darkness, and hunger, was the "last straw," the "finishing stroke," that put an end to all her resolves of firmness and composure.

She leaned her arms on the hard table, rested her face on them, and sobbed as though her heart would break—sobbed until sleep came to the rescue; the white lids drooped over her tearful eyes, and her troubles were hushed in sweet forgetfulness.

By-and-bye Miss Winifred came into the school-room, like a whirlwind, with a bedroom candlestick in her hand and a servant at her heels.

"Why, here is Miss Forest! and I declare she is asleep on the table. Cora, Cora, rouse yourself, my dear! It is very late, past eleven o'clock. Are you ready for bed?"

The girl woke up shivering, and with a sense of pain at her heart, as she looked round inquiringly.

"I never knew Miss Forest was in the house at all, ma'am. I thought she were gone out with you, and the poor young lady haven't had no tea, and no supper," said the servant.

"Oh, what a shame! What will Mrs. Woodhouse say when she hears about this to-morrow? Run down, Lucy, and get some cocoa ready at once, and toast a slice of bread. Poor Miss Forest must be faint with hunger."

The servant disappeared, and then Miss Winifred laid her hand on Cora's arm, and said, in an excited tone—

"Never was I so startled in my life, as when I looked into your bed and found you were not there! There has been nothing but mistakes all through! Lucy thought you were with me, and I thought—well, to tell you the truth, I never thought about you at all. I went to tea at Herr Zillner's lodgings with his sister Bertha, and they both had so much to talk about, and were so lively, and sang such pretty German duets that the time fled rapidly. It never came into my head that you were here alone, neglected, and half-starved. You look quite ill, child! Forgive me my part in the blunder—will you?"

A kind word was like balm and honey to Cora's sensitive heart; the ready smile was on her lip, the hand outstretched in a moment, and Miss Winifred for the first time in her life drew the girl towards her and pressed a warm kiss on her lips.

Cora took her cocoa and toast and tried hard to think she was enjoying the repast. Miss Winifred seated herself beside her on the form, and began recounting some of the songs she had heard that evening.

"Herr Zillner has a splendid baritone voice," said Cora, when she could get in a word.

"Yes, my dear, and he knows how to manage it to perfection. It is a great treat to hear him sing."

"Which does he excel in most, singing or painting?"

"Really, Cora, I could not say. The Germans are *so* clever that they excel in almost everything."

It was pleasant to talk to Miss Winifred now she had put off her precise, school-room manner, and would even condescend to gossip. She grew animated with her subject—a full, deep colour swept up and brightened in her cheeks; and Cora wondered she had never before thought Miss Lewis handsome. Yes, even at thirty-seven, "quite handsome."

So passed the first day of Cora Forest's vacation, and the next morning Miss Winifred laughingly turned her out of the school-room, locked the door, and took her up to a little apartment called "Mrs. Woodhouse's *boudoir*."

"Make yourself at home here, Cora, and, if you want books, take down some of these from the shelves. I can't have you poring over school lessons for ever, child. 'Screw not the cord too sharply, lest it snap.' You must have a thorough change of occupation; and if I had not promised to spend the morning at Bertha Zillner's we would sit down and sew and read together. But Mrs. Woodhouse is coming home this afternoon, I am glad to say, and she will plan something pleasant for you, no doubt."

(*To be continued.*)

A GIRLS' WALKING TOUR.

I THINK the idea of our rather novel walking tour first originated in the long winter of '78-'79, when a large party of our country relatives and friends had, as usual, met to spend Christmas and the New Year together. One evening, before the gas was lighted, we girls had congregated round the fire, as we always were very fond of doing, to have a cosy chat, between the lights, before dressing for dinner. We were, on this particular evening, mourning over the various pleasures that girls are debarred from, just because they are girls, and not men, who can do anything they choose without anybody being shocked or scandalised. We spoke of the delights of cricket, some sighed for football or paper-chasing, others acknowleged a hankering after rowing or canoeing, which latter girls certainly cannot indulge in without being considered "fast," unless it be in private waters. We all united in denouncing the arbitrary laws of Society, which forbid us these and other delights including walking-tours, unless accompanied by gentlemen, or, at any rate, a *chaperone;* when one of our party, who had been silent for some moments, electrified us by saying: "Well, for my part, I do not see why we should not go for a walking tour. I have just been considering the matter, and, as we six are all good walkers and delight in the country, I believe we could make a glorious tour together, without a single gentleman or *chaperones* to interfere with us."

This startling speech was received with rapture by us all, and we instantly set about making plans; and that we *would* have such a tour when the summer came was decided without loss of time.

But the first thing to be done was to obtain our respective parents' consent. Some of them certainly demurred slightly at first; it was such an unheard-of thing, they said, for six girls, the eldest of us only twenty-four, to go "skylarking" about the country and getting into all sorts of mischief and difficulties, with no one to look after us. We assured them we had not the slightest intention of getting into any difficulties, and if we did, as it unfortunately is quite impossible to get out of the reach of railways in England, we should simply come straight home by train. Besides this, one of the party said she had, from her earliest youth, been taught to regard the skylark as a model of early rising and general good behaviour, and it was very hard to be stopped directly we tried to imitate that most exemplary bird.

At last a consent was wrung from these obstructionists, and we felt that the only obstacle to our holiday was removed.

I need not trouble my readers with all the ideas that suggested themselves and were talked over with the greatest zest before the time, place, and duration of our walk were finally decided upon. It will be easily imagined that our brothers and male cousins at first begged to accompany us, but, finding that all entreaties met with a stern refusal they took quite a different tone, and jeered at and ridiculed us unmercifully; some of them threatened to join us on our way, but this design was frustrated by our agreeing to keep our route a profound secret from all save a few trusty friends, from whom we were obliged to ask advice as to suitable hotels and distances. It was at last decided that, weather permitting, we would start on a certain Monday, early in June, from the house of a friend near Reigate,

"THIS STARTLING SPEECH WAS RECEIVED WITH RAPTURE."

returning to the same place the following Saturday.

