

"Oh, you make some mince of any sort of cold mutton, nicely flavoured, you know, with thyme, and nutmeg, and parsley, and pepper, and the yolk of one egg, and just a speck of onion, and all sorts of things, but the meat must not be minced too small. Then you put it in scallop shells, and cover it with egg and bread-crumbs, and just brown them in the oven."

"That sounds delicious. I quite long to come and taste them. Have you decided on a joint? If not, I think I should have a well-hung saddle of mutton if I were you, because you can do it up again so nicely next day, by filling the gap made in it at dinner with mashed potatoes. Then have it warmed up, and it looks like a fresh joint."

"Madge, you certainly are a genius. Now I must rush off and buy that turtle, or the soup will never be done in time. I can manage to invent some sweets myself, I think. Do not forget to be punctual at the banquet on Tuesday. Uncle Andrew is nothing if not punctual. And do not forget to work round the conversation to cold mutton and dried turtle. You might persuade Wilfred to make a few remarks on the various industries of the West Indies, and then it would come in quite naturally, only I am afraid I shall laugh, and spoil it. Now, good-bye; I can see you are longing for me to be gone, so that you can go on dusting those lovely plates on the book-case."

So saying, she departed, leaving Margaret to finish her interrupted work. As "lovely plates" are not always to be found on a book-case, perhaps their presence there ought to be explained.

It will be remembered that the drawing and dining-rooms were separated by folding-doors, to the appearance of which Margaret had a great objection, so they were hidden, and the space occupied by them turned to an account in an ingenious manner by Wilfred's fertile brain. It was in this way. One day before their marriage, Margaret and he were talking over the best place to put the book-case, which was rather a difficult problem, for the space was limited in the little dining-room.

"Look here, Madge," cried Wilfred, suddenly, "you said you did not like folding-doors, so why not have them done away with, or permanently fastened, and the book-case placed in front of them?"

"Yes, perhaps that would do," said Margaret, ponderingly, "and yet I think, perhaps, a communication between the two rooms might be very useful sometimes, though I did condemn folding-doors."

"Well, then—I have it, Margery!" cried the young fellow, starting up, and energetically commencing a rough sketch of his idea on the back of an envelope. "Look here, dear; you have the book-case built the same size as the doors—not absolutely square, but with a few elegant irregularities at the top: so. Have it fitted with shelves of different depths for books, and here and there, perhaps, a shelf for odds and ends of china, or a rack for newspapers and magazines, or a cupboard with handsomely-carved doors, or—in fact, there is no end to the variations you might introduce if once you began—"

"But, please," broke in Margaret, "I do not quite see how we are to transport ourselves through the book-case; or did you mean us to step on the shelves, and so climb over?"

"I was about to observe," remarked Wilfred, "when I was so rudely interrupted, that a doorway should be cut through the middle of the book-case, from which should hang a curtain of some rich, heavy-looking material: red plush, I believe, is considered the correct thing."

"Oh, charming!" cried Margaret; "but I fear plush will be rather beyond our means."

"And the whole affair mounted on castors, so that, if necessary, it may be moved away bodily, and leave the whole space clear; but as it will weigh probably about two tons, I fancy those occasions will be rare," continued Wilfred.

Margaret's admiration of the genius displayed in this invention was unbounded, particularly after the idea had been most successfully carried out.

The drawing-room side of it was managed thus: the back of the book-case and sides of the recess were papered like the drawing-room. A small, low book-case was made at each side of the curtained doorway, and on them china and other ornaments were displayed, leaving just room above for corner brackets, holding vases of flowers and a couple of pictures. This gave it the appearance of an ordinary recess, and had the advantage of making the room that much larger.

These book-cases and their ornaments Margaret always dusted and arranged herself, whereby she gained the very desirable end of having no ornaments broken, and also having the books always put back into their own particular places, so that she could find any favourite author in the dark.

(To be continued.)

THE FOUR PERIODS.

By ALICE KING.

I.—SCHOOL-LIFE.



THE school-life of our English girls! We speak the words, and they seem at once to call up before us the dream of a rose-garden all filled with buds and perfume. The school-life of our English girls!—we speak the words, and as that rose-garden dream fades away, we grasp firm hold, in joyful thankfulness, of precious certainties, of glorious results, of which this same school-life will be the fruitful root, the fair first chapter, the fountain-head from which stream upon stream of sweet waters will flow to gladden generations yet unborn.

Now, in speaking of a girl's school-life, we wish it at once to be understood that we do not mean to limit ourselves to remarks upon what goes on in the class-room and in lesson hours, when grammars and dictionaries are in the hand, when music-books and drawing portfolios are open. These things have in truth their own fitting time and place in our girls' school-life, and we shall say something about them in their turn; but a girl's school-life will be very meagre and incomplete if it does not extend beyond the doors of the school-

room. Girls are meant for practical daily life even more than boys; girls, even more than boys, must have an education of the heart as well as of the head, because for women's hearts there is quite as much good, brave work to do in the world as for women's brains; therefore our girls' school-life must be in the home as well as in the school. Let mothers look well to this, for this is their especial province and duty and kingdom, this training their girls in the other school-life, which is not the school-life of the schoolroom. A schoolmistress or a governess may fill a girl's mind with rare stores of knowledge, may deck her with graceful accomplishments, but few save a mother can form a girl's heart. And where can this part of a girl's education be carried on so well and thoroughly as in a bright, sympathetic home? And since this is the case, let us strive to make our homes bright and sympathetic to our girls from the very beginning—from the moment when their sweet young eyes peep out of their cradles.

The first thing which the home school-life must give our girls is a solid religious foundation to their characters. No form of religion that the human mind can imagine could be so well calculated as Christianity to make the female sex shine. Let women, then, seize eagerly the proud privilege, and strive to form their daughters on a high Christian pattern. Love, patience, meekness, long-sufferance, self-sacrifice, are all, at the same time, the noblest products of Christianity and products natural to woman's character. Thus, then, mothers, you have a rich soul full of good seed ready for you; in God's name, in the name of children yet unborn, do not root up, or let die through want of care or sun, or dwarf the precious growth, but help it with every effort to come to perfection.

One excellent way of training our girls' hearts is to lead them early to the homes of the poor, to bedsides of the old and sick. Here they will learn to watch suffering bravely, and to meet it with every possible remedy; here they will be taught—without knowing that it is a lesson, the task will grow so sweet to them—how to feel for others, and how to work for them. A woman's influence depends in a great measure on her depth of feeling and sympathy. A woman's noblest work is, in general, for those immediately around her in her home—for husband and children; then this learning betimes to be full of kindness and charity must be, surely, a bit of good schooling for our girls.

It is also good for our girls, in the home school-life, to be taught to take a lively interest in the management of a household. This may be instilled gently, and almost imperceptibly, into them, by inciting them to strive to gain a loving influence for good over the younger servants. They should be encouraged to form sewing-classes or singing-classes, or other little schemes for their improvement, and to exercise over them a lady's high moral power—the power which comes from mental cultivation. Let our girls, too, in their home-school be taught not to hold their pretty heads above bending sometimes over the week's account-book, or the cookery-book. Such things will steady the wings of their young imaginations, without making their flight less swift.

