

HOW TO FORM A SMALL LIBRARY.

"Books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good."

—Wordsworth.



It would be easy to fill a whole number of this magazine with the good things that have been said from time to time about books and reading. Some of these have been far-fetched, no doubt, just as we find man's expressions inclined to extravagance when he speaks of her he cares for most, but in the main they are no more enthusiastic than the subject deserves.

In books, be it remembered, we have the best products of the best minds, and in such a form, too, that we can conveniently appropriate them for our own use. Through books

we enjoy the companionship of the most noble spirits, not only of the present but of the past. Think of this, and you will be inclined to re-echo the words of Sir John Herschel, "If I were to pray for a taste which should stand me in stead under every variety of circumstances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to me through life and a shield against its ills, however things might go amiss and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading."

We must be fully alive to all the advantages of reading or we are not likely to be much interested in anything that can be said on the formation of a small library. Unfortunately, ignorance with its narrow views gives bad counsel in many a home, and the reading of books is often regarded as a refined species of trifling, instead of being, as it is, the most economical pleasure, and the most profitable of employments.

Those in the habit of observing what goes on in the circle of their friends will readily acknowledge that reading good books, if it does no more, at any rate does this, it raises the tone of the mind and purifies the morals in much the same way as the frequenting of good society. No one, it has been said, can write in a vulgar style who is in the frequent habit of reading the Bible, and the remark may be applied, though in a less degree, to all books. A girl becomes a reflection of the graces of her favourite authors, and though she may have no wealthy or aristocratic friends, if she moves at home in the society of Shakespeare and Milton she can never be commonplace, and will always make herself respected.

By reading, too, we learn how best to make our way in the world. Almost everything worth our knowing is to be found in books, and if a girl has to earn her own living, let her read till she makes herself mistress of all connected with the business in which she is engaged. This is a way to succeed that will seldom be found to fail.

The study of books, to mention another advantage, enables us to take our place with credit in society. When people meet together it should be to exchange ideas, and the trifling conversation one hears nowadays, in the company of otherwise very charming women, arises in a great measure from the fact that they have never acquired a taste for reading.

But one of the greatest charms connected with books is that by their aid we can support loneliness with tranquility. Take the case of a girl away from home, and working every day for her living amongst strangers. How invaluable books are to her, supplying her

with the most friendly counsel, the most wholesome instruction, the most rational amusement, and the best of companionship. There are thousands of young women in London and other large towns, who, if they could only be induced to form a small library, would find in it the surest safeguard against the perils which surround their solitary condition.

We might show, also, how reading puts us in the best possible position for doing good in the world, and how the formation of a taste for it is one of the best preparations for the old age that will insist on coming all too soon. But the subject is one which you girls can work out for yourselves; so think it over, and you are all so sensible, that I anticipate your coming to the conclusion that every one who can afford anything beyond the necessaries of life should set apart a definite sum at regular intervals for books, and form the habit of always looking out for new ones.

You may have it cast in your teeth that you are nothing but a book-worm. Never mind; have the answer ready, that a book-worm is one of the most respectable of worms, and that you are in company to be proud of. There is certainly one class of book-worm which I hope you will never be like; to it belong all those who love nothing but books, and are so absorbed in them that they forget their duties in real life. But this sort of book-worm in our busy age is fast becoming an extinct animal.

A well-chosen library, growing larger year by year, is an honourable part of a girl's history. No one whose opinion is worth having, but will love and esteem her the more for it.

To all girls I say, never marry a husband who has not a collection of books of more general interest than his cash-book and ledger. The reading young man makes a stay-at-home fireside-loving husband. Like to like. Unhappily, it is not always so. The book-lover marries, and is linked for life to one who thinks books an encumbrance, and the money spent on them a waste. When he comes home with a newly-bought treasure he has perhaps—it is no overdrawn picture—to slink through the shrubbery, and drop his book in at the library window, before he goes round to his own front door to ring the bell.

Alas! It is a difficult thing to convince some people that there is any necessity for buying and owning books. They point out how many circulating libraries there are in the country, and how there are public libraries and free libraries everywhere for the express benefit of earnest students and those of voracious literary appetite.

Now the value of these institutions no one can deny. But the fact remains that to get real benefit from the best books, we must buy them and keep them always beside us. Think of sending to a circulating library for a copy of Spenser, or Milton, or Dante, to be read and returned in fourteen days. No; books like these are not to be run through as you would a volume of travels or a popular story.