As we found our equipments all that could be desired, it may be interesting to mention what we took with us, and what we wore. We all had dresses of thin olive green serge, made quite short, and waterproofed to save carrying cloaks, quiet-looking hats of the same, and gloves to match, which, however, were generally discarded, except on occasions of ceremony; light, but strong, boots, and, *of course*, woollen stockings. One of the party, who, fortunately for the rest of us, looked much older than her years, was set up with a cap and spectacles, and would have looked quite an imposing *chaperone* had one been needed; but, as it happened, in every hotel we had the coffee-room to ourselves. As to luggage, we each took what we wanted in a knapsack, which we carried orthodoxly on our backs; but, on this subject, let me breathe a word of caution to any inexperienced walking-touristess. Do not take anything more than is absolutely necessary in a knapsack, its weight seems to increase amazingly as the day wears on; though, if not too heavy, one soon gets accustomed to carrying it; in fact, some of our party went so far as to say that they preferred carrying one to walking without. Also take care that your shoulder straps are broad enough. Mine happened to be rather thin and narrow, and my poor shoulders suffered much in consequence, so much so, that I was obliged to get some new straps put on at the first village boasting a saddler's shop. One of our friends had presented us with a charming little portable cooking stove, the weight of which was said to be so extremely small, that the one to whose lot it fell would hardly know she was carrying it, but, alas! I chanced to be that one, and never for a moment forgot the fact that I had it to carry; and last, but not least, we had a small pocket filter, which we found most useful.

The long-talked-of Monday came, and I rose with the lark, so as to be at our appointed meeting-place in good time to start at nine o'clock. As I said before, we were to start "weather permitting"; but, for the first half of the day, so far from permitting, the skies were decidedly forbidding, and we were obliged to wait a few hours in hopes of a change in the weather, so that when we did start, at half-past one, the rain having ceased and the sun shining, we were constrained to take train as far as Dorking, to make up for lost time. Arrived there, and fairly outside the town, we shouldered knapsacks and set off, in light marching order, the vanguard consisting of the President and Pathfinder, the main body represented by the Poet and Artist, whilst the Treasurer and Secretary brought up the rear. These titles, perhaps, need a little explanation. I ought to have mentioned before that in making our plans we had deputed the eldest of our party to be Treasurer during the tour. She was to pay all the bills, and to keep a strict account of every penny spent. Very severe she was, never allowing any reckless expenditure on luxuries or souvenirs, and woe betide the rash individual who should even propose such a thing. Another of our number, officially known as Pathfinder, acted as guide, carried the ordnance maps of the country, and informed us every evening how far we had walked during the day. Her tender feelings were sometimes lacerated when, at any perplexing juncture, some of the company insisted on taking the advice of local rustics in preference to trusting her and her maps. I held the honourable post of Secretary. My duties were to despatch daily post cards to our friends reporting progress, to see that everyone duly wrote their diaries, and to keep a specially detailed one myself. So my work was really arduous; and why the secretary should have to carry the cooking stove I never could discover. Lest the others should feel injured at not holding any official position, we dubbed one Special Artist, and another Special Poet, apparently because this member never wrote a line of anything but prose in her life. The remaining one installed herself as President, whose duties were of a vague and uncertain nature. After devoting our best consideration to the question, the rest of us concluded that the presidential avocations consisted solely in suggesting a rest every few miles.

"IN LIGHT MARCHING ORDER."

Our first night was to be spent at Gomshall; the road thence from Dorking, though interesting in association and certainly pretty, does not call for special remark. One pleasing incident of the afternoon was our invaluable President's opportune discovery of a mill-pond, whereon lay a boat sheltered from the morning's rain by an overhanging tree, just at the time when we were all fain to confess that a few moment's rest would not be disagreeable. We were just comfortably settled in the boat, however, when a man, whom we took to be the owner thereof, was espied striding towards us, so, by way of having "first fire," two of our number started to meet him, and politely requested him to permit our resting in his boat. He graciously assented, and we finished our siesta in peace.

We had agreed that on entering any town or large village we would divide into two or three parties, and go in separately at intervals of a minute or two, so as not to attract the attention that all of us together might do, and also that two should always go forward and secure rooms at the hotels for the night. But we need not have troubled ourselves about being conspicuous in Gomshall; for, though a tolerably large place, there was not a soul to be seen save one stolid villager, who

"HE GRACIOUSLY ASSENTED."

vouchsafed us not even a glance. After securing rooms, ordering tea, and depositing knapsacks, our irrepressible pathfinder insisted that we must go for a stroll, "to make up the mileage," whatever that may mean; so, with a few gentle remonstrances we started again. Picking our way up a remarkably muddy lane for some distance, we climbed a high mound, on gaining the summit of which the president, who affects archæological tastes, gaspingly requested a halt, ostensibly because the mound was evidently artificial, in her opinion a Roman remain. We were nothing loth, and enjoyed the lovely view of fertile valley dotted with farm-houses and pretty cottages, which was spread out before us, whilst our chief diligently poked about amongst the gorse bushes, seeking, I suppose, for further proof of the Roman origin of the mound. After our tea came the writing of diaries, which process was so frequently disturbed by the portentous yawns of certain of the party, that it was thought well to

"WE BEGGED SOME WATER."

bring our literary pursuits to an abrupt conclusion and to retire at an early hour.

Early next morning, just as the sun was rising, my companion and I were aroused from our downy slumbers by a vigorous hammering at our door, for we had given stringent orders to be called betimes, and the deaf chambermaid was determined to do her duty. When she was at last convinced that we were really awake, she repeated her laudable battery at all the other doors with so much success that in a short time we were ready to start.

"Really a very moderate bill," said our treasurer, complacently, as we set out; "and, if not luxurious, everything was, at any rate, clean and comfortable."

"Quite true, as it happens," said the artist; "but I believe our respected treasurer would think the accommodation in a workhouse princely, provided the bill were small."