There exists among a certain class of English society a received and well-cut-and-dried opinion that it is a necessary sign and insignia of ladyhood to spend a large portion of every day in a state of elegant idleness, that allows of nothing more serious employing a woman's time than gossip, and some flimsy, utterly useless piece of work in wool or silk, or, by way of variety, a little very-indifferently executed music, or illumination of texts that certainly do not shine the more from the way in which they are thus adorned. Can anything be conceived more

unjust and foolish than an education which would tend towards making a woman's story such a pale, thin shadow of real life as this? For are not work and thought the meaning of living? And yet there are some in the land who would turn a girl's school-life into a preparation for just such an aimless, listless existence, by giving her, in her youth, a taste for not one single, solid, useful pursuit. Let us strive to make our girls, in their way, quite as steady workers as our boys; let one essential part of their school-life's teaching, both in the actual school and at home, be to prove that every moment is to be filled with doing or learning something—that not a single faculty is to be wasted. To do this, we must put into the school-life regular rules and methodical habits, for these are matters that are somewhat contrary to many womanly natures, and therefore they must be engrafted early into the female character. In this way our girls' school-life will give them strength of will and solidity of purpose—things which will prove rare blessings to them in days to come. It is well, too, to combat another natural defect of womankind in our girls' school-life by showing them that we do not think it the least pretty or charming to start and scream and faint for every smallest cause, but that we regard self-restraint and composure as qualities that are far more to be admired. Thus we shall build up a firm barrier against foolish affectation, and, moreover, give even a timid girl, through early training, at least some amount of calmness and presence of mind in difficulty and trouble and danger.

We speak of habits of work as being as necessary for a girl as for a boy in his school-life, because woman is the God-given companion and equal of man, and, after all, half the work of the world falls upon her shoulders, though, of course, she labours in a very different workshop from man, and with very different tools. The man or woman who denies this last fact is simply trying to deny the laws of God and of nature. If a girl marries, what a weight of responsible work at once falls to her share—the work of cheering and strengthening and advising her husband; the work of managing her house, and regulating a considerable part of the family expenses, and guiding her servants; and highest work of all—highest and holiest—the work of bringing up children, and training both their physical and mental powers. Is it fair, then, or is it wise, to make the school-life of her on whom such earnest work will, in process of time, devolve, a mere period for gaining a liking for frivolous employments that are not worthy of the name—a field for picking up just a few desultory accomplishments? If, on the other hand, a girl does not marry (and it is well for her school-life training to contemplate, in these days, this possible alternative, and to bring it sometimes even before the young pupil's mind), what various departments of work lie open before her now, in the nineteenth century, which will make her a useful member of the community! She may become an authoress, and, according to what her school-life has been, bring words of wisdom or words of folly to thousands of English homes. She may be a hospital nurse, and, as she goes from ward to ward, both she and her patients will have full occasion to thank God and her parents for the experience she was allowed to gain, and the courage in bravely facing suffering which she was able to make her own, when, in her home school-life days, she went from house to house among the poor and sick. She may be a teacher in schools, a speaker of God's Word to His people, an expounder of the Master's own blessed book; in what good stead then will stand her all the knowledge on Scriptural times and subjects which her school-life gave her; what a calm, safe feeling—the feeling, as it were, of one who

has a charmed life—will she have in all the scenes of pain and distress through which her calling leads her, if only she bears about with her a lively religious faith, that jewel of price which we should strive to bind fast upon our young girls' hearts. When we think of all these careers that may lie before our girls, how can anyone presume to speak even of making their school-life a season of aught save serious preparation for earnest duty?

There existed formerly, and, indeed, in some narrow minds there does still exist, a prejudice against women receiving a liberal and comprehensive education. In the eyes of these people a girl is a creature that may be taught to be a first-rate cook and sempstress, but whose intellectual faculties are not to enjoy the slightest development. This creed—fortunately a creed fast dying out in the land—is as unjust to woman as that other theory of which we have just spoken, which would condemn her to complete supine idleness of both body and mind. Woman was created to be the companion and helpmate of man; but how is he to find a companion and a helpmate in one who is so immeasurably his inferior in education that she cannot talk rationally with him on a single subject that interests him? A boy, in the nursery, may have the foundations laid for a great public career, that may prove the glory and blessing of his country; but how can a woman, who has never opened a book stored with the riches of thought and genius of past ages, who has never formed for herself any political or social opinions, lay such a foundation in her son? Let us be very thankful for the vast educational advantages which our times offer to women, and let our girls take good heed that they do not misuse the talents entrusted to them.

The intellectual education of a girl must, of course, in some measure be guided by the intellectual calibre which she possesses. A girl's actual school life must, of necessity, be of much shorter duration than that of a boy; we must not, then, try to cram into it more than it can well hold. We must endeavour, too, to find out as early as possible the extent of a girl's capabilities, and the special direction in which they tend. If a girl has a real talent for music or drawing let it be cultivated to the utmost, while other subjects are more lightly dwelt upon. If a girl has no taste for these arts, let her be allowed to give them up altogether, for inferior musical performance and feebly-executed sketches will merely prove a form of suffering for the ears and eyes of her friends. Let such a girl give her school life to more solid studies, such as literature, languages, &c., and she will soon find her reward. A certain amount of reading in good standard books—poetical, historical, and otherwise—is, indeed, an indispensable part of every girl's school-life, unless her faculties are of an exceptionally low order; for such reading gives her the habit, so needful for female minds to acquire, of concentrating her attention, while, at the same time, it will make a sort of storehouse in her brain to which she will always be able to go in after life. Such reading will also give a girl breadth of mental vision and firmness of mental grasp, qualities always somewhat difficult to be attained by woman.

In the best ordered families even there may come days of trouble and disaster—days when, through a bank failure, or some other like mischance, the delicately-nurtured daughters of the house, who hitherto have been watched and guarded as rare, tender, conservatory plants that not a breath of rough wind must touch, are suddenly cast upon their own resources in a more or less degree, and exposed to sharp blasts of poverty and adversity. In such a case—and in our own days such cases have been far from being the dreams of romancers—how well and happy it is for a girl to be able, through some cultivated

talent, or some thoroughly acquired branch of knowledge, to become at once a working bee who can bring back her share of honey to the home hive, instead of being a dead weight hanging round the neck of father or brother. It is simple thoughtlessness and cruelty not to prepare our girls, in their school-life, for such very possible changes and chances as these, even if the fortunes of the family remain unaltered. How often a girl, whose pocket money received from her parents is of necessity, from her father's position in life, small, is glad and thankful for the power of being able to earn a little money for herself, which she can spend in a thousand useful ways, and which will give her the joy of knowing the sweets of charity!

Now let us go and stand on higher ground, and, in conclusion, speak a few words to our fair English girls themselves. Whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, such are the things which a Christian girl must make her whole school-life a striving towards. She must work earnestly to make every kingdom of knowledge on which she enters entirely her own, remembering that school-life, like all other life, without earnest work is a mere painted travesty of real existence; but while she thus works she must never keep in view her own exaltation, but must make her chief object being able to do something to God's glory, and, next, something that will benefit her neighbours. She must not try in anything to imitate or rival her brother, because, though she is man's equal, she was created for quite different work from him, because her physical strength cannot bear the strain of excessive mental pressure as the strength of a boy can, and because it was never meant to be formed on the same pattern as a boy's; but, on the other hand, girls must struggle to master every branch of learning they take in hand quite as thoroughly as boys do, and also avoid, in their school life, all superficial outward show of knowledge, for in a Christian girl everything must be true gold—no gilding will do. They must try to put every faculty to its highest use, and not let a single power they possess lie dormant; even the capabilities of their lithe young bodies must be developed to the best of their abilities by open air and exercise, which is too often neglected in our girls' school-life.

Finally, girls of England, keep it ever in your minds, as the highest object of your school life, to form your whole lives on the model of His who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. It is the most exalted glory of woman that the life of Christ may be as fully and entirely imitated by her as it can be by man; in this, the loftiest end of all human work and thought, she need never be second. Let our girls keep all their school-life in tune with this one precious key-note; let them be brave, earnest workers, with the light of this radiant truth falling on all that they do and undertake and learn in the school and at home, and theirs shall be the crown and victory for time and for eternity.



(Continued from page 427.)

having been seen by the country people in woods and thickets.

The catkins of several of the forest trees are sometimes to be seen in this month, and are very singular and worthy of examination. Those of several kinds of poplar are very conspicuous, especially the large dark-red catkins of the black poplar, looking, when they have fallen on the ground, like great caterpillars.

