

I shall wish those to be kept freshly supplied just the same."

Later on she was in the room alone, and standing before me, she said under her breath, thinking aloud, more than speaking, "I suppose it is because you have shown me only the better way so far, and the result is not so terrible as I fancied it might be—anyway I seem to like you, old glass."

She smiled half comically at herself as she spoke, and again I could not but reflect a face changed somehow since the day we had first met in Messrs. Beech's warehouse.

It puzzled me then. I was new to the world. Since that time I have learned much of what are called secrets of the toilet, but

which can be scarcely secrets to any who have eyes to see and intelligence to comprehend.

I was glad my mistress approved of my reflections. I did not mind being called "old," perhaps it really was a term of endearment with Adelaide.

The ladies departed the next morning on a visit to a friend, residing some ten miles off, so I understood. And then ensued a period of very perfect calm and restfulness, I may say laziness, on my part, so very few reflections was I called upon to make, beyond the image of my little Winnie, when she renewed each day the fragrant posies in my china cups, and carefully as ever removed each speck of dust from my polished surface.

The days passed on in unbroken quiet, the morning air breathed sweetness through the open windows, and when the sun came round later on to my side of the house, his beams played hide and seek among the trellised leaves, and cast chequered shadows on the floor, while the soft rustle of the trees and the song of the birds outside chimed in with the click of Winnie's thimble, as her busy needle was plied industriously within.

It was a peaceful time. I mark it the more in my reflections contrasted with the commotion, the tears, the regrets, and misery which followed it so closely.

(To be continued.)

## SOME HINTS ON GIVING PRESENTS.



Most persons in the world are fond of presents; fond of giving them, fond of receiving them. To many the former is even more delightful than the latter, or rather would be if (and "ifs" will enter into and spoil so many

things in this life) the purse were but heavy enough, and had not too many demands upon it for other things, more prosaic and less attractive. Yet this latter consideration applies perhaps to the majority among us, and turns what should be the pleasantest task into one of anxious care and perplexity. Relations and friends give us presents, we must return them; birthdays are for ever coming round; weddings are always happening; the drain on our pocket grows with the years, till 'tis no wonder if we sometimes sigh over the expense and trouble of "giving presents," for who has not felt the difficulty of combining suitability, goodness and prettiness, with cheapness?

The following hints are only mere ideas or suggestions on this subject, yet perhaps they may not be without use. Certain it is that there is much money spent on presents that give little or no pleasure, sometimes even the reverse, to those who receive them. Failing thus of its object, the money may be said to be wasted. This ought not to be. A little care, a little thought beforehand, would prevent many a failure, would secure the pleasure we wish to give, as well as gratitude to ourselves.

If we cannot afford to give a present, it is absolutely wrong to do so. One must be firm and strict with oneself in this. The plea that one has been given us, that one is expected from us, that we must give one, will not hold. There is no "must" about it. To give a relative or friend a present and owe money at the same time, or so hamper ourselves that we have to borrow from some other relative or friend, is little short of robbery. Yet one has heard of such things. Nor should we sacrifice more important matters in order to spend money on presents. Our almsgiving should never suffer, nor should our savings for illness or old age. Kindness is no excuse for so doing. What if the kindness or generosity be but pride or the wish to appear grand? It is often hard not to give, especially if we have

ready money in hand; but if we do right, our inclinations must be fought against, however hard the struggle.

We ought to know, roughly at all events, how much money we can spare from our income for presents. With due regard to other items, we should every year determine and decide, each one, what the amount should be. We know within a little to how many we shall have to give presents. Having fixed the amount, we should divide it, on paper or mentally, between those to whom we shall give it. Not equally divide it, oh no! Some have far more claim on us than others, parents especially. What a world of bother and worry would be saved if we all did this; how very much best we should find it! As regards expense we should be free all the year from any more thought about the subject. We should know the amount we should have to spend on each person, and so would be saved all doubts when we came to buy, whether or no we could afford this or that, whereas if left to chance in the ordinary way, with only the present state of our resources to guide us, is it any wonder if we make mistakes? Another very important advantage is this:—many do not begin to think of what to buy until a very short time beforehand. They thus have little time or opportunity of seeing or comparing suitable articles, and, buying in haste, make an unwise choice. Those who have settled the amount at the beginning of the year have plenty of time to look about them, and being able to buy as long beforehand as they choose, are almost sure to make a better choice.

