returned to favour as a warm trimming for the spring; while its colour makes it look quite fit for the season, and its becoming and softening effect is well known.

The other figure shows the front of the bodice, in lace and black chiffon, in the sketch given. This was a very graceful and useful bodice, and could be worn by anyone in the evening, either at home or at concerts—looking quite sufficiently dressy. The bands at the neck and round the waist are of black satin ribbon, and the small basque is of black chiffon.

Many of the basques are made separately,

AN OLD CORNWALL ROMANCE.

By C. A. MACIRONE.

CHAPTER IV.

DAME THOMASINE PERCYVALL, LADY MAYORESS
OF LONDON.

"Daughter I am in my mother's house,
But mistress in my own."

Rudyard Kipling.

It was in such a vigorous and useful domestic life, as was described from old writers in our last chapter, that the little peasant-girl developed her remarkable ability and her discrimination of character. It served her well and guided her when her wealth and lonely position again made her an object of pursuit among the courtiers and gentlemen of the period.

In this strange history, which does indeed repeat itself, we see for the second time Thomasine left a widow. An old chronicler says of her:—

"The fame of the virtue, wealth and beauty of the said Thomasine spread itself over the City of London, so that persons of the greatest magnitude of wealth and dignity there courted her. Among the rest, it was the fortune of John Percyvall Esquire, goldsmith and usurer [that is to say banker] to prevail upon her to become his wife."

He was very wealthy and of high repute; alderman of his ward, and besides a man whose noble character and private history had won her regard before he gained her affection.

So he wooed and won the "golden widow," for so, because of her double inheritance of the wealth of two rich husbands, she was merrily named.

Their wedding (about the year 1480) was made a kind of public festival, and the bride, in acknowledgment of her own large possessions, was invested with a stately dowry at the church door.

We have given some description from old writers of the sort of household (in large houses) that was, over which Thomasine was called to rule. It must have been a life of incessant responsibility and activity amongst her numerous dependents, amidst all the anxieties and disorders of that restless age.

There is one matter which must strike everyone in thinking over those domestic duties, and that is, to doubt how far time has dealt kindly with the interests and employments of our homes.

There was then an infinite variety in the home life. There were emulations and rivalries in the productions of various households; in the comparative excellence of their embroideries, the fineness of their naperies, the fame of their still-room productions. All those were matters of common talk and of great interest among well-to-do families. Their brewings and their bakings, the perfection of their laundry work, were topics of infinite discussion amongst neighbours. All this has passed away.

There was also, through the necessary intercourse and intimacy of those forming a household, a much greater fellow-feeling between families and dependents. It was natural, when people worked together, dined at the same board together in hall (whether above or below the salt), and when they shared the common meal, that the bond of loyalty and mutual good-will should be strong.

Now, though a few of the mistresses of the great merchants' households and factories recognise the responsibilities of rulers, still that is not (would that it were) the universal feeling. The old order of nobles still takes the lead in this, as in some other things. That

beloved lady, the late Marchioness of Waterford, now gone from the people she loved and ruled so well, and others have given the work and energy of their lives to the welfare of their dependents.

Another noble lady, personally known to us, of whom we may write, as she is dead, and has gone to her reward for a life of untiring benevolence, used to dispose her leisure so as to allow her, every Sunday, to see all her domestics (men as well as women) alone, to read with them that blessed book, which, in a life of lonely widowhood, was her own guide and comfort. A singular thing happened after one Sunday, when her remarks were on "How great a fire a little spark kindleth," pleading in her graceful and kindly way against the errors of the tongue. That same week, a spark lodged in the oaken flooring of the kitchen, smouldering unperceived, suddenly set light to the beams and panels of the old house and burnt till the beautiful place was levelled to the ground. But not in vain had the busy population of that home become loyal and attached to its mistress. They rushed into the flaming passages, and triumphantly brought out every family relic of value, so that nothing was destroyed but what could be replaced.

Starting up, in a remembrance of the above train of thought, comes a curious incident of a few days since, of a dame who was disturbed in her luxurious boudoir by an announcement that a lady wished to see her. An elderly lady, very plainly dressed appeared, who, when asked what she wanted, answered—

"A young woman has applied for a situation as kitchen-maid in my house, and referred me to you as her late mistress, and I wish to know all you can tell me about her."

"Oh," said the dame haughtily, "I know nothing whatever about my servants; you had better ask my housekeeper!"

"Perhaps you will allow me to see her; for I take great interest in my servants, and like to know about their families." The dame rung the bell, and told the servant to show "this person" to the housekeeper's room.

A little while after, while reflecting on the odd notions of some people, her housekeeper, with a grave face, begged to speak to her.

"Pray, ma'am, did you know who that lady was whom you sent down to my room?"

"Oh, that elderly person?"

"Yes, ma'am; it was the Duchess of X—"

The uneasy feelings which followed may be left to the imagination.

To return to our Lady Mayoress. As her wedding gift of remembrance to her dear old home, she directed that "a firm and steadfast road should be laid down with stones, at her sole cost, along the midst of Green-a-Moor, and fit for man and beast to travel on with their lawful occasions, from Lanstaphadon to the sea (it may be that which runs from Wike St. Marie over Wike Ford, and through Poundstock and little Winsum to Melhac Mouth).

"At another time, and for a New Year's gift, she gave the sum of forty marks towards the building of a tower for St. Stephen's church, above the causeway of Dunkevel, and it was her wish that they should carry their pinnacles so high that they might be seen from Iwannacote Cross, by the moor, to the intent that they who do behold it from the Burgage Mound may remember the poor mayde who is now a wedded dame of London Citie."

One cannot but remember that it was by this Cross, at eventide many years before,

that the London merchant first saw, at this trysting-place, the beautiful girl who was to play such an important part in his home. With increase of wealth came many a renewed token of loving remembrance to her old home and the parents who lived in it; nor did her pure and lofty nature swerve with her elevation or decrease the reverence she paid them. Not content with gifts for their comfort and well-being, she gave that honour to which a special commandment is devoted, and her long and honoured old age was an answer to the fulfilled duty and devotion of her life.