In our gardens the almond, the apricot, and the peach will generally be in flower; as will the bright and attractive *Pyrus* or *Cydonia japonica*, and several of the ash berries or mahonias. The crocuses, too, and other hardy bulbs, and the hepaticas, will be in full beauty.

For those who take an interest in the feathered race, there will be much real enjoyment, for many of our birds will be again in full song in the hopeful spring months, and actively engaged in building their nests, many of which are most curious and interesting. Of all the British songsters, the common thrush is perhaps the best known, and also the most general favourite; for, of our larger singing birds, it is almost universally regarded as the best, possessing to a greater extent than others a combination of the three important requisites—viz., power, quality of tone, and variety. Not only does the thrush begin to sing early in Spring, but its song may be heard through a considerable portion of the year. The bird is, moreover, elegant in shape, inoffensive in habit, sprightly in action, and engaging by its confidence. It is, too, most useful to us in our gardens, for it feeds on insects, worms, and snails. It is curious to watch this bird cracking the shells of the snails against a stone. An amusing story is told of a tame thrush, on being let out of its cage to fly about a room, took its mistress's pincushion, which was made in a whelk's shell, and hit it as hard as it possibly could against the table, in the hope, no doubt, of finding a snail concealed within the shell.

Of the nests of birds that may be found at this time, perhaps some of the most curious are those of the sand-martins. These may be said to consist simply of holes in the perpendicular front of a sandbank, being sometimes so deep as to take a man's arm up to his shoulder without reaching the bottom. Rennie describes the mode in which the sand-martin makes its nest. He says he has seen one of these birds "cling with its sharp claws to the face of a sandbank, and peg in its bill as a miner would do his pickaxe, till it had loosened a considerable portion of the hard sand, and tumbled it down amongst the rubbish below. In these preliminary operations it never makes use of its claws for digging; indeed, it is impossible it could, for they are indispensable in maintaining its position, at least when it is beginning its hole." The holes made by some of these birds are as nearly circular as if they had been drawn with a pair of compasses. The bird begins in the centre and works outwards, changing its position continually, and it is as often hanging from the roof with its back downwards, as standing on the floor. When the hole is of considerable depth, the bird always scrapes out with its feet the sand detached by the bill; but so carefully is this performed, that it never scratches up the unmined sand or disturbs the plane of the floor, which rather slopes upwards, and, of course, the lodgment of rain is thereby prevented. There is a whole colony of these birds in the sandbanks near Woking, in Surrey; and there are others in various parts of Great Britain, from Devonshire to the north of Scotland.

D. W.

MAIDENHOOD.



THE dew glistening on the daisy-sprinkled meadow, the rays of morning falling on spring flowers, the breeze leaping lightly over the mountain-tops. Such are the comparisons which rise up in our minds when we speak the words "Christian maidenhood." We feel as if we were entering a sanctuary when we approach the subject, as if we were treading almost holy ground; and yet it is a subject on which the broad daylight of everyday life must be permitted to shine freely if we would consider it aright. We want our maidens to have the purity of the early dew, the brightness of the morning, the freshness of the mountain breeze, and yet, added to all these things, we want them to be useful and helpful members of society, not creatures of dreamland and of air. A Christian girl must always have about her something of the shy perfume of the violet, and yet, at the same time, she must have in her nature and character something of the strength of the young trees of the forest that lift aloft their leaf-crowned heads in graceful pride.

One of the most indispensable qualities of true maidenhood, a quality which forms a chief part of the scent of the violet, is a real, inherent modesty of thought and feeling; a modesty which must shine in softened, chastened light in a girl's eyes, and tinge her cheek, and be written in every fold of her very dress. When it gets woven, as it were, into the whole texture of her character, it becomes a shield, which often, almost unknown to herself, is guarding her, making her, with a rapid movement which in its quick, intuitive working is more like instinct than reason, turn away from the companionship, or the book, or the place which might, in the faintest degree, lead her towards miry, uneven paths. It is a quality which mothers and teachers should endeavour to let their girls draw into their being with their earliest breath; it should be taught softly in the very cradle-songs which lull the tiny maiden, should pervade the sights and sounds of her nursery; it is a quality which the Christian girl, as thought and intelligence grow and expand and strengthen, should foster for herself, with courage, with sweet seriousness of bearing, above all with religious reading and earnest prayer.

This modesty of which we speak is not at all a thing that will lower a girl either in her own eyes or in the eyes of others; far from that, it should and does lead on to a gentle, graceful pride. Without a certain touch of pride of this sort maidenhood is incomplete. It is a pride that surrounds our girls with a mild halo, that even when it is most radiant never dazzles, that makes a nameless perfume float around their steps. Maidenhood is a queenly word, and there must be something of queenliness always with it when we find it in its highest perfection of beauty. It is a queenliness which bears in its hand an enchanted, golden sceptre, one wave of which makes the air around pure; it is a queenliness which works with wondrous, elevating power on all the men who draw near her who possesses it. This queenliness has nothing to do with pride in dress or personal attractions, though, where these latter exist, it sets them off in a way that girls are little aware of, or they would, perhaps, strive more to gain it. Fortunate and highly blest are the young men

whose sisters are adorned with this most precious jewel of womanhood; contact with it will raise their tone of feeling and thought as nothing else can do.

Yes, our girls must not forget the royalty of their maidenhood, and must remember that in it they hold a very mighty weapon for God in their hands. By it they can raise the whole standard of opinion and tone in the society in which they move; by it they can banish all things low, and frivolous, and unbecoming from the conversation round them; by it they can help on God's cause, while they are helping on the cause of woman. A girl must never fail to exact a certain amount of reverence in word and outward behaviour from every man with whom she is in daily intercourse, even from a brother. This maidenly royalty, however, when it is developed aright, will have nothing of dulness, and heaviness, and prudishness about it; it will always be accompanied with an airy grace that will charm every mind as with an irresistible spell.

The mention of this grace leads us on to the next most essential attribute of Christian maidenhood, and that is graciousness. There are few things in nature at once more unlovely and more out of place than a sulky girl, or a girl with sharp, haughty words on her lips, and gloom and arrogance sitting, with folded wings, on her brow. A girl should be always sweet-tempered, always ready to oblige in small matters as well as great; always swift, as far as she is able, to minister to the comfort of others. Her bright looks should be the very sunshine of her home, without which father, mother, and brothers feel cold and lost; her voice and rippling laughter the very music of the house, without which the rooms and passages are as the woods in winter-time when the birds are dumb. Maidenhood is all light, all breezy sweetness, and our girls must always remember, with thankful happiness, that one of their chief missions is to bring joy and comfort wherever they go, and that this can never be done so well as by attending to all the small wants, and wishes, and worries, and troubles of those with whom they live. These may seem, at first sight, trivial, prosaic things, but out of such things, cared for in a tender, lofty, Christian spirit, is made life's fullest music.

Maidenhood is never so lowered and weakened as when a girl fancies she can make herself appear strong and bold by adopting the habits, and manners, and talk of men. There is, unluckily, at the present day a tendency for our young women to assume manly words and habits, and even to approach towards manly ways in their dress. Fashion has brought this about, and it is one of the high duties of Christian maidenhood to combat steadily such a fashion. The slang expression, the fiction which holds up as its heroine a bold, daring, free and easy type of womanhood; the attire, which has a certain flavour of manishness about it; all these things should be quietly but decisively avoided by a Christian girl in her walk through life. If a young woman steadfastly sets her face against such things, it is wonderful what a change she may work among her surroundings. Her companions would grow ashamed of displaying an inclination for such things in her presence. Her example would make its way slowly but surely; her influence would help towards the putting away of such ways and practices from among us—ways and practices that injure the bloom, and charm, and power of Christian maidenhood as the caterpillar does the rose. Girls are most grievously mistaken when they think that these fashions in talk, and behaviour, and appearance make them lovely and interesting in the eyes of men. When they adopt them they simply make themselves a subject either of mockery or pity to every man with

whom they come in contact, unless the man is utterly devoid of every spark of wit and every grain of sense. Let maidenhood, then, never forget to be essentially womanly, for when she tries to be manly, she simply loses all that is good and beautiful and highest in her own sex, without gaining a single noble or attractive quality of true manhood in its place.