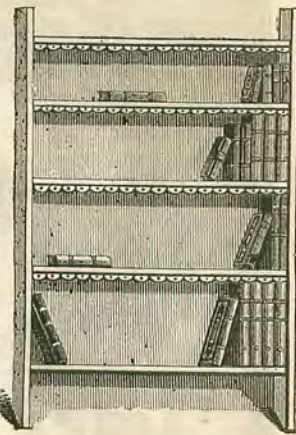
Books of reference, also—dictionaries, commentaries, and such like—we should own. Asking at the library for the loan of a dictionary would show about as ill-furnished a house as begging your next-door neighbour to lend you a teapot or a frying-pan.

However, though it cannot be stated too emphatically that no one who really loves books should abandon the pleasure of possessing them, and that, however small, everyone should have a collection of her own, we do not advise the neglect of circulating libraries. In them we find the literature of the day, and with that it is the duty of everyone to be more or less acquainted. We live in the present, not in the past, and if we are to be of any use in our time we must understand what is going on.

How many books should our small library contain?

This is a question of considerable difficulty, but as we are bound to name some number, suppose we say fifty. Fifty volumes of good books form a respectable library, and they may be so selected as to contain a vast fund of beauty, wisdom, and information.

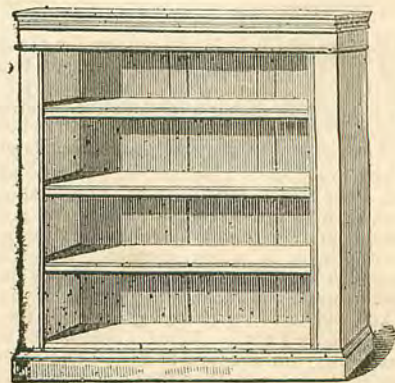
Of course, compared with the number of books that have been published, fifty is but a millionth part of a drop in a bucket. You might, if your tastes lay that way, gather together over a thousand volumes on the subject of chess alone, and



a fully-appointed library in theology must contain far over 30,000 volumes. But it is impossible to buy all literary works, and it is perhaps not desirable even to buy a great many, unless you wish your room to be like that of one of my friends, in which you cannot sit down for the books piled up on the chairs. Fifty will do very well to start with.

Fifty, then, be it. It will be a matter of great surprise if you stop at fifty. In book buying the appetite increases with every purchase. I began—if by way of illustration one may be permitted a scrap of autobiography—not so many years ago with modest notions and a handful of half a dozen books. Now I have considerably over four thousand volumes, and the modest notions have given place to extravagant visions of additional spoil. But none of you girls are ever likely to be in such a bad way. The famous founders of libraries have for the most part been old bachelors.

Now what will be the cost of our small library of fifty? The purse of the fairy tales that was always full of gold and silver has either been lost, or the present possessor keeps it all to herself; otherwise, we might speak of cost with perfect indifference. But as it is, we must look the question in the face, and in times when people are reluctant to spend because money is hard to obtain, we shall do our best to be economical.



At one time books could only be obtained at great expense, but things have changed since then, and the best literature is to be had



TRUST.

o you remember? Yesterday was bright,
And fresh and fair;
The sea was sunny blue—and rippled o'er
By soft sweet air.

“But look how those wild waves, foam-tipped and
Roll in to-day; [dark,
Listen how sadly those great restless winds
Howl round the bay.

“Their moan and roar *will* strike upon my heart
With sudden pain;
Oh! will my boy—my bonny sailor boy
Come back again?”

“O faithless heart! be still. For God is God
As much to-day
As when the world and sea and sky were fair
And bright and gay.

“Are not the winds His messengers of Love,
Doing His will?
'His path is in the sea,' and His dear voice
Has said, 'Be still.'

“And He can say it now. Trust then, O heart!
And be at rest;
Your sailor boy is in His Father's hands,
And *must* be blest. L. A. M.

at a figure which it is no exaggeration to say is no cost at all. The fifty books will cost, on an average, two shillings apiece; thus five pounds will cover the whole library. It might even be done for less, but in giving a quotation it is better to err on the safe side. Should it cost quite five pounds, it will, I hope and believe, prove the best investment of that sum you ever made or can make.

The five pounds need not be paid out all at once; indeed, ought not. The accumulation of your library should be spread over a long time, or it is not likely to do you much good. Besides, what is the pleasure of going into a bookseller's shop and ordering fifty books to be sent home in a box, compared with the delight of paying the bookseller visit after visit, looking over his shelves, picking out treasure after treasure, and carrying them home in your hand?

You might begin by laying aside for the purposes of your library, say a shilling a week. What would be the result? A shilling a week makes fifty-two shillings in a year, and amounts up to a hundred and four shillings—more than the five pounds you require by four shillings—in two years. If a shilling a week is too much, say sixpence, and if a girl cannot spare sixpence, there is no reason in the world why she should not set aside threepence. True, she will not have com-

pleted her fifty books for eight years, but she will know them in the end quite as thoroughly as if she had bought them in two, and that is the great matter.

