

middle of a word! This, of course, involves another stop which is an awkward intruder.

If you desire to read quickly and at the same time to be intelligible and distinct, you must read in a somewhat stilted fashion, utter your words glibly, slightly *staccato*. If you notice it, you will hear many of those who are called upon to read aloud in public buildings adopt this style, and it is partly owing to this peculiarity that every word is heard without the audience straining their ears to catch them.

I have now set forth the necessary requirements for being heard and understood, but that should not be the only aim in the mind of him or her who reads aloud. Listen to some more wise words which have reference to this subject:—"There is no composition in music, however perfect as to key and melody, but in order to do justice to its author will require something more than an exact adherence to time and tune. It is this which gives music its power over the passions, and it is called expression." Let two people play the simple tune of "Home, sweet Home:" each shall play it quite correctly; but the effect on the listener shall be very different if one plays it with merely mechanical accuracy, and the other adds expression and feeling to correctness of execution.

This, then, is what completes the qualifications of a good reader in the proper sense of the term—expression. To hear books, whether grave or gay, heavy or light, whether political, theological, biographical, or geographical, whether novelettes or sermonettes, to hear every one of these various subjects read in the same tone of voice is extremely trying to the

ears of the listeners. Proper and suitable variations of the voice and manner we must have, if enjoyment is to go hand-in-hand with instruction. We want nothing theatrical, no affectation, but an avoidance of mechanical, sing-song, hum-drum, droning reading, such as that with which we are too often punished.

A pathetic subject surely needs pathos in the tone; a gay and lively subject surely needs vivacity of tone and manner. Conversations require variety of tones. Is it natural for half a dozen people to ask and answer questions and make remarks in exactly the same pitch of voice? Yet this is the usual way they are represented as uttering them by the reader aloud. Descriptions of scenery require more evenness of tone, so do books of a grave and learned character.

I have now given you the directions which I gathered and followed myself, and with good results; for, at the risk of being considered atrociously conceited, I must tell you that I am now a proficient in the art of reading aloud; I am not a professional reader, nor do I pretend to read the poets and dramatists; but to home circles wherever I sojourn I find I can give pleasure, and am always called upon to use my powers of reading aloud. Fortunately for me I have also attained the power of reading for a great length of time without feeling weary—four hours at a stretch does not fatigue me now. When one thinks of the many to whom one can afford this enjoyment—the sick, the aged, the blind, and the busy—a feeling of self-satisfaction and thankfulness steals over the mind that one can do something to alleviate their sufferings and lighten their burthens.

E. C.

A CUP OF COCOA.



IN one of the cabinets of the Dresden Gallery there is a little picture that is so famous, that quite a mob of copyists pitch their easels and encamp round about it. You see drawings and finished sketches; copies in oil, in water-colour, in pastel. It is as popular as Greuze's Girl with the Pitcher, in the Louvre; or Sir Joshua's Angels' Heads, in our own National Gallery. A pretty servant girl, with short petticoats and dainty little high-heeled shoes, is advancing towards

you and holds out a cup of chocolate. It is a very small cup indeed, about the size of a little coffee-can, and probably of Dresden china. But then the picture was painted a hundred years ago. A hundred years ago ladies drank chocolate much the way gentlemen now drink liqueur. The idea of "taking it in a mug" would have been barbarous. It was part of the fashion of a modish day. The fashion and the century have both passed away. The little Dresden thimbles of our ancestors' time have given place to solid and capacious cups. The aromatic drink is to be had at every breakfast-table. Cocoa has become to us, not a mere

luxury, but an important branch of commerce, and the latest experiment on that picture in the Dresden Gallery is to convert it into a trade-mark.

And yet three hundred years ago the word was unknown. The Spaniards navigating the Western Ocean little knew the value of the prize they had secured when they conquered the great district of Mexico. Amongst the curious habits of those barbarians was one of drinking something which looked extremely like mud, but had a delicious smell and a fairly good taste. That drink was afterwards to be called the "Indian Nectar," and if you go to the British Museum you will find a learned treatise on it and its "secret virtues," written by a doctor in Charles II.'s days. Indian imports in that century were always more or less accredited with mysterious properties. The Spaniards, however, probably accustomed to their native wines, had but a poor opinion of this temperate refreshment. But it made its way, in time, over to the old hemisphere, where a great future awaited it. The Spaniards naturally brought it to Spain, and an officer in the suite of Marie Thérèse imported it from over the Pyrenees, and settled down in Paris with the fashionable novelty. The queen gave him the monopoly of its sale, and he started his establishment at the corner of the Rue Saint Honoré. That is one account