To those to whom money is an object, would it not be better to give less often? Would not a good article, that would always be useful, given once in two or more years, be better than to give every year or oftener some small present, which a short time after the receiver cannot remember, without thought, what it was she had received? Again, it would be worth while deciding if it would not be better to give to fewer friends, so as to give the few far more useful and better presents. We cannot possibly give to all we know. If we try to do so, the presents would be of little use in themselves, while by spending the same amount on fewer friends the money is certainly spent to better advantage. We should give pleasure to fewer, some say. It may be so, yet we think the greater pleasure and greater usefulness of the articles to the few, more than balance the small amount of pleasure to the many. This applies only to yearly and regular presents, as unexpected presents, little remembrances of visits to the seaside, etc., show a kindly thought, and perchance give more pleasure than that which is looked for.

It is a trite remark that the most costly presents are not those most appreciated, yet it may console those who have little to give. Common sense, the power of thinking, will enable us to give a present that no money without these could buy. We should always try to give what a person wants, what is suitable for them. How often are wedding presents given utterly unsuited to the position in life of the newly married pair. Many in giving presents buy what they like, instead of what their friend likes. We should not judge others by ourselves. Different persons have different tastes and likings. Let us study them if we would give pleasure, which is what most of us want to do, not pleasure to ourselves, but pleasure to them. This is why girls often fail in giving their brothers presents. They cannot understand their (to them) peculiar tastes. It requires a struggle to an ordinary girl to buy her young brother a cage of white mice, instead of a necktie or worked slippers. Yet the former would often give far more pleasure than the latter, and the sister should be thankful it is so, and encourage rather than check the tendency. Many persons have a hobby (would that we all had!); when this is the case anything connected with it will always give pleasure. We can generally find out something they have set their hearts on, if we watch. Why should one scruple to buy what is not often given as a present? Books on any particular hobby would always be acceptable, though perhaps they might be as dry as dust to the buyer. Birds and other animals are not so often given as presents as those who are fond of them could wish. Fretwork, carving, and especially ordinary carpenter's tools (as a good saw or plane) are the best possible presents to a handy youth. They are what every male person should possess, and know how to handle. They might be useful a lifetime, and would save many a shilling. Articles connected with chemistry, and other scientific pursuits, form good presents to those whose tastes run that way. In every case the principle is the same—not to buy what we like, or what we think they ought to like, but what they do like.

Articles of clothing, useful or ornamental, are much in favour as presents. For ourselves, we should not care either to receive or buy them as such. It is a matter of individual taste. A present is best that is always of use, that always recalls the kindness of the person who bought it. Articles that are worn are soon used up and cast aside, and to our thinking it is best for each to buy her own clothing. This applies only between equals, and even here there may be exceptions.

In buying presents, due consideration should be given to the use a present will be



to the owner. Such things as work-cases, writing-desks, inkstands, are always a good investment. They cost little and are useful a lifetime. Anything that helps to make a home more pleasant is money well spent. Screens, pictures, lamps, vases, small tables even, decorative needlework of all kinds—there is no stint of choice. With regard to pictures, good oleographs hardly distinguishable from oil-paintings, good plate engravings, cabinet portraits, photographic views of native scenery, texts for bed-rooms, etc., can be bought cheaply, and if simply and neatly framed would add much to a room's appearance. Growing flowers, for which the taste has grown so rapidly of late years, would give daily pleasure and brighten many a home, such as a lovely maidenhair fern, or handsome indiarubber plant, or even a few hardy scarlet geraniums. The money spent in towns on buying cut flowers to give to others would be better spent on growing ones; the former give but a few days' pleasure, the latter please for weeks and months.

Books present an enormous choice to the buyer of presents. Much judgment is needed in choosing, and one ought if possible to have first read the book oneself. It is useless to give a Tennyson to one who has no taste for poetry, and so in many cases. But by means of books we may have a higher object than mere giving pleasure to the recipients. A well selected book, given by some near one, may prove a turning point in life. It may say to them what we cannot say, may advise where we cannot, and the voice will be as our own. There are many shops that sell new books at threepence in the shilling discount, by going to which a dearer book may be bought than we could otherwise afford. It is a good plan to send for the catalogues of the societies and large publishers, so as to have a wide choice, and see the price of different books, instead of choosing from the few we can see when we buy. Magazines are certainly the cheapest books, and are presents much appreciated. Standard works can now be bought at almost every price. The sixpenny reprints (sold at some shops at fourpence-halfpenny) are marvels of their kind, and there is now a large choice, which grows monthly. Two or more of these bound together, such as "Tom Brown's Schooldays," White's "History of Selborne," Rev. J. G. Wood's "Strange Dwellings," would form a valuable present for a boy, at a far cheaper rate than formerly. The last two would be equally suitable for a girl, as would also the "Voyage of the Sunbeam," and the reprints published by the Religious Tract Society, which are cheaper still.