It is impossible to gather together a library, however small, without making some sacrifice for it. And the books are all the dearer if to purchase them we have denied ourselves something. Reduce the amount you spend in dress, if that can be done without ceasing to be tidy and respectable, and your library is already gained and an incalculable addition made to your chances of happiness and usefulness.

There is no reason why we should not buy almost all our books second-hand; it makes a great difference in the expense, and the books are often none the worse for having previously formed part of another's library. Avoid, however, forming a ragged regiment. There is a joy in thumbing one's own books out of existence for oneself, but none in using books half-thumbed out of existence by other people.

The best plan in buying second-hand books is to make the acquaintance of some large dealer who has a general stock which he is frequently turning over, not one who deals in any particular class of books. Tell him the books you wish to buy, and if you have any skill in the art of management, you will not be long in making his experience of material service to your inexperience.

You cannot buy expensive editions; that is understood. But, after all, we want books to read, not to look at, and they will serve our turn if they are so clearly printed as not to try the eyes. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that there is a real enjoyment in reading a fine edition, and it would be affliction to say that we would not invariably buy the best copies if money were always at command.

Neither can you indulge in extravagant bindings. Dictionaries and books that are frequently handled should have strong leather binding; for all others the ordinary cloth is good enough. Some people who have only a half-hearted interest in paper and print, recommend that we should never bind up our magazines. On the other hand, bind up everything, say I, magazines, pamphlets, prospectuses, and programmes. You have no idea of what interest a few such odd volumes will become in the course of a few years.

While on the subject of magazine literature, we might mention that every girl should by this time have had the numbers or parts of the first volume of the GIRLS' OWN PAPER bound up, so that they may not become dirty and untidy-looking. Every girl who is not extravagant, and who wishes to make the best use of her paper, should have the “Annual” already on her bookshelf, so that, with the aid of the index, she might be able to refer to any information that has already been printed relating to matters requiring immediate attention. This is the more important to a wise girl, as it is the editor's intention to decline to repeat any assistance or instruction that has already been imparted in the first volume.

Now we can speak about the bookcase—the house in which our family of books is to be lodged. About it there is no great difficulty, for fifty books do not require much space. Between sixty and seventy inches of shelf-room will be quite enough for that number.

We must, however, provide extra accommodation for library books, and for books borrowed from friends, as well as for magazines and other periodicals, so I think we would not make quite a satisfactory start unless we had at least nine feet of shelving. This would not be a tight fit.

But beware of having too much space. Nature abhors a vacuum, and so does every well-regulated mind detest a bookshelf with nothing on it. Many a one has been seized by all the symptoms of bibliomania just from possessing a bookcase a few feet larger than he actually required.

The material of which the bookcase is made should, according to the laws of artistic furnishing, be the same as the principal furniture of the room in which it is to stand. Circumstances, however, must be our guide, and as I am always in favour of economy, especially in starting a new pursuit, my advice is in favour of a bookcase at first of the cheapest wood that looks respectable.

There is not much choice in the matter of form. The hanging bookshelves and the dwarf bookcase shown in the illustrations on the previous page are very neat, and will be found to answer admirably, whilst they are so simple in construction that a girl's brother, if accustomed to the use of tools, might put them together in a few spare hours.

We have now discussed the accommodation for our books. Next, about the books themselves. What are the fifty to be? JAMES MASON.

HOW TO FORM A SMALL LIBRARY.—II.



We agreed, you may remember, to aim at accumulating a library of fifty books. Now what these fifty are to be is a nice question, for a great deal depends on the character and education of the people who are to read them.

The poet Southey once drew out a "list of a gentleman's necessary library," and the works he put in it were the Bible, Shakespeare, Spenser's "Faerie Queen," Sidney's "Arcadia," the works of Sir Thomas Browne, the works of the Rev. Cyril Jackson, Walton's "Complete Angler," Clarendon's History, Milton, Chaucer, Jeremy Taylor, South's Sermons, and Fuller's "Church History." These are all good books, and one of Southey's scholarly tastes might think his bookshelves completely furnished with nothing else; but it is doubtful whether we, who are less sedate, would care for five books out of the whole thirteen.

Perhaps the poet would have been as little satisfied with the following "list of a girl's library;" but if you, girls, are pleased that is enough.

The longer I think about the fifty, the smaller the number seems to be. Let none of you run away with the impression that a little book-case can contain all the literature of worth in the world. Even had you ten times that number you might well heave a sigh at the consideration of the number of works of beauty and glory of which you have not so much as turned over the leaves.

