

"Basil, I am sure you are in trouble," she said earnestly. "Can't we any of us help you?"

"No, Nell, thank you," he said, with dreary calm.

"Did you sell Scarthwaite because you wanted money?" she asked.

"Yes, I did."

"You used to tell me everything, Basil," pleaded the girl. "Can't you tell me why you are in such want of money? Jack thinks"—it was her last effort, and she put it desperately upon her brother—"that—that," faltering, "you are ashamed to tell us."

Dead silence. Then he said slowly—

"Jack is right. I am ashamed to tell you."

Nell had nothing more to say. He had condemned himself out of his own mouth.

And he was condemned yet more utterly when it was known that he had sold his property. The fact in itself was proof enough that he had fallen into bad ways, and he was soon made to feel that Holmelea was no place for a man labouring under such suspicion. Even Jack could not honestly defend him, and Basil was fain to leave a spot which he could no longer look on as home.

The day after he was gone Lord Hurstham asked Nell to marry him. And then, to his surprise, she burst into tears, and vowed she could not.

"I have behaved very badly to you, I know," she sobbed. "I thought—I thought I liked you; but I am afraid I don't—at least, not well enough to marry you, I mean."

Lord Hurstham was terribly disappointed; but he bore the blow manfully, assuring her she was not to blame, and went away quietly like a gentleman, though a very heartsore one.

Jack, who had just set a good example by becoming engaged to Ruth, was furious, and abused Nell roundly. He told her she was an abominable little flirt, and ended by saying he was disappointed in her and Basil, and would never trust anyone again.

"Don't abuse Basil because you don't understand him!" retorted Nell, to his amazement, and fled out of the room.

Nell was very miserable; she blamed herself for her conduct, and wished, in her youthful impatience, that she had never been born.

One dull November afternoon she was wandering slowly round the garden, watching the fallen leaves

with a kind of sad pleasure in the mournful world around her, when a quick footstep behind her made her turn, to find herself face to face with Basil.

"So I have found someone at last," he said. "Every one is out at the Vicarage, and I thought I should have to go away without saying 'Good-bye,' after all."

"Good-bye? Where are you going to, Basil?"

"I am going to China as secretary to a company," he answered coolly. "It will be a splendid place to send you a present from when you marry your nobleman, you know." In spite of his jesting tone, Basil looked perfectly wretched.

Nell burst out fiercely: "I hate that stupid joke. And as for Lord Hurstham, I refused him weeks ago."

Basil's whole manner changed. "Nell," he said, after a moment's pause, "I will tell you the reason of my money troubles if you will keep my secret. Some time ago I learnt that, amongst his other sins, my father made off with the whole fortune of a girl to whom he was sole guardian and trustee. No one knew it except the lawyer who had charge of the securities and trust deeds, and he was a scamp who was kept quiet by hush-money. I met him in Australia, and he told me the whole story, adding that it had weighed on his conscience ever since."

Nell was silent; she saw it all.

"I traced her out; I found her a poor parson's wife, with a large family. Well, she has her money now; but she only knows that it is an act of restitution from someone," said Basil. "My father has too much to blacken his memory already; I *could* not blazon it abroad that I had discovered something fresh. So you will keep my secret, Nell, and I will go to China."

"Basil," and she laid her hand on his arm, "don't go. We should miss you so. And—and we have misjudged you so. I will go bail for your character henceforth, only—don't go!"

He looked down into the pleading face.

"Will you come too, Nell?" he asked, with his rare smile.

"Anywhere," she said fervently, "with you."

"No, I won't take you to China," he said. "I dare say I could find employment at home; but I wanted to get as far as I could from you and your nobleman."

"You can't," she said proudly. "My noble man is here!"

FRUIT AS FOOD.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



THE question whether or not it would pay to cultivate fruit to a much larger extent than is now done, it is not my province to discuss.

I have my own ideas on the subject, however, and can only say here that the want of means of transport, and that alone, prevents thousands of farmers in the farther-off counties from laying down fields with

the bushes, trees, and herbs from which rich fruits are culled. Steam road-traffic may yet meet the difficulty. Railways are made for passengers, and gardeners' produce gets left, and is good for nothing ere it reaches the great metropolitan markets.

