

## ROWING FOR GIRLS

BY ELLEN LE GARDE



It has always been noticed that girls who from childhood are accustomed to row are of a cheerful temperament. As if that was not enough of a recommendation, such girls have never known what dyspepsia means. If the exercise is vigorous, the faster

is the flow of the blood. With the quickening of the circulation, perspiration becomes profuse and the body is enabled to throw off all poisonous matters. If I knew a girl who was dull, heavy footed and heavier thoughted, with a blotched and muddy colored skin, who sometimes thought she wanted to be as well as another girl, but did not do anything to reach it, nor knew how, I should put her in a row boat in a shallow pond, place the oars in her hands and tell her to take care of herself. Unkind? I think not. I should have a long rope, you know, attached to the boat, one end in my hand. The position might frighten her a little at first, but the natural instinct to help herself would come to her aid, and then, too, rowing is not difficult to learn. To most girls it comes as naturally as walking. They creep along the water, not far off shore, first with one oar, then trying two, keeping stroke for stroke, up and down, "catching crabs" occasionally, old Nep's protest at being conquered by such a courageous piece of prettiness, and in the three or four attempts may be the delightful sport is theirs. So this girl with the torpid liver and the lethargic feeling must be the gainer, for she has to think faster, she must move and breathe quicker in that unison of time kept by her fast impelled oars. How can such a girl long remain ill or stupid?

Rowing, too, expands the chest. The next time you see a boat's crew at practice look at the breadth of shoulders of its men and prepare to be envious. And should you ever be in the Cove of Cork, marked on your modern geography as Queenstown Harbor, notice the women who "welcome the coming and speed the parting guest," in their little boats that toss like very cockle-shells under the shadow of the great steamer on whose deck you stand. These women have the broad shoulders, the bright eyes, the rosy complexions, the full chests, the strong organs of respiration that are bred of healthy, vigorous exercise on the water. Like all women that row from girlhood their backs are strong, "strong as iron bands." Corsets, or "stays," as they would call them, they never owned. Nothing so becomes a woman as health, and the girls of to-day need not use rouge at their dressing tables nor sigh for beautiful complexions and figures if they will exercise constantly and regularly in the open air.

The good effects produced by rowing upon the muscular system can be secured by certain mechanical movements produced by the rowing machines of the well-equipped modern gymnasium. The latest invention, a hydraulic rower, gives the same stroke and same resisting action as does the water.

In so practical a matter as rowing, written instructions are of little value. Experience is the best teacher. The girl rower in learning, requires a good steady boat, a light oar and a companion who knows how to pull. The latter can either act as steerer or pull too, but should encourage the tyro to exert all her power and "pull, pull away." The learner must have her hands properly placed, the outside hand grasping the oar with the thumb above the handle, the inside hand holding the "loom" of the oar just where the rounded part joins the square, and keeping the thumb beneath. The elbows must be kept close to the sides, and well straightened immediately after the conclusion of the stroke. The stroke is finished by feathering the oar, and this is done by a turn of the wrist, which places the blade of the oar parallel to the surface of the water instead of vertical to the surface as during the pull. In rowing, the body should swing to and fro in a straight line with the stem and stern of the boat. The rower should throw herself well forward, in taking hold of the water with the oar, and lean well back in lifting it out of the water, the oar not being dipped in the water beyond the blade.

A little practice will enable the beginner to feather her oar, but feathering is not necessary at first. Backing is effected by pushing the blade of the oar through the water in the direction opposite to that of rowing, and feathering the oar as it leaves the water. Keeping time and stroke becomes necessary when two or more are pulling together, and in the first is the exact execution at the same moment of the feathering of the oars and their recovery by the whole crew.

Girls can just as well learn a good style of stroke from the start as a poor one. The best stroke is one which does not cause the boat to jerk. It should begin with a neat and delicate drop of the oar in the water without any splash; the rower catching hold of the water at once and gradually increasing her power.