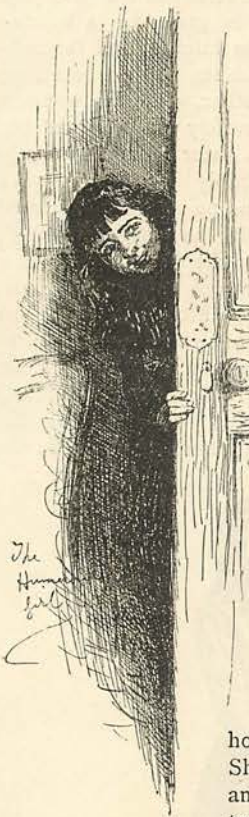


and when she at length recovered she couldn't think of, or remember, the accident; and knew nothin' of the details for many a month. She begged Tom to tell her why he had ceased to write to her, and if he still cared for her; which in his heart he did. He knew it all the time! Then pluckin' up heart he told her all the truth, and Phœbe forgave him, after a long cry, and much soothin', as it wasn't all his fault, she said.

"After a few months more—a year after the smash—when Tom had been promoted to drivin', he and Phœbe were married quietly, and their first joint act, as man and wife in our village yonder, was to put up a marble tombstone to the memory of Nelly who had been killed on the railway on her weddin'-day!

"That's the story, sir; and here's your supper comin' in. After you, sir."

OUR BELONGINGS: THE GIRLS.



The
Heedless
girl

IN a long schoolroom, with windows overlooking a rather untidy garden, are a number of girls. It is "Work holiday"—a monthly festival, when a story-book is read aloud and clothes are mended. Carrie Hatherwood has her fist nearly through the heel of a stocking, and is proceeding with a very large needle and coarse cotton to fill up the gap in a fashion of her own. Presently the stocking is twitched from her grasp, and the clear voice of Miss Kirkewhite says: "Girls, girls! Come and see how Carrie can darn!" The girls, with the innate cruelty of their sex, rush from all corners of the room to inspect the article the head mistress holds up to view. Poor Carrie! She sits with crimson cheeks and swelling heart—a palpitating mass of indignation. In

the particulars of stocking-darning the heedless girl speedily amends her ways; but her faults are too many, and her temperament too excitable, for the change to extend to other departments. She is invariably to be seen with a rent somewhere in her frock, large ink-stains on her apron and fingers, her hair a ribbonless tangle, and her shoes often down at heel. If she carries a number of books from one room to another, they slide from her grasp, and when she hands the bread and butter or passes the tea, some portions are to be found on the table, or in the laps of neighbours. She tumbles up stairs, slides down, walks into puddles, trips over the grass, loses her handkerchiefs, upsets the chairs, bruises

herself against furniture, and never finds anything for which she is sent to look.

These heedless ones are trials at home: mother despairs, and father laughs; while at school Carrie is a sign-post to show the way wherein walking is not good. The heedless girl has often unusually large hands and feet, her limbs are long, and loosely knit, and she is frequently short-sighted: her defects may now and again be remedied by a good course of calisthenics, and a visit to the optician. Occasionally she develops a considerable talent for music, drawing, or languages, and this throws her awkwardness into the background. It causes her much hard work and many tears to conquer her vexatious faults; but if she grows into a neat and careful woman, she has in the process acquired self-control and discipline which make her of sterling worth.

A different type is the "beauty." In every assemblage of girls there is one pre-eminent for good looks, and a pretty girl between the ages of fourteen and sixteen is a very beautiful creature. She is gracefully formed, as well as lovely of face; the smooth cheeks, red lips, soft masses of hair, bright clear eyes, and pearly teeth have the *beauté de jeunesse* as well as



The Sharp
girl

that of form and colour. The masters do not scold her, her schoolfellows call her by pet names, her brothers say she is "awfully decent to look at," and the "beauty" does not remember a time when the small world of her surroundings did not bow to her



THE BEAUTY.

will. She is not often intellectual, and rarely grows into such loveliness as might be expected from present promise; but she is always a pleasure to look at, marries when quite young, and walks gently through life's daisy-spread paths.

We meet nowadays more often with the girl-genius, who is going to Girton after the High School, and to whom the study of mathematics, the intricacies of algebra, and the rules of grammar are pleasing diversions. She conquers difficulties by instinct, and cannot explain her mental processes. It is well for this girl if she be incited to play games and take to reading story-books. She very rarely cares for music, and frequently has no romance in her composition and no eye for colour. She develops, perhaps, into a clever, useful pioneer on the road for the higher culture of her sex; but the brightness and lightness, the hurry, fun, and bustle of life pass her by, and old-fashioned friends of her mother's still regard her almost as one of a race apart.

