

CHRYSANTHEMUM.

By CLARA THWAITES.

I BRING you the latest blossoms
Which summer has given to me.
How white is her farewell token,
How pure she would have us be!

She has spoken to me in fragrance,
She has whispered to me in flowers,
In utterance sweet and tender,
Through the long bright sunny hours.

She had blooms of the deepest splendour,
But amid her gorgeous host,
I think that her fair white blossoms
Were cherished by her the most.

She sent the snowdrop and wind flower
To herald her happy reign,
And the hawthorn's crown of beauty
Was a fall of snow again.

And I heard the lilies murmur,
As they stood in their grace apart,
In the moonlight's quiet splendour,
"How blest are the pure in heart."

Oh! gaze at her latest blossoms,
And ponder her gentle speech,
And the voice of the passing summer
Her lowliest thought shall teach.



A FEW QUESTIONS ASKED AND ANSWERED.

By MEDICUS.

OUR literary year has flown away. Another goodly volume of our GIRL'S OWN is finished and closed; yet we trust—ay, and feel sure—that for many and many a long year to come it will grace the bookshelves of hundreds—we might say thousands—of happy homes, not in England only, but in every country where our language is spoken or understood. Nor will it be allowed always "to stand at ease" on the bookshelf, for our stories are good, and will bear re-reading, but apart from this the volume will often be appealed to as a book of reference. And so we—the Editor and his hard-working staff—are contented, for though modesty forbids us to say we have gained success, we can, at all events, boldly declare that we have done our best to merit it.

And so we shall in future. We have all returned from our holidays recruited in strength, and are once more at our tables, pens in hand. Speaking now for myself, I sincerely hope that the few hints on health which from time to time during "the year that's awa'" I had the honour and privilege to throw out, have not been quite wasted on my fair readers. During the months now before us, I trust to be able to give much common-sense advice that will serve to guide them safely through many a weary little ailment or trouble, and safely past the innumerable pitfalls with which the paths of life are so freely strewn.

Mankind is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards. We cannot expect always to be well; even those who live carefully and most in accordance with the rules of health are subject to illness at times and liable to accidents. Indeed, sickness is itself an accident, but we cannot too often call to mind the fact that cold or infection prefers the weakly as its victims—smites at them, and passes by the hardy and robust. This shows us that we make a very serious error if we do not so live as to keep our bodies as near as possible the high

water-mark of health. And as the body so will the mind be. A healthful body feels ever light, and in such a body a calm, contented, happy mind is sure to dwell.

It has occurred to me that in this paper, instead of taking as my text the symptoms and treatment of any particular class of ailments, I might do good by asking and answering a few questions, which I know the sensible portion of my girl readers must sometimes put to themselves. I begin with one that was put to me the other day by a mother.

"Do you think," she asked, "people do well to use so much medicine in the nursery as is generally done?"

"I consider it," I replied, "one of the greatest mistakes out to turn a nursery into a kind of fire-side hospital. The way our poor little children are doctored and dosed by their nurses and mothers is sad to think of. If I had my will, I would clear out every bottle with a label on it from the nursery. Away with your syrups of senna and rhubarb, away with your still-waters, your slops and your oils. Stick a thermometer over the mantelpiece; keep the temperature equable night and day, never too hot, never too cold. Keep baby warm, but do not sweat him; if you do he will grow up a puny peevish lad, and probably into a miserable man, with whom nothing will seem to go right, because he is not healthy. So if you love him do not over-clothe him in bed or bassinette; but give him wholesome food and fresh air, and look upon sunshine as life to him. If he does ail at any time, believe me, rest and gentle, lulling, soothing treatment is likely to do far more good than any drug or medicament you, with your mother's heart but blind skill, are able to choose for him."

Should soothing medicines be given when a child is restless, in pain, or cannot sleep?

Never, unless prescribed by a medical man. They are poisons, and of those children who

have been accustomed to them, I have but one remark to make. It will be better far for them if they die while young; if they do live it will be with broken constitutions. Do you know what one of the best remedies for the little ephemeral fevers, the nondescript attacks of nervousness, the day-old dyspepsias and incipient insomnias of babydom consists in (I am speaking to mothers at present)? Why, in nothing else but this: allowing him to roll and tumble on bed or on nursery floor, and do just as he pleases, with just as much clothing on, and not a vestige more, than he himself desires to wear. Meanwhile, if he takes food kindly, let him have it; if not, let him go without for an hour, or even for two.