But so convinced am I of the extreme value of fruit in the animal economy, that I hope to live to see the

time when the green embankments along our railway system shall be blooming orchards, and tracts of land that now lie fallow and unprofitable, turned into strawberry and gooseberry fields, so that a large part of Southern England shall be all one smiling garden.

I am more than convinced that a far too large proportion of meat is eaten in this country: the man who should bring about a change in this respect would be one of the greatest reformers Britain ever saw. There would be ten times less distress in the country, ten times less sorrow and sin. The change would benefit the health, purify the blood, and strengthen the hearts of this great people, and we should be ever more brave, more moral, and take a higher place among the nations of Europe than we do now.

Now, I will tell you what I claim for fruit as food: that is, for fruit as a complement of one's daily diet. First, that it is exceedingly palatable; secondly, that it causes, owing to this very palatableness, an increased flow of saliva; thirdly, that it thus assists us in digesting other food, both bread and meat; fourthly, that fruit is itself easily assimilated by the system; fifthly, that it keeps the system free and in good working condition; sixthly, that from its acids, salts, and essential oils the blood is purified and disease-germs destroyed; and seventhly, that from its saccharine matter the body is nourished and the animal heat kept up.

It would seem like a paradox to say that fruit both warms and cools the body, but such is the case. In summer its acids temper and equalise the heat, in winter its sugars warm. Sugar and acid, in fact, are so equally balanced in this food, formed in the great laboratory of nature, that neither preponderates unduly or to the detriment of the other.

We may take the testimony of the birds as to the healthfulness of fruit. And who so bright, cheerful, and happy as they? The blackbird knows well what to treat himself to in the sweet summer time, and flutes all day in the groves, and the greater part of the night as well; yet in winter, cowering for shelter under the dwarf pine-trees, he does not let down his heart. On the contrary, he is content if he can scrape up a few grub-worms from among the withered leaves, and obtain a hip or a haw to assist in digesting that worm.

The Arabs form a good example of a nation that to a large extent lives on fruit. We are apt to claim courage as characteristic only of the British soldier. This is simply our insular ignorance and arrogance. Who can be more brave than the Arab, or who possess more *clan* and dash?

"Give an Englishman his beef and his beer," I fancy I hear someone remark. Yes, and he looks well on his food, that I willingly admit. *Too* well sometimes, from a medical point of view, for we know that it is your fleshy men that fall victims most speedily to inflammations, and that in such men those inflammations are most likely to lead to a fatal termination. I say let him—the Englishman—stick to his beef, for such food may suit his country and clime,

but what I in all respectfulness suggest is that he moderate the quantity of flesh, and have recourse to good, wholesome fruit. Let anyone try this plan for three months, and he will be surprised at his lightness of mind and increased powers of exertion. "To what extent," it may be asked, "would I propose cutting meat from the dietary?" "To the extent," I reply, "of just one-half." If nothing else could be claimed for fruit, except its power of aiding the digestion of other food, it would still be worthy of our best consideration. It is indigestible or undigested food lying in the alimentary canal that causes people so much uneasiness, to say nothing of actual suffering. Fermentation takes place, and if the system is unable to disburden itself of the load, there is hardly a portion of the animal economy that does not come to grief. The liver is sorely distressed, the stomach chimes in with its sad complainings, the heart flutters or palpitates like an overdriven beast of burden, the blood is overheated, and brain and nerves are affected. It is well if this last but for a night, and restlessness with bad dreams be the only results; but how seldom is this the case when, night after night, the same effects follow the same indiscretions! No wonder the liver at last gives up the unequal struggle, or that the soured blood stores up its salts in joint or muscle, developing all the misery of rheumatism or gout.

There is at least one other virtue to be claimed for fruit. It assuages thirst. And what a blessing this is! Let us take but a mild example; and I am talking from experience. It is a blistering hot summer's day, and you are away on your cycle seeing the scenery, hearing the birds sing, and inwardly thanking heaven you were born in so lovely a land. But oh! it *is* hot! You are damp with perspiration, and drink you must. You are modest in your order at the little country inn that you soon glide up to. Beer you know to be heating, and spirits were madness; soda and milk you think will best suit. But it does not always. It puffs you up, and you even perspire the more. A lemon or lime, or even an orange or two, would have met the requirements of the case, checked the perspiration, cooled the blood, and cooled the head, to say nothing of the saving of the pence.