Maidenhood—that is, Christian maidenhood—must be very careful of her dress and outward seeming. This may appear at first a small matter, but when we take it as affecting the whole mass of women in a town or neighbourhood it is a great one. Any extreme of fashion should be looked at doubtfully and adopted sparingly by a young woman of sense and feeling. Any large outlay of money in dress should be shrunk from by her. Does not her heart tell her that it is far better and sweeter to feed the hungry and clothe the orphan than to array herself in some new fashion of the hour, which will be old-fashioned to-morrow? Would not her money bring her a much more lasting gratification if she spent it on new books or music? No girl should be untidily dressed. Every girl may and ought to try to dress becomingly, but this can be done without any very lavish expense when the eye knows the meaning of good taste, and the neat, skilful hand follows its directions. Christian maidenhood should strive to have her outward appearance full of harmony and grace, so that it may be, in some measure, an exterior visible sign of the soul within.

Let every girl be rather slow than hasty to leave her maidenhood for the married state. There is nothing more lowering to womanhood, nothing so repulsive to high ideas of female delicacy, than a young woman making it the one aim and object of her life to be married; and yet, how often do we see this the case in modern English society! How often do we see a young lady display her intentions in this respect with the most cool, unblushing boldness; how often is the fact made painfully apparent in many of the matrimonial connections contracted in the world around us! Let Christian girls shun and look down upon this hasty eagerness for marriage as utterly beneath the dignity of their maidenhood. In our day there are, thank God! many beautiful, and useful, and ennobling works which may be undertaken by girls in their maiden years, therefore there is no possible reason why they should want to hurry into marriage. There are schools for our girls to teach in, schools of the poor and ignorant; there are Christ's sick and weak to be tended; there are hearts and minds that have never tasted of the blessed gospel fountain waiting for draughts from the water of life; there is knowledge of varied kind to be won; there are talents to be cultivated; there is every facility given in our time for the intellectual improvement of women. Our girls, then, cannot complain that marriage is forced upon them as the only path in life open to woman. Let a Christian girl go bravely on, making herself useful, and making herself happy, and resting calmly in her maiden dignity, without anxious longing to rush into the married state.

There is nothing also so contrary to Christian maidenhood as a marriage formed for worldly motives, and motives of personal interest. The girl who marries for rank or wealth, simply to make herself the mistress of a grand establishment, simply to have more money to spend than she has in her father's house, is but few degrees removed from making herself a bale of rare merchandise that is sold to the highest bidder. Besides, what can be further from the spirit of Christianity than the state of mind of a woman who takes the most solemn vows of love, and faith, and reverence to a man who, in her inmost heart, she regards

with nothing better than cool indifference? Can any act of basest dishonesty, any word of meanest untruth and deceit, be baser and meaner than this? Marriage is one of God's own highest and holiest institutions; but can there be a more complete and calmly carried-out deed of mockery against the Almighty than a marriage of this kind? Let our girls tremble at this thought. Unless her heart goes fully and entirely with it, let no Christian girl give away her hand; this free giving of herself is one of the most queenly privileges of English Christian maidenhood, but our maidens must take good heed how they use it. No girl who is a child of light, a daughter of the kingdom, will give herself away for such an empty bubble as a title or a higher position in worldly society, or for such a low, sordid thing as a large income; no girl who has been brought from her earliest years to serve the Master will give herself away to a man who is not a soldier of her King, with whom she cannot pray, with whom she cannot speak of high and sacred things, who will not walk bravely heavenward at her side.

Maidenhood is a season in young women's lives which should be filled with active employment, with gaining stores of knowledge and strength that will stand them in good stead in the battle or the sorrow which, in future years, may be before them. Our girls must not make their days one round of light amusement. They are young and bright, and there is busy life thrilling and tingling in every fancy, in every nerve, in every impulse of heart and mind; and who would waste such good, precious things as these in hurrying from house to house, visiting people that have no real place in our affections or even our esteem, in sitting for hours with some bit of almost useless embroidery or crewel work in the hand, chattering about the merest trifles, or making silly jokes about love and marriage—matters which are too serious to be treated with aught but seriousness—or repeating small fragments of petty gossip and scandal, to which ill-nature makes a piquant sauce by hint, and shrug, and significant glance?

Far otherwise from this would we see the hours, from morn till evening, of our Christian girls mapped out. A portion of each day should be given up to really useful reading, reading that will keep the mental faculties in healthy activity, and exercise the memory. Any talent that is possessed, such as music or drawing, should be carefully and industriously cultivated; a girl always keeping in mind that, though she may have left school, her education is far from finished. The economy of time must be learnt, and regular habits of application must be gained, for these are things in which women are naturally inclined to be in fault. Above all, prayer and Bible reading must never be neglected, and some task of earnest work for God and man, such as school-teaching or district visiting, must be undertaken and faithfully fulfilled, even though some pleasure has, sometimes, to be given up that it may be done. In this last point let our girls be very severe with themselves. If they take any duty of this sort in hand, let them do it in a thorough, complete way, not rushing into it with rapid eagerness to-day, and then forgetting it to-morrow for some light cause, or at the best doing it in a careless, unfinished manner. When the days of maidenhood are thus well filled and employed, when, in the course of them, the mind is enlarged, the character strengthened, good work done for others, and the religious foundations of the soul laid deeper and deeper, instead of the whole period being one senseless picture of light amusement and aimless frivolity, it becomes a blessing to a Christian woman's life.

Thus we see that Christian maidenhood, in all its attributes, in all its duties, is a very

high and noble thing—a thing to make the whole world purer and sweeter, a thing that may struggle bravely for God, a thing that angels may look down on with joy. Let our girls, and all who teach and influence them, thus look on maidenhood, which belongs to Him who came to save and lift up. Let our girls strive to draw daily closer and closer to Him in thought and deed and word, and the days of their earthly maidenhood shall add a radiant jewel to their heavenly coronet when they sit down at the supper of the Lamb above.

ALICE KING.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MUSIC.

HEATHER CUP.—*Agevole* is Italian, and means, "lightly, and with facility"; *volante*, "flying," a light and rapid series of notes. The Pestalozzian system of education was devised by John Henry Pestalozzi, a native of Zurich, Switzerland, in 1746, who died 1827. He turned his farm into a school for educating poor children in reading and writing, &c., and was the inventor of the monitorial or mutual instruction system, afterward adopted by Lancaster.

ONE WHO IS FOND OF MUSIC AND JENNIE STRANGE.—We see no reason why you should not make fair progress in music, if you begin to learn now, when you are twenty-four years of age. You are anxious to learn, and are not likely to waste your time, nor to be so slow of comprehension as a younger person. Your chance will be improved if you find a kind and patient mistress.

MARY L. A.—You would do better with someone to give you a few lessons in tuning the guitar, if not in playing it. Both instruments would be cheaper to you if you purchased them secondhand.

IRENE AND ORGANIST.—The National Training School for Music, at Kensington Gore, W.C., offers free instruction to English subjects of both sexes, and without limit of age, upon success in competitive examinations. Some of the scholarships carry also exhibitions for maintenance. Write to the secretary for information.

COOKERY.

E. A. H.—Many thanks for your letter. To make lobster cutlets proceed as follows:—Take one tin of lobster, one egg, and a few breadcrumbs. Pound the lobster into a stiff paste, smooth and fine, add a little cayenne pepper, and, if you like, some anchovy sauce. Put the lobster on a plate, well working it with a fork until it becomes quite smooth, and be formed into a round shape by the plate. Then cut it into eight sections, brush over each piece with the egg, beaten up, dip into the breadcrumbs, and fry in either lard or dripping.