A great many mothers are positively presumptuous in their treatment of ailing infants. Not only would they take the case out of the doctor's hands, but out of Nature's as well. They want to force the child to get well, and they try to do so on principles most unsound. Far better if they would try to be guided by the apparent feelings of the little sufferer. If they did err then it would be on the right side.

Should the education of children be commenced when they are very young?

As I may return to this subject another day, I shall merely say at present that, although the education of children cannot be commenced too soon, it should not be altogether of a scholastic nature. Confining them to the table or desk too many hours a day is a mistake, and a very cruel one; I think children ought to learn to read and write in the nursery, and that their books ought to be of a kind to interest them, and the sentences they write and copy be also of a kind to give pleasure. As with their bodies so with their minds. You must consider and study their feelings. Education should never be of the nature of a penance or punishment. Don't force. You cannot bene-

ficially spoon-feed the mind any more than you can the body. But self-control should be taught at a very early age, and habits of industry, not inculcated but fostered. Inculcation has little effect on children; they forget a lecture in five minutes, but an exemplary lesson never. Well, we should remember that a child's eyes are very wide open, and his ears are very impressionable. He is for ever wanting to know, to learn, and to be educated; hence he is for ever asking questions, and wanting things explained to him. A good teacher or thoughtful mother takes advantage of this, and does not forget that her child will learn more through eye or ear in a twelvemonth, if properly guided, than he could in five from book or slate, and without any detriment to his health either.

You must interest before you can educate with good results, and you must keep up the interest all along, as the process of educating proceeds. Remember that there is such a thing as beginning at the wrong end with a child's education. There is a parable, it may or it may not be true, only it will help to elucidate my meaning. A certain long-headed papa took a bright-eyed son of his, aged nine, to a certain factory, where a certain biscuit of which this little boy was very fond was made.

"Now," said papa, "I'm going to show you the whole process of manufacturing this favourite biscuit of yours. Let us begin at the very beginning. Yonder, you see, is a steam-engine; I won't attempt to explain that at present, because you are rather young, but from that engine comes the power. Well, you see this great belt coming creeping along from the engine, that is what communicates the power to the biscuit machine. Observe that it turns that broad wheel. Well, come nearer, and you will see that the axle of the broad wheel turns other wheels with cogs, and round here you see that the cogged wheels work levers; further on here you see these levers empty flour into a tub, and other levers and cog wheels and things turn and whirl and mix it; and look, it is now being turned out as dough; and notice this roller and these other wheels, and these marvellously clever contrivances—"

The boy had already begun to yawn and look dreamy and uninterested, and at last he said—

"But when will we get to the biscuit, papa?"

Then his father laughed, and took him straight away round to the wonderful toasting machine, and the boy could see the rows and rows of crisp biscuits tumbling off, and he got one, and smelt it, and smiled, and ate it. Thus interest was at once awakened in his own mind.

"I want to know," he said, "what moves that great gridiron?"

His father showed him, and showed him the biscuits sliding in, uncooked, passing through the oven once, and tumbling out crisp and cooked. Then the boy must go farther back, step by step, and find out what moved this, that, and t'other, until he had mastered the whole machine, learned the whole process, until he stood once more before the long running belt. Then he gave a big happy sigh, and—

"Papa," he said, "I'll never rest content now until I understand all about the steam-engine itself."

Is the education of girls, as conducted at ordinary schools, sound and healthful?

As a rule it is very much the reverse. If all girls were turned out of the same mould, the principles of education might pass muster. Society, however, demands certain acquirements in a girl, which are dignified by the title of accomplishments. Among these, French, German, Italian, and music are first favourites, and to the study of these much

time is devoted, which might be far more profitably passed, and more pleasantly, too, in learning arts that would be found useful in after life. And, after all, are there five per cent. of finished girls who can talk either French or German with a proper accent, or sing or play with taste? I will not answer this question, but repeat it. Are there?

But leaving the education of girls alone, I think they are often harshly dealt with at schools. Lessons are devoid of interest; the confinement is irksome and injurious to the health; the position the body has often to be maintained in for hours is not conducive to its proper development, and there is a great dearth of innocent, interesting games, which, if properly chosen, might be made a means of both mental and physical training. All these defects in our systems of education will come to be remedied in time—perhaps.

Granting, as many girls will be glad enough to do, that school life is not all sunshine and joy. Why is it, let me ask, that thousands look back to it from after years as the happiest period of their existence? Well, if male eyes, if the eyes of brothers and husbands ever scan these columns, I hope they will read the answer I give to the question I have just propounded, because it is so very often the fault of them alone that those of the opposite sex with whom they come into daily contact are not always as happy as they might be.