Many of our books will be necessary ones, but others I shall mention only "on approval." They are recommended, certainly, with all the enthusiasm with which one introduces his best friends: but if a girl desires to read other books, then those others are likely to do her most good, so let her buy them, after taking counsel with some friend whose judgment she respects.

In selecting the fifty I have tried to put it to myself in this way: Suppose I were Mary, or Kate, or Alice, and banished—of course for nothing at all—to a desert island, what books would I carry with me of a useful and fairly representative kind, so that the time might be pleasantly and profitably spent till remorse attacked my oppressors and urged my recall? Here they are:—

The first is the Bible, the best of books and a library in itself. "Turn it, and turn it

again," says an old writer, "for everything is in it." The Bible should form the keynote of every collection, and all the rest should be in harmony with it. Get a good edition, with notes, and strongly bound, so that it may stand constant handling.

Whoever sets a high value on the Bible will welcome every aid to the understanding of its sacred pages. The best of all helps in this way is "Cruden's Concordance," of which there are several cheap and serviceable editions to be had.

Of other religious books to be placed beside the Bible and the Concordance, we shall choose five. The first is the "Pilgrim's Progress," the work of the "prince of dreamers." No other book in the English language, the Bible alone excepted, has, as everyone knows, obtained so constant and so wide a sale.

Besides prayer-book and hymn-book, you should have a good manual of daily devotional reading. Bogatzky's "Golden Treasure" is an old favourite, and one of the best of those recently published is "The Daily Round." The "Book of Praise," edited by Lord Selborne, is one of the best collections of sacred poetry. With the concordance, I ought to have mentioned the new Companion to the Bible, published at 56, Paternoster-row, a little book, with much information on scriptural subjects. The Bible Handbook of Dr. Angus is also of great value.

We have now decided on seven books, but perhaps we have gone ahead too fast. We should, maybe, have begun by speaking of what are strictly utility books, books not for reading but for reference. These form a good solid foundation for a library.

There must be a Dictionary of your own language, of course, and let it be the best you can afford to buy. When you get it, too, use it, and never fall into the lazy habit of making a guess at a word whose meaning you do not know. As a supplement to the dictionary, you must have a good work on English Grammar; including, if possible, a sketch of the history of the language. When on the look out for this at your second-hand bookseller's, do not buy the first that offers merely because you have not patience to wait till another turns up. The best and most satisfactory purchases are often only to be made by waiting.

Next comes a Dictionary of Dates, which will give you in a disjointed fashion the history of the world. To this should be added the "Elements of History," and from it you will gain a correct idea of the orderly progress of events.

A Dictionary of Biography cannot be done without; neither can a Gazetteer, and we can as little dispense with an Atlas. Let these books be of recent date; give the cold shoulder indeed on every occasion to antiquated books of reference. They are little better than waste paper.

You must now narrow your views, and having what will represent in a general way the places, the biography, and the notable events of the whole world, invest in a History of your own country; it must be the best your purse can afford. But stay, we said that when speaking of the dictionary. It is, indeed, a rule applicable to every book bought for your library.

Whose history should it be? Why, my friend, if I were to name an author for this, or for many another of these books, it would be of small use. If we had started with the understanding that you were going to buy them all new it would have been different. As it is, you must take the best that present themselves, and may fortune send you a happy choice!

A Handbook of English Literature will come

nicely now, giving short notices and specimens of all the famous authors who have adorned the past. This is a most interesting branch of study, one rich in everything that can enlarge the mind and improve the heart. There is none better than the Handbook of Dr. Angus, and its companion volume, "Specimens of English Literature."

An Atlas and Geography you must possess; Milner's Geography, new edition, by Keith Johnston, is the best. Add next a Guide to your own town or county, so that you may take an intelligent interest in your own immediate neighbourhood.

In Biography there is an immense number of books one would like to have, and all the more so because in biography we have one of the most valuable aids in the formation of character; but we must be satisfied with three. There is Plutarch's "Lives" to start with, a readable, medicinal, invigorating book, which is not to be spared from the smallest library. When I name it I always remember how Alfieri, the great tragic poet of Italy, read it with such enthusiasm that he was afraid the people in the next house would think he was mad. The second is Boswell's "Life of Johnson," and let the third be some collection of the lives of eminent women.

Amongst volumes of Essays we may select as many as we did of biographies. The first are those of Lord Bacon, a book containing a great fund of useful knowledge and displaying a more intimate acquaintance with human life and manners than perhaps any other. "It may be read," says the great Scotch philosopher, Dugald Stewart, "from beginning to end in a few hours, and yet, after the twentieth perusal, one seldom fails to remark in it something overlooked before." Then there is the "Spectator" of Addison and Steele, an inexhaustible mine of humour, invention, and good counsel; last of all, we must have the Essays of Lord Macaulay.

