

do, his boat drifted on, and he had passed round another angle of the rocks, out of sight of his sisters before he had even succeeded in attracting their attention.

* * * * *

"Hi there! Hi you—young sir—look out! Do you want to be drowned?"

The stentorian tones of a couple of pairs of strong lungs roused Merton from a momentary torpor of despair. He raised his head. His boat was drifting along still, but he had got into smoother water; he was drifting slantwise across the real harbour of the little fishing hamlet. And two stalwart fishermen were shouting to him in expression of their astonishment and bewilderment at his inexplicable proceedings.

Merton Perivale started up with a sudden revulsion towards hope; and utterly regardless now as to the possibility of getting that

"ducking" by such an act about which he had laughed in the early morning, he made energetic signs, and shouted back—

"I can't help myself. I've only one oar; the other is lost. Come to me—quick!"

That final adjuration was unneeded. You may trust fishermen for kindheartedness, and helpfulness too, in any emergency that they can understand. In a couple of minutes they were beside Merton, in less than another he was in their substantial craft, the gay little cockle-shell affair left to take care of itself, and the three were rowing for a race with the sea and death. By the Heavenly Father's merciful aid they conquered, and literally at the last moment Rose and Violet were rescued from their sea-drenched ledge.

Whilst poor old Nurse Collins cried her eyes nearly blind over the two exhausted girls,

lying so languid and white-cheeked in the little snow-white beds which she had prepared for them, two days before, with such anxious but delighted pride Merton rode over to the nearest town for a doctor, and to despatch a telegram to his parents.

Parliament had to do without Mr. Perivale after all, for the remaining days of that session; and three days later, when Violet was once more well enough to come downstairs again, Rose laid her head against her father's arm, and said between tears and smiles—"After all, our thoughtlessness has gained such a happy reward that—that—" But the merry speech broke down, and hiding her weeping eyes against his shoulder, she whispered, "Oh! papa, I do thank God so much for not letting you and mamma have to lose us yet."

GRACE STEBBING.

OUR PRINCESS ALICE.

ONE of the characteristics of the age in which we live is the utter absence of mystery in the domestic life of Royal persons. The veil which separated kings and queens, princes and princesses from the people in former times has been gradually drawn aside; not by means of vulgar curiosity, but by the hand of Majesty herself.

When I was a little girl, the favourite game of myself and companions was to play at royalty, and I well remember how very puzzled we were in our desire to represent faithfully the home life of kings and queens, for we had then no means of deciding about their food, habits, and manners. We wondered if Royal people knew anything about the poor, and we decided in the negative, having heard that Queen Charlotte, on being told of a number of people who were starving, said, "How very foolish of them to starve when there are so many legs and shoulders of mutton in the land."

One thing puzzled us women-children greatly, viz., how the Queen had the measure taken for her dresses. Did the dressmaker take it on bended knees, and did the poor woman ever, from nervousness, prick or nip Her Majesty as she often did us poor children? It was a matter of doubt, too, whether those among us who took the part of princesses should be allowed to have a game of play, and if so, with whom we might play without losing our dignity. I know we had many an argument upon these points, and some of the more bold among us decided to write a letter to our Queen just to settle the question as to whether she ever took into her Royal hands a letter sent by one of her subjects.

In these days there is no doubt, no mystery; all is open to the eyes of the world. Do we love and reverence our Royal family the less because we know that they have the same struggles, temptations, and trials in their lives as we have? or, because we see that their hearts are as tender, their bodies as subject to weariness as any of ours?

No, the knowledge draws us nearer together; what we lack in awe we make up in love and devotion, and many a prayer for our Queen and her children goes up to the Throne of Grace from the hearts and homes of the people who, through the nearer insight into their lives, feel a distinct ownership and pride in them. And, perhaps, in no country in the world are the prayers, "God save our Queen," "God bless the Prince of Wales," a greater reality than here in England.

If prayer be the golden key to unlock the casket of heavenly treasures, who doubts that special grace and blessing will be poured upon

the members of our Royal family, in answer to the thousands, I had almost said millions, of earnest prayers which go forth daily to the King of Kings?