"I was under the impression," remarked our poet, with a fine air of innocence, "that board and lodging were provided gratuitously at those establishments."

"So I believe; and it's a splendid idea," cried the treasurer; "and, since you have suggested it, we will by all means go to the casual ward to-night at Farnham; it will be a great saving of money, and quite a new experience too." On the whole, however, as we disliked gruel, and did not know how to pick oakum, we decided not to act on our treasurer's suggestion. This conversation brought us to the village of Shere, where there is an interesting old church, kept locked up, however, according to the foolish custom in England. The stairs to the gallery are outside the church, and there is a curious Norman doorway. Obtaining the key, which is itself a curiosity, being nearly as long as my arm, we entered, and admired the fine modern window, old brasses, and other interesting objects.

"AN INTERESTING OLD CHURCH."

"WE POLITELY DECLINED."

We were all familiar with the Silent Pool, which lay about a mile away, and had often looked in wonder at its limpid depths of moonlight clearness, and had gathered the wild sweetbriar and forget-me-nots from its banks, so on this occasion we did not diverge from our path to visit the favourite spot, but proceeded at once by a field-path into a park, called, according to the map, "Albury," where our artist was in constant raptures at the lovely effects of sunlight on the trees, and the picturesque glimpses of hills beyond. She was also anxious for us to stop to admire some Channel Island cattle, but I was of opinion that in this case discretion was the better part of valour, and so did not pause until I was safe on the further side of the fence.

Shortly afterwards we were directed by our pathfinder to leave the high road and clamber up a steep grassy hill, at the top of which we should find "St. Martyr's," or, as it is now called, "Martha's," Chapel. "Here," she said, when she had recovered her breath after the climb, "here the Canterbury Pilgrims, in whose steps we have been treading all day, used to stay for rest and prayer." "Oh, pathfinder," cried the president, reproachfully, "you surely do not expect us to believe that they would come so far out of their way, and up this dreadful hill, to say their prayers and to rest, forsooth, when they could have done it just as well by the roadside." The pathfinder immediately prepared to prove by an overwhelming mass of authorities that the pilgrims much preferred hill-tops for their resting-places; but her attention was diverted by the poet to the lovely view of verdant, smiling country, while the president proceeded to examine the chapel, and pronounced it "quite modern, and not very interesting." Notwithstanding this adverse verdict, the artist and I attempted to sketch the building and its few simple grave-mounds, but before we had succeeded to our satisfaction we were obliged to move on towards

"SUDDENLY THE PRESIDENT SCREAMED."

Guildford. When we reached the outskirts of this "fine, neat, old town" (vide guide-book), we separated for a time, the president and treasurer going to buy the materials for the out-of-door lunch, which was part of our scheme, the pathfinder and poet vanishing without any explanation, and the artist and I endeavouring to visit the Castle, which we had been told we ought to see. We found, however, that the keep was the only part remaining, and that was occupied by a party of school-boys, who informed us that visitors are no longer allowed to go over the place. We therefore rejoined the rest of our party in the lower part of the town, where we were just in time to witness the wrath of the treasurer, who had taken that spendthrift couple, the poet and pathfinder, in the very act of buying unnecessary oranges.

The president now appeared, laden with the various constituent parts of our lunch, and, after distributing the parcels as fairly as possible, we began to ascend the steep road which leads up to the Hog's Back.

A carter who was going the same way kindly offered to add our knapsacks to his load; but, as we did not fancy the look of it, we politely declined, and pretended that we quite enjoyed carrying our burdens.

The view from the Hog's Back is very beautiful and varied, with hills and dales, heathy ground, broad sheets of water and corn-field, mingled with park and pasture, but, unfortunately for pedestrians, the hedges on each side of the road are very high, so that it is only through a gap or a gateway that it can be seen. This made the walk rather monotonous, so, as we were all accustomed to singing in parts, and there was no one to be scandalised at such conduct, we "cheered it with song" for a considerable distance. Then, and always, we found it a wonderful help when we were tired or the road was dull to unite our voices in any well-known ditty, the more spirited the better.

Before very long, however, we came to a most inviting bank, and all agreed that it would be foolish to pass by so good a chance of lunching in comfort.

We, of course, took off our knapsacks, and then set up the cooking stove, while one of us begged some water from a cottage near, the mistress of which, scorning our diminutive teapot, insisted on lending us a large pitcherful.

The poet, who certainly ought to have been writing an ode on the occasion, displayed a previously unsuspected genius for poaching eggs, and turning them daintily on to the slices of bread held to receive them. They were a great success, and though the tea had prismatic colours on its surface, from some peculiarity in the pot, which made most of the party decline to drink it, on the ground that it was poisonous, preferring to quench their thirst from the pitcher instead, on the whole we felt the first course of our first *al fresco* meal to be quite satisfactory. Bread and marmalade made a sumptuous second course, and we should also have had a slice of cake each, but for the reprehensible conduct of the president. We were sitting by the road-side, and were intent on our cooking, so that none of us noticed, till they were quite close, that several cattle were being driven past. Suddenly the president screamed, and, leaping up, seized an umbrella with which to protect herself from her pet aversions, which she had just perceived. Her quick movement caused one of the cows to stop and look at her with mild and gentle wonder, which so added to her terror that when the drover made the animal proceed she thanked him effusively, and actually presented him with the remains of our cake, "as a reward," she said, "for saving all our lives." Our feelings were too deep for words, so she escaped the reproof she so richly deserved. With little delay we returned the pitcher to its owner, and continued our march along the Hog's Back, pausing at every gap to gaze at the lovely view, and after several miles taking a short rest on a road-side hillock. We were soon astonished by an exclamation from the treasurer. "Poet," she cried, and that ingenuous damsel started as though accused of some fresh crime. "I beg your pardon. I retract all my protests against your purchase of the oranges. The dust of this abominably long road has nearly choked me, and the juice of your generous present will save me from suffocation."