WILD WAVES.—In various fruit-jellies the juice of the fruit is mixed with water to make up the quantity of liquid, and the wine and brandy may then be omitted. There is really no need of the spirit if you can use any other liquid. Where jelly is ordered as nourishment, in case of illness, the method of making it must be regulated by the doctor's wishes.

LOTTIE D.—Take the onions just after they have been harvested, or taken up, in September, when ripe and dry. Take off the two outer skins with a silver knife, and as fast as they are ready put them into a dry bottle and cover them with cold vinegar. Tie them down closely, and they will be ready for use in three weeks.

MISCELLANEOUS.

STUPID ONE.—Our little friend who has adopted so ignominious a name has contrived to make a wonderful guess at the reason "why the mention of weaving made in the Book of Job" should be "the first allusion to the art" in Holy Scripture—that made in the "Book of Judges," xvi. 13, 14, notwithstanding—viz., "that the Book of Job was written before that of the Judges." Yes, by some it is computed that Job was a contemporary of Isaac; by others that he was the grandson of Esau, and was identical with Johab (1st Chr. i. 44); and by others again as having lived even prior to the time of Abraham. But, if not very quick in understanding one remark in the article on "Linen," our young friend is certainly not a "stupid one" in perceiving the drift of the whole article, which was to furnish a method for the more careful and interesting study of the Holy Scriptures. We thank her warmly for so kindly expressing her appreciation of our efforts.

E. B. S.—Cards should not be sent at any time by post. If they be left personally, one is generally left for the master of the house, and one for each of the grown-up sons, or any visitor staying in the house.

"I—I—don't understand, madame."

The old Marquise interprets her words and actions quite according to her own wishes.

"I was quite sure you would not consent to any such *sacrifice, petite*, and so I told Etienne. But he assured me it would be no sacrifice, and that he is quite fond enough of you to make you a good husband."

Damaris freezes as suddenly and as stiffly as if an arctic wind had passed over her. La Marquise goes on speaking, but Damaris hears nothing, understands nothing. One idea is shaping itself in her own mind to the exclusion of all others.

"Etienne is chivalrous, noble; he cannot endure the thought that a breath should assail you while under his roof, *petite*. But you, I am sure, would be the very last person to take advantage of such unparalleled generosity."

She pauses, and Damaris echoes mechanically—

"The very last, madame."

"But Etienne is impetuous, determined; we must save him from doing what he would ever afterwards regret."

"We must save him, madame."

"I felt so sure of you, *chère enfant*, that I tell you all this in the utmost confidence."

"Confidence, madame!"

La Marquise looks up. Is *petite* attending? She stands by the marble mantelpiece, her two hands clasped upon it, her drooping face reflected in the glass. Her whole face and figure express immobility, which La Marquise interprets as weariness.

"You are tired, you shall go to your room now, and to rest; dear child, and in the morning we will arrange everything. But this is what occurs to me. It is near the time when I promised you should go home for awhile to your England to see your sister. I cannot give you up altogether, *petite*; and you will not abandon me, I am sure. But suppose you take your holiday at once now, and when you return, I shall be settled in Paris, and we will forget this *triste* St. Aubin and be happy together once more. Shall it be so, *petite*?"

"As you wish, madame."

"Then kiss me, and go to bed and to sleep."

Damaris kisses her with icy lips and goes, still moving as one who walks in her sleep, and whose senses are sealed to all outward things.

Left to herself, La Marquise ponders the position of affairs.

"She is a strange child, this *petite*; wayward and warm-hearted, but sensible. She sees at once that Etienne's idea can never be carried out. I need have no further uneasiness. If she is away in England for a month, by that time he will have recovered his health and his common sense, and will not dream of repaying a simple act of duty on her part in so extravagant a fashion. They will be good friends once more, I shall be happy in their mutual pleasantness, and both will thank me for having prevented them taking a rash and fatal step in a moment of undue excitement. How many sad mistakes in life might

be prevented if people would only exercise a little caution and diplomacy!"

With which sage reflections La Marquise rings for Angelique to prepare her little person for the rest which is to fit her for further negotiations on the morrow. When her head is on the pillow, she falls asleep with the comfortable reflection that without her supervision the affairs of everyone who came within her jurisdiction were certain to go wrong. She dreams of a possible English lover for *petite*, and is pursued with a nightmare dread that she is about to lose her companionship for ever.

(To be continued.)

WOMANHOOD.

By ALICE KING.



HERE are Eastern tales of jewels so radiantly bright that but the faintest contact with the outer air will leave a stain upon them. There is a Spanish flower whose perfume is so delicate that it will not and cannot be wooed forth by the burning rays of the noontide sun; only the cool, soft wing of the night breeze stealing over it can draw its hidden sweetness from the inner cup among the folded, silken petals. Such a gem, such a blossom is Christian womanhood; and yet, unlike the jewel and the flower, it has to preserve its unsullied brilliance, its rare fragrance amid the roughest storms of life, in the world's noontide glare, by the wayside of earth's high-road, where the dust is thick, and the miry pools are many.

When our girls step out of girlhood into womanhood they must not forget to keep their Christian maidenhood with them; indeed, the attributes of maidenhood, something of its radiance, something of its sweetness cling to the purest and highest type of Christian woman throughout her whole life, and make a halo and a perfume round her. Still, when she is wife and mother, womanhood must never lay aside her white robe, even when she is treading the most commonplace paths of daily life; but she must also learn to keep those white garments unstained as she stoops to raise the fallen or to help the weak, or to speak a word of gentle reproof or warning in the ear of the erring, or when she takes up bravely her own load of every-day cares, and worries, and trials. Nothing ought to be, nothing can be more lofty, more exalted than womanhood; and yet the Christian woman must think nothing in her home too small and lowly to have her earnest and careful attention if it concerns the comfort and well-being of those around her; and yet the cry of the most obscure sorrow and poverty must be more readily heeded by her ear than the loudest praises of the world.

We want our girls to blossom into highly-educated women, into refined women, into high-souled, high-minded women; but we want them, at the same time, to be thoroughly practical women, whose characters and dispositions will wear well in daily life. If our girls merely develop into women who can talk finely in drawing-rooms about the

duties and privileges of their sex, they will entirely fail to do womanhood's mission in the world. Our women, to do any good in their generation, must be earnest, faithful workers, as well as readers and thinkers, and they must be workers who will do simple, noble work as conscientiously and fully as great work. We say this most emphatically, because the sphere of action of so many of our girls will lie among the so-called little things of ordinary daily life. Let our girls, however, be of good courage when they find that their season of womanhood, from which they had expected and hoped so much, about which they had dreamt so much, only leads them into a crowd of small duties, of small difficulties, of small cares; for out of these small things of earth the Christian woman can build up the ladder on which she herself will mount to heaven, drawing others after her. Christian women must never forget, but always remember with joy and thankfulness, that the Lord and Master, when He came down from heaven, dwelt upon earth as one that serveth, and that it is a high, rich, precious woman's right, the right to exercise especially the virtues which most marked the Saviour's life—meekness, patience, and gentleness. As the Lord, too, manifested His godhead, even when His lowliness and His longsufferance were most apparent in word and deed, so must Christian womanhood live up to her loftiest standard, and show it forth even while she does the most common round of household duties, even while she replaces the proud or angry word that rises to her lips with the soft answer that turneth away wrath—the answer which, if she would only believe it, gives her such infinite power, power that no railing, violent tongue can reach over the minds and hearts of men.