I met yesterday with a very touching tribute to our Queen. A gentleman, one who may never even have seen the Queen's face, said to me in such an earnest tone—

"I hope it may please God to spare the Queen during my life, for it would no longer be the same thing to live if she were gone from here."

Although the love of the nation goes out freely to the Queen and all her children, it is with one specially our thoughts are occupied now. It is with the only daughter the Queen has on the other side of the river—with her who has joined the white-robed throng of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The girls of England regard Princess Alice as specially belonging to them, specially dear to them. She is as it were their representative before the countries of the world. It is no small advantage to them that her life has been placed before them. It is so full of touching beauty and bright example, that there is not a girl in any rank of life who would not be the better for contemplating it.

If we had nothing more than the page of contents of this book, we should be the better for it, for it is an epitome of woman's life. Here it is—

1. Childhood and girlhood.
2. In our new home.
3. At home and at work.
4. Trials.
5. The end.

The precious part of life, childhood, and girlhood (the seed time) of Princess Alice was spent here in England under every favourable circumstances, with a father and mother "under whose influence there grew up in the midst of the most brilliant court in Europe a domestic family life, so perfect in its purity and charm, that it might well serve for a bright example to every home in the land."

Our Princess speaking of this period, said—"I ever look back to my childhood and girlhood as the happiest time of my life."

She was evidently very pretty as a baby-girl, for her father speaks of her as "the beauty of the family," and adds, "she is an extremely good and merry child." As she grew older she was the life of the family, full of fun and mischief, and naturally the favourite playmate of her brothers, over whom, however, she exercised a gentle, sisterly control—never allowing their spirit of fun to hurt anyone about them. She began very early "to

show proofs of real kindness of heart, and of tender consideration for others."

A touching proof of the exercise of these qualities is given by one of the Queen's dressers, who relates that she met the Royal children playing in the corridor and was passing on, when the Prince of Wales made a joke about her great height. Instantly Princess Alice said to her brothers, so that the lady could hear: "It is very nice to be tall; papa would like us all to be tall."

It is true that "her intellectual faculties and the deeper qualities of her character did not develop very early; but almost from the first she showed those qualities of disposition which win all hearts and lend a charm to daily life."

"The feeling of acting independently for the good of others had been aroused in many ways in the Royal children," and Princess Alice early manifested a true womanly interest in the works of charity and mercy. Girls of every rank like to play at housekeeping, and this the Queen encouraged by giving over to her children "the Swiss Cottage at Osborne with its museum, kitchen, store-room, and little gardens, which was made the means of learning how to do household work and to direct the management of a small establishment."

"The Queen and Prince Albert were invited here as guests to partake of the dishes which the Princesses themselves had prepared." This cottage was a sort of emigration to a new colony; each child was allowed to choose its own occupation and to enjoy perfect liberty.

We are sometimes inclined to feel a little jealous of the extra love shown to Scotland by our Royal family; but jealousy will change to admiration when we look at the reason of their preference.

It was their life in the Highlands which brought them into closer contact with the humbler classes, and called into play their sympathy with the poor. "The Royal children were not only permitted to visit the humblest cottages, but encouraged to do so. It was here in the Highlands, no doubt, that a feeling of pity for, and an ardent desire to help the poor, the sick, and the needy were first aroused in our Princess Alice."

The first great change in the family life was made by the marriage of the Princess Royal with the Crown Prince of Prussia. This change caused new responsibilities to devolve upon Princess Alice. As the eldest daughter now at home she was brought into closer companionship with her parents, and "it was her father's constant care at this time to imbue her with that sincerity and earnestness

of purpose, without which," as he himself said, "it was impossible to fill one's position in life happily, worthily, and with dignity."

As the time drew near for her to be confirmed, she was not only prepared for it by the Dean of Windsor, but was encouraged and instructed in serious thoughts and reflections on religious subjects by the Prince her father.

