

Nothing is more annoying to such men than to find, when the toils of business are over, and they have settled themselves comfortably into their gardening suits, that some marauder has carried off the very vegetables on which they had prided themselves.

The water-vole has been detected in the act of climbing up a ladder which had been left standing against a plum tree, and attacking the fruit. Bunches of grapes on outdoor vines are sometimes nipped off the branches by the teeth of the water-vole, and the animal has been seen to climb beans and peas, split the pods, and devour the contents.

Although not a hibernating animal, it lays up a store of food in the autumn. Mr. Groom Napier has the following description of the contents of a water-rat's storehouse:—

"Early in the spring of 1855, I dug out the burrow of a water-vole, and was surprised to find at the further extremity a cavity of about a foot in diameter, containing a quantity of fragments of carrots and potatoes, sufficient to fill a peck measure. This was undoubtedly a part of its winter store of provisions. This food had been gathered from a large potato and carrot bed in the vicinity.

"On pointing out my discovery to the owner of the garden, he said that his losses had been very serious that winter owing to the ravages of these animals, and said that he had brought both dogs and cats down to the stream to hunt for them; but they were too wary to be often caught."

I do not think that the owner of the garden knew very much about the characters either of the cat or water-vole.

Every one who is practically acquainted with cats knows that it is next to impossible to point out an object to a cat as we can to a dog. She looks at your finger, but can never direct her gaze to the object at which you are pointing. In fact, I believe that pussy's eyes are not made for detecting objects at a distance.

If we throw a piece of biscuit to a dog, and he does not see where it has fallen, we can direct him by means of voice and finger. But, if a piece of meat should fall only a foot or two from a cat, all the pointing in the world will not enable her to discover it, and it is necessary to pick her up and put her nose close to the meat before she can find it.

So, even, if a water-vole should be seen by the master, the attention of the cat could not

be directed to it, her instinct teaching her to take prey in quite a different manner.

The dogs, supposing that they happened to be of the right breed, would have a better chance of securing the robber, providing that they intercepted its retreat to the water. But if the water-vole should succeed in gaining its burrow, or in plunging into the stream, I doubt whether any dog would be able to catch it.

Moreover, the water-vole is so clever in tunnelling, that when it drives its burrows into cultivated ground, it almost invariably conceals the entrance under a heap of stones, a wood pile, or some similar object.

How it is enabled to direct the course of its burrow we cannot even conjecture, except by attributing the faculty to that "most excellent gift" which we call by the convenient name of "instinct."

Man has no such power, but when he wishes to drive a tunnel in any given direction he is obliged to avail himself of levels, compasses, plumb-lines, and all the paraphernalia of the engineer. Yet, with nothing to direct it except instinct, the water-vole can, though working in darkness, drive its burrow in any direction and emerge from the ground exactly at the spot which it has selected.

The mole can do the same, and by means equally mysterious.

I may casually mention that the water-vole is one of the aquatic animals which, when zoological knowledge was not so universal as it is at the present day, were reckoned as fish, and might be eaten on fast days. I believe that in some parts of France this idea still prevails.

With all its wariness, the water-vole is a strangely nervous creature, being for a time almost paralysed by a sudden shock. This trait of character I discovered quite unexpectedly.

Many, many years ago, when I was a young lad, and consequently of a destructive nature, I possessed a pistol, of which I was rather proud. It certainly was an excellent weapon, and I thought myself tolerably certain of hitting a small apple at twelve yards distance.

One day, while walking along the bank of the Chervell River, I saw a water-vole on the opposite bank. The animal was sitting on a small stump close to the water's edge. Having, of course, the pistol with me, and wanting to

dissect a water-vole, I proceeded to aim at the animal. This was not so easy as it looked. A water-vole crouching upon a stump presents no point at which to aim, the brown fur of the animal and the brown surface of the old weather-beaten stump seeming to form a single object without any distinct outline; moreover, it is very difficult to calculate distances over water. However, I fired, and missed.

I naturally expected the animal to plunge into the river and escape. To my astonishment, it remained in the same position. Finding that it did not stir, I reloaded, and again fired and missed. Four times did I fire at that water-vole, and after the last shot the animal slowly crawled off the stump, slid into the river, and made off.

Now in those days revolvers and breech-loaders did not exist, so that the process of loading a pistol with ball was rather a long and complicated one.