When our girls reach womanhood, one of their chief and most important destinies in the world's history is, of course, to become wives. In the last paper of this series we spoke of the time when the Christian maiden begins to think of marriage; now we would speak of the period when the Christian woman becomes a wife. Let no girl, who is a noble Christian girl, regard this period, in the fashionable young lady's usual point of view, as a season when, released from the restraint of parental authority, gay toilettes, incessant visiting, and extravagant display of all kinds may be indulged in with the most unbridled and reckless excess; far from that, let our girls think of it as a time when a chosen and well-loved burden is to be seriously yet sweetly taken up, when the real earnest journey of life is to begin. There will be a second self, and a far dearer than self it is true, to help to bear the load, there will be a brave tender heart and a strong arm at her side in her pilgrimage; but not the less for this is marriage a grave undertaking which no young woman must take lightly in hand. It is no light thing, our girls will surely see if they think of it calmly, to promise to be another's life-long companion; it is no light thing to become the mistress of a household and family, with many dependent on her rule and guidance. Hitherto the girl has been fenced around, every day and all day, by anxious protecting love and care; hitherto she has but had gently, and with docile sweetness, to follow where she has been led; hitherto one of her chief duties has been to learn, now she has to come forward to hold a more or less prominent position, now she must know how to assert her own womanly dignity, now she must be a counsellor and often a support, now she must lead instead of being led.

In our paper on maidenhood we dwelt on a girl's choice of a husband. Now, in this paper on riper womanhood, let us suppose that she has chosen well, and let us consider what are the graces which will most adorn the Christian woman as a wife, and how she may

best fulfil the duties which will be hers by highest, purest right. The first duty of a good and loyal wife is helpfulness. She must be willing and joyful to take upon her a share of everything that concerns her husband. Whatever may be his work or business, she must endeavour to learn enough about it, to be able to listen to him with interest if he speaks to her of it, and to give him a sensible opinion, if he asks for it, on any point of trouble or difficulty that regards his calling. If her husband is straitened in means by any sudden loss of money, she must take her part of the anxiety and do what she can to lessen it; if there comes some unexpected family misfortune she must be ready and strong in standing up against it at his side; in every chance and emergency of life she must be truly a helpmeet for him, never for a moment letting herself be treated as a pretty toy, or at best as a child who has no power and no capability to meet the storms and struggles of life.

Another of a wife's most high and holy duties is the duty of gaining a firm yet sweet and modest influence for good over the man who is her husband. This influence will never be reached by sharp, bitter words, or by fits of sullen pride, or by the assumption of masterful airs, or by dictatorial lecturing. Nothing is more distasteful and abhorrent to man than any of these things in woman; nothing so quickly as any of these things will snatch all power in her home out of her hands: it will be won by gracious looks, by tender little acts of love, by soft, persuasive words, by gentle, hardly perceptible leading. It is often the case that women have deeper and loftier religious convictions than men, and it is a glorious task, in truth, for a Christian wife to make the life of her husband more spiritual, more rich in noble deeds of love towards his fellows, more near to God in his daily walk than it was before she entered his house. Wondrous both for earth and heaven, incalculable in its breadth and length is the power which Christian womanhood may thus hold and wield. If only she will go the right way to win it and exercise it, the world would be a very different place from what it is, if in this respect all Christian wives would live up to their duty.

Sympathy, and sympathy of the most lively, earnest, unwearying sort is another quality very needful in a wife. A woman must cultivate in herself a thoroughly sympathetic nature and frame of mind, or she will never—however great may be her other charms of face or intellect—retain lastingly her hold upon her husband's heart. A vain woman, wrapped up all day in thoughts about dress and personal appearance; a selfish woman, whose time is filled up with nothing but her own ease and pleasure; a cold, apathetic woman, whose stagnant soul is never stirred by a single breeze of feeling; none of these can make the light and sweetness of a man's home. If our girls have the germs of any of these sins and faults in their characters, let them root them out at once, resolutely, and with the mighty help of prayer; let them strive to awaken in themselves instead a warm, loving, sympathetic disposition of mind and feeling which takes quick, lively interest in the joys and sorrows of all around them: so shall they, in one point, be preparing themselves to be, at some future day, the sunshine and the perfume of a Christian home, the priceless jewel to some brave man's heart, that he would wear here and in eternity.

This quality of sympathy of which we have been speaking must colour and impregnate the Christian wife's whole life with regard to her husband and her conduct towards him in a thousand ways, making sweet and easy to her what would otherwise

be hard and difficult. It must make her always ready, whatever she is doing, to throw it aside the moment he comes in, to interest herself in what interests him; it must make her able to have a smile for him when he returns home at night, however sad and downcast she may be feeling from small home worries; it must make her a good, earnest listener when he talks about himself and his doings, as the best and cleverest men often love to do when a sympathetic woman's ear is at their side; it must make them try to master, in some degree at least, any subject that especially occupies him, that she may be able to speak with him intelligently about it. Entire, many-sided sympathy of this sort men have a full right to expect from their wives, and many and many a domestic story would be very different from what it is did women use and practise it more in their daily intercourse with their husbands. But this most womanly grace of sympathy, which is, in fact, the own sister of self-forgetfulness, can only be reached in full perfection by her whose whole life is pervaded by a living, active Christianity.

To speak for a moment of a smaller and yet very important matter. It is a great mistake when a wife ceases to try to make herself pleasing in her husband's eyes. The young wife whose dress and bonnet are faultless when she goes out for a round of afternoon visiting, but who does not scruple to appear in untidy, ungraceful, not to say slatternly, attire before her husband at home, is taking a step in a very wrong direction. She is giving up one of her most simple and natural womanly ways of keeping his affection for her always aglow and awake. A woman should always be at least neatly and becomingly dressed in her home, otherwise she pays a very bad compliment to both herself and her husband. Moreover, the bright, sparkling girl, who turns, after marriage, into the dull, silent wife has no one to thank but herself if he is often absent from his own house.

If a husband is slipping into any bad way or habit, it is certainly a Christian wife's duty to speak a word of warning; but this must always be done gently, and with tact, or the woman's good object will be worse than lost. A woman must never fail to remember that man's nature and character are, by right, stronger than her own, and that when she is married it is her duty in everything, except where a yet higher duty to her Master above commands, to be subject to her husband; therefore, when she comes forward, in God's name, to admonish him, she must do it very mildly and modestly, or the harm she will do will be far more than the good; a loving word of warning on a woman's lips will often work wonders with men where her loud, railing tongue would be of no more avail than the noise of a cataract.

When a woman marries, it is her duty at once to weld her whole life and being into the life and being of her husband. She is, of course, in these days when so many careers of noble, useful work are open to women, not at all compelled to be ever a wife; but if she chooses the married state she must give herself heart and soul to him whom she makes, by her own free will, a part of herself. She must cheer him when he is sad, she must soothe him when he is worn or harassed; she must support and encourage him when he is weary. In how many a noble struggle for God and men have high-hearted Christian women thus upheld and strengthened the hands of Christian men! It is in the nature of woman to be thorough and entire in all she undertakes. A true wife will never give her husband a half-allegiance; all her faith, all her courage, all her sweetness, will be his, to beautify and

irradiate his life, until he and she together blend into one fair, harmonious whole—one story, one picture of goodness and of light.

Above all, let every Christian wife, whether her station be high or low in society, whether her husband's sphere of work be in the library or the workshop, adorn herself with a calm, peaceable temper, with a gracious bearing, with the most precious ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. These are jewels that are equally becoming in the palace and the cottage; these are jewels that will stand every-day wear; these are jewels that will grow the brighter for the using. Then let Christian wives put them on resolutely and at once, and their home history, wherever it may be cast, shall be a radiant history that shall shine in the eyes of angels and of men.

Finally, let all Christian women begin their married lives as true, faithful servants of the Master to whom women did minister, and let them strive to tune all their relations to their husbands to the same high key-note; then shall they draw those who are dearest to them upon earth up with them to heaven, and they who have been as one in time shall be together in the light of God in all eternity.



ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MISCELLANEOUS.