In a letter to the King of the Belgians the Queen speaks of the confirmation of Princess Alice thus: "She was deeply impressed by the importance and solemnity of the event."

The Queen sums up the character of her child, Alice, in words which would rejoice any daughter's heart: "She is very good, gentle, sensible, and amiable, and a real comfort to me."

It is scarcely to be wondered at that when Prince Louis of Hesse came to England and saw our Princess in her home, where every true woman-child is seen to advantage, he should have admired and loved her. The paragraph in which the Queen relates their engagement is most touching, and Prince Albert's approbation and sympathy are undoubted; he called the newly-engaged prince "a beloved, newly-bested, full-grown son."

It seemed the special province of Princess Alice to minister, soothe, and comfort; it was to her companionship that the Duchess of Kent, her grandmother, owed much of the happiness she enjoyed in her last days.

The time was now close at hand which was to test to the utmost the character and qualities of this child-woman; her father, whom she so loved, and to whom she owed so much, was laid low by fever. She was scarcely ever absent from him; she ministered to him, she read to him, and, at his request, sang to him.

A German gentleman, who loved Prince Albert greatly, told me that the Prince asked his daughter Alice to sing the words "Einsam bin ich, nicht allein" to some music which he himself had composed, and that she at once complied, singing them in a low, sweet voice which soothed the sick man. I was told this in the year 1862, and the notes of the music were dotted down for me; I still have them, but, unfortunately, do not know where to put my hand on them.

"During the days of unspeakable sorrow which followed upon the death of the Prince Consort it was Princess Alice, above all, who was a real support to her broken-hearted mother."

Notwithstanding her own intense sorrow, which never wholly departed from her, "she took into her own hands everything that was necessary in those first dark days of the destruction of that happy home. She endeavoured in every way possible to save her mother trouble." "The gay, bright girl seemed all at once to have changed into the thoughtful woman, living only for others, beloved and respected by all."

From this time forward it seemed her one great object to carry out the principles which her father had instilled into her mind, and by trying to walk in his footsteps do honour to his memory.

It was but natural that during the first weeks of her great sorrow and of her many duties the thoughts of her own future should have been put into the background. It was not until the 1st of July, 1862, that her marriage was solemnised at Osborne, thus closing the most important period of her life—her childhood and girlhood. A period which had been so tended, so watched, and cared for could scarcely fail to bring forth a rich harvest.

We feel almost as much sorrow at parting with our princess at this point as the Queen did after the ceremony, when she withdrew alone to her room.

It may be that many who read this journal

may yet have no opportunity of seeing the book containing the life of Princess Alice. We will therefore close this period by the following beautiful sonnet, which appeared in *Punch* at the time of her departure from the land of her birth, and which has been quoted in the book:—

"Dear to us all by those calm earnest eyes,
And early thought upon that fair young
brow;
Dearer for that where grief was heaviest,
thou
Wert sunshine, till He passed where suns
shall rise
And set no more; thou, in affection wise
And strong, wert strength to Her who even
but now
In the soft accents of thy bridal vow
Heard music of her own heart's memories.

"Too full of love to own a thought of pride
Is now thy gentle bosom; so 'tis best;
Yet noble is thy choice, O English bride!
And England hails the bridegroom and the
guest
A friend—a friend well loved by him who
died.
He blessed your troth; your wedlock shall
be blessed."

The history of her new home, her work, and her trials we learn from the pen of the dear princess herself, who little thought when writing these letters without reserve to her Queen mother that they would be seen by the whole English nation; neither could she have contemplated the increased love and admiration for her character that these letters would evoke.

No such picture of Royal life has ever come before us, and we are struck with the similarity existing between the joys and trials of domestic life in the highest and the lowest of the social scale: Prince and peasant how nearly akin.

The first letters after leaving home show how deeply she felt the parting from her mother, notwithstanding that she was leaving with a husband greatly loved. In a letter written on board the Royal Yacht, she says, "My heart was very full when I took leave of you and all the dear ones at home. I had not the courage to say a word, but your loving heart understands what I felt."