What about Poetry? Now we feel pinched, indeed, for room, and filled with alarm lest we should not be compelled to make another shelf. Let us begin by getting a good general Collection of English Poetry. There are several good ones to be had, books which will familiarise us with the names and highest efforts the chief writers of verse of our land.

We must next make the acquaintance of the ancient heroic world by purchasing and reading Pope's translation of Homer. The defects of this translation have often been pointed out, but its merits, too, are great. The only objection which you who are so gentle-minded are likely to find with it is one that belongs to the subject, and not to either the poet or his translator; the *Iliad*, at any rate, has rather much fighting in it.

The next whose works you must buy is Shakespeare, the greatest dramatic poet of the world. Then comes Dante, in whom the Middle Ages found a voice, and of Dante the most readable translation is Cary's. We must not forget the gentle Spenser either, or Milton, and these are all the poets I shall insist upon. They are five of the greatest of the great. Read them, and as you do so thank heaven for having sent such genius to brighten, elevate, and purify the lives of men.

But you may wish to add other poets, for one is sometimes most in love with lesser lights. Choose, therefore, three others, whom you please. Cowper, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Longfellow, and Scott might be suggested, and pray don't forget the "holy George Herbert."

How are we getting on now? We have named thirty-five books in all, and after enumerating fifteen more shall be at the end of our tether.

To fiction we shall devote five books. One will be "The Vicar of Wakefield," and this, by the way, you may meet with bound up in the same volume with Goldsmith's Poems, and

some of his dramatic and miscellaneous works. Thus you will increase your collection without infringing the rule as to the fifty. The remaining four should be one story by Scott, one by Dickens, and one by Thackeray—say "Pendennis," "David Copperfield," and "Vanity Fair," and one favourite—you will yourself name who he is to be. What! no? You ask me to choose, do you? Then, I say, a good translation of Grimm's "Fairy Tales," for the enjoyment of which all happy people can never grow too old. These will supply more nourishment to the imagination than half the novels in Christendom.

This will be a delightful corner of our library, but we must not be too much taken up with it. The rule, as somebody says, should be this—"Mix light reading with serious reading, so that the one shall not engross nor the other weary."

Good Letter-writing is a rare accomplishment, and one book may be named as a model in this department. Critics of most opposite tastes, Southey, Jeffrey, Robert Hall, have all pronounced the poet Cowper the most charming of letter-writers. An edition of his selected letters, with memoir, and notices of his correspondents, is published at the office of this paper.

In Science we must have something, and the most charming work in this line I know is White's "Natural History of Selborne." Get it by all means, and it will teach you, as it has already taught many, to be a close observer of nature and an enthusiast for rural life. Add to this one work of a thorough-going character on any science for which you have a decided taste: botany, zoology, astronomy, or anything else.

Now we come to miscellaneous books, and of these you would do well to have three at least: a Dictionary of Quotations, a Book of English Proverbs, and a Collection of Anecdotes. These are all food for thought, and most valuable for such as know how to use them.

Of "home books" you must have three also. Let one be a sensible work on Cookery, another a book on Domestic Management, and the third a Guide to the Preservation of Health and the cure of simple ailments. These all treat of subjects belonging to the sphere of woman, and you will relish the poets none the less for knowing the best way to boil potatoes, lay the fire, or bind up your little brother's cut finger.

An almanack is hardly to be reckoned in our list, being usually of pocket size; but if a book, let it be "Whitaker's Almanack," the completest and best.

You are musical, of course; so your forty-ninth book—for we have really come to the forty-ninth—should be a thorough-going treatise on the Theory of Music, another special subject for girls.

And the fiftieth; what is that to be? What should it be but THE GIRL'S OWN ANNUAL? Modesty makes the Editor insist that I should put it last, but we all know how high a place it deserves to hold. It is true that all our other books differ from THE GIRL'S OWN ANNUAL in this, that they may be had in one volume, whereas, in the course of time, there is no saying to how many volumes our magazine may grow. "But," says Mary, "never mind that; we shall shut our eyes to the peculiarity you have mentioned, and, whatever number of volumes we possess, we shall always reckon them just as one book." Thank you, Mary; you are a very nice example of woman's ingenuity.

Now our library is complete. Complete, at least, for the present; for, as I said before, the appetite for books grows by what it feeds on. In these fifty books you have a little collection representing the best thought of all

time, and containing an immense store of the most useful information, and no one who possesses it and uses it can fail to lead a happy intellectual life—a life, too, that may exercise some good influence in the world.