First, the powder had to be carefully measured from the flask; then a circular patch of greased linen had to be laid on the muzzle of the weapon, and a ball laid on it and hammered into the barrel with a leaden or wooden mallet; then it had to be driven into its place with a ramrod (often requiring the aid of the mallet), and, lastly, there was a new cap to be fitted. Yet although so much time was occupied between the shots, the animal remained as motionless as a stuffed figure.

When I crossed the river and examined the stump I found all the four bullets close together just below the spot on which the animal had been sitting, and neither of them two inches from its body. Although the balls had missed the water-vole, they must have sharply jarred the stump.

I was afterwards informed that this semi-paralysis from sudden fear is a known characteristic of the animal. It seems to be shared by others of the same genus, as will be seen when we come to treat of the field mice.

In its mode of eating it much resembles the squirrels, sitting on its haunches and holding the food in its forepaws, as if they were hands. I am not aware that it even eats worms or insects, and it may be absolutely acquitted from any imputation of doing harm to any of the fish tribe.

(To be continued.)

## "SHE COULDN'T BOIL A POTATO;"

OR,

THE IGNORANT HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE.

By DORA HOPE.



HE late Miss Ella!"

"When are you going to turn over that new leaf you spoke of, my daughter?"

"There's a little coffee left, but the bacon is quite cold."

These were the exclamations that greeted a tall bright girl, as she entered the breakfast room one morning.

"I am very sorry, papa. I really meant to be down in time, but I suppose I must have gone to sleep again after I was called." And being really vexed with herself for having so

soon broken her good resolutions, formed for the hundredth time the day before, Ella Hastings accepted the cold bacon meekly, and even turned a deaf ear to the withering sarcasms of her two schoolboy brothers, who were leisurely strapping together their books, and delaying their departure till the last moment.

"There is the postman coming up the garden; run and get the letters, Hughie."

A solemn-looking boy of six years old climbed down from his chair, in obedience to his father's request, and soon came back with a handful of letters, and settled himself patiently by his father's side to wait for the empty envelopes, which formed his share of the morning's correspondence.

An exclamation of surprise from Mr. Hastings caused his wife to look up inquiringly from the letter she had just opened,

and he handed her silently a telegram which had been forwarded, with other papers, from his office, where it had evidently been delivered late the previous evening. Kate, the eldest daughter, leaning over her mother's shoulder, read aloud the short notice:—

"Mrs. Wilson dangerously ill; letter follows."

Mrs. Wilson was Mr. Hastings' only remaining sister. His mother had died when he was almost an infant, and this "sister Mary" had slipped into her place as mother, teacher—everything, to her little brothers and sisters; never leaving them, till the father having died also, and her young charges being all old enough to settle in life for themselves, she had rewarded the faithful waiting of her old lover, and they had settled down together in a quiet village a few miles from the noisy town where his business lay. Her happy



married life lasted but a short time, however, and for the many years since her husband's death she had preferred to live entirely alone with her two maids and a strange medley of pet animals—finding employment and interest for her declining years in her books and her garden.

From being so long alone she had grown eccentric in her ways, and very odd and decided in her views; but she kept a warm corner in her heart for her favourite brother and his children, who heartily returned their aunt's affection, though they stood a good deal in awe of her keen penetrating gaze and sarcastic criticisms.

She had always prided herself on her good constitution, and despised doctors and dentists as people who pandered to the fads and fancies of a degenerate generation—a generation who, according to her creed, weakened their backs and ruined their health by lounging on sofas and easy chairs, while, for her part, though seventy years of age, she was thankful to say a straight-backed chair was good enough for her. It may be imagined that for this self-reliant, vigorous Aunt Mary to be taken seriously ill, so ill as to have to summon help, was a great shock, and Mr. Hastings decided at once that he must go to see his sister, and that one of his daughters should accompany him; but the telegram was so short, and gave so little information, that nothing further could be arranged till the noonday post arrived, which always brought the letters from Hapsleigh.

The morning seemed endless, but noon came at last, and with it the promised letter, which was eagerly opened and read. It was from Mrs. Moberly, a near neighbour of Mrs. Wilson's. She described the sudden illness, and all that had been done for the sufferer. "The doctor says that for a day or two he cannot tell what the result may be, though we may hope for the best. He has sent in a thoroughly trustworthy trained nurse, but he agrees with me that it would be a good thing if one of your daughters could come to take charge of the household, for even if all goes as well as possible it will be a long and tedious recovery, and the invalid must be kept perfectly quiet and free from all worry."