Then come letters full of affection for her husband and the great happiness of her married life, expressions brought out by her mother's desire to hear of her happiness.

"You tell me to speak of my happiness—our happiness. You will understand the feeling which made me silent towards you, my own dear bereaved mother, on that point, but you are unselfish and loving and can enter into my happiness, though I would never have been the first to tell you how intense it is, when it must draw the painful contrast between your past and present existence. If I say I love my dear husband, that is scarcely enough; it is a love and esteem which increases daily, hourly. . . . My lot is indeed a blessed one."

Almost in every letter she writes she tries to comfort and strengthen her mother; for example:—

"Take courage, dear mamma, and feel strong in the thought that you require all your moral and physical strength to continue the journey which brings you daily nearer to Home and to Him."

"Bear patiently and courageously your heavy burden and it will lighten imperceptibly as you near him, and God's love and mercy will support you. Oh, could my feeble words bring you the least comfort!"

In another letter she says, "We do feel for you so deeply and would wish so much to help you, but there is One who can do that,

and you know whom to seek. He will give you strength to live on till the bright day of reunion."

Again, "Try and gather in the few bright things you have remaining and cherish them, for though faint, yet they are types of that infinite joy still to come."

"You have the privilege in your exalted position of doing good and living for others, and as you go on doing your duty, this will, this must, bring you peace and comfort."

"Trust in God ever and constantly. In my life, I feel that to be my stay and my strength, and the feeling increases as the days go on. My thoughts of the future are bright, and this always helps to make the minor worries and sorrows of the present dissolve before the warm rays of that light which is our guide."

Then come little histories of her excursions, the preparations of her home, and scarcely to be believed home worries, such as grand folk coming to breakfast, and neither space nor means to receive them as she desired. Her description of trying to make the two ends meet, and the receipts of presents from her mother of money and food to help the house-keeping is very touching. She says, "We must live so economically, neither going anywhere, or seeing many people, so as to be able to spare as much a year as we can."

What will young mothers think of a princess who writes, "I have made all the summer walking dresses, seven in number, for the girls from beginning to end. I manage all the nursery accounts myself, for we must live very economically."

Our princess soon made her mark in the country of her adoption. Societies for helping the sick and needy sprang into existence; hospitals were visited; education was fostered, and ladies who would never have dreamed of interesting themselves in labours for the poor were attracted and fascinated by our princess, who invited them to her afternoon coffee parties and drew them with loving, gentle words to join her in work. And these coffee parties became famous in Darmstadt for the many benevolent schemes set afloat and carried on there.

In these days there are but few countries, I imagine, which can boast of a princess going amongst her poor, and with her own hands tending them and helping them. Are not your English girls proud of such a woman having sprung from your midst?

Hear what she says in a letter to her mother. After entering into explanations concerning the founding and working of an institution for helping poor women in their confinement with clothing and food, she said, "The other day I went to one (poor woman) *incog.* with Christa (one of her ladies) in the old part of the town, and the trouble we had to find the house. At length, through a dirty courtyard, up a dark ladder into one little room, where lay in one bed the poor woman and her little baby; in the room four other children, the husband, two other beds, and a stove. But it did not smell bad, nor was it dirty. I sent Christa down with the children, then with the husband cooked something for the woman: arranged her bed a little, took her baby for her, bathed its eyes—for they were so bad, poor little thing! and did odds and ends for her. I went twice. The people did not know me, and were so nice, so good, and touchingly attached to each other; it did one's heart good to see such good feelings in such poverty. The husband was out of work, the children too young to go to school, and they had only four kreuzers (three make a penny) in the house when she was confined. Think of that misery and discomfort!"

"If one never sees any poverty and always lives in that cold circle of Court people one's good feelings dry up, and I felt the want of going about and doing the little good that is

in my power. I am sure you will understand this."

A little later on she tells her mother that she was with another poor woman even worse off than the one just related, so you see it was not an isolated act of kindness, but, as I know from those who worked with her, a constant habit.