"It is the distinguishing mark of a great mind to confess when it has been in error," said the poet, gravely, "so, treasurer, I forgive you."

In her turn she produced an orange from her knapsack, and we were all following her example, in an attitude, I fear, rather of comfort than of elegance, when three young ladies most fashionably arrayed in lawn-tennis costume passed by, and, as we fancied, eyed us with lofty scorn. I hope they enjoyed their tennis as much as we did our oranges, but I hardly think it possible. The rest of the way to Farnham we walked without a halt, and at the ancient hostelry there we had time for a pleasant stroll in its pretty garden before retiring to our rooms, where we were speedily lapped in balmy slumbers, living over again in our dreams the lovely views and delightful events of the day.

(*To be concluded.*)

MORE THAN CORONETS.

By Mrs. G. LINNÆUS BANKS,
Author of "The Manchester Man," &c.

CHAPTER XX.

WITH GRANDMA.

KINDNESS begets kindness. Mrs. Stapleton was greatly moved by the service rendered to Hesba and Mercy by Miss Agnew and her sister, making light of their own inconvenience, and only accepting reimbursement for absolute outlay on extreme pressure. She had not left Larch Cottage, where all her married and widowed life had been spent, or its old-fashioned garden, where her husband's own hand had planted the larches and many a fragrant shrub besides, without a pang of regret, although she kept it to herself; and as she thought of those two young ladies reared in a "cosy ivy-covered vicarage," living alone at the top of a tall dingy London lodging-house, with slated roofs and chimney-pots to bound their horizon, yet thankful that they had health and ability to earn an independent subsistence, she felt herself touched in the depths of her heart.

It stirred her, moreover, to say, when discussing the home question in their temporary lodgings with her own two girls—

"You see, my dears, I have kept the best of my furniture, sufficient to furnish a nice little house, that shall hold us comfortably, with a spare bed for Willie whilst he is in London, or Brian when he comes back to us. And don't you think it would be nicer for your two friends if I took one large enough to accommodate them also, and we all lived together? They must lead very isolated lives at the top of that tall house."

The two friends, who had been taken with Mrs. Stapleton's genial, motherly face, were of the same mind when the question was put to them, but, aware of their own economies, had their doubts about "living together," and they smiled at Mrs. Stapleton's expectation of finding a "nice little house" in the heart of London, or any house moderately rented.

She soon discovered this to be correct. The "nice little house" had to be abandoned, and the good old lady resigned herself, though not without a sigh, to rent *half* a house in a crescent near Bedford-square, which confronted a similar crescent at the opposite end of a short wide street.

With Willie Forsyth's active help her household goods were unpacked and distributed amid much chatter and light-hearted merriment. Mercy clapped her hands and exulted as, one after another, familiar friends came to light. She rattled over the keys of the rather-out-of-tune cottage piano, danced on the old Turkey carpet before Willie and Hesba had fairly unfolded and laid it down, nodded and talked to portraits as if they had been living realities, hailed the picture of the *Ariel* with a blythe "hurrah," and went into ecstacies over the Chinese junk and the soap-stone pagoda. She seemed half beside herself with joy; the depression which had settled on her countenance when Brian was torn from them had given place to smiles and glee; upstairs or downstairs she ran with this thing or that, singing as she went; glass and china and chimney ornaments seemed to find their places by magic when her fingers touched them; and ever and anon she would stop in her carol or her work to fling her arms around Mrs. Stapleton's neck and with a kiss and a hug proclaim, "You dear, good, old grandma! I'm so happy."

She looked it, she felt it. "Home" was growing round her again, and she bade fair to be once more the living sunbeam of that home, there being no Mr. Mason to interpose a cloud.

Not less happy, if less demonstrative, was Hesba; but her satisfaction was tempered with sober thoughts of the sacrifice of home-ties and associations her grandmother had made for them, mingled with high resolves to repay devotion with devotion, and so apply herself to study that the good grandparent might never regret the sacrifice.

How homelike the strange rooms soon became under their hands! and none the less that Willie Forsyth was there, not certainly the Willie of her childhood, but still Willie Forsyth, Brian's old friend and hers. And the bookcase was there, and the books, no longer under interdict, and their first-floor sitting-room seemed a marvellous reproduction of the common parlour at Woodside.

Larch Cottage, despite its unpretentious name, had been a many-roomed domicile; and, although fully half the furniture had been sold, including, much to Hesba's regret, the old bureau, there was something of an overplus here.

bare the earth would look if its bright green covering were removed. In hot countries, there is nothing to equal our own fresh, moist pastures. For instance, in Palestine the heat of the sun and the dryness of the earth cause the grass to wither very soon, and travellers say all the flaunting and gorgeous flowers of the East do not hide the parched and cracked ground, and that our emerald meadows are far more refreshing to the sight. One can easily imagine how soon the eye would grow tired of crimson lilies and showy oleanders, and long to gaze upon the evergreen turf of our parks and pastures. Grass flourishes above the zone of man's cultivation, where he could never sow the seeds. '*God* maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains.' Strange to say, in these high lands the grasses do not produce seeds as they do in sheltered valleys, but the roots spread, and young plants spring from the stem, and go on increasing for ever. On some of the beautiful slopes of the Alps there are lovely green spots on which the goats feed.

"In southern countries the stems of the grass become tall, and form themselves into trees. I wish you could have a glance at these grasses, waving their silken, feathery flowers above the tree tops. There are also bamboo forests and cane-brakes from which we get sugar and other luxuries, all of the grass tribe."

"Now we will gather some grasses from the road side. I have found several kinds."

"Ah! I thought you would soon discover a variety. I will try and tell you the names."

"What sorts have I in my bunch?" asked Laura.

"You have gathered some sweet-scented vernal grass; it has two little stamens, and flowered spikelets The delicious perfume that arises from newly cut hay comes chiefly from the sweet-scented vernal grass. That pretty, soft-looking bunch with fine feathery spikelets, is bent grass, not so good for herbage as many of the others, and the hard looking kind is rye grass, common enough everywhere."