"Well, girls," said Mr. Hastings, as he finished reading the letter, "you must decide between yourselves which of you will go. As there seems no immediate danger, we need not leave till to-morrow morning, so you will have a little time for preparation; but however great a sacrifice it is for you to go, and for us to part with you, there is no question about it. Aunt Mary must not be left alone till she is quite herself again, so I will telegraph to Mrs. Moberly that one of you will go with me by the first train to-morrow."

There was no room for disputing the point when Mr. Hastings spoke in that decided tone; moreover, the girls themselves would have said just the same—that someone must go; but the question was, "who?"

"Kate, it must be you," said Ella, eagerly. "I do not know anything about nursing or housekeeping, or anything of that sort, and you know I always say and do the wrong thing."

Mrs. Hastings looked anxious and perplexed. "I really do not know what to do for the best," she said. "I do not see how I can spare you, Kate; for if I have one of my bad attacks I must have you at hand; and you see, Ella, you would have everything to learn here just as much as at Hapsleigh, and I think you would find teaching the children very hard work."

Kate, the eldest daughter, was her mother's unfailing assistant, and almost entirely relieved her of the care of the three little ones; indeed, during Mrs. Hastings's frequent attacks of asthma, Kate was both ready and able to take entire charge of the household, and she

felt that to leave her mother with only Ella's help would be throwing more care upon her than her delicate health could bear. She spoke decidedly, therefore; and, after a little more discussion, it was agreed that Ella should accompany her father, prepared to stay as long as she might be required.

The rest of the day was fully occupied with packing and making arrangements. Ella was rather apt to let her clothing take care of itself, and, in a sudden emergency such as this, had to borrow right and left. Indeed, Mrs. Hastings and Kate were both kept busy all the afternoon looking over and supplying the deficiencies in her outfit.

"That dressing-gown will not do at all, Ella. It is most important to have a thoroughly warm one when you have to sit up at night. Yours is very pretty, but blue cashmere and lace are not suitable for a sick room in cold weather. You will have to borrow Kate's thick flannel gown. You should have my quilted silk one, but in such a great thickness of material one's arms do not feel quite free to help an invalid, or shake up a bed."

"Here it is, Ella," rejoined Kate; "and I have brought you my thick bedroom slippers, too. They are not so elegant as your Turkish ones, but they are much warmer. Be sure you keep them by the side of your bed, so that you can slip them on directly if you are called up suddenly. You know you take cold so easily, and it would be so awkward if you had one of your bad throats at Hapsleigh."

Mrs. Hastings felt very anxious about her daughter, called upon so suddenly to take up such important and unexpected duties, and gave her a great deal of loving counsel.

"You will have to manage to get up earlier, dear child," she said. "You know Aunt Mary's servants are always rather inclined to go their own way, and they may perhaps try to take advantage of her illness to keep irregular hours and slight their work; and you must remember that you will be responsible for good order in the house, and that is impossible unless all the household are regular and punctual in beginning their day's work at the proper time. I will let you have my little clock, and you can set the alarm at whatever time you wish to get up."

"Yes; I really am going to turn over a new leaf about that; but you know, mother, I shall feel more obliged to get up now when I am responsible for things going right. Oh, dear! what a dreadful thought! I am sure I shall never manage. Why, I can't cook, and I can't keep accounts, and I have no idea how many pounds of meat people want for dinner. I shall order a tin of Australian meat, and just have it at every meal till it is finished, and then get another."

"I am afraid the servants will soon give you notice if you do, Ella," said Mrs. Hastings, laughing at her daughter's ideas of housekeeping. "You will soon get accustomed to the size of joints and puddings, if you get into the habit of noticing them, remembering how long they last. But there are two other pieces of advice which I want you to remember and to act upon. If your father decides that it is necessary for you to stay and act as mistress, he will tell the servants so; but you must assert yourself as mistress at once, and take everything into your own hands. You will find it rather difficult at first, but it will save you a great deal of trouble in the end. I have seen endless discomfort caused by young and timid housekeepers not liking to take the reins into their own hands. But, at the same time, be very careful never to interfere or complain, unless you are quite sure that it is necessary, and that you are in the right. If you are in any doubt you can always consult Mrs. Moberly; and you must make allowances for the fact that the servants have always been allowed to do pretty much what

they liked, and will naturally expect to continue doing so; therefore do not complain unless you have unmistakable grounds for it, and never, under any circumstances, speak hastily or angrily. If you are put out, wait till your vexation has cooled down a little; and then, if you are quite sure you are in the right, speak quietly and kindly, but so decidedly that there may be no mistake about your intention of being obeyed."