That life went on, still happily and prosperously. In 1486 John Percyvall became Sheriff of London, and in 1498 Lord Mayor, and was knighted by the King. Like his wife, he too was loyal to his birthplace, and amidst the many interests and duties of his position, remembered to endow Macclesfield (near which city he was born) with a free grammar school "because there were few school masters in that country, and the children, for lack of teaching, fell to idleness and consequently live dissolutely all their days."

The poor and the ignorant, the young and the old, seem to have been the unceasing care of Thomasine and her husband. They say a happy life has no history, that of Dame Thomasine Percyvall and her husband may be read in the records of their benefactions.

Thus, by a strange succession of events, the barefooted shepherdess of a Cornish moor had risen to be the Lady Mayoress of Metropolitan fame, and the legend of Thomasine Bonaventura (for it was now well known) became the popular theme of royal and noble interest among the lords and ladies of the Court.

With increase of wealth and power came also many a renewed token of affectionate regard and sterling bounty to her old beloved dwelling-place of Wike St. Marie.

Bacon says, "Great riches are like a heap of manure; on it, if the sun shines, it breeds corruption, but, spread over a wide field, it breeds fertility."

She wisely and beneficently dealt with the riches Heaven had trusted to her, and one of the MS. letters which remain is interesting enough to be quoted here at some length, as it shows so much of the sweet and generous nature power could not debase, nor wealth corrupt, and the honour and reverence the first lady in the greatest city in the world paid to her parents, the poor uneducated peasants of a Cornish village; besides that it is in itself an interesting picture of the manners and Court of Henry VII.

Some years after their marriage Sir John Percyvall and his lady were, as Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, bidden to attend the Court of the King, and writing to her mother, as her custom always was, she says in a letter which remains in MS.:

"Sweet mother, thy daughter hath seen the face of the King. We were bydden to a banquet at the royal palace, and Sir John and I could not choose but go. There was such a blaze of lords and ladies in silks and samite and jewels of gold, that it was like the citie of New Jerusalem in the Scriptures, and thy maid Thomasine was arrayed so fine that they brought up the saying that I was dressed like an altar. When we were led into the chamber of dais, where his Highness stood, the King did kiss me on the cheek as the manner is, and he seemed gentle and kind. But then did he turn to my good lord and husband, and say, with a look stark and stern enow, 'Ha, Sir John! See to it that thy fair

dame be liege and true, for she comes of the burly Cornish kind, and they be ever rebels in blood and bone. Even now they be one and all for that knave Warbeck, who is among them in the West.' You will guesse, dear mother, how my heart did beat. But withal, the King did drinke to me at the banquet, and did merrily call, 'Health to our Lady Mayoress, Dame Thomasine Percyvall, which now feedeth her flock in the rich pastures of our Cite of London!' And thereat they did laugh, and flect, and shout, and there was flashing of tankards and jingling of cups all down the Hall."

CHAPTER V.

THOMASINE DONAVENTURA, THE LADY MAYORESS OF LONDON.

"All worldly joys go lease
To the one joy of doing kindnesses."

Herbert.

HER history went on in serene prosperity, during twenty-five years of happy married life, in the love of her husband and the well-ordering of her home.

She had no children, but the poor, and the distant old home, became her care, and she ceaselessly provided for their needs and education.

In 1504 Sir John Percyvall died, leaving her—with the same love and trust she had elicited before, all his possessions. He seems to have been heart and soul in all her charities, and the parish records and those of the Merchant Tailors have many entries of the benefactions of both husband and wife. In the churchwardens' accounts for the parish of St. Mary Woolnoth in the City of London, the first entry which makes mention of Sir John Percyvall notes his having a chantry in that parish.

Another entry "Item received of the Master and Wardens of the Merchant Tailors, for the beme light of this church according to the devise of Dame Thomasine Percyvall widow, late wyf of Sir John Percyvall, Knight, deceased xxvjs. viiij."

And there are many others of the like kind, but we may not give space for them. Herbert in his histories of the Livery Companies of London, gives many particulars of the estates out of the proceeds of which the above funds (referring "to a number of other entries of charitable donations) were paid, the premises being situate in the parishes of St. Mary Woolnoth, St. Michael Cornhill, St. Martin Vintry, and St. Dionysius (or Denis) Backchurch in Fenchurch Street."

The charities left by this benevolent couple are also set forth at p. 502 of the same work.

And lastly the Stratton churchwardens' accounts for 1543 (the old text is 1513, but as Dame Thomasine Percyvall died in 1539 her death could not have been had "in mind" in that year.) The above accounts show that on the day on which my lady Percyvall's memory came round (i.e. the day on which her death was to be had in mind) prayer was to be made for the repose of her soul, and two shillings and two pence paid to two priests and for bread and ale.

There are however still to be seen in the remote and quiet village of Wike St. Marie, some five or six miles south of Bude, in the northern corner of Cornwall, the substantial remains of the good Thomasine's College and Chantry, which she founded for the instruction of the youth of her native place, and a school for the children of the poor.

The buildings are about a hundred yards east of the church (from the summit of whose grotesquely ornamented tower six and twenty parish churches may be discerned), and built into the modern wall of a cottage which

stands inside of the battlemented enclosure is a large carved granite stone (evidently one of two which formed the tympanum of a doorway) on which the letter T stands out in bold relief.

Probably it is the initial of the Christian name of our Thomasine, at any rate it is pleasant to think it may be such.

But alas! afterwards in the Parliament of the 4th of November, first of King Edward VI., 1550, all colleges, free chapels, chantries, fraternities and guilds throughout the kingdom, being dissolved and given to the King, this chantry and free school underwent with others the common downfall, and the revenues vested in the crown, from whence it passed to—now in possession thereof.