But never forget that many of the books just named are not of necessity the right ones for you. I hope you will in the end let them all rank with your best friends; but never, no, never, form a library on a plan suggested by somebody else without regard to your own inclinations. If a library is worth anything, it should faithfully represent the tastes and aspirations of its owner. It should be such that a stranger coming in and looking at it might say with confidence either, "There are many points of contact between that girl's mind and mine;" or, "I am sure that girl and I will never get on, for she cares for nothing that I like and likes nothing I am keen upon."

You may say that we have made our library hold more books than we can ever hope to read. I do not think so; but what matter if we have? To own more books than we can read, is one of the conditions of intellectual growth. Our minds expand even by the contemplation of the subjects we cannot master and the authors with whom we can never hope to grow familiar.

Having started your collection, keep it in good order. Keep everything in order, but especially your books. Have them neatly arranged according to size, placing the biggest on the bottom shelf as ballast. Were your library larger, I would recommend placing the books by subjects; but you will be able to run over the whole fifty in a minute, so it is not necessary, and I expect you to handle them so often that you will be able to pick them out blindfolded or in the dark.

Keep a catalogue, and whenever you bring home a book enter it; and whenever you lend one enter it also, with the date and the name of the friend who has borrowed it.

On the subject of lending, do not cease from indulging in this kindly practice because of some unhappy experiences. I sometimes think there is a great deal of false delicacy shown in not asking the borrower to return a book when one thinks she has had it long enough.

It has been suggested that at Christmas one should devote some time to searching for borrowed books and returning them to the owners. This would certainly add another charm to the festive season.

Enter all the books you borrow in an appendix to your catalogue. This is a useful practice, and in the course of time you thus secure an interesting record of all the books which have passed through your hands.

BITS ABOUT ANIMALS.

JOHNNY AND PEACOCK.—These were a pretty little pair of horses, that ran together in a carriage. They were merry little things, full of tricks and capers; but as docile and free from vice as possible. Very often, when out together, it was noticed that Johnny would give Peacock a sly kick, not enough to hurt him, but certain to be followed by a start forward and more rapid trot. This was observed again and again, and at last the coachman was asked what Johnny meant by thus assaulting his companion. "Peacock is a little bit lazy sometimes," said the man, "and does not take his honest share of work; but Johnny is a cute little fellow, and not to be done; so he just gives him a slight kick whenever he catches him lagging. Peacock knows what he means quite well, and starts off at a proper pace to keep alongside his mate, or he would soon get another and harder kick."

POLLY, THE BLIND MARE.

WHEN returning home in a cab, one day, I was much pleased with the kind and gentle manner in which the cabman treated his little mare. No whip was called into use; but now and then he cheered her on with a chirrup, a little shake of the reins, or a "Come up, Polly," which she responded to by a brisk toss of the head and more rapid trot. There seemed to be a positive friendship, as well as a perfect understanding, between the mare and her master; and, as I took out my purse to pay the man, I could not help expressing my pleasure at seeing the humane manner in which he treated her.

"No need of a whip for Polly, ma'am," said he, his face quite lighting up as he patted her sleek sides. "She's as gentle and loving as a little dog, and I should be sorry for her to have a smart of my causing. Have you noticed, ma'am, that Polly is stone blind?"

I certainly had not; and when I thought of the manner in which the mare had threaded her way, in and out, amongst all the horses and vehicles in the busiest part of Manchester, I was astonished to find that Polly had never been able to see.

"She's the best little thing that ever was," said the cabman, "and so sure footed she never slips. Many of my lady customers would rather have Polly in the shafts than any horse going, and ask for her to take them to the city. She's quite a pet, too, and often gets a piece of bread from the ladies. If we go to a house where she has once had it, she knows as well as I do, and she turns her head to the door and waits and listens for somebody to bring her a bit again. Polly's very fond of bread."

I took the hint, and brought out some bread, which the pretty creature took from my hand as gently as a child—I mean a polite child—would do. While she was munching it she kept turning her sightless eyes towards her master, and, guided by his voice, moved near enough to let her now and then place her head over his shoulder with a caressing touch, to which he always responded with a "Poor old Polly," or a pat.

I observed this scene with great pleasure, and my sympathy encouraged the man to tell me still more about Polly.

"She is just petted like a dog by the children," he said; "and when we are at dinner in the kitchen, which opens right into the yard, she will come and pop her head in and then step towards the table to be fed from their hands."

"I've a little thing, only a twelvemonth old, and she always will give Polly some broth or milk out of her spoon, and it looks so funny to see Polly taking it. Then baby gives her such small pieces of bread out of her little hand, that you would wonder she could take them without hurting the child; but she never does. She would rather drop the nicest bit than hurt the baby. We are never afraid, and the mare goes about the place like a dog; we never fasten her."