Most of our readers visit bazaars, more or less often. Those with little money to spend buy a useless pincushion or some such trifle, which is dropped in a drawer on reaching home and there remains. They would like to buy more, but cannot afford to. Yet we think it a good suggestion, we once heard, to buy articles at bazaars for presents. But, things are always so dear at bazaars, it is said. Yes, but the money we spend does not all go on the present; that is worth so much, the rest goes to the cause for which the bazaar is held. We know how much we have wherewith to buy this present; we can tell about how much the article is worth. The first we reckon out of the money set aside for presents, the other from the money set apart for God; thus many could help a good cause more than they otherwise would, as they might not think of buying the article for themselves. Having the money to be given on presents determined on beforehand, it matters not when the present be bought. The late tendency to price bazaar articles at their true value should make this suggestion the more often acted on.

Among very near relations, who live together, and know quite well as their birthday comes round that they will receive presents from sisters or brothers, is it not the best plan to ask them what they would like? They would often doubtless prefer it, and they would then be certain to get what they cared for. "It is so much nicer to give what they do not expect," some answer. Nicer for the giver, maybe, but the recipients may perhaps wish very much they had been consulted, for so-and-so which they have long wished for would have cost less, and given them greater pleasure.

To give presents our own hands have made should make them doubly valuable. To those with plenty of money a bought present may be no proof of love, but this will seldom be said of one who has given time and labour to make one. It gives an individuality to a present, one cannot buy its counterpart in a shop, the present is doubly hers who made it, and the recipient will ever see the giver in the gift. By this means, too, we may give very valuable presents at comparatively small cost, or turn a cheap present into a valuable one, by our skill. THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER has given numerous helps on this subject, which supplemented by busy brains and careful fingers might do wonders. Blotting and music cases, painted or crewel worked, screens, brackets, terra-cotta, tapestry painting—all offer a wide choice. Let us see, however, that the work be of our very best, for it is better by far to buy something finished outright at a shop, than give second-rate workmanship.

As in other matters, so in giving presents; whatever is worth doing is worth doing well. Let us in future bestow more care and thought on the subject, both on deciding on the gift, and also in choosing it, and the increased pleasure we give, and the gratitude our gifts will excite, will amply repay us. W. L.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### EDUCATIONAL.

DEWDROP.—You had better apply direct for printed terms and all other information to the Kindergarten College and Practising School (under the auspices of the British and Foreign School Society), 21, Stockwell-road, S.W. There are ten of these schools in town, and five in the provinces. You may also obtain general information respecting the training and the work from Mrs. Berry, hon. sec. of the Froebel Society, 27, Upper Bedford-place, W.C. Your hand is quite spoilt by writing with a very bad pen.

THE DUCHESS.—Provide your pupil with some nice child's story-book, with good print; and make her read without dividing the syllables. Read certain chapters to her of the New Testament, the Gospels especially, and talk to her about our Saviour, encouraging her to ask questions, that you may teach her what she does not know.

### MUSIC.

JESSIE R.—We do not imagine that changing the part you take in singing would injure your voice, unless it were a very weak one and of small compass. But, not being acquainted with its strength or quality, nor with the amount of fatigue which it is expected to sustain, we could not give an absolute opinion. Your handwriting is legible and fairly good.

NOEL.—1. There is nothing unladylike in playing the violin in public, any more than in playing the piano or the violoncello. 2. See page 172, vol. ii. The black spots of which you complain are the result of the obstruction of the pores with dirt and perspiration combined. Clean them out and keep them clean.

MAYFLOWER.—We do not give names, prices, nor addresses in reply to inquiries; but we give recommendations of new music occasionally. See edge for counterpane (knitted), page 205, vol. iii.; also "Knitted Leaf Edging," page 461, vol. ii.

KATIE.—Your general health needs attention; any weakness may affect the voice. Local applications, apart from such a measure, would be of little service. The tone and the power of the voice on certain notes determine the kind of voice, whether a contralto or not.