The traditions, however, concerning her are not only still numerous in the neighbourhood, but are as implicitly believed as if they were recorded in the history of England, and we have taken pains, due to our respect and reverence for her, to verify through old chronicles and parish registers the various facts of her life. In them we found the dates of events which read more like an improvised romance than a real history, and we have exactly transcribed them for the sake of those who care to know the simple facts of a beautiful legend of old times, and the real life of a very noble woman.

There are still many MS. letters of hers remaining, very interesting in the reverence and affection they express for her parents. They are so humbly worded that they seemed to us well worthy of record and remembrance in an age when deference and obedience to parents and elders is not a remarkable quality.

Like all noble natures, her spirit rose with her personal elevation—nor did her true and simple woman's nature change during the long years of her prosperity. It breathes and survives in every sentence of her family letters, and in her last will. It is touching to observe the dutiful loyalty with which she writes to her "Honoured Father," the old uneducated shepherd, and the "Sweet Mother," poor peasants sacred in her eyes, and addressed with the humility of a daughter though she was first of the proud city dames.

During her three marriages she had no children, and it was her singular lot to survive Sir John Percyvall, who died in 1504, for 'thirty-five years in a long, lonely widowhood.

But the promise of the commandment did not fail, and all that should accompany old age—

"As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,"

was hers to the end.

Carew says, "She employed the whole residue of her life and last widowhood to works no less bountiful than charitable; namely, repairing of highways, building of bridges, endowing of maidens, relieving of prisoners, feeding and apprelling the poor."

"Among the rest, at this St. Mary Wike, she founded a chantry and free school, with fair lodgings for the school-masters, scholars and officers, and added £20 of yearly income for supporting the incident charges, wherein, as the heart of her desire was holy, so God blessed the same, with the wished success, for divers of the best gentlemen's sons of Devon and Cornwall were there virtuously trained up."

It is said that after the death of Sir John Percyvall she retired from court and city to her old parish of St. Mary Wike, and carried on her life of unweariend well-doing there to the last. She died in the year 1539 in the eighty-ninth year of her age. Her will, dated the vigil of the feast of Christmas 1510, is a singular document, for therein the feelings and impulses of her early life are recalled and condensed.

"She bequeaths large sums of money to be

laid out and invested in land for the welfare of the village borough, whereto amid all the strange vicissitudes of her life, her heart had always clung with fond and lingering regret."

She directs that a chantry with cloisters shall be built near the church of Wike St. Marie, at the discretion and under the control of her executor and cousin John Dincham the unforgotten priest. She endows it "... and provides that there shall be established therein a schole for young children born in the parochie of Wike St. Marie, and such to be always preferred as are friendless and poore. They are to be taught to read with their fescue from a boke of horn, and also to write, and both as the manner was in that country when I was young."

The well-remembered days of her girlhood appear to tinge every line of her last will dated 1510. Her very codicil is softened with a touch of her first and fondest love, for therein she gives to the priest of the church, where she will know her cousin John would serve and sing, "The silver chalice gilt, which good Master Maskelyne had devised for her behoof with a little blue flower which they do call a forget-me-not wrought in turkiss (turquoise) at the bottom of the bowl, to the intent that whensoever it is used, the minister may remember her, who was once a simple shepherd-maid by the wayside of Wike St. Marie, and who was so wonderfully brought by many great changes to be Lady Mayoress of London citie before she died."

Changes? Yes, but there was no change in that heavenly spirit of humbleness and love which shone with such a glow through the veils of her earthly life. "The fierce light which beats upon" all earthly eminences only discovered the beauty of her spirit and the purity of her life. What a funeral that must have been in Wike St. Marie of the aged lady who had abandoned the great city where she had reigned as first lady once upon a time, with its grandeur, its security and its circle of friends for the poor hamlet on the moors!

We may remember that she left her native place a child of 13 years, and was more than 60 years old when she returned. Her parents must long since have been dead. The old associates of her girlhood (in all probability the Cousin John, for whose remembrance in the holiest hours of his life she had provided the little flower of loving thought so many years before) had passed away, only the descendants of her people can have remained, but they will have been fired with the zeal, which even now, after four centuries, still glows in the legends of her native place.

One can imagine the chanting procession of priests and acolytes, the waving censers and banners, and the high cross which passed along the bridge and the roads they owed to her care and love; but it is more difficult to realise the weeping train of mourning people who followed the dead hands which had only lived to bless; the dead feet which had never wearied in well-doing, and the stilled heart which had realised its greatness in sympathy with her Lord's love for the poor and wretched, and which, in its fervour of humility and charity may have found expression in the words of the old hymn: *

"The highest honours that the world can boast,

Are subjects far too low for my desire;
The brightest beams of glory are at most,

But dying sparkles of Thy living fire;
The proudest flames that earth can kindle be

But nightly glow-worms, if compared with Thee."

[THE END.]

* Francis Quarles.

"MY ROOM" COMPETITION—PRIZE WINNERS AND REPORT.

One Guinea Each.

Eileen, Langholme, Dumfriesshire. (*Please send full name and address.*)
 Mary Law, West Street, Hertford.
 Mary Fowell, Wellington Road, Oxton, Cheshire.
 "Sidney Keith," Wootton Court, Warwick.
 Lina Francati, St. Oswald's Road, West Brompton.

Half-a-Guinea Each.

Country Maiden. (*Please send full name and address.*)
 Emily Bennett Bewsey, Old Hall, Warrington, Bogmyrtle, Dumbartonshire.
 Bet, The Manse, Portcharlotte, Islay.
 Edith M. Watts, Buckland, Portsmouth.

Honourable Mention.

Irish Nan, Birmingham.
 Letitia F. May, Tremayne, Hants.
 Ella M. Tennant, Catford.
 Fair Flower, Bodlondet, Newtown, Montgomery.
 Lizzie Donald, Straith Cottage, Cluny, Aberdeen.
 Bess Evans, Park House, Newquay, Cardiganshire.

REPORT.

THE cheerful promptness with which the girl readers of the "G. O. P." have responded to the editor's invitation to describe their own special rooms has pleased him greatly.