The girl with an overpowering sense of humour interests us immensely. She remembers her lessons by making jokes of their important facts: "King John was not a nice young man for a small tea-party"; "James the First was a prig and a duffer"; "Alfred the Great 'caught it hot' from the neatherd's wife"; and so on. She invents terribly appropriate names for governesses and schoolfellows, sets a whole class laughing by some grimace of imitation or caricature, turns reproofs inside out to make fun of, and laughs

her way through schoolroom and home. She is not always a favourite, for she sees too clearly Tommy's absurdities and Mildred's foolish little ways. Her powers of mimicry lead her into scrapes sometimes—notably when she pranced across the lawn behind Mrs. Toplofty, in exact imitation of her gait and demeanour, unaware that one of that lady's daughters (having got out of the carriage a minute or two after her mother) was following her, filled with amazement and wrath. Troubles will sober this maiden, and her elastic temperament will stand her in good stead as she makes her way among the thorns and briars of the world.

The domestic girl is to be found on half-holidays making toffee and cakes over the schoolroom fire, and from slender materials turning out delicacies which delight her small brothers and sisters at tea-time. On the happy days when cook is gone for a holiday she is allowed to reign in the kitchen, and the puddings she makes and the cakes she prepares for afternoon tea surprise her mother, who often wonders whence came Mary's housewifely ways, while her father perhaps recollects his sister Joan did exactly the same. Mary will probably be a dragon of economy when she marries, and no cook or housemaid will be able to delude her in the smallest matter; there never was a time when she did not know how much suet, flour, and raisins it took for a pudding, and how many eggs go to make three pancakes. She looks very bewitching with her sleeves rolled up to her elbows, her round arms whitened with flour, her great apron, and her cheeks coloured a lovely pink from the heat of the fire. We will hope that her husband will not expect her to belong to the



The Athletic gal

Browning Society or to read Shelley with him in the evenings ; for to the paths of learning she does not incline.

A great contrast to her is the girl with imagination—who reads Wordsworth and Shakespeare when her comrades are immersed in "Beauty and the Beast" or "Cinderella." She has apt quotations for every storm and sunset, every event of the passing day, and astonishes her elder sister, who scolds her for something, by saying, "My faults lie open to the laws ; let them, not you, correct them" ; and tells one of her brothers he is "as prone to mischief as able to perform it" ; while she writes poetry and helps to get up a magazine with two or three young friends. She lives in a world of her own, and the people about her, with all their deeds, are shadows, while in her realm of cloudland abide the only realities.

The sharp girl has a decided character : she is always ready with a criticism, an answer, a remark—jumps at conclusions (often correct ones) while others are just taking in the subject in debate. Her rapid brain works at lightning speed, and she makes enemies and friends in scores, as she epitomises their faults or virtues with a sarcasm or an epigram. She needs careful training, and requires to remember always that "the tongue is a fire." She does not know the power of speech, nor how chance words live and rankle. She is usually bright and merry, and almost always a centre of attraction wherever she is, but more feared than loved.

The placid girl is a great comfort at home ; at school, too, she gets a large amount of commendation. Her books are neat, her lessons ready to time, her dress tidy, her hair an example, her temper unruffled, and her speech measured. She is not very interesting, perhaps, for her character seems devoid of salient points ; but she is useful, gentle, homely, and never in extremes. In the nursery she is a treasure ; she amuses the little ones, and her presence brings calm to the fiercest turmoil between Jack and Jennie or Mollie and Bertie. She is usually of fair complexion, plump of figure, and with blue or light-grey eyes—not very pretty, but fresh and pleasant-looking, and it seems to be her *métier* to walk through life without exciting remark.

The girl who can climb trees and play cricket with



her brothers is a charming variety. How lightly she scuds along, and how wildly enthusiastic she is with her shouts of "Well played there !" "Keep it up !" "Hold on !" She can jump a ditch, vault a gate, swarm up the oaks, and bat or bowl with any of her brothers ; she gets into trouble very often for damages to dress or person ; but by and by she will develop into a young lady "more than common tall," who can row, swim, play tennis, climb mountains, and ride across country without fear or fatigue. A happy girl is she, and a healthy life she leads. She usually turns out to be a most lovable and domestic woman, with sympathy for and interest in her children's pursuits, which cause her to be adored by them.

The girls—how we love them ! How much their presence helps to make a home delightful. We often say of tiresome boys, "Poor things ! they have no sisters," and of nice ones, "You can tell there are girls at home." Fathers spoil them, mothers often lose count almost of their present in longings that the future may be bright for them ; and their hopes and fears, their pain or their pleasure, their well-doing and their well-being, colour the world in which they live for their loving parents.

M. R. L.

CONTENT.

CRAVE no treasure
Save such as I may find
In a contented mind :
Wealth beyond measure.

Let me not quarrel
With Fate, nor sigh for fame ;
Give me an honest name :
The brightest laurel.

Though knaves may palter
With Love divine on earth,
Let me upon my hearth
Rear it an altar.

To me be given
A home built day by day—
One that shall flout decay—
A home in Heaven.

MATTHIAS BARR.