of its introduction, though another pushes it back to the reign of Louis XIII., and the influence of Anne of Austria. It is clear that it was esteemed in England during the Restoration, for Dr. Stubbes' book, treating of its "secret virtues," had a great sale, and it gives an interesting item as to the cost. The Indian Nectar was to be bought at 6s. 8d. a pound, from a man named Mortimer, who lived in East Smithfield. Dr. Stubbes, in recommending this Mortimer, describes him as "an honest though poor man." The art of puffery, it would seem, is older than the trade in cocoa, and we may be sure that Mortimer, if he remained honest, at least ceased to be poor. But by the time Stubbes wrote, the new drink had conquered and captivated fashion abroad as well as at home. Madame de Sévigné, who had so poor an opinion of coffee, writes to a friend on the 11th of February, 1671. The friend is in the country and had been ill. There were fashionable diseases in those days as well as fashionable drinks. Ladies used to get the spleen and the vapours. "You are not very well," writes Madame de Sévigné, probably to a poor victim of *ennui*—the days were very long, and no amusements worth speaking of to beguile them, no such thing as a good day's shopping, and novels in three volumes an unknown luxury—"You are not very well; chocolate will, however, set you up again; but you have not a chocolate-pot: I've thought of it a thousand times, whatever will you do?" How strangely this two-hundred-years-old letter reads! The country lady in the vapours—chocolate, a sovereign specific, at hand—but no chocolate-pot, and the town friend troubling herself so much about it. We are tempted to say, like Mr. Pickwick and the warming-pan, "Why, gentlemen, who *does* trouble himself about a chocolate-pot?"

If we seem, up to this, to have rather confused cocoa and chocolate, it is because nature has done the same. She has made them grow on the same tree. The trees are always in fruit and flower, the pink petals strewing the ground while the pods hang heavily overhead. Now cocoa is the grain or berry of these pods. An average tree would have half a dozen pounds weight of them. They lie in the pods, surrounded by a kind of sweet juicy pulp, which the negroes are specially fond of. This pulp is distilled away and then the berries come out hard and brown, and it is said that the early Mexicans used them for coinage. They must have been nimble counters if they did. A currency in kidney-beans would scarcely suit English commerce. The tree grows to the height of a cherry-tree, but withers up under the burning heat of the tropics; so the planters take their own means to protect it. In "Dombey and Son" we read that Major Bagstock had a negro servant on whom he used to impose all sorts of tyrannies. When the weather was hot, this expatriated native walked slowly before the major, who followed leisurely in his shadow. There is a tree to be found on all cocoa plantations, called the banana, producing an agreeable kind of fruit—a number of pods attached to one stalk, rather like a naval officer's epaulette. This banana serves the same purpose as the major's negro: It enables the little cocoa-tree to flourish in the shade.

But the sun is not its only enemy; the whole insect tribe seems in conspiracy against it. There is a terrible caterpillar with horns, and such a tenacity of life that if you cut off its head it goes on living. And then there is an insect called the *goosino*—we are quoting from an old treatise—which is so destructive and so numerous, that the whole establishment is often told off to kill them. This peculiar insect gets wings in process of time, and then the days of its mischief-making come to an end. The natives light fires round the trees, and then the *goosinos* gaily fly in and are burned. Let us assume that the cocoa escapes these preliminary dangers, that the pods are harvested safely and the nuts extracted. The next thing is to dry them. Sometimes they are simply spread out in the sun, with a little sugar flung over them; but the better way is to bury them in sand; there they remain for a couple of months till they ferment, a process which thoroughly removes the pulpy envelope of the grain, and also a certain bitterness which is found at this stage. Then they are dried and roasted. You may taste cocoa in every kingdom in Europe, and you rarely find two cups the same. The difference is not so much in the grain as in the roasting. In Italy it is very bitter and very aromatic; the Italian cocoa-beans are over-roasted. In Spain it has not the least taint of bitterness, but then it is heavy and oily; the Spaniards spare their fire. Of course we must think our own preparations the best, and so they certainly ought to be. We are enormous consumers, and our consumption is always on the increase. In 1849 we imported 2,000,000 pounds, and in 1870 about 15,000,000. The consumption in France is about 10,000,000; but then in Paris chocolate is both a food and a fashion. You drink it at breakfast with your roll and butter, and you eat it at the opera while the curtain is down.

One great cause why cocoa has got to be so popular is to be found in the simplicity with which it can be made. This was not so originally. The apparatus used to be the drawback; it was so extremely troublesome and so very ugly. There is a certain amount of trouble in making a cup of tea, but then the equipage may be so tasteful and so costly. Queen Anne silver and Worcester china may make a tea-table almost as attractive as a case in a museum; but what can you do with a saucepan? It is said that the Shah, when he stayed at Buckingham Palace, used to put the silver dishes on the kitchen fire. But there is a point at which good taste revolts. You will not like to put a silver saucepan on the coals. It would get black and smoky. What can you do with it? Happily you can now do without it. We have spoken of these cocoa-beans. Chemists give their analysis—so much theobromine, so much albumen, so much starch, so much cellular matter, &c. &c. We need not go into details, but state in round numbers that 50 per cent. of the bean consists of a fatty matter called butter of cocoa. Now, the chief effort of recent manufacturers is to get rid of part of this. It is found that so large a quantity is indigestible. We cannot drink so much melted butter; though, on the other hand, the test of the goodness of the original cocoa is the amount of this

vegetable fat which the beans contain. Machinery can do everything, and certain cocoa manufacturers have discovered some way of removing about two-thirds of this butter of cocoa, which leaves what remains of the bean literally an essence. The difficulty is overcome. All that you want is boiling water; you pour it on the powdered essence, and—you have a cup of cocoa.