It has, as he anticipated, given him an insight into their characters, capabilities and resources beyond that afforded by any former competition.

So attractive have been the majority of the descriptions that he earnestly wishes it were possible for him to accept some of the invitations so pressingly given to come and

see for himself the dainty sanctums, the bright kitchens, the studios and the living rooms of the many competitors, and to note all their clever contrivances to press beauty and comfort into rooms which otherwise would have been bare, empty and characterless.

Before presenting some of their cosy nests to his readers, the editor cannot resist expressing his great pleasure at the thoroughness of the appreciation of his editorial work expressed in almost every paper sent in; he is greatly encouraged by it to persevere in his endeavour to render the "G. O. P." a faithful friend, a comfort and teacher to every reader.

One of the competitors, speaking of the "G. O. P." says 'tis—

"Enjoyed in mansion, in cabin and cot,
 And read in every available spot."

The editor has reason to hope that this may be true, for the competitors are of every class and send in their papers from the remotest corners of the British Isles.

Out of the large numbers of papers sent in, only a few have been discarded without a second thought as being simple catalogues or inventories; the majority of the competitors understood that the editor wanted to judge of their characters by their surroundings and again to note the effect of their surroundings on their dispositions. They have done their work so well that it has enabled him to picture them in their quiet hours and has made the friendship between him and his readers still closer.

Some of the writers have invested every article in their rooms with interest; either it has been the gift of a friend or obtained by self-denial and economy, or made from instructions found at various times in the "G. O. P."—they have painted the rooms, stained the floors, made the rugs, upholstered couch and chairs, filled the windows with plants, till as

you look you see as in a looking-glass the reflex of the girl herself; her hand has been like that of a fairy, changing dirty old boxes into delicate book-cases, pretty ottomans and all sorts of dainty articles.

The editor has been interested to note that in a very large percentage of rooms described, whether in castle, mansion, farm or ordinary home, they have a few things in common; first, horseshoes over the doors for luck and to keep the witches out; second, a copy of the "Soul's Awakening" on the walls; third, Ruskin's works on the book-shelves, and lastly, a Persian cat before the fire.

In a few cases the tastes of certain girls are strongly marked; for example, one gives a minute description of every plant in her room in a most interesting manner, and having done this she concludes, "and the rest is merely furniture and photographs."

Another describes every book in her room and concludes, "I don't think there is anything else but furniture."

Another is a collector of swords, and her description of them is enthusiastic; all else in the room is as nothing compared to these.

In most of the papers, however, one recognises the effect of the daily surroundings upon the dispositions, how they rest the tired mind and body, how they quell the angry temper and encourage self-control, how they develop talent and foster industry.

The papers are all so really good that it has been difficult to make a selection. Three foreign papers have been sent in with this first set of papers, and will be considered with those yet to come in from abroad; one is from a Portuguese, a second from a German, and a third from a French lady.

The editor thanks the competitors for their good wishes and reciprocates them most heartily. He hopes to print the first five of the prize essays.

"MY ROOM" COMPETITION.

(ONE GUINEA.)

DEAR MR. EDITOR,*

I am afraid you will feel inclined to debar me from taking part in the competition when you discover I have no other room to write about than my mother's kitchen. Let me, however, say a word in my own defence. Our house certainly possesses "a but and a ben," and in the latter apartment are stored all our household gods as is customary with the working classes, leaving the kitchen somewhat bare and uninteresting by comparison; but then I seldom enter "the room," as we call it, except to do the usual dusting and sweeping, whereas my days are spent almost wholly in the kitchen doing housework and sewing. Clearly then, the kitchen must be my theme if I am to adhere to the rules of the competition.

There is in it such a curious medley of things ancient and modern, valuable and utterly devoid of value, that I hardly know where to begin. Then again, taken as a whole, it looks so homelike to me, for I have been surrounded by its old-fashioned furniture all my life, but I feel that the analysing of its contents is bound to do away, wholly or in part, with that impression, and so I shall have failed to do it justice. I shall try to do my best however.

* This essay is printed exactly as written, without correction or alteration of any kind.—Ed.

Our kitchen is one of the real old-fashioned sort with stone floor, recess for a bed and large open fireplace minus an oven. It has, however, got two important modern improvements, a high ceiling and a big window, so it is both light and airy. The floor is a sore point with me—it needs so much washing to keep it clean. After being thoroughly scrubbed, too, the hard flagstones of which it is composed are rubbed all over with a piece of rather soft sandstone and the borders are decorated with marvellous devices in the form of whorls and lines executed in white chalk. The hearth is treated in a slightly different manner for mother applies whitening and makes it all white. Both look very nice and have a clean wholesome appearance certainly, but in my inmost heart I have a leaning towards the waxcloth so many of our neighbours have adopted to lesson labour, and to deaden the musical clank of their wooden clogs. Mother and I made two big rugs of woollen remnants of all kinds cut in small oblongs and thrust through holes bored in coarse sacking and these are always laid down in the afternoons when the fireside is "redd up" and the kettle put on for tea.

Our walls until recently were destitute of paper—we used to whitewash (!) them annually with a wash of a pale pink tint instead—but the paper certainly gives a cosier appearance to the kitchen and even mother's conservatism is

broken through on that score. From the walls the next step is to the pictures, but how shall I describe them? for they are simply a collection of co-operative-store calendars. A new one makes its appearance at the beginning of each year and the oldest and most fly-marked one disappears for ever, and for a while one misses an old friend. Odd, isn't it? that a mere trifle like that should have rather a saddening effect on one, and should somehow have the power to set one a-thinking strange thoughts on the mysteries of life and death.