"Oh, dear!" groaned Ella, who was almost reduced to tears at the prospect of such serious responsibility. "I am sure I shall come home ignominiously in a week. I know just how it will be. Just think of Aunt Mary's scorn when she finds I don't even know how to boil a potato!"

There was no time for lamentations, however, and her mother and Kate both comforted her with the assurance that at any rate no one would blame her if she did her best, and they would expect a few mistakes from a girl only just home from school.

The next morning, at any rate, Ella was punctual, and at eight o'clock they all sat down to breakfast.

"I made tea for you, Ella," said Mrs. Hastings. "I thought it would be better for you before such a long journey. Coffee sometimes disagrees with people who are not very good travellers. And I advise you not to take bacon; it so often makes one thirsty. Here is potted meat; that would be better for you."

Ella felt in very low spirits, and her mother's and Kate's affectionate kindness only brought the despaired tears into her eyes. She could hardly touch her breakfast, and was relieved when Kate left the table, and began to look after the small articles of luggage.

"Robin, did you strap up the rugs? Oh, what an untidy bundle!" and the methodical Kate unfastened the straps and rearranged the contents. First the large rug was folded lengthwise till it was just as wide as the length of the bundle should be when finished. Then came Ella's shawl, an awkward one for a neat roll, as it had long fringe; but Kate turned in the fringe all round first, and then folded the shawl itself till it was just a little narrower than the rug; the ulster was carefully folded also to the same size, and both were laid on one end of the rug. Finally, Ella's umbrella and sunshade were laid across the pile of wraps, and all were rolled round carefully, so that none of the articles inside protruded, and the rug, being longer than the others, hid all the ends, and, when strapped round just tightly enough to hold all together comfortably without unnecessary squeezing, it made such a neat-looking roll as compelled even Robin's admiration. Ella's travelling-cap had been inside the bundle before, but Kate took it out and advised her to carry it in her hand-bag, as being easily accessible if she did not wish to undo the strap.

All was ready at last, the rugs, the hand-bag, and the tin trunk, to which at the last moment Kate came running to tie a piece of red braid, by which to distinguish it, making Ella and the boys laugh at what they called her "incurable old-maidishness."

"Never mind," she replied, nodding sagely, "you will thank me when you have to hunt for your box amongst twenty others exactly like it."

Kate had suggested going to the station to see them off, but her father objected.

"We shall get on better alone," he argued. "We settle ourselves comfortably in our corners at once, unroll our rugs, and make everything ready before we start, instead of having to make spasmodic efforts to think of last remarks and messages. Of course, if Ella were going alone I should go to see her off, but as it is I would rather not have anyone with us."



Mrs. Hastings thought this a rather hard-hearted way of looking at the matter; but as Ella quite agreed with her father, feeling convinced she could not be able to keep from crying if the farewells were too long protracted, there was nothing for it but to yield, and as soon as the cab came to the door the parting was hurried through, and, almost before she had time to realise that she was really going, Ella found herself halfway to the station.

The railway journey was a long and troublesome one, involving several changes. Before midday Ella had recovered her spirits and her appetite, and acted on Kate's advice. "Do not wait for father to suggest lunch," she had said; "you may be sure he will not begin to feel hungry till you are quite ravenous." Remembering this, Ella laughed to herself at Mr. Hastings's surprise when she suggested that she was ready for her lunch, and proceeded to unpack her stores.

"This is the first course, I suppose," she said, as she produced two neat white-paper packages, each with the name of the contents written on it. "This one contains potted meat sandwiches, and these are chicken. They

look very nice, too. These sprigs of watercress between the sandwiches are a great improvement."

"Yes, I must confess they are very good ones," assented Mr. Hastings, after trying one of each kind. "I think someone must have been giving the cook a lecture on the art of cutting them. Home-made sandwiches have generally too much butter, so that they are too rich to eat, and the paper they are wrapped in is greasy and disagreeable; but these have just the right quantity, and they are made with suitable bread—not, as I have often had them, of spongy bread, full of holes, through which the butter and meat oozes on to one's fingers."