"Polly will never forget this place, ma'am. You have talked to her and given her bread, and she will know your voice as well as possible whenever she may hear it."

The mare had by this time finished her lunch, and the master, with a "Good morning, ma'am, and thank you for Polly," started on his way. Not on the box, though. He only said "Come on, old girl," and the pretty mare, guided by his voice alone, walked after her master, never deviating from the path or stepping on the edge of the lawn, until they passed the entrance gates and were lost to sight.

I always remember Polly and her kind master with peculiar pleasure, and wish that every one who has to do with horses displayed as much humanity towards them as did the kind-hearted cabman towards his little mare.

THE OBSERVER.

THE old rhyme about the cuckoo tells us that :

"In April, come he will,
In May, he sings all day,
In June, he changes his tune,
In July, away he'll fly,
In August, go he must."

The same rhyme is sometimes quoted of the nightingale, but it is especially true of the cuckoo, which generally begins its song about the middle of April. It has a particularly thin and delicate skin and seems less able to endure cold than other birds, and the first sign of waning summer drives it back to the warmer shores of Northern Africa. Its note is one of the most easily imitated by voice or instrument. Mitford says that it first begins with an interval of a minor 3rd in its song, and goes on "changing his tune," through a major 3rd, 4th, and 5th, but that its voice breaks before it can reach a minor 6th. Its usual note is a minor 3rd, sung downwards, though sometimes late in the season it seems to be reversed, and is a 3rd, or greater interval, sung upwards. Its voice is hoarse in drought, but becomes mellow again after summer showers. Its voice gradually dies away in the autumn, and its note becomes irregular, as another old rhyme says :

"At first koo—koo, sing still can she do;
At last kooke—kooke—kooke, six kookes
to one koo."

The cuckoo feeds upon insects, and its eggs are always laid in the nest of some insectivorous bird, in order that the young ones when hatched may be provided with the kind of food they require. The nest chosen is generally that of a small bird, such as the hedge-sparrow, or wagtail. The young bird's ungrateful habit of turning out its little foster-brothers is too well known to need describing, but it is a curious fact, which should be pointed out to young observers, that although the full-grown cuckoo is a large bird, its eggs are quite small, very little larger than those of the bird in whose nest they are laid, and are marked very like those of the hedge-sparrow, so that they are at first not easily distinguishable from those of their foster-parents.

Nearly all the birds are singing by this time, larks, thrushes, blackbirds, and the other members of the "feathered quire," are all in full song. Almost without exception, our song birds are all small; none of our large birds sing, though many of them, such as the cock, crow, and magpie, as well as the sea-gull and other sea-birds, make various noises.

April is a good month for the study of sky and cloud effects; and one may become to a certain extent weather-wise by careful observation of their changes. Small cumulus clouds floating about the sky towards evening predict calm, fine weather; but if they increase much in size and number about sunset, it is generally considered a sign of rain. If they are dark and shaggy, and rolling over each other, cold and stormy weather will probably follow. They frequently appear silvery white before thunder. The approach of a thunder-storm is also often heralded by masses of clouds coming up against the wind, or at all events against the wind blowing on the surface of the earth. Other signs of rain are the sun going down into a bank of cloud; or dark clouds about the sky with white flecks passing across them, or light clouds with dark flecks. Strong winds speedily follow the appearance of anvil-shaped clouds, that is, clouds with a kind of thick stem and an overhanging, anvil-shaped top; they are frequently followed by a gale of wind, but not, as a rule, by rain. "Mare's-tail" clouds, with long thin tails, and varying a good deal in shape, betoken windy, unsettled weather; though when they

are seen during light winds, after stormy weather, they may be taken as a sign of a quiet, fine day. If currents of clouds are seen going in two opposite directions, rain will surely follow, probably accompanied, in the summer, by thunder.

These rules will serve as a basis from which girls can make their own observations, and rules are no use without observation and experience, which will be greatly aided by the practice of making notes of what one sees.

Many trees are coming into flower or leaf now. The ash, oak, and elm flower, in an ordinary season, towards the beginning of April, but the leaves do not open till the close of this, or beginning of next month; though all these rules are subject to exceptions, as trees are so much influenced by their situation.

This month is a favourable time for seeing the planet Mercury, which will be found in the north-western sky immediately after sunset. Saturn and Venus can be easily found, too, as they are both in the constellation Taurus, directions for finding which were given in January; but it must be remembered that though the position of these constellations with regard to one another is always the same, they are all moving gradually towards the west, so that they are in a slightly different position each month. DORA HOPE.