"What a motley collection!" you would feel tempted to exclaim if you could take a survey. There in one corner is a girl looking from her casement over the sea and singing, "Abide with me," while in close proximity is a representation of Lord Rosebery and Ladas. Here a crowd of grandees are hanging on Burns' words as he stands in their midst reciting, while right opposite Lord Nelson lies mortally wounded in the midst of his brave sailors. Another one seems very comical to those who know the joke. It represents seven geese slowly waddling past before the admiring eyes of a little child in its mother's arms, and its title among store-goers is "The Store Committee," the reason not being far to seek for the members of the unfortunate committee are seven in number as well as the geese. One or two neatly framed texts hang over the

mantelpiece, and my favourite. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths," is placed right above my sewing-machine.

Our kitchen is very full of furniture—in fact too full—but our house is so small that we have no other place for the superfluous articles. There is, of course, a bed in the recess covered summer and winter with the invariable patch-work quilt, and a valance of cretonne stretched along the top of the recess next the ceiling takes away its otherwise bare appearance. Father's armchair always stands in front of it, and likewise our little round table, folded perpendicular when not in use. The big kitchen table stands where all such tables usually stand, in front of the window, and is kept spotlessly white with soap and water. Like the table, the chairs are all of plain deal, but unlike it they are old and rickety and of antique shape, for they were my grandmother's and it may be, her mother's before her. Our clock is an heirloom too, of considerable value I understand, for it is one of those so much sought after for halls nowadays. It has a very handsome brass face, and notwithstanding its great antiquity it never thinks of playing pranks with old Father Time but can be thoroughly relied on, year in, year out.

The next piece of furniture I am about to describe, a chest of drawers, is not usually considered part of a kitchen's furniture, but, believe me, it is by no means uncommon to find either drawers or a clothes press in the kitchens of homes such as I am describing. Ours stands low and contains many curious little drawers (wb) and recesses whose contents speak of a bygone day, but alas! it has seen its best days and the veneer is chipping off

bit by bit. Piled up on the top is quite a miscellaneous assortment of literature, the religious section represented by mother's favourites, Boston's *Fourfold State*, James' *Anxious Enquirer*, Baxter's *Saint's Rest*, Spurgeon's Sermons and the like, and the secular by one or two of Scott's Novels, *The Pickwick Papers*, *Lorna Doone*, Longfellow's and Burns's Poems, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, a few bound volumes of *The Sunday at Home* and some pamphlets and treatises of a nondescript character. In front of the books stands a looking-glass with the usual elaborate arrangement of white netting round it, just as one would see it in dozens of similar homes, and alongside of it what one does not often see in such homes as ours, a number of priceless old china bowls and plates which are the admiration and envy of every visitor who is anything of a connoisseur in such matters.

Our little corner-cupboard fitted high up in the angle of the wall contains some more exquisite "bits" of old china, which mother treasures solely for the old associations that cling to them. The same corner lower down is occupied by my sewing-machine, the most modern thing in the room, and a "kist" or wooden trunk cushioned on the top to form a comfortable settee and decked round with red hangings.

The description will be complete, I think, when I add one or two characteristic details which I have omitted. First as regards the mantelpiece. At each end there is a quaint old tea-caddy and a handsome old brass candlestick. Two Italian irons ("tallies" we call them) which mother uses for "setting up" match borders, is the next item. A box of

matches, one or two cocoa tins, a pair of big foreign shells, and father's spectacle case, placed so as to be reached from his arm-chair, make up the sum total. Next I must speak of the ceiling which is furnished with half-a-dozen stout books, from which hang various articles, a basket, the brass jam-pan wrapped up in brown paper, and, most important of all, also wrapped in paper, a huge piece of ham or bacon which gradually wanes until it disappears and its place is taken by another piece of similar size. The window and its contents I have left to the last, though in its direction a stranger would first turn his eyes on entering our kitchen. My mother is always very successful with her flowers and has a pretty show at all seasons. Even in winter she has often a monthly rose out. Not only is the window-sill filled but one or two hang down from above and twine along a cord stretched across the window. To tell the truth the whole street is enthusiastic on the subject of flowers and there is quite an extensive exchange of slips and cuttings when the proper season comes round, and much friendly jealousy as to whose window looks bonniest. Such then is our kitchen, a very ordinary room with nothing very attractive about it except to its inmates, but to them "Be it ever so humble there's no place like home," and I must say I think with the poetess that

"There's nought to compare wi' ane's ain fireside."

"EILEEN."
Langholm
Dumfriesshire.

This has been written entirely without help or assistance of any kind.

"EILEEN."

"IF LOVING HEARTS WERE NEVER LONELY—";

OR,

MADGE HARCOURT'S DESOLATION.

By GERTRUDE PAGE.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.



MIST had gathered over Elsie's eyes as she sat silently listening, while Madge told of all that was in her heart, and when she finished, she clasped her hands in silent prayer for strength to help this young struggling heart.

Getting up from her low chair, she knelt down beside Madge, and taking her hands in hers, kissed her white face.

"I am so sorry for you, dear," she murmured, "I can't tell you how sorry, nor how much I long to help you. I know so well what you have gone through and how sometimes it has seemed to crush the very life out of you."

"I think you have helped me already,"

said Madge, in a low voice. "You are so good not to be horrified at me. I felt sure that you would not judge me harshly."

"God forbid that I should judge you at all," she answered fervently. "What are we, the very best of us, that we can judge a fellow-creature. No one can judge except God, because no one else knows the strength of the temptation. And oh, Mrs Fawcett! He is so good and so loving, a God of Infinite compassion. Men's hearts are so hemmed in and weighed down, with ceremonies and vain reasoning, that they cannot grasp the meaning of Infinite Love, and yet it is so simple. They confuse their minds with endless controversies, and get all mixed up because they have not first grasped the meaning of Father and child. They think this thing and that thing is necessary to salvation, but often the poor uneducated man, who has learnt to look up and say 'Father' is nearer the Kingdom of Heaven than they. I wish I were clever and eloquent that I could help you. I know so well what I believe, but it is hard to explain and convince. I don't think either that anyone can be convinced by mere words, they must feel things for themselves."

She paused, gently stroking Madge's hand and looking away from her into the night.

Her eyes shone with a steady light of love and worship, one could almost fancy a halo round her sweet pale face.