In addition to these there were, for Ella's benefit, a few sandwiches made with damson jam, from which the stones had been extracted. The next course consisted of some small cakes and a few ripe pears. By way of beverage, Mrs. Hastings had supplied Ella with a flask of cold tea, made weak, and with a squeeze of lemon in it, which she had always found the best possible drink for quenching thirst; when travelling herself she always took either this or lime-juice and water. Finally,

knowing that Ella had a good appetite, and would probably get very hungry before reaching her journey's end, her mother had told the cook to fill a small jam pot with lemon jelly, and to provide a teaspoon to eat it with. Ella found this most refreshing, and her lunch altogether was very satisfactory; certainly the supply was rather too bountiful, but that fact did not trouble her much, for she soon noticed a poor, hungry-looking boy on one of the stations, who thankfully accepted all that was left.

In spite of the length of the journey, Ella quite enjoyed the day; her father was so kind and took such good care of her. He insisted on her getting out of the carriage and walking up and down the platform whenever the train stopped long enough, that she might not be tired of sitting still; and when it began to get dark he made her put her feet up on the seat and tucked her up with the rug, and made her so comfortable that, to her own great surprise, she went fast asleep, and only awoke as her father was collecting their books and wraps on nearing their destination.

(To be continued.)

## MERLE'S CRUSADE.

By ROSA NOUCHETTE CAREY, Author of "Aunt Diana," "For Lilies," etc.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE NEW NURSE.

**L**ooking back on those days, I simply wonder at my own audacity. Am I really and truly the same Merle Fenton who rang at the bell at Prince's Gate and informed the astonished footman that I was the person applying for the nurse's situation? I recall that scene now with a laugh, but I frankly own that that moment was not the pleasantest in my life. True, it had its ludicrous side; but how is one to enjoy the humour of an amusing situation alone? and, to tell the truth, the six foot of plush and powder before me was somewhat alarming to my female timidity. I hear now the man's startled "I beg your pardon, ma'am."

"I have come by appointment," I returned, with as much dignity as I could summon under the trying circumstances; "will you inform your mistress, Mrs. Morton, that I have come about the nurse's situation?"

Of course, he was looking at me from head to foot. In spite of the disguising plainness of my dress, I suppose the word gentlewoman was clearly stamped

upon me. Heaven forbid that under any circumstances that brand, sole heritage of my dead parents, should ever be effaced. Then he opened the door of a charming little waiting-room, and civilly enough bade me seat myself, and for some minutes I was left alone. I think nearly a quarter of an hour elapsed before he reappeared with the message that his mistress was now disengaged and would see me. I followed the man as closely as I could through the long hall and up the wide staircase; not for worlds would I have owned that a certain shortness of breath, unusual in youth, seemed to impede me. At the top, I found myself in a handsome corridor, communicating with two drawing-rooms of noble dimensions, as they call them in advertisements, and certainly it was a princely apartment that I entered. A lady was writing busily at a small table at the further end of the room. As the man spoke to her, she did not at once raise her head or turn round; she was evidently finishing a note. A minute later she laid aside her pen and came towards me.

"I am sorry that I could not attend to you at once, and yet you were very punctual," she began, in a pleasant, well-modulated voice, and then she stopped and regarded me with unfeigned surprise.

She was a very lovely young woman, with an indescribable matronly air about her that spoke of the mother. She would have been really quite beautiful but for a certain worn look, often seen in women of fashion; and when she spoke there was a sweetness and simplicity of manner that was most winning.

"Pardon me," with a shade of perplexity in her eyes, "but I suppose my

servant was right in stating that you had come by appointment in answer to my advertisement?"

"Yes, madam," I returned, readily; for her slight nervousness put me at my ease. "I have your letter here."

"And you are really applying for the nurse's situation—the upper nurse, I mean; for, of course, there is an under nurse kept. I hope" (colouring a little) "that you will not think me rude if I say that I was not prepared for the sort of person I was to see."

I could have groaned as I thought of my note. Was it possible that I had spelt "advertisement" *wrongly, and yet* I had the paper before me; my handwriting was neat and legible, but evidently Mrs. Morton was drawing some comparison between my letter and appearance, and I did not doubt that the former had not prepossessed her in my favour.

I became confused in my turn.

"I hope to prove to you," I began, in a very small voice, "that I am a fit person to apply for your situation. I am very fond of children; I never lose my patience with them as other people do, or think anything a trouble; I wish to take up this work from love as well as necessity—I mean," correcting myself, for she looked still more astonished, "that though I am obliged to work for my living, I would rather be a nurse than anything else."