"My grasses are not a bit like Laura's," exclaimed Fanny.

"You have the crested dog's-tail grass, which has an erect head, and slender, hard stem. The other, much of the same form, but softer and more silvery looking, is cat's-tail grass. There is some quaking grass, which is very delicate and beautiful, also the brome grass, very pretty and luxuriant. I am giving you only the English names; the botanical ones are more difficult to remember. There are about twenty different kinds of grasses in our meadows and pastures, but the farmer only selects eight or ten sorts to sow for hay.

"Now we will look for some ferns, and I must first tell you ferns, mosses, and other flowerless plants are called cryptogamia—from crypt—and they include all those in which stamens and pistils have not been detected, fructification being performed by other organs. There are about three thousand kinds of ferns in the world, and in England only about thirty-five kinds are found growing wild.

"Ferns differ greatly in their habits. Some love the mountain side, some grow on old walls, others on the moist, shaded sides of streams. To discover to which class ferns belong we must look at the back, and there we shall discover the seeds arranged in various forms. *In one kind* the seed grows in little round spots like spangles, in another it grows in bars, another has its seed like a neat braid round the edges in a half-moon shape. Thus we may call them the 'spangled ferns,' the 'bar ferns' and the 'braid ferns.' In olden times fern seed was supposed to have the power of rendering people invisible, and pretty fables are told about it. No doubt insects feed on this seed, or sori, for it is so abundant the whole world might be full of ferns, if it did not perish in some way or other. It is full of a kind of oil, and burns with a flash and noise like gunpowder, but it does not explode, and is not dangerous. The fern has not leaves like other plants, so there is a peculiar name given to the fern branches. They are called 'fronds.' If you examine the fronds well, you will discover every part of it is rolled up like a ringlet (circinate or curled). Only two other vegetable productions have the same curled leaves; one is a little English plant called 'sun dew,' the other is the stately palm tree of eastern countries."

We had now reached the banks of a clear stream, where the thick trees nearly met overhead, and this was a favourite haunt of the ferns.

"What lovely green leaves those are nearly touching the water!" said Fanny.

"You mean the delicate, light green fronds of the lady fern (*Athyrium Filix Famina*). The one above it, with long ribbon-like fronds, is the hart's tongue (*Scolspendrium Officinale*). The latter is one of the bar ferns; the sori grows at the back in straight lines. This pretty graceful looking plant is the maiden's-hair fern; the seeds form half-moons round the edge (*Asplenium*). Here is another of the same kind—the bracken; both are braid ferns. Brackens grow to a great height in summer, and armed men have hidden themselves amongst them in olden times, to surprise their enemies by an unexpected attack.

"Maiden's-hair ferns grow in numerous forms, but the seed is always arranged in the same way; the stems are hard and thin, and of a delicate purple hue, like a girl's black hair.

"The fern yonder with several fronds growing in a circle is the *Filix mas*, or male fern. The seeds on the back form little round raised spots, and this is one of the spangled ferns."

Ere long we reached Overstone Lynch.

"What a lovely place!" exclaimed Fanny. "What multitudes of orchis plants, what quantities of wild honeysuckles, what thousands of flowers!" She darted down the steep path, but soon drew back, and exclaimed the place was full of bogs, and swamps, and mud.

"I brought you here on purpose to show a kind of fern called the *Osmunda regalis*, or royal fern. These ferns form into trees, and the seed-cases tower high above the large fronds, like tall brown feathers."

"I never thought ferns could be so lovely," said Laura, as she picked her steps over the moist grass, and cut off a splendid feathery head and a frond.

"I shall prize this greatly. I suppose if I press and dry it nicely it will keep?"

"Yes, it certainly will; and it would be a good plan for you and Fanny to make a collection of ferns. It might remind you of Overstone Lynch when you are far away in London again. Notice this forked-looking fern growing round the roots of the trees; the fronds have deep divisions, and it is called polypody, which means many feet. (*Polypodium Vulgare.*)

"Although ferns do not possess the gorgeous colours of flowers, nor the same useful qualities as fruits and vegetables, still they are a great prize to us, for they teach us the beauty of form. They help to make the world more attractive, and we may learn many a lesson from them of God's wonderful goodness, even in the prodigality with which He has given us such graceful and wonderful varieties of elegant ferns."

A GIRLS' WALKING TOUR.

PART II.

WEDNESDAY MORNING.—Much refreshed, we rose with the lark (unless, indeed, that estimable bird rises before 7.30), and having had our usual substantial breakfast we went on our way without staying to inspect the lions of Farnham, or even to inquire if there were any.

"I'm sure we may congratulate ourselves on having good tempers," said the poet, as we stepped briskly along in the bright morning air, "because my father prophesied that we should all have quarrelled with each other before the first day was over, and should probably part and return to our respective homes on the second."

"But why should we quarrel any more than anyone else?" asked one.

"Well, I could not quite grasp his reason, but he said people always do on walking tours; it's a way they have, I suppose. They get so tired of each other's society after a day or two."

"Naturally they do, when the pedestrians are of the male sex," said our artist, who is something of a *man*-hater, "and very likely we should have been no exception to the rule had there been any gentlemen with us, so I think we have clearly proved that our arrangement is the best." Of course we all agreed, and rather than let the prediction come true I forbore for the future to express my opinions with regard to the cooking-stove, since the others all seemed peculiarly impressed with the conviction that it was the secretary's duty to carry the obnoxious machine.

Exhilarated by the fresh air and bright sun, we walked at a fine pace towards the wild barren country round the Hind-head, intending to stay the night at Haslemere.

Tilford was soon reached, and here we paused to buy provisions and also to inspect a splendid old oak tree on the green.

"It is called the King's Oak," said the pathfinder, "and is one of the boundary marks of the Waverley Abbey lands. Years ago orders were given for it to be cut down; but the country people assembled from far and near to protect the tree, which they regarded with great respect and even affection. They nailed plates of tin round the trunk so that the axes could not take effect." Seeing what she took to be incredulous looks, she added—"There are the pieces of tin before your eyes, so it must be true."