Madge gazed at her with hungry yearning to know of the content and rest that evidently filled her heart as she said, "Please go on talking to me, I don't want you to reason, I will not interrupt you; only go on talking and let me listen."

Elsie fixed her eyes on the now star-lit heavens and continued in a low soft voice. "Mrs. Fawcett, if you had a little child that you loved very dearly, and it climbed on to your knee and asked you certain questions that you knew it was better for your child not to know, what would you say to it? Suppose your little one wanted to know why you did various things that it could not understand? Suppose it asked reasons and explanations for your treatment towards it and its brothers and sisters?"

"Don't you think you would gently tell the child that it must not ask those questions; that if you answered them its little mind would only be bewildered; that it was not old enough to understand these things yet? You would say

that when the right time came you would explain everything, but that now it must trust you to know best?

"And, Mrs. Fawcett, are not we children in understanding, compared with God's infinite wisdom and knowledge? Surely He who made and knows all things knows how much it is good for us to know, and how much we are best capable of understanding.

"Believe me, He has told us all that is necessary, bidding us trust Him a little while; for the rest, He tells us that when it is good for us to know more, He will tell us more. That one day all things shall be proclaimed upon the house-top, all doubts dispersed, all dark enigmas solved, and all His dealings with us justified. We shall know why everything was right then."

She paused awhile, then continued gently.

"I am not going to reason with you, dear, for I can see it is overmuch reasoning that has already engulfed you.

"I want you to come away, for a time, from all questionings whatever, and try to stand alone with God. Just you and your Maker uninfluenced by anything else whatever. Try to believe that He made you and therefore loves you—that He is perfect and would have you perfect—that He, Himself, planted that yearning in your heart that you might not be so satisfied here as to have no desire beyond—that He too caused you to doubt and question that you might give Him a reasonable thoughtful ser-

vice, instead of a blind, indifferent one. Lastly, that He taught you to love, and that that same love is the most God-like attribute you possess; the very best part of you; and yet but a shadow of His Infinite Love.

"The Bible itself says, 'Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man,' and again that the chief of these commandments, is to love God, and the next which is like unto it is to love your neighbour as yourself. Try to grasp this absolutely before you venture any further, it will teach you the greatest lesson of all—annihilation of self. When you have learnt that you will easily find room for your Heavenly Father in your heart, and all the rest will follow in the most natural way."

"How shall I begin?" she asked, in low tones.

"Give up reasoning and thinking so much, relying on the Godhead, believing by the grace of the Holy Spirit that Christ our Saviour made you the Father's own well-beloved child; and then you will love others more and live more in their life. You will look about for someone to make happy and weary yourself in their service; believe me your work will be its own reward."

"But what of the next life?" she urged. "I can't forget it, for it touches me so nearly because of Jack, and mother. Tell me, is it well with them?"

"It is well," was the firm, quiet answer. "You need have no misgivings whatever, and when you have learnt to

call God, Father, you will never have, for you will trust Him all in all."

"Thou wast the source of all that love, Which makes me glad no more; And Thou hast taken to Thyself, What was Thine own before; Thine, and mine too, O Good to give, O Faithful to restore!"

Just then the clock struck six and Elsie started.

"I have been here three hours," she said; "I had quite forgotten the time. Mother will be wanting me, I must go at once."

"I am afraid I have detained you," said Madge anxiously.

"Indeed no, I have greatly enjoyed our long talk. I hope your husband will be in soon; you will be dull alone. Will you come down with me until he returns?"

At the mention of her husband a strange expression flitted across Madge's face, but she only said, "Thank you, I don't think he will be late, and I don't mind being alone."

"Shall I see you to-morrow?" asked Elsie.

"I am afraid you will get tired of me if you see me too often," replied Madge, with a soft little smile, that made her face strangely beautiful.

"Indeed I shall not," was the warm reply. "I shall come at ten o'clock to take you for a walk; mind you are ready," and with a bright smile she hurried away.

(To be continued.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

STUDY AND STUDIO.

APPLE BLOSSOM.—The sentiment of your verses is good, but they are not worthy of publication. Occasionally the metre halts; for instance:—

"Turn my steps from the path so wide."

We also do not quite understand the expression, "I was far off but thou wert near." Of course your meaning is plain, but you will see that the metaphor is an impossible one. You may certainly send us your short story for criticism. We should prefer it written on one side of the paper, but whether in an exercise book or on foolscap matters little. Always write your name at the foot of each production. We suppose "Our Teacher" is yours, but cannot be sure among our multitude of MSS. Many thanks for your pleasant letter.

MARGARET.—1. We must not criticise your story too severely as you are only twelve years old, and it is your first attempt. Such wonderful prophetic dreams as you describe, with their fulfilment, do not occur in ordinary life. Genius, dear child, is very rare, and you need not be disappointed to hear that you do not possess it.—2. We think your abilities must be good enough to repay a sound education, and we advise you to give your time to study, as far as you can, only writing stories for amusement. You need, as yet, to learn to write and to spell correctly, but you will quickly improve if you persevere.

PHILLIS (sic).—Your verses on "Christmas" vary too much in metre. You begin in lines of eight and seven syllables alternately, but soon the "7s" line becomes "8s." There is no such adjective as "choicely," and miles cannot be said to "roll" unless they are measured on the ocean. Your description of Christmas, although pleasant, has nothing fresh about it. You need not feel ashamed when we say you could not hope to earn by your verses, as it is by no means an easy thing to turn poems into money.

LUX.—The thoughts of your verses are good, and you appear to understand and to obey for the most part, the rules of metre, the chief exceptions being here and there in "Beautiful Night." We do not, however, think that you could make any use of the poems, as religious compositions expressing the same familiar thoughts are very plentiful.

ALPHA BETA.—We have received your kind note and thank you for sending it. We also wish to express our sympathy with you in your suffering, and our hope that your invalid life may yet be brightened by the knowledge of good and successful literary work.