"Will you answer a few questions?" and, as though by an afterthought, "will you sit down?" for she had been standing to keep me company out of deference to my superior appearance.

"I will answer any question you like to put to me, madam."

"You have never been in service you



to be," said John Shelley, stroking Fairy's golden head fondly as he spoke.

"But if he could be a very clever man some day and perhaps learn a profession, you would think that better than being a good shepherd, would you not?" said Fairy, who was in Jack's confidence, and knew that as he watched the sheep on the downs he dreamt dreams of this kind.

"No, Fairy, no; if God had meant Jack to be a gentleman he would not have given him a shepherd for his father. His duty is to labour hard to get his own living in that state of life in which it has pleased God to call him, as the Catechism says."

"But, John, why did God let me be brought up by a shepherd, then?" asked Fairy. "You see He does not always mean people to remain what they are born or I should not be here, should I?"

This was an argument to which John's slow mind could not supply an answer. Conservative to the backbone in all his notions, like most Sussex people, be their politics what they may, the law of progress was no law to him, but rather rebellion to the divine appointments, and that Jack should wish to be any-

thing else but a shepherd like his ancestors was to him as inexplicable and incomprehensible as it was profane and wicked.

Fairy's presence among them had often been an enigma to him. Accustomed to work in a groove himself, his mind never travelling beyond the downs on which his life was spent, he could not fathom the divine purpose in placing her under his care, but yet being quite clear in his own mind it was God's will for her at present, he did his duty towards her without questioning; but the idea of Jack rising out of his own sphere of life into a higher was another matter altogether.

"I don't know," said John, at last, as Fairy repeated her question.

"By the bye, how long have I been here exactly?" asked Fairy.

"Let me see; twelve years last shearing-time," said the shepherd, whose dates were few and simple, sheep-washing, shearing, lambing, and next and last sheepfair being the principal.

"But I want to know the day of the month; and I'll tell you why. You all have birthdays except me, and no one knows when mine was, so I am going to keep mine for the future on the day I

was brought here, so I shall be like the sheep; you count their age from their first shearing, not from the day they are born, and I am going to count mine from the day I was found. Now try and remember when it was, will you?"

"Twelve years ago last shearing; it was on a Friday, the day before the shearing ended, somewhere about this time, for we finished shearing last Saturday week," said John.

"It was earlier, John; it was the twenty-sixth of June; I wrote it down in my Bible the night you found her; but come into supper; the smock is finished at last," said Mrs. Shelley, folding up the ugly garment with a sigh.

"Jack's smock? I am glad of that, he must put it on to-morrow; he will look every inch a shepherd then," said John.

"Indeed, he won't wear it to-morrow; we are all going to have a holiday, and going to the seaside for the day; but where is Jack? I wish he would come into tea. I want him to help me with my lessons; I shall be much too tired to do them to-morrow," said Fairy, as they went into the kitchen.

(To be continued.)

## "SHE COULDN'T BOIL A POTATO;"

OR,

### THE IGNORANT HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE.

By DORA HOPE.

#### PART II.

THE next morning Mr. Hastings had an interview with the doctor, who told him that Mrs. Wilson's recovery depended to a great extent upon her having absolute quiet, and freedom from all anxiety or annoyance. He advised that the nurse, in whom he had perfect confidence, should have the entire responsibility of the sick room, but as it was clear that she could not be always on duty, he hoped it could be arranged for Ella to remain and take the management of the house, and at the same time relieve the nurse occasionally by taking her place in the sick room.

It was absolutely necessary, he said, for Mrs. Wilson's sake, that there should be a mistress in the house, for already the nurse had complained to him that her patient had been very much disturbed by the loud talking and banging of doors; and that she herself had found considerable difficulty in getting her wants attended to, and her meals provided with comfort.

The doctor's opinion settled the matter; Ella must stay, and in order to make everything as easy for her as possible, Mr. Hastings called in the servants, and explained to them that he left his daughter in charge of the house, and that until Mrs. Wilson was well enough to attend to business herself, they were to take all orders from, and refer everything to, Ella.

At first all went smoothly enough; the servants were frightened at Mrs. Wilson's illness, and were ready to help and obey. Contrary to her expectations, too, Ella found her time pass very quickly; instead of days seeming dull, there was only too much to