Whether the pathfinder's pretty story were true or not, we could not but be glad that the hoary old tree had stood so long, and such as were able made some hasty sketches of it, whilst the others went on an expedition to the one shop of the village, and secured a heterogeneous collection of viands for dinner.

As we left Tilford with its pretty bridge and river behind us, the aspect of the country

grew wilder, and cultivation began to give place to heather-clad hill and wide breezy moor. The road was very dusty and glaring white. The sun, mounting high in the heavens, blazed down upon us, making us pine for the sight of a tree or anything that would cast more shade than a small umbrella; but we pushed on bravely till the strange mounds called the "Devil's Jumps" were clearly visible.

At this point a very unexpected "ten minutes' interval" took place, It is superfluous to relate that we owed this halt to our president, who, spying a small lake lying placid among the heather a short distance from the road, insinuated how delightful a closer investigation of it would be. The pathfinder warned us of the distance still to be traversed, and expatiated on the beauties which would soon be unfolded to our wondering view; we looked at the hot white road, then at the clear cool water. Alas! the temptation was too strong, and, headed by the president, we set off at a run, away from the path of duty, feeling rather like Christian and Hopeful when straying into Bye-path meadow. We did not, however, like them, come to repent having strayed, for of all the delightful remembrances of our tour, none is looked back to with more pleasure than the rest beside that lonely lake. We lay down on the springy heather, most luxurious of couches, revelling in the floods of sunshine, whilst a gentle breeze fanned our hot faces as we gazed up into the cloudless blue overhead. We drank from the transparent water, where a tiny waterfall rushed over the stones in mimic wrath. We watched the caddis-flies and other "strange creepy creatures" cutting capers in the water, all unconscious of the curious eyes marking their every movement, whilst a lark, hidden from view in the clouds, trilled forth its glad song "thanking the Lord for a life so sweet." The babble of the fairy cascade, the sound of insects humming drowsily, and the bird's song just broke the stillness that otherwise would have been oppressive. All too swiftly the moments flew by, we each knew we must soon be moving onwards, and yet dreaded hearing the pathfinder give the signal. Suddenly, looking at her watch, she started to her feet and exclaimed—

"Oh, it's actually twelve o'clock! How could I let you waste so much time by this silly little pool! You must shoulder knapsacks instantly. Come, wake up, president. Now secretary, I long to hear the cheerful jangle of the stove again."

With much regret we obeyed her behests. Leaving our lovely resting-place, we were soon marching along the fine country road, and shortly began the actual ascent of the Hind-head.

Two hours' walking brought us to a belt of firs on the road side, in the cool depths of which we lunched, getting water for tea from a well hard by, said to be 200 feet deep. No misadventures occurred, except the usual one of setting fire to the grass by the stove-lamp. As this happened almost every day, we became very expert at extinguishing conflagrations of this sort, and ceased to notice them much, though at first they proved rather exciting.

We were very expeditious over our repast, having already spent too much time on the road; indeed we were all anxious to start again quickly, for the scenery through which we were passing became more and more grand, and we longed to be at the top of the hill to see the view which we knew was in store.

"How far is it to the Devil's Punch Bowl?" asked the pathfinder, of a rustic sitting astride a low stone wall.

"Dunno, never yeard tell on't," was the stolid answer.

"*What* ignorance!" murmured she, and hastened on to ask a woman approaching. This individual seemed to have the very vaguest ideas of distances, but hazarded in reply, "It moight be about three moile." The next pedestrian declared it to be a "good foive moile," whilst still another said even further than that.

Our guide concluded not to ask any more questions, so we trudged on. The strange parallel valleys causing the road to make a wide detour, possibly accounted for the difference of opinion about the distance. At last we reached the celebrated Punch Bowl. No doubt every one who knows Surrey will be familiar with this spot—one of the finest in that beautiful county. Standing there, half way up the Hind Head, one sees range upon range of bleak, rounded hills. Conspicuous among them are the three conical peaks mentioned before as marking the jumps taken by the individual said to own the Punch Bowl. Behind, the ascent is more abrupt and steeper than that of the road by which we have come.

"WE LAY DOWN ON THE SPRINGY HEATHER."

At our very feet is the great hollow scooped out in the bosom of the earth, so sudden and unexpected as readily to account for the superstition which gave its name.

On its brim is a tombstone, erected to the memory of an unknown sailor foully murdered on this spot, and whose tragic end is set forth in a curious inscription. Coiled about the base of the stone lay a viper recently killed, perhaps by some passer-by. This gave the finishing touch to the weird, unnatural character of the scene. Gazing, in a silence unbroken by voice of any living thing, it was with almost a sigh of relief that we heard the sound of sheep-bells tinkling faintly far below us. We then saw for the first time, dwarfed by distance, but still recognisable, a substantial and most *un*ghostly farmhouse nestling amongst the trees in the very Punch Bowl itself.

With that, all our eerie feelings vanished, and then someone remembered that this place is mentioned by Nicholas Nickleby, he having stopped to rest here when on his way to Portsmouth with poor Smike.

Turning away from the melancholy scene, we were soon at the top of the hill, whence a wonderfully extensive view is obtained. From thence a picturesque lane, whose high hedges sent forth long trails of honeysuckle, clematis, and rose, led to Haslemere, our goal. We had, for some reason or other, all been filled with intense admiration for Haslemere, never having seen it. Perhaps we rather associated it with the poems of the Laureate who lives there. However, our expectations were high, and, as is nearly always the case when one expects much, we were disappointed.

The pathfinder and myself had gone to reconnoitre, and we read in each other's faces the tale of blighted hopes.

"Oh, pathfinder, we *cannot* stay here, it's so very tame after what we have come through," I exclaimed.

"It is; painfully so," said my companion; "and see, the sun is not thinking of setting yet, it won't be dark for hours. Do let us go on again."

"But where to? and what will the others say?"