- EBO.—"God tempests the wind to the shorn lamb," is from Sterne's "Sentimental Journey."
- CALISTA.—Khorassan is an extensive province of Persia, now divided between the Shah and the Afghans. The great Salt Desert occupies a part of it.
- MAIDENHAIR.—We are sorry we cannot help you, save with the advice to continue your education, which is your most important duty at present.
- MARCH HARE.—Write to 56, Paternoster-row, for the numbers which are contained in the first volume. Bound, price 6s., in cloth.
- SWEETBRIAR.—You may restore the black hue to your leather bag by using one of the many "glosses," "polishes," or "varnishes," sold at all shoe shops for home use, instead of blacking.
- ANNIE K.—Many thanks. We regret to decline your offer.
- TIGER and NELLIE.—Wear large boots and shoes. Pressure is the cause of nearly all the evils to which the feet are liable.
- PEGGIE.—Our statements as to the value of coins are gathered from the last published list, or from some recent sale, but it is impossible to be certain on such points, as the values of coins alter from week to week, and are of course governed by the demand and supply.
- ONE WHO SEEKS FOR INFORMATION.—"Toga virilis" means the gown of manhood assumed by the young Romans when they arrive at that age. The 13th July, 1868, was a Monday.
- ORSINA.—The quotation, "Like ships that have gone down at sea," is from Moore's "Light of the Harem." It is easy to show by a cold yet lady-like and courteous demanour that you do not desire his attentions.
- EDELWEISS.—Your quotation is wrong. "Daffodils," not "cowslips," "come before the swallow dars." See Shakespeare's "Winter's Tale," act iv. sc. 3.
- POMPOPIA.—"Tom Brown's School Days," as well as "Tom Brown at Oxford" is by Mr. Thomas Hughes. George Arthur is considered to be a portrait of the late Dean Stanley. "Eyre" is generally pronounced "Air." "A very powerfully written tale."
- JUMBO and ALICE.—The origin of Hot Cross Buns is of great antiquity. Their use on Good Friday has probably something to do with the unleavened bread eaten at the Passover by the Jews; they were formerly unleavened also. "Bouns" or buns were a kind of sacred cake offered to the gods. Cecrops is said to have first offered it. The Prophet Jeremiah takes notice of this kind of offering when upbraiding the Jewish women in Egypt.—See Jer. xlv. 18, 19; vii. 18. We retain apparently the name and form, but the sacred uses are no more.
- MADCAP.—When the colour has been taken out of the material by acid there is no remedy; however, it is to be hoped you can hide the spots with a little trimming, some cheap white lace, or a bow.

THE FIRST BLACKBERRIES.

By HELEN MARION BURNSIDE.

THE roses have faded—the bonnie wild roses—
They sleep with the violets that blossomed in spring;
The midsummer glory has gone from the hedges,
Where only the blackberries cluster and cling.

We measure the flight of the year by its seasons.
"It fell in the haytime, or harvest," we say;
"At the fall of the leaf, or when primroses blossom;"
Or else, "when the berries are red on the spray."

Last year, when the blackberries purpled in clusters,
He gathered the first that were ripe in the lane,
As thickly they hung o'er the stile where we parted,
And said, "I'll return when they ripen again."

Already the berries are flushing to crimson,
The cornfields are bright with their own mellow glow;
Each day that I waken I think will it bring him—
My laddie who left me a long year ago?

Fly fast, O ye days, and blow softly, ye breezes,
Shine warmly, O sun, on the blackberry lane,
For when the red clusters have deepened to purple,
The lad that I love will be with me again!

MOTHERHOOD.

By ALICE KING.



HERE is a key-stone to the arch which puts the finishing touch to its grace and beauty; there is a time in summer when fulness of flower and foliage makes the crown of the year; there is a depth of melody in the blackbird's song, when his callow young are in the nest, that

excels in sweetness all the silver trills, all the gay chirping, all the tender notes of other seasons. Such a keystone to the lofty arch of her story, such a crown to the blossom and fruit of her life, such a rich blending and bringing out of all the rarest melody of her nature, is motherhood to woman.

Motherhood is woman's highest, fullest royalty, her season of most splendid prerogative, of her widest rule; when her influence, her broad dominion, her sovereign power, stretches far on into rising generations, sways the men and women who are to be, moulds and colours the minds, and manners, and deeds of the distant future. Maidenhood is queenly with a moon-like queenliness that is all her own; wifehood is queenly, wearing a modest diadem that well becomes her; but motherhood is queenly with a supremacy of royalty that shines out in a noontide radiance to which scarcely any light on earth can compare.

Yet, with all its queenliness, with all its perfection of beauty and brilliance of brightness, with all its richness of harmony, motherhood is a thing often misused and misunderstood among us, motherhood is a thing often turned by women into a poisoned root, a talisman of evil; it is a coronet that woman often lets fall in careless neglect from her brow to be trampled beneath her feet.

She who is a mother holds in her hand the wonder-working wand of a saint, she has the halo of an angel gleaming round her brow; and yet she will fling away, with a light laugh, this wand, she will let herself, quite calmly, lose this halo, and will pick up instead

any little bit of glittering tinsel that society, that fashion may let drop in her path—will wrap herself up in a mantle of idle ease or self-indulgence, and forget tranquilly the royal, the sacred privileges that belong to her. Would that we could rouse up mothers in all ranks, and classes, and stations in England to recognise and exercise, in its whole extent and fulness, the mighty power that lies in their hands! Then the coming pages of the nation's story would be secured, even before they are written, for goodness, for glory, for purity, for truth!

Women are always said to be fond of power; what a boundless field of power opens before them here! Parents and guardians are frequently ambitious for their girls; they want them to make marriages which will raise them in social position; here is something worthy of men and women being ambitious for, to bring up a girl so that she may become the mother of heroes, the mother of patriots, the mother of saints, the mother of martyrs. Our girls, themselves, may well claim the highest advantages of training and education, may well demand that the clearest intellectual light should be poured in on their young souls, may well expect that, in early life, the best and most learned among us should labour to lay deep and firm the foundations of their religious faith and knowledge—when such work as this may lie before them in their future. When we shape the flexible natures of our young girls, when we wake up their hearts, when we feed their fancies, when we give employment to their brains, when we kindle their lively feelings and affections, we must remember that our work is a far-reaching work, for they will perhaps be one day mothers, and on the mother depends the whole formation of character in the children, who will be men and women, fathers and mothers, by-and-by.

It may, perhaps, be thought by some, at first sight, that these last words which we have used are an exaggeration; but let us look at them closely and calmly, and we shall own that they are not. In the first place, it is said by those best qualified to judge on such subjects, by men who have made these things their constant study for the good of their fellows, that on the treatment, and the care, and the training received by the child from the time when it is born till it is two years and a half old depend its whole mental and bodily future. Who is it that at this early

period holds, or at least ought to hold, the entire empire over the boy or girl? Who, but the mother! How can an ignorant, low-bred, narrow-minded woman, how can a woman whose head is nothing but a list of new dresses, whose life is one long story of thoughtless dissipation, how can a woman who knows nothing of prayer, nothing of a noble, spiritual walk with God, who has no desires and aspirations beyond this world—how can any of these fill such a post, a post which has in its keeping the destinies of humanity for both earth and heaven? For such women to be raised to the dignity of motherhood seems like setting an image of clay in a marble temple on a jewelled altar. The woman who is to print on her child's soul and features impressions that are to be life-long, though made at this early age, must know, at least, something of the laws of health, that she may care wisely and well for the development of the tender form; she must have a lively intellect always bright and awake, so that she may be able to kindle the young intelligence; above all, she must have a strong, brave, religious faith to lean upon, so that from the very beginning she may put the little fingers into the hand of Him who takes the little children in His arms, who is the might and strength of all true manhood and womanhood alike.