TRINIDAD HELIOTROPE.—We are glad to have your letter from a distant port, and to know that you are able at length to gratify your wish in taking our magazine. May it bring you as much help and pleasure as we should like to send you! We do not think that you were wasting time when you wrote the poems you enclose, so long, of course, as you were not neglecting any duty in doing so. We were much interested in "The Months," with the new and strange description of what characterises each in Trinidad. "Ariel's Farewell to Naxos" is the best poem of the three, but occasionally your metre halts. This verse is correct:—

"Softly the whispering wind of eve did woo
The fields of golden grain,
And gently stirred the vines that, ripening fast,
Purpled the smiling plain."

But your ear will tell you that your first line—

"Two were standing 'neath fair Syrian skies"
is not of the same cadence as the first line of the verse we quote. Dr. Angus' *Handbook of the English Tongue* will give you the rules of punctuation as well as of prosody. You can obtain it by writing to the Religious Tract Society, 56, Paternoster Row, London. Careful observation will also teach you a great deal.

ONE BY ONE.—1. Your handwriting is very good, well formed, readable, and we should think, characteristic. Your letter would look better if you kept a uniform space between the lines.—2. "A Sketch by Moonlight" is not rubbish at all. You evidently have some power of description. You should try to write with a little more self-restraint, not "letting yourself go" all the time, but only occasionally; then the effect would be enhanced.

FLOWERINE.—We are afraid you have not much ear for correct versification, as both the poems you send us are very defective in form. Every poem should have some metre in which it is written; that is to say, the lines should be of certain lengths and cadences. We refer you to our last answer.

MERMAID.—There are a great many ways of publishing, which vary according to the reputation and capacity of the author. Sometimes an author sells his work outright to a publisher, receiving a certain sum for the "copyright," as it is called. Then the publisher can issue the work as he chooses, and if he first issues it in a magazine, can republish it in book-form. Sometimes the author sells his MS. to the publisher of a magazine "for use only," retaining the right to publish on his own account in book-form later on. Sometimes again the publisher pays a sum down for a MS., and agrees to also pay a "royalty" on copies sold after a certain total has been reached. These three ways are, we must add, chiefly for the successful in literature. It is sometimes the case that an author pays all the cost of the publication of his book, hoping to be recouped by the sale; or he may divide such cost with the publisher. All depends on the (presumed) worth of the book. We cannot give you any idea of the probable cost in your case, as we do not know details, but for a work of any size, £40 or £50 would not go far. Your best plan will be to communicate with the publishers of similar works to your own, setting forth your aim, and asking whether they would be disposed to enter into negotiation with you, but if you are quite unknown, we fear you could hardly hope to make money by the venture.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE.

Two little French boys of thirteen, André Bossy and André Pallé, pupils of the Lycée at Rochefort, Charente-Inférieure, France, would like to correspond with English boys of the same age. They would write in English, their correspondents would write in French, and they would correct each other's mistakes. Will any English brothers of "our girls" volunteer?

OUR OPEN LETTER BOX.

Miss S. Hill, Abberwick, Alnwick, Northumberland, kindly sends us the information for E. A. T., and offers to post her a copy of the words of the hymn,

"Onward through life thy children stray
Groping at noon their silent way,"
on receipt of name and address.

OUR NEW ESSAY COMPETITION.

STORIES IN MINIATURE.

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

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

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

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

Examiners:—

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

NOW READY.

No. 5.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

MONTHLY SUPPLEMENT TO THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER.



AMY'S DELIVERANCE

A Tale for Girls.

BY

MRS. JEROME MERCIER,

AUTHOR OF

"ARUM FIELD," "ONLY A GIRL'S LIFE," etc.

* * *

LONDON:

"GIRL'S OWN PAPER" OFFICE,

55, PATERNOSTER ROW.

Will any one kindly direct "Jasmine" to the recitations, "The Obstructive Hat in the Pit," and "Mr. Brown's Trials"?

Mr. William Wardrop (Linthgow) says that the music of the song,

"Bonnie Charlie's now awa"

(see Part 216) is not by Finlay Dunn, but (probably) by Neil Gow, junior, a son of a famous violinist of that name. "Southern musical people," he says, "should be interested to note the absence of the fourth of the scale from the air."

MEDICAL.

MISERABLE.—Two kinds of hairs grow upon moles; one is a fine silky down, the other consisting of a few very long coarse hairs. The fine silky hairs are not very common, and as they are inconspicuous rarely require any treatment. If they are black or dark brown they may be bleached with peroxide of hydrogen, but no other treatment is possible. The larger hairs are usually very few in number, and are very noticeable. Personally, we think the best thing to do for them is to keep them cut short. Removal with tweezers may be practised, but this is not advisable as it irritates the mole. Electrolysis is occasionally practised, but it is very expensive, and notwithstanding that one hears that "it never fails," in our experience it does fail, decidedly. If you have a really disfiguring mole on your face, removal is much the best treatment. They are easily removed by operation, leaving a minute linear scar at the place of the incision.

GOOGLES.—Do incorrect spectacles do any harm? We can scarcely understand any sensible person asking such a question. We know that many people, when their sight begins to fail, go to an optician—these men usually style themselves "oculists" (which they very seldom are)—ask for a pair of spectacles, choose a pair with the prettiest frame, wear them once or twice, and then useless (because in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred they are not of the right kind), then give up wearing them, and abuse the medical profession because it can do nothing to relieve the long-sightedness of advancing years. Never wear spectacles that are not of the right kind. Go to an oculist (we have to call him an ophthalmologist now that men who sell lenses have usurped his rightful title), or if you cannot afford his fees, go to a first rate optician who can test your eyes and give you suitable glasses.

AMELIA.—Most decidedly, decayed teeth can cause neuralgia; in fact, they are the commonest cause of neuralgia. You tell us that you are "tortured" with facial neuralgia, and that no treatment has been of any avail; but when you say that you have "four decayed tooth-stumps in my upper jaw" it seems to us that the first sentence, "no treatment is of any avail," is rather hasty. The first measure in facial neuralgia is to remove any decayed teeth from the jaws. Usually this alone, with a brief course of medical treatment is sufficient to cure the neuralgia. If it is not, one must seek for other causes and other measures to cure or to relieve.