"Oh, if we settle all before they arrive, and then just say we are going on to such and such a place, they will take it quite calmly."

Consulting the map, we found the next village to be Fernhurst, which sounded charming to us, and some women standing near told us there was sure to be accommodation there, as there were two inns, which could not both be full. Thus encouraged, we went to meet the others, who, hearing it was only two miles to Fernhurst, were quite satisfied with the arrangements.

It was rather a dismaying discovery to find the "two inns" to be really nothing more than small public-houses, and quite impracticable, but hearing of a larger inn with a farm attached a mile away, we started on again, hopefully. The pathfinder and I feeling responsible in this matter, as we had been the ones to decide on leaving Haslemere, went quickly on, feeling a trifle anxious lest there should not be room at the "Old Ewe's Head." It proved to be indeed the beau ideal of an old-fashioned country inn, standing back from the road, with a little green in front, in the middle of which was an immense patriarchal elm tree, whose branches, stretching out all round, nearly touched the trees on the other side of the road. Round the great gnarled trunk were seats ranged, on which doubtless, the lords of the creation resident in the neighbourhood would sit, when the day's work was done, smoking their evening pipe, and talking over the affairs of the nation.

The landlady, a buxom and highly good-natured dame, was really distressed to find we required more than one small room, which was all she could offer. This being the melancholy fact, my companion and I were, for the moment, plunged into a state of abject despair. The only information the landlord could give was that we were nine miles from anywhere. "Ah, yes," he said, "it's a good nine mile afore you'll come anywhere worth mentioning; and a lonely road too, a very lonely road, it is. Well do I remember when I was a lad going down that road of a morning with the other lads to see the gibbet, and sometimes there'd be as many as three bodies hanging there all at once; just opposite that pond as you'll see, 'bout two mile from here, where the trees meets over your 'ead now, that's where them gibbets used for to stand. Yes, a very lonesome road it is, and no mistake." He continued in this strain for some time; we had gone out to consult him whilst the tea we had thought it prudent to have ready against the others' arrival, was being prepared. Happily, the landlady broke in upon his enlivening information by coming to say the kettle was "just on the boil" and that tea would be ready in a minute.

"What's my old man been telling you about nine miles from nowhere, ladies? I heard him through the window; but never you heed him, he always was such a one to put the worst side upmost. I'll set you on the road as 'll bring you to Midhurst under five miles, so you'll get there 'fore it's dark if you go as quick as you was when you come here. And as for them gibbets, he knows as well as I do that they've been all took down and done away with these forty years; so don't you heed him, ladies."

This was reviving, and we felt ready to fall upon her neck and weep for joy, but refrained, and greeted our companions with a sprightly air, refusing to tell them anything till after tea. And what a tea that was! Such new-laid eggs and fresh butter, such cream and new bread, and the giant water-cress, home-made jam, and native honey, combined with all the other good things, made up a repast not soon to be forgotten. And how the eatables vanished! We might not have eaten for a week, to see how quickly the table was cleared. At last we were satisfied, and with many directions from the kind hostess and predictions of evil from her saturnine spouse, we set off on the last stage of that long day's journey.

A lovely walk it was. Through the roadside trees were seen distant hills bathed in the ruddy sunset glow, and the sky, where visible through the green roof overhead, was flecked with amber and crimson and gold. The sunset was a glorious one, but it reminded us that

"A LARGER INN, WITH A FARMYARD ATTACHED."

darkness would soon follow, and we must hurry on. And hurry we certainly did, too much so, perhaps, as it soon became evident that we had missed the way among the many short cuts recommended.

After floundering wildly about for a little, we were soon hopelessly lost, so we stopped to hold a council of war. The pathfinder and I volunteered to scour the country round till we met with either a house or a person to ask. Climbing to the top of a five-barred gate, from whence a very extensive view is obtained, I surveyed the prospect o'er till I discovered—oh joyful spectacle!—a house. The guide and I hastened to it, and our thanks will be for ever due to the lady of that house, who, with the greatest kindness, put us in the right road, by which a mistake would be impossible.

"Putting our best foot foremost," we went along at a good pace, singing "Marching thro' Georgia," and other martial airs, when sure there was no one "around," till at last our long walk was over, and we were peacefully ensconced in our hotel at Midhurst, having come twenty-three miles.

Next morning our rule of early rising was, for the first time, broken, in fact I fear it was nearly nine o'clock before we gathered round the breakfast-table. We all felt rather stiff, and some of us even a little foot-sore, though our constant practice of bathing the feet in warm water, with a few drops of arnica therein, saved us from much suffering in that way.

"A PARTY OF VILLAGERS SPECULATING ABOUT US."

After visiting the beautiful ruins of Cowdry, we crossed the park and gained the high road to Petworth. We were rather curious to see this little town, having heard a story of a regiment of soldiers which was ordered there. They marched what seemed to them to be more than the proper distance without apparently getting any nearer the town; they then made inquiries and learned that they had already passed through the place, without being aware of the fact, and were marching back to London! I think the town must have considerably changed since this extraordinary thing took place.

The inhabitants appeared to think the spectacle of six girls dressed alike, with knapsacks in their hands (we always carried them thus in the towns), a curious and interesting one. We bought our viands, however, in spite of the eyes staring through the shop window at the transaction, and the noble president presented herself and us with a tin can, which the shopman filled with water for us.

Leaving Petworth, we went on only till out of the range of vision of its denizens, and then turning up a lane, we seated ourselves on the grass, and leaning against a gate, with our feet on our knapsacks, we lunched as comfortably as we could have done in our own dining-room. We were just congratulating ourselves on our privacy, too, when a gate at the end of the lane was opened, and a carriage and pair dashed past, its occupants gazing with astonishment at the merry party, and the various component parts of the luncheon that lay scattered around us.

It was always found that we walked better and with more enjoyment after lunch than before, and to-day was no exception. Passing along the pleasant lanes and across the

"NO BREAD LEFT, MISS."

open heaths, singing and telling tales to beguile the way, stiffness and blistered feet might have been things to us unknown, and we could hardly believe our day's walk was done, when we arrived at Pullborough.