As a general rule we are on the safe side to eat the fruits of our own country while in season, though foreign fruits, if in condition, may be eaten whenever we can get them. Your very early forced strawberries, for instance, are not so good nor so wholesome as those that ripen under the sunshine in the open air. But have we not fruits fit to eat all the year round? In spring-time we still have our own home-grown apples and pears, with delicious oranges, lemons, and limes from abroad. Summer comes—as a poet would say—tripping o'er the flowery lea, lap-laden with all sorts of delightful fruits: king of these is the strawberry. And here comes Polly the milkmaid with the delicious cream, and Sarah Jane with the powdered sugar. Ay, and let me tell you, as you sit there enjoying the feast, that that same dish of strawberries and cream is not only food but a prophylactic against

many and many an ailment of the blood. Then we have cherries: a dozen different sorts at least, and all as good for the system as they are lovely to look at. But here are gooseberries in glorious profusion, of every size and colour; good, every one of them. And summer brings currants too, white currants and red, like clusters of miniature grapes, and black as well. But autumn is even more profuse in her gifts of fruit, with her apples and pears, plums, greengages, melons, &c., not to say a single word about the wild fruit, such as the cranberry and bilberry. Nor in winter need we want a delightful assortment of fruit on our tables.

Nuts of many kinds grow in this country and come to us from abroad, and, considering the enormous amount of nutriment they contain, I do not hesitate to say they ought to form part of our diet daily. When our own nuts fail us, we may have resort to the foreign ones, and their name is legion, from the dear delicious little pea-nut to the cocoanut as big as a baby's head.

Not sufficient advantage is taken in this country of the dried fruits which come to us from other lands, such as dates, raisins, apples, prunes, figs. The prune, by the way, is both food and physic.

Surely from even such an incomplete catalogue as I have here given everyone's appetite may be satisfied, every palate pleased. But I am not quite done yet. There are jams and jellies. We can always have these, and spread over bread they are not only cheaper but even better for our little ones than butter.

But more delicious than all are fruit syrups, and they are well adapted for summer drinks. But the manufacture of these is not sufficiently studied in this country. These fruit juices, such as that of the lime or the lemon, with soda water or lemonade, form drinks fit for the noblest in the land.

I aver then that, in summer especially, we should eat more fruit and nuts and far less meat; that fruit is food in the truest and purest sense of the word; that we should eat it ourselves and give it to our children; that we should not only eat it but drink it in wines, syrups, and juices; that it forms the best food for the sick; that it should be eaten in season *au naturel*; that, however, the fruit should be ripe and not over-ripe; and that fruit as food tends to banish disease and lessen the death-rate. These are all facts worthy to be pondered over by every *paterfamilias* and *materfamilias* in the kingdom.

ON THE ART OF ACCOMPANYING.

FEW soloists have not, some time or other, been martyrs at the hands of an accompanist; and perhaps there is nothing much more trying to the temper than having a solo spoilt for oneself and one's audience, after spending upon it endless hours of study, and after having

reached, as one fondly hoped, some degree of perfection in the execution thereof. Yet is not this a matter of common occurrence?

Who does not know the agony of singing breathlessly through a song with the piano half a bar ahead, or of losing all concern of anything else in the one vain effort to drag on the accompanist who is several beats behind? And it is not only from the player at sight that one suffers; indeed a moderately good reader will follow your rendering as well at first sight as after practice, given the necessary qualifications of an accompanist. It is the person who plays without accompanying—the *note player*—in short, whom you have to dread; and alas! note players, accurate enough in their way, are not by any means rare, whereas *music players* are scarce, and accompanists very black swans! It is not unusual to hear the remark: "To accompany well, you must be a born musician," but, although I grant there is some truth in this assertion, I am unwilling to conclude that it decides the whole matter, having known so-called "born musicians" who have been anything but good accompanists, and having been accompanied by pianists laying no claim to that title who have satisfied my most exacting demands.

But first of all, what is generally understood by the term "born musician"? I conclude it to mean one who, possessing a faultless ear and sense of rhythm, is able instinctively to har-



"THANK YOU SO MUCH! IF YOU WILL BE SO KIND!"