

rubbing hard and brushing; and they will even employ injurious alkalis in washing, in order to do that quickly which would have been better done if done slowly. If the practice of soaking the clothes were more universally followed, laundresses would not be so strongly tempted to use lime and injurious washing preparations as they now are. Clothes that have been thoroughly soaked are half washed before the actual washing is commenced; while the difference of colour between clothes that are regularly soaked before washing, and those that are not, is most marked.

One reason why clothes so frequently escape being soaked is that so many housekeepers have a fixed prejudice in favour of washing on Monday. This prejudice rests upon an old proverb which says—

“They who wash on Monday have all the week to dry.”

Now, in a business like washing, where there is a

possibility that many unforeseen contingencies may arise, it is always well to take time by the forelock. But where Monday must be the washing-day, why not put the clothes to soak on Saturday night? Sunday is the day of rest; nothing can be done then, we know; but the pans would take no harm if left standing in the washhouse, and they would be all ready for Monday morning. It is usual in many families to have clean underlinen on Sunday; but there is no charm about this regulation; linen might be changed on Saturday just as well as on Sunday, and the alteration would be an advantage in making still less work for Sunday. In many families this change has been made, and the arrangement has answered admirably; the long soaking has been an advantage rather than otherwise. As to the routine to be followed when the soaking has been accomplished, we may perhaps deal with it on another occasion.

PHYLIS BROWNE.



CHARACTERS IN FEET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF “IMPRESSIONS OF A NOTICING EYE.”

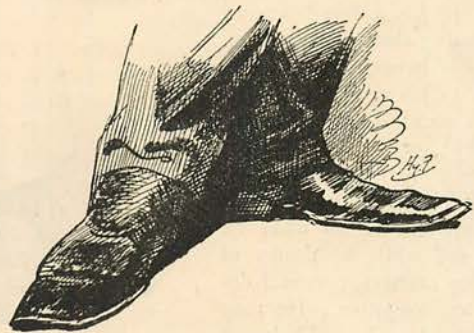


THE use of feet is more characteristic than the feet themselves. Of course there is some character even in the shape: there is the common and careless flat foot, and the neat foot, and the vain foot, and the quick foot. In Herrick's old poem the whole

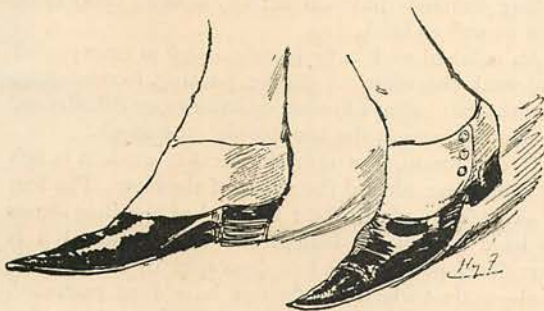
portrait of a dainty white-slipped girl is suggested by the words—

“Like mice, beneath her petticoat,
Her little feet went in and out.”

But the distinctions of character are not seen, really, in the feet themselves, but in what their owner does



PHILANTHROPIC.

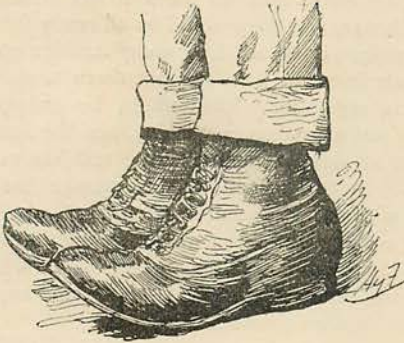


THE FOP.