BRYDE.—It is far less painful to the fingers to play the harp than the guitar, for the simple reason that most of the notes have to be made by pressure on the frets; and if played as it is capable of being played, not as a mere accompaniment to the voice, the sliding of the fingers up and down these frets, with a pressure sufficient to produce good clear notes, is very painful, and the fingers become very sore until more or less horny.

A TROUBLED ONE.—If you cannot play the piano agreeably, so as to afford pleasure to your parents and friends, after having devoted "four hours a day" to practising "for the last four years," your case is certainly a peculiar one. An hour a day is surely sufficient time to devote to a mere amusement of any kind, especially one of a noisy character, likely to disturb your neighbours, unless you propose to make it your profession, and a means of making a livelihood. Your finger-joints might perhaps be rendered less stiff by anointing them with oil or vaseline, rubbing well, and sleeping in gloves after being thus greased. But you may be rheumatic, and this would explain your difficulty. Give one hour still to music, and one or two to some other agreeable and, above all, profitable accomplishment. At sixteen you have still much to learn—housekeeping, cookery, nursing, and needlework of all kinds, valuable arts not taught at school as they should be.

EDITH DOMBERG.—We could not tell you the price of any musical instrument, nor of lessons, as they all vary so much in expense. But we think you ought to take lessons at first, that you may not form any bad habits, which are difficult of cure; and that you may also learn methods of producing a variety of effects, which you could not know how to produce untaught. Violins vary in price from a few shillings to hundreds of pounds. We are very glad to hear that our articles on "Crystoleum Painting" have enabled you to practise the art.

### WORK.

LANCELOT.—Having given patterns for a baby's shoe or boot, both in crochet and knitting, it may be some little time before we give any more. See page 489, vol. i., for a knitted boot; 207, vol. i., for a crochet one; 149 and 150, vol. i., for a crochet boot-gaiter; 516, vol. ii., for a child's crochet gaiter. For a child's knitted sock, 158, vol. ii. Two patterns of a baby's knitted shoe, 159, vol. ii., and for a baby's knitted sock or boot, 597, vol. iii. Altogether, eight patterns illustrated, and we think a considerable variety has been supplied.

COSTANZA cannot tell us through what means the white silk handkerchief became stained, so that ordinary washing will not restore it. We can only direct her attention to pages 64, 80, 399, vol. i., page 126, vol. ii., and pages 92 and 655, vol. iii., and tell her that we are likely to give an article on the subject of stains of every description, and on all sorts of materials. 2. Of course, transfer-paper can be used several times for crewel-work designs, and we do not understand any difficulty in connection with it.

LEONIE.—With reference to coffee stains on a pale blue silk, we can only repeat what we said to "Costanza," that an article will be given on the subject of stains. *Fama semper vivat* means, "May his fame endure for ever."

LIZZIE L.—You should procure a little manual for teaching knitting, as you do not appear to understand the ordinary terms used in recipes. Your writing is too angular; make your letters rounder.

MARCH VIOLET.—Put the gloves on glove-trees, and using a small piece of flannel, wash them in a tepid lather of curd soap and soft water.

KATE.—See page 47, vol. iii., for a recipe for cleaning gloves.

HEBE.—See "How to remove tea and coffee stains," at page 126, vol. ii. We feel much obliged to you for all you so kindly say of our paper, and its usefulness.

FRED'S SISTER.—1. Tight-fitting jackets of checked tweed or cloth will be worn by young girls. 2. See our series of articles, entitled "How to Wash and Iron," pages 18, 107, and 219, vol. ii.

AURORA.—Russia-crash, or towelling and unbleached linen (employed for crewel embroidery), can be had at any large draper's or Irish linen depot. The first-named is about half a yard in width, and is used for towelling; the latter ranges from a yard to three in width. You probably employed the former name, improperly, for the latter. We thank you for so kindly telling us that people of mature age enjoy our paper, and find it of use to them.

M. A. B.—Make a strong solution of coffee, and colour the starch with which you mean to stiffen your lace curtains. This will make them "écru-colour" or cream.

MICKEY.—You have expressed yourself in so obscure a manner, that we scarcely understand what you mean. We advise you to show your various descriptions of work at suitable shops, and endeavour to obtain trade orders. We do not advise your sending them to any Ladies' Work Societies.

THE REGENT'S DAUGHTER.—You could wear a velvet bodice with your dress, of the same colour, which would look well out of doors. From the patterns you send we think the dress must be well dyed, and you perhaps could improve the bodice by damping and pressing it. The cashmere would probably be easily matched at a good shop, as the colour is an ordinary brown.