Kind-hearted and good-intentioned a brother or husband may be, and yet it may seldom or never occur to him that the housekeeper herself, she who seldom goes abroad, as he does every day and mixes with the world, may, on this very account, be suffering both weariness of body and *ennui* of mind—a monotony of existence, in fact, to which almost any kind of life, even one of drudgery itself, would be preferable. Men err in this way, I am sure, more often from thoughtlessness than anything else, but sometimes, I am sorry to say, from a selfishness of which they ought to be heartily ashamed; a selfishness that is positively sinful. Recreation and pleasurable exercise are a *sine qua non* of health, and the dreary monotony of existence to which it is the sad lot of so many girls in after life to be condemned is quite incompatible with length of days. It soon tells, it soon does its work, and probably he whose fault it has been is left alone some day to think, when too late, that it might have been so different. *Verbum sap.*

VARIETIES.

LOOKING-GLASS.

When this crystal shall present
Your beauty to your eye,
Think! that lovely face was meant
To dress another by;
For not to make them proud,
These glasses are allowed
To those are fair,
But to compare
The inward beauty with the outward grace,
And make them fair in soul as well as face.
—James Shirley.

JOY AS A MEDICINE.—Joy is one of the greatest panaceas of life. No joy is more healthful or better calculated to prolong life than that which is to be found in domestic happiness, in the company of cheerful and good people, and in contemplating with delight the beauties of nature. A day spent in the country, under a serene sky, amidst a circle of agreeable friends, is certainly a more positive means of prolonging life than all the vital elixirs in the world. Laughter, that external expression of joy, must not here be

omitted. It is the most salutary of all the bodily movements.—*Hufeland.*

PROFITABLE LACE.—Valenciennes is the cheapest lace in the end, for many reasons. It is made with a round, whole thread. Worn carefully, not daily, it can hardly be worn out. It can be washed any number of times, and not being so peculiar as the point or appliqué laces, the Mechlins, &c., all of which are much more fragile, it gives the soft effect of lace without attracting too much attention, so as to be recognised easily again.

THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.—Once a Gentle came to Shamai, a famous Jewish rabbi, and said, "Proselytise me; but on condition that thou teachest me the whole law whilst I stand upon one foot." Shamai drove him off with the builder's rod which he held in his hand. When he came to Hillel with the same challenge, Hillel—who was the master of Shamai and the most eminent of all the rabbis—converted him by answering on the spot, "That which is hateful to thyself do not to thy neighbour. This is the whole law, and the rest is its commentary."

—*The Talmud.*

HEALTHY LAUGHTER.—There is nothing so healthy as honest laughter. A woman who had recovered from a decline was asked what had cured her, and her reply was, "I stopped worrying and began to laugh, that is all."

A WORD ABOUT FASHIONS.

Be not the first by whom the new is tried, Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.

HOW PEOPLE DRESS IN CHINA.—The Chinese nation almost entirely clothes itself in cotton, in one form or another; warmth in winter being obtained by means of wadded garments, which are piled on until the wearer assumes sometimes the aspect of a stuffed doll. Hence the severity of the weather is not infrequently expressed in terms of clothing, as for instance, "a two-coat day," or "a three-coat day."

COMMON-SENSE IN LOVE.—A girl may feel certain on this point, that, as a man treats his mother and sisters, so he will treat his wife six months after marriage. This may seem cold-blooded, and very far removed from the tender feelings which courtship induces. But a girl has a choice to make—a choice upon which the happiness of her whole life will depend; and there is always a time, whether she notices it or not, before she parts with the control of her heart, at which she ought to listen to her judgment. Without better evidence than her own feelings, she is very likely to make a mistake; but if she can assure herself that her lover is a man who is respected and liked by his male friends, and is a favourite at home, she may be pretty sure that in listening to him she is choosing wisely.

THE DAYS OF THE WEEK.—With the natives of Burmah it is a belief that people born on a Monday are jealous; on Tuesday, honest; Wednesday, quick tempered; and soon calm again; Thursday, mild; Friday, talkative; Saturday, hot-tempered and quarrelsome; while Sunday's children will be parsimonious.

PEACE AND JOY.—Peace is better than joy. Joy is an uneasy guest, and is always on tiptoe to depart; it tries and wears us out, and yet keeps us ever fearing that the next moment it may be gone. Peace is not so. It comes more quietly, it stays more contentedly, and it never exhausts our strength, or gives one anxious forecasting thought.