I think we always look upon it that a good daughter makes a good wife and mother, and there can be no doubt about it in the case of our princess. How devotedly she loved her children, and yet stopped short of spoiling them. It happened to her as to many among ourselves, *her trials chiefly* came through her great love.

In April, 1866, she was beginning to dread the war, and lived in a constant state of anxiety and alarm. It was, as she said, a war fearful to contemplate—brother against brother, friend against friend. She was expecting the birth of a little one, and in great fear lest she should be left alone in her time of sorrow, and her letters to her mother at this period were so full of fear, sorrow, and passionate longing for her husband's safety, that one even now cannot read them without eyes overflowing and a longing to go and help her, forgetting for a moment that she is now at rest.

It is touching that when the certainty of war was announced and her husband received his order to depart, he hurried to Berlin to tell Fritz how circumstances forced him to draw sword against the Prussians in the service of his own country. The Queen (our Queen, I mean) took charge of Princess Alice's children at this time, and thus took a load of anxiety off her mind. Poor princess! she had enough to bear—her own trouble drawing near, her husband leaving her for what looked like certain death, and a man who built her house appealing to her for money owing to save him from ruin, and she without the means of satisfying his demand. She went to Frankfort with other poor wives to visit her husband good-bye the day they marched forward.

In announcing the birth of her little daughter she is able to speak of the great blessing she enjoyed of having her husband with her, who had been able to get a few days leave of absence.

When he left her to move on to Aschaffenburg her longing was to be able to follow him, watch and help him. Well for her she could not; it would have crushed all hope out of her. I was there, and shall never forget the sight. I never think of it without a choking sensation, nor have ever quite lost the smell of blood, which sickened me as I moved about on that field the morning after the battle.

God heard her prayer, and brought back the prince, her husband, to her. In memory of having fought side by side, he asked the two regiments of the cavalry brigade officers and men to stand sponsors for his little baby-girl. They called her *Irene* in memory of the peace.

Time went on and brought, as it does to all, many trials to our princess, but it pleased God to keep her family circle unbroken until the year 1873, when an overwhelming sorrow came upon her in the death of her little son Frederick (Fritz), who fell out of the window and died in her arms. She never recovered from this blow. In writing to her mother she says, "There are days which seem harder than others, and when I feel very heartsick prayer and solitude do me good. He (little Fritz) seems near me always, and I carry his precious image in my heart everywhere. That can never fade or die. You ask me if I can play yet. I feel as if I could not. . . . It seems to me as if I never could play again on that piano where little hands were nearly always thrust into mine when I wanted to play. I could cry out for pain sometimes," she says, on returning to the place where her

child died, after being in England a short time. You who read this and have had sorrow cannot you sympathise with our princess?

In the year 1878, diphtheria attacked Princess Alice's household. She lost her little May, the sunshine of the home, the rest recovered. She herself, however, was a victim to the disease, and died on the 14th of December exactly seventeen years after the death of Prince Albert. She died so peacefully, like a child going to sleep, murmuring softly the names of "May, dear papa."

WORK VERSUS IDLENESS.

By MEDICUS.

If I were writing for matured minds, grown-up understandings, so to speak, I should commence this paper with a few well-chosen sentences about the muscular and nervous tissues, their development, their consistent and judicious nourishment, and the duties they have to perform in the animal economy. I should also have a little to say about the brain itself, and a few words about that wonderful muscular double-force pump the heart, that never for a moment ceases to beat from the moment life is vouchsafed to the babe, until, probably, three-score years and ten after its birth the old man or woman finds rest in death.

But my *clientèle* of readers is for the most part young, and physiology in any shape or form is but a dry subject. I therefore avoid it all I can.

The remark, however, I have just made about the heart cannot but afford some food for thought to some sensible girls, whose bright eyes scan these columns. The heart! what a wonderful thing it is, ever going on, ever working!—

"Our hearts, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave."

All through the busy day, all through the silent hours of the live-long night, whether we are awake, or whether our eyes are chained by slumber, beat-beat, and throb-throb goes the heart. Is it always working? Does it never, never rest?