But even still it is a prosaic drink. Doctors recommend it. Chemists analyse it. It is very nourishing. It is very fattening. The gouty man, who has forgotten port and abandoned sherry, with its aid advances on a toe which has long ceased to be light and which never was fantastic. But there are no poets to

praise it, like Balzac and Voltaire. You will not find such a description as Pope, in the "Rape of the Lock," has given to the preparation of a cup of coffee. We drink it and are thankful for it, and then get the things away and go on with our work. But before they are removed we have one word to add. Our little article is on "A Cup of Cocoa." We have remembered the cocoa—we must not forget the cup. Buy it, if you can, abroad: thick, heavy, ugly, with a solid handle and an uncompromising edge. With cocoa you cannot be æsthetic. Egg-shell china and dainty chalices are out of place. They may look well in that picture by Liotard in the Dresden Gallery, but—*crede perito*—they won't stand the test of experience.

MY GUARDIAN.

BY ADA CAMBRIDGE.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH. AT MRS. CARTER'S.



WE were duly met at Shoreditch by Mrs. Carter, whom, in spite of white hair and corpulence, I recognised at once, and were taken by her in a cab to Pembridge Villas. Jack was nowhere to be seen; and, as soon as he had had a glass of wine and a biscuit, Mr. Pelham went off in search of him.

Mrs. Carter, full of love and bustle, took me up-stairs and divested me of my out-door garments, telling me how like my dear mother I had grown, and how overjoyed she was to have me under her roof again. I bore up, and answered all her eager questions, as long as I could; and then, breaking down utterly, I flung my arms round her neck, and sobbed and wept as if my heart would break.

"My pretty lamb! my pretty pet!" the old woman murmured, fondling me just as she used to do when I was a new-made orphan child. "Don't fret so, Daisy, you'll make yourself ill, my love, and you're not looking so strong as I'd like to see you. She's gone to a better world, you know, where she'll never suffer any more. You must think of her gain and not of your loss. And you're going to have a compensation for it, too, in a kind and good husband, my pet. It's ungrateful to give way when God has blessed you so."

I was relieved to find how reticent Jack had been, and how little she knew of the real state of the case, though my heart was aching intolerably for woman's help and sympathy. I cried my cry out, and then I set myself to be heroic, and to fight my battle through alone as best I might. "Where is Captain Stafford?" I asked, as soon as I could command myself sufficiently to speak of him.

"He was here this morning, dear," said she, "seeing that all was ready for you. He seems very careful of you, Daisy; but he always strikes me as rather a cold, hard man."

"Oh, no, no!" I protested; "anything but that. I could not have been happier than I have been with him."

"Well, it doesn't do to judge from appearances. I think his first coming to take you away from me prejudiced me against him; and, dear me! he's not a bit altered in all these years, except that he's so much bigger and stronger. Are you feeling better, love? Now come down and have some lunch, and then rest yourself on the sofa."

In the afternoon Jack and Mr. Pelham came to Bayswater together. Jack, who looked stern and haughty enough to justify Mrs. Carter in her opinion of him, shook hands with me and asked me how I felt after my journey, and whether I was satisfied with the arrangements he had made for me. I could not answer him for the lump in my throat and the tremulousness of my mouth, and after a pause he got up and walked away to the bow-window. Then Mr. Pelham came to my side to say good-bye, and to tell me that everything was satisfactorily arranged. "Your uncle thinks with me, Daisy, that there will be no impropriety in your being married so soon after my poor wife's death, since it was her wish that Rolfe should go to Australia at once, and of course supposing the wedding is quite quiet. Mrs. Carter kindly offers that it shall take place here, if that will suit you; and your uncle consents to its being in two months' time."

"Two months!" I exclaimed, aghast.

"Yes, my dear, I thought that was what you and Rolfe had agreed upon? Rolfe spoke of that time, at all events, and it happens to suit me exactly. I want a change myself, Daisy, I feel I can't go on living in the old house now she's not there," and his voice began to shake, "so I've made up my mind to travel a little, to recruit myself and help the sad time over. I've got a foreign chaplaincy offered to me; and I shall go away as soon as I've seen you and Rolfe settled."

While I was still too much stunned to offer objections to this astounding scheme, Mr. Pelham kissed me and