We have spoken above of the care and attention a mother should know how to give to the physical development of her child, and we must say a word more about it, as one of the duties of motherhood, before we go on to higher things. It is, perhaps, little known and considered how many bodily weaknesses, how many nervous affections, that sadden and torment the middle-age of men and women, arise solely and entirely from foolish, injudicious treatment and management in their childhood. A mother's guardianship over her children should be vigilant, active, unwearying, practical, sensible, and should never, except under peculiar circumstances, be delegated, for more than a few hours, to servants and dependents. Every muscle of the young limbs should be given just its right amount of exertion and rest; every slightest tendency to physical disease should be watched and guarded against; the tender mind, the lively budding fancy should be kept from shocks and disturbances that set the poor little sensitive nerves all in a quiver. If a mother would have her boys and girls grow

up to do good work in the world, she will do her utmost to give them healthy bodies, and calm, nervous systems, for these good things are wondrous helps to those who are fortunate enough to possess them in all mental labour, in all the graver tasks and undertakings of human life.

What a rich, choice treasure to the mother, who knows how to value her, is a baby girl creeping and laughing in the sunshine on the nursery floor! Here is a creature to be trained into a household angel, that shall first gladden her own home, and then another home that is to be, with grace, with light, with sweetness. Here is a fair canvas on which the mother may paint her own image, so that she shall live again to a future generation; here is a heart and mind to be *strengthened*, and illuminated, and opened, so that if, in after days, the girl does not become a wife, she may go out to do bravely and nobly her woman's mission of lifting up, of warning, of comforting, of healing; here is a young princess, who may, in future years, have to assume the same royalty of motherhood which the mother now wears herself. A mother should be always very careful to set her girl high in the family. It is a mistake, and a mistake bringing forth much evil fruit, when the daughters are made the drudges of a household circle, upon whom all the dull, disagreeable work is thrown; the mother should educate her sons to pay chivalrous reverence to their sisters, and not to regard them, as is too often the case, as convenient slaves ready at any moment to do their will. This state of things is bad for both boys and girls, and mothers should be earnest and resolute against it. They should teach their sons respect for womanhood by making them use, even from their nursery days, all gentleness, and kindness, and courtesy towards their sisters; they should breathe round their daughters the loftiness and holiness of womanhood, by even from their cradles making them things of worth and honour in their home, flowers whose sweetness must be prized, jewels too precious to be roughly handled.

While, however, the mother thus instils into her girls the glory and beauty of their womanhood, she must look to it that, at the same time, she makes her an article fit for everyday wear. The plan of the mother, who keeps her daughters like so many wax dolls under a glass case, is both ridiculous and senseless. A true, brave, earnest Christian mother will put on her girls' armour of heavenly proof that shall make them ready and prepared to meet every possible and probable struggle of life with calmness, and sweetness, and patience, that shall cause them to be their own best guardians, that shall clothe them with strength with which to help both others and themselves.

Such are the sweet, gracious duties of a mother towards her daughter. Now let us turn to the highest, noblest, closest tie of all, the tie between a mother and her son. It begins from the first moment that she holds him in her arms; it must last, if Christian hearts and hopes are there, far beyond the grave, into eternity. The entire and absolute queenship of a mother over her son must begin from his infant days themselves; she must fill him with herself even in his babyhood, so that he will see with her eyes, think with her thoughts, feel with her heart. She is his judge to whose arbitration he brings everything. She is his law, which it is his own joyful will to obey; she is his sovereign lady, who awakens up his young knighthood to all that is fair, and generous, and noble, for whom he delights to do and to dare, whose smiles are treasures to him; she is his first great love who absorbs his whole nature into his worship of her.

Such is what a mother may be and ought to be to her son; what royalty is like this? What supreme authority can be compared to it? And when on the throne of this complete dominion sits a woman whose religious faith is a living reality that permeates her whole daily walk through the world, a woman who, moreover, added to this highest essential, is a woman of deep thought, and wide cultivation, and earnest strength of character, what can the result be in the future life of her son but a grand and beautiful result—a result that shall bring blessing and light wherever he goes, to all who come in contact with him, to every work that he undertakes? and all the blessing, and all the light in his own life, and spreading from him into the lives of others, will have sprung, under God, from his mother. A woman who makes her queenly influence thus lasting in her son will have two lives at the same time, for long after she may have departed into life eternal she lives on here in the words and deeds of her son. Surely women cannot complain that their aims and objects in the world's history are small and trivial, when such possibilities as these lie before them.

We have spoken above of the lasting influence of a mother, and her influence, if it is rightly gained and assured, is always a most enduring one, going on long beyond the time when her son leaves her side. At school and college she is queen over the boy and youth still, as she was over the child; she takes a close and lively interest in all her son learns and undertakes, in all his young emulations; she flings her being into his, and draws his up to hers; her approbation is his highest reward in every triumph.

When he goes out into the battle of life she is still with her young soldier; he fights on

the side on which she has taught him to stand; he is brave and steadfast for her sake. When temptations surround his young manhood he thinks of her face, her words come ringing in his ears like the whispers of warning angels, and he is bold and strong to withstand and to conquer; she taught him long ago to pray, she put into his hand long ago the sword of the Spirit, and he is safe. When he chooses some woman for his life's companion, the thought and influence of his mother are still with him as living and as strong as ever, and he will strive to find a wife who is formed on the same pattern. Thus the mother colours her son's story from the beginning to the end. No wonder, then, that we say motherhood is the highest crown of womanhood.

Many speeches may be and are made about education among us, many books may be and are written on it; but, after all, the real, practical, simple truth of the matter is, that the most important part of the education of our boys lies in the hands of their mothers. It is a most certain truth that no one has so much influence over man as woman, and who is so well able to gain a sovereign influence over young men as their mothers—the women who come in closest contact with their daily life? It is, then, no light, superficial task, but a task to be taken in hand very earnestly and very gravely—the education and training of girls, the future mothers of England. They should be encouraged in reading and thoughtful studies; they should have opportunities given them to form clear, reasonable views about literature and politics; most of all, the edifice of their religious faith should be built up very firm, and very fair, and very lofty, for what they are, most infallibly the men of the next generation will be. It is not too much to say that our girls hold in their hands, under the Almighty will, the coming destiny of the nation.

Nothing will so much tend towards saving the coming century from infidelity, from wild hurrying into dangerous extremes, and from all other evils that may threaten it, as the growing up among us of a race of brave, earnest, working, Christian women, with highly-cultivated intellects, with wide, warm, noble hearts, with clear, practical heads, with tender, yet well-ruled feelings, with bright yet controlled fancies, with gentle, gracious, modest, womanly ways, yet with strength stronger than the strength and boldness of manhood in standing up for the right, in fighting on the side of God. Such let our girls strive to be, such let us strive to make them, and high and beautiful shall be the story of women among us, and great and wide shall be the work they shall do for God and man, and greater still shall be their reward in their heavenly Father's kingdom.

HER OBJECT IN LIFE.

By ISABELLA FYVIE MAYO, Author of "The Other Side of the World," &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER THOUGHTS.



DENZIL Alleyne wrote a note to Marcus Drummond, telling him that on this New Year's day he should not keep their usual evening appointment, as "he had a very particular engagement."

Nor did he leave the house all day, until evening, save for a short walk with Faith down to the sea-shore, which,

though there was a light snow lying over the country, was comparatively warm and perfectly bright in the brilliant winter sunshine. The waves dashing in with the energy left by the last storm, broke in soft prismatic colours at their feet. And Faith's heart was warm and tremulous with pain already melting into joy, and disappointment scarcely felt before it resolved itself into hope. She seemed something like a child who receives an unexpected blow from a dear hand, but almost before the smart is felt,

is smothered in a shower of kisses. Very tender and very precious are such seasons, but they are too often like one of those sweet summer-like days which come upon us in late winter and make us think that it is ended, till long weeks of harsh and bitter spring tempt us to doubt if summer will ever come.

When Denzil and Robert came home together from the temperance meeting which they attended that evening, they found a bright little supper set for them both in the Alleynes' parlour, and Faith