As we left the village next morning, we heard a party of villagers speculating about us, and the president's gift evidently supplied them with a clue to our pursuits.

"They'll be painters, I reck'n," said one. "See the can that one be carrying? That's to hold the co'ours, that is."

Our road was said to be the Roman Stone Street. We could well believe it for, as our poet remarked, "it needs a great deal of the iron determination attributed to the Romans to tramp along this straight undeviating road." A bend or turn here and there would have been quite a relief; but no such weak-minded deviation from the severe straightness occurred.

At Billingshurst we were dismayed on visiting the only bread-shop to hear the owner say she had none left; but after a search in the back regions of her establishment she emerged with one very small loaf, all she had, and with that we had to be content. We lunched in a somewhat marshy spot, but the damp had happily no ill effects, being counteracted, perhaps, by our usual drink of tea each.

The day was very warm, and the president's can proved a great comfort, for we refilled it on every opportunity so as to be able to quench our thirst as we went along. This night, the last of our tour, we spent in a comfortable hotel at Horsham.

Saturday morning broke gloomy and threatening, but as it did not actually rain we determined to start as usual, and it was not till we were beyond the region of railways that the storm began in earnest. It was trying to have to put up with the very limited view of the pretty country which is obtainable from beneath an umbrella; but as it was the only wet day we had, we tried to persuade ourselves that it was quite a pleasant variety.

Our pathfinder had spent the previous evening in measuring on her maps and counting up the distances of each day. She now told us that, on our arrival at the starting-place, we should have walked altogether 96 miles, making an average of 16 miles a day, though, as will have been seen, we had generally been either above or below the average.

The treasurer, too, had been busy with her account-book, and it may be of interest to my readers to know exactly what our tour cost. The total expenditure for the six of us during six days and five nights was £8 4s. 6d., which gives £1 7s. 5d. as the share of each, or 4s. 6d. each per day. This included everything, excepting only the president's noble gift of a tin can, value 3d. Our treasurer said that our plan of having "high tea" in the evening instead of dinner was an economical one. And, of course, taking our midday meal in the open air cost much less than having it at an hotel would have done, besides being much more agreeable. We should all have been very sorry to have missed the pleasure and fun of our daily picnics.

As we neared home the clouds broke, and the drops became few and far between.

"Look!" cried the artist, "there is quite a bright gleam of sunshine; we shall reach home under smiling skies after all."

"I believe we shall," said another of the party. "What a time of great enjoyment we have had! Do you know, I can't help thinking of this verse all the time—

'Oh God, oh Good beyond compare,
If thus Thine earthly works are fair,
How glorious will those mansions be
Where Thine elect shall dwell with Thee!'"

For a moment or two we were all silent; then the president, looking up, cried—"See, there is our own home in sight. Now for a spurt, so as to come in gaily at last!" And so, with happy faces and thankful hearts, we marched up to the door, feeling, as we received the hearty welcome awaiting us, that we should be richer and better all our lives for the delightful hours spent in our walking tour.

DORA HOPE.

THE DRESS OF THE MONTH.

I AM always most desirous of helping those amongst our readers who are endeavouring to make their own dresses, as they deserve every encouragement in their laudable efforts. The girl who has succeeded in making a dress for herself has a new feeling of independance, and a degree of pride in her own abilities which will probably lead her on to making fresh attempts in "self-help," that will both benefit herself and everyone about her. All costumes are still composed of draped skirts and bodices, which may, or may not be of the same material. This skirt is called in Paris a *jupe drapé*, and we hear that they are sold there ready-made, to be worn with any bodice; for the French ladies—always managing and clever—have quickly noted their value in an economical point of view. This draped and trimmed skirt has quite taken the place of the ordinary skirt sold, which used to require a tunic or polonaise, as well as a bodice. They are to be obtained in Paris in silk, black and coloured, in Surah silk and satin, as well as in Corah, foulard, cambric, *percale*, gingham, cotton, and sateen. A few polonaises are to be seen, some of them with the front turned up like a *laveuse* tunic, and the back draped—an excellent idea for anyone who wishes to remodel an old polonaise. But the fashionable revival of the polonaise fastens behind and has puffed sleeves, and is made in velvet or striped Pekin, of satin and silk, or satin and velvet, a style which will probably last through the autumn, as it is most becoming and pretty. Hoods look extremely well on handsome dresses made in this way, and are lined with bright colours, like the "Zingari stripes."

But to return to skirts. All walking skirts must be made as narrow as possible, and the effect of the whole skirt demands that great care should be exercised in the cutting-out of the foundation, which, if the dress be of silk or any good material, may be of twilled lining, or of alpaca, to match the colours of the dress. The front breadth alone is slightly gored, and the fulness of the back breadths is gathered in at the waist behind, while two darts make it sit well over the hips. The width of the skirt should not exceed two yards at the edge. Kilted skirts are still much worn, as well as those with quantities of small gathered flounces, some of them extending to the waist.

Princesse dresses have by no means disappeared, but are worn both for day costumes and evening toilettes, though the skirts are so much trimmed and overwhelmed with draperies that they have lost their distinctive appearance. The *robe de chambre*, or tea gown, alone is allowed to retain the Princesse character, and to fall with uninterrupted folds to the feet.

The old gathered bodices, plain at the shoulders and neck, and gathered into a band at the waist, are adopted by many young people, and are worn with a wide belt and a bow under the arm, but this style is only suited to certain figures, and is therefore not very largely adopted. Pointed bodices, with Henri IV. bands and puffs, are much worn for full dinner and evening dress, as well as the Elizabethan standing ruff. A *jabot* of this description is one of the most effective of our recent evening toilettes, and may be made up without difficulty at home. It has been already illustrated in the June monthly number at page 317, and for the evening need only be carried a little lower down the front, with the *jabot* lengthened to the end