A CONSTANT READER.—Habitually wearing a false fringe does, in time, affect the natural hair beneath. This is the rule, but there are frequent exceptions. As a false fringe is usually worn because the natural fringe is either insignificant or has partly combed out, it is not at all unlikely the condition which necessitated the use of the artificial hair in the beginning will continue to get worse until the forehead is quite bald. In this case it is not the fringe which causes the baldness. When wigs were in fashion baldness was exceedingly common.

MISCELLANEOUS.

GEORGE.—The origin of the descriptive name given to the Duke of Wellington, i.e., "the Iron Duke," although very suitable in consideration of his insublime will, owes its origin to quite a different source. A passenger steamship placed on the line between Liverpool and Dublin, many years ago, was called the *Duke of Wellington*, and being one of the new iron boats, it was popularly known as "the Iron Duke." From this circumstance the great general was himself distinguished by this sobriquet. In reply to your second query, as to the so-called "Hermit of Grub Street," he was a man of fortune, but secluded himself from all society, and lived in three rooms, communicating only with the other study, bed-room, and kitchen and eating-room. When the service of the apartment had to be performed in one room he retreated to another, never, with a very rare exception or two, seeing anyone. There he occupied himself in religious devotions, and works of charity, during a period of forty-four years; and when he died his hair was of a great length. An attempt to shoot him by a younger brother was the cause of his retirement from all society.

E. M. A.—When one visiting card is intended to serve the purpose of two a portion of the card may be turned down or folded, to indicate that it is meant for two persons; for example, a mother and daughter, or two sisters. On the Continent it signifies that the owner called in person, and that no relative or friend had left it with her own.

SCOTIA.—It is impossible to pronounce definitely on the very smallest amount on which a girl could dress. We have known girls who spent only £8, and others who made £10 answer. Of course, they made their own dresses and underlinen.—2. It would depend on the style of evening dress you needed; and there are so many cheap and pretty materials that we think you should manage for only £12 per annum.—3. "Will You No Come Back Again," is an old Jacobite song which is found in several collections of Scottish songs. It is in one called *Lyrical Gems of Scotland*, published by Cameron, Glasgow. To be a pleasant companion and talker you need what the poet calls—

"A heart at leisure from itself."

You must be free from self-consciousness and able to think of others.

B. C.—The duties of an under-lady's-maid are to do what her senior orders, and learn as much as she can from her; but to begin with, she must be a good needle-woman, and able to brush hair, quick and clever at messages and errands, and able to fold and pack. Ladies'-maids do not wear caps and aprons. A good deal of useful training is needed to make a lady's-maid; and a pleasant but respectful manner, and kind heart, are very necessary.

OSWALD.—It is quite true that trees and plants do us service in absorbing injurious elements in the atmosphere; especially from marshy ground, or refuse heaps and drainage, etc. When there are no leaves on such trees and plants we cannot tell you "what becomes of these injurious elements," excepting that we inhale more of them than otherwise. However, hard frosts are likely to destroy many noxious microbes, and "God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." One thing we do know, that all can obtain His help and protection in time of temptation, "a very ready help," and that for all sin He accepted an infinite Atonement, free to all who accept of it. You must not forget that man is not an automaton. He has the gift of free will. He is not a slave. Thus he is responsible. But his purification and his salvation are assured to him if he ask for them, with an earnest effort to serve his Creator. For how long a period is he to try, and to fight the fight of faith," with the powers of evil, none but the All-wise and All-merciful can know. You try to assume the place of the Judge instead of the delinquent; and of the supreme Creator instead of the creature. Man owes Him all he possesses of good here and can hope for in the future. Write again if you like.

SEA-BREEZE.—We never heard of any sinister attribute attached to pearls; and according to the ancient theories respecting the properties attached to precious stones, bringing, as was imagined, good or bad luck to the wearers, opals were not regarded with disfavour, but quite the contrary. The superstition is a modern one. Amongst the semi-precious stones the onyx is of evil repute, excepting when worn with a sardonyx, and malachite is also credited with being of evil influence; but no other stone.

NEVA.—Never send up your card by the servant when making a call. Pronounce your name distinctly that it may be correctly written on your entering the reception room. The degree of intimacy must decide the question of leaving cards after a reception. It is always better bred to go in, rather than leave a card. On going out, lay a card of your husband's on the hall table. If you went in and paid your visit you need not have left a card on the hall table.

AMANDA.—Blonde net lace is produced at Caen, Bayeux and Chantilly, as well as at Barcelona and Catalonia. Those made at the latter place (Chantilly) are unsurpassed in beauty and delicacy. It was first made there in 1740. The old white and black, made of floss silk, and with flowers of large size, cost 20 guineas a yard. Whether the old Spanish would fetch such a price at present, or even that of Chantilly, seems doubtful. Take it to Hayward's, Oxford Street, for an opinion and possible sale.

F. SMITH.—It is unfortunate that you have not the means to pay for a training in a foreign missionary field, as you would throw all the burden of the expense entailed on the society. But you might apply to the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, 9, Salisbury Square, Fleet Street, London, E.C.; or to the Deaconess's Training Institution, 41, Ferntower Road, Midway Park, N. Your age, health, and temper, and intelligence, must be taken into consideration. Foreign languages and dialects have to be learnt, and you should be strong and active, and able to endure hardships and trying climates.

WINSTON.—Income Tax is deducted from all securities. It can be reclaimed from the Inland Revenue Department, at Somerset House, on sending guarantees to prove that the tax has been paid. A printed paper is supplied which must be filled up, stating the sources from which your income is derived, and the several amounts and rates of interest obtained. An income of only £130 per annum is not liable to any tax.

MARY HILL.—There is no such society. In a parish unconnected with any other place, such might be found; but only to benefit their own fellow parishioners.