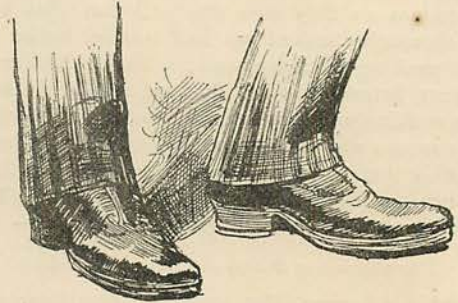
with them. Sometimes it is significant that their owner does not know *what* to do with them. He is vulgarly, defiantly self-sufficient, and despises ceremony, so when he smokes a cigar he puts his feet on the mantel-piece, out of the way. Or he is a country bumpkin, painfully self-conscious, so he stands on one foot and then on the other, and shifts them about, perplexed what to do with them, as ill-bred folks, when they sit idle and sociable, are perplexed by possessing a pair of hands. On the contrary, the fop—whose feet are clad without spot or speck, and regardless of expense—knows very well what to do with them; they are part of the exhibition which is his constant care. In general, it is a sign of vanity to thrust forward

habitually a neat foot when one is at rest. A conceited man nurses a leg and admires a foot, which he twitches and twirls beneath his delighted eyes—quite uncon-

done; and the country could not thrive nor the community exist without the feet that wear hobnailed shoes. The firm foot is the ordinary type in men. A firm



HOBNAILS.



FIRM.

sciously, and in a different manner from the fop; for the vain man thinks of the effect produced upon other people, but the conceited man is satisfied with himself, without any regard to the world of ordinary mortals who may chance to be observing him.

Very different is the generous mind of the philanthropist, who thinks constantly of the rest of the world, and not of himself. There is nothing cramped about any of his ideas or of his possessions. He forgets such small matters as fashion and details of appearance. Except on state occasions, he considers neatness to be a hindrance; everything about him is large, from his benevolent schemes down to his well-worn shoes.

His stand is not alert, but patient, well set on the ground; he is ready and steady; he waits to give what he can, and to do what he can, and while he thinks of weighty matters, personal details are forgotten. He may walk flat-footed in old shoes; insteps and heels are infinitely beneath his consideration. So his foot is not of the type that the dancing-master believes to be the one thing necessary for a gentleman; but he has already flattened injustice under his feet, and the horror of the dancing-master shall never reach his ears.

This philanthropic man has done a great deal to widen and smooth life's roads for crowds of feet of another type. On the roads he has improved, the hobnailed boots go more contentedly.

They (the "hobnails") are strong and rather defiant: for instance, they have a defiant way of turning up. They stand straight together, just as their owners as a class stand shoulder to shoulder. Their size and weight are suggestive of possible bad kicks; but their bulk and hard-worn bend are also suggestive of work

walk is a sign of self-control as well as of power. When the shoe thickens so obstinately that the foot cannot bend it, and when the walker does not care what noise he makes, the firmness and power are developing to a degree that may inconvenience weaker or more sensitive folk.

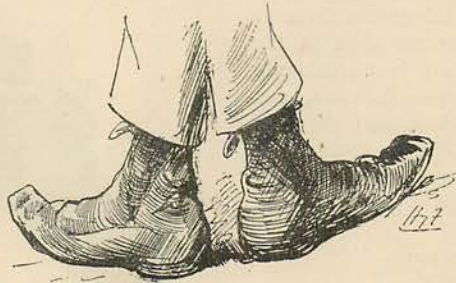
The weak foot is very common. The stand suggests a knock-kneed body and a mind not strong enough to make the best of life—one might almost say, altogether a knock-kneed character that is always stepping crooked, and going its way with an uncertain gait.

This is not to be confounded with the weak walk of the man who is always in a hurry and absent-minded, because he is hurrying up some plans of future work. The hurrying walk is apt to be weak, but it does not betoken a weak character. On the contrary, hurrying feet, whether they walk firmly or irregularly, are always a sign of strong character. The weak-footed hurry often belongs to the

man whose work is mental; the hurrying man whose calling demands physical activity is more likely to be firm as well as brisk.

An indolent walk is frequently a sign of empty mind and weak character. A gliding, pausing, foot-bending, stealthy gait betrays finesse, or strategy, or calculation, or cunning, or—as the last degree—the sneak.