HOW I FORMED A SMALL LIBRARY.

ONE of our readers (FELICIA CLINTON) has sent us the following for publication:—

It will be a year this August since I first read in THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER an article on "How to Form a Small Library," and I thought I should like to try and form one of my own. I immediately went round to all the shops to try to get a bookcase, for that was the first thing spoken of as being most necessary, as it would be no use getting books to let them lie about to get dirty. I was not able to purchase one small enough for my purpose at any shop, so I ordered one with three shelves, and folding doors; I had it made of deal wood, and then stained to imitate mahogany. This only cost me eighteen shillings, which I thought cheap, for it really is a very nice-looking piece of furniture. I then began to collect books, buying one now and then when I could afford it, with the article in THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER for a guide as to what sort of books to get.

I have now collected about forty volumes, which I am still increasing when able. Amongst them I have books of poetry, standard novels, and a sprinkling of history and literature. One side of my bookcase I devote to THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER, which I read continually, and have from the very beginning, and which now forms three nice volumes; in a little over two months I shall be able to add the fourth. My bookcase stands in my bedroom, and forms a very pleasant spectacle, for which I have to thank THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER.

I would advise any girl who may be anxious to form a small library for herself to read the piece I refer to, which was published in vol. ii., page 7, and to take that as her guide, and I am sure that in time she too will have to thank THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER for giving her the incentive to something so useful, interesting, and instructive, not only to herself, but to her home circle and friends. I would also advise her to get none but good and instructive books of all kinds, and, above all, not to get them with paper covers, for after a little wear they burst out, and look very untidy, being anything but an ornament for a bookcase; whereas if nice cloth covers are procured, they will last almost a lifetime if carefully used, and will always look neat, even though they may be well worn. I wish that all girls that possibly can would begin to form libraries; they have no idea how interesting and fascinating it becomes.

With every new book added, there is something to show how the life of the owner has been spent, and what sort of recreation she has preferred—in fact, a girl's character may be known by her occupations. Any girl will find that by thus doing she gains respect for herself in other people's eyes, for anybody is always glad to find a girl who prefers spending her money on something so useful, instead of frittering it away without anything to show for it. I have found, too, that many a kind friend will now and then add a volume to your library, and thus help you to increase your stock, which will both at the present time, and in the future, prove so interesting, and always be a source of useful information, both to yourself and others.

NEW MUSIC.

J. B. CRAMER AND CO.

Milkmaid's Song. From Tennyson's "Queen Mary." Music by W. H. Jude.—A lively, tuneful, and musician-like composition, set to the Laureate's well-known verses. We recommend it to those of our young friends who have a fairly good and flexible soprano voice.

Only in Play. Words by Lewis Macdonald. Music by Frank L. Moir.—An interesting song, set to a sympathetic melody.

The Reign of the Roses. Words by H. L. D'Arcy Jaxone. Music by Caroline Lowthian.

My Own Familiar Friend. Words by the same author. Music by J. Stuart Crook.

Through all the Years. Words by Harold Wynn. Music by Godfrey Marks.—Three very pretty songs, with a *tempo di valse* refrain.

The Golden Path. Song, with harmonium accompaniment (*ad lib.*). Words by Nella, music by Henry Parker.—A simple and pathetic story, set to a sympathetic and well-written melody; the effect is greatly enhanced by the addition of the harmonium.

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J. AND W. CHESTER AND W. J. WILLCOCKS AND CO.

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ROBERT COCKS AND CO.

Heyday. Words by Mary L. Campbell. Music by Edwin St. Lemare.—A charmingly conceived and well-written song. We recommend it to our young friends, and think it will become popular in the drawing-room.

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Class Copies of Vocal Duets for Ladies' Voices.—No. 12 contains three well-known favourites easily arranged: "Fading Away," "Twilight Dreams," and "Beautiful Dove." The type is good, and they are especially adapted for the young. The price, one shilling each book, will attract purchasers.

J. CURWEN AND SONS.

A Christmas Party. A tableau with music, suited for school and home gatherings. Music composed and adapted by Josiah Booth.

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Album Leaves. Three short pieces for the pianoforte. By John Gledhill. No. 1, "In the Forest." No. 2, "Nocturne." No. 3, "Romance."—We can with every confidence recommend "Album Leaves" to our young friends; the pieces are short, and are sure to become popular in the drawing-room.

BOOSEY AND CO.

The Promise of Love (a Seville love song). Words by Hamilton Aidé. Music by William Fullerton.—A composition of very distinct merit, written in the composer's happiest manner; it is full of feeling, and the accompaniment is bright and characteristic. It will, we think, be received as a graceful addition to the *répertoire* of the salon.