Were the heart to stop beating for even a second or two, a strange, dizzy sensation of fulness of the head would take place, everything would become dark. You would have no time to gasp for breath, every feeling of sense would fail at one and the same time, and you would sink into insensibility, and mayhap into the arms of death.

Then the heart never rests? Yes, it does; it rests between every beat, and it gets more rest at night, because then the beats are fewer and further between, and it gets more rest when one is sitting or lying prone, than when walking or working in the erect position.

Probably some might be inclined to take pity, as it were, on their hearts, and think that the more rest it had the better, and the less one works one's heart the more chance of long life would there be. But this is a mistake, for the more work—up to a certain degree—a girl gives her heart, the better it will be for her own health and happiness.

And the reason is not far to seek: the heart is like the forearm or calf of the leg, a muscular organ; in the very act of working it is drawing towards it nerve-power and nutrient blood, and keeping up its own strength by this means, and enabling itself to send the red stream of life with honest force to the most distant parts of the body. A feeble heart could not do this. I sometimes hear people complaining of cold feet and cold fingers, although the temperature of the air is but

little under summer heat. This proceeds from enfeeblement of the heart, it cannot send the blood along through feet and fingers with sufficient force. Such people are only about half-hearted; let them go to work in the open air, and take abundant exercise, and gradually the heart will strengthen itself and grow, even as the forearm and biceps of the brawny blacksmith grows from wielding the hammer. On the other hand, if you permit the heart to indulge in idleness, if you lie too much in bed or on the sofa, and nurse your heart, if because you feel tired when you exert yourself to any degree you get afraid to work, then you are making your heart weaker and weaker every day; it will degenerate into a poor, useless, pale, flabby morsel of muscle that will be of no more genuine service to you than you yourself are to the honest work-a-day people in the world around you.

An idle heart is not only a weak one, but the place that it should have occupied and filled with good, sound, muscular tissue is apt to be clogged with useless fat, and the possessor of such a heart is very much to be pitied indeed, being feeble in body, a prey to a thousand weaknesses, and often vacillating in mind, and entirely destitute of strength of mind and will.

One of my favourite authors, Charles Lamb to wit, was a very hard-working man in the heyday of his life, but he grumbled a great deal at having to work. The following alliterative line is Lamb's:

"The dry drudgery of the desk's dull wood."

It was Lamb who asked—

"Who first invented work and bound the
free

And holiday-rejoicing spirit down?"

Ah! but when Lamb retired upon a pension adequate to his simple needs, he looked back often and often to his working days as the happiest of his life, and would have given a good deal for a sufficient excuse to return again to the "desk's dull wood." If Lamb had asked me who first invented work, with all reverence, and with a thankful ring in my voice, I should have answered, "God!"

* * * * *

"Whoso works not, neither shall he eat."

There is far more truth in these words than most people imagine, and they seem to ring through all nature. The birds of the air who do not work starve and die; the beasts of the field, if they get lazy, grow thin and other creatures devour them; the little fishes that prefer to sulk under stones in the brook, or lie in sunny days in midstream, under the shadow of a floating weed, never grow, and by-and-bye bigger brothers gobble them up. But, to come nearer home, even those portions and organs of our own bodies that are not exercised get puny. I have already told you what an idle heart soon becomes. Well, look now at your little finger. Why is it so small and useless? Because it is so little used by mankind. Why is the left arm more feeble than the right? Because it works less, and therefore has to eat less—in other words, it does not, by exertion, draw to itself so much nutritive blood as does the right.

Well, but rich people in this world, you may tell me, do not have to work in order to eat.

"Whoso works not, neither shall he eat."

I repeat the words, and an idle man or woman, be he or be she as rich as a Croesus, has but little heart or natural appetite to eat. Idle people do not live long, and when they die they are never missed, for the simple reason that they are not the salt of the earth and nobody ever really loves them. I would far rather be a poor man and break stones by the wayside, and dine off bread-and-cheese, than I