In conclusion, it is remarkable that modern habits of dress have altered the shape of the foot. The feet of savages are mostly flat; the heel of the shoe seems to have formed the instep. Of course, the arch is over-developed and the foot destroyed by the too high heel—against which the doctors have long protested. Again, in the antique the front of the foot is loose and broad, and the great toe parts from the others with a



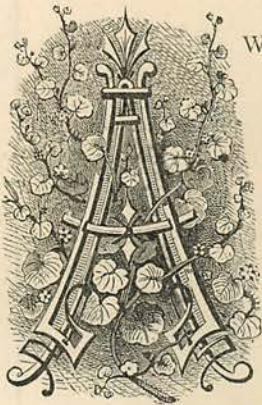
THE WEAK.

division as decided (though of course not as broad) as the parting of the thumb from the fingers of the hand. This division was used for the strap of the sandal. If we take the antique for our type of beauty, a pointed shoe is utterly unnatural. Very rare is the fine form of a foot that has kept straight on the inner side—not bent by efforts to be cramped to a point. Perhaps this straight foot that never has been distorted ought to be taken as a sign of common sense. For if one judges rightly, the distortion caused by a craze for pointed toes is as bad in kind—though not in degree—as the malformation of the foot which Chinese ladies allow their children to suffer in infancy, so that they may grow up to have a proper Chinese deportment—supported by a maid, or a stick, or a friendly wall.



THE SNEAK.

THE GARDEN IN MARCH.



WHOLE array of gardening lies before us as soon as the month of March sets in; the two months that have just passed we occupied largely in the preparation for what we may call our gardening proper—that is to say, we are now assuming that in January we did some heavy trenching and manure-wheeling, and in February saw to our re-putting and collection of

composts, and so on; and now in this, the morning of the year, we sow our seed.

Digging a foundation is certainly the least interesting part of house-building, but without it no house would stand; but now, however, that everything is in training for the reception of seed, we strike out with a fresh zeal.

Let us notice first our flower-garden: about the middle of the month sow, then, some hardy annuals in the open borders in which you intend them afterwards to flower; such, for instance, as your sweet peas. For gaiety of colour and delicacy of scent, nothing can surpass these old and popular favourites; unfortunately, however, they are rather short-lived, and last year, owing to the drought, their lives were still shorter, and but for watering would have been cut off altogether. They would almost seem to thrive better in situations not exposed for the whole day to a scorching sun. A little hand-picking for bouquets and table-decoration seems, too, to prolong their period of bloom. Our half-hardy annuals, however, we must hardly yet trust to the tender mercies of an English climate; these, therefore, we sow in pots in our greenhouse or

pit, and do not expose them to the open until the month of May.

And then there are the biennials, among which may be named our old-fashioned friends the sweet-william and the Canterbury-bell; these, if sown towards the end of the month, will bloom early next year. But they need no rich soil or any choice situation; indeed, they may be sown on poor soil, so as the rather to check too free a growth this year, and will be all the better enabled to stand the winter by this precaution. Those biennials, however, that were sown last year may shortly be transplanted to those places in which you intend them to bloom this year. And we might remark in passing that some of these biennials thrive and bloom very well in comparatively shady and gloomy situations; the writer of these gardening notes has often noticed both sweet-william and Canterbury-bell in full bloom down a familiar carriage-drive that only saw the sun though a mass of shrubs and tall trees that intervened, where it seemed next to impossible that anything could flourish.

Not a few of our perennials also are good-natured enough to thrive under similar circumstances, and it is well to bear this in mind, if only for the purpose of enlivening a portion of our garden that would otherwise look unusually dreary. And these perennials we treat very much as we do our biennials—that is, by sowing them now for next year's blooming, though the preferable method of their propagation and increase is rather by dividing and transplanting them in the localities in which we want them to bloom. And this division of our perennials we make at once, and the sooner the better; for a walk round the garden just now will show you that they are all making a start. Of course, though, we are not supposing the existence of any unnatural or prolonged frost, which nevertheless does occasionally take place at this time of year, in which case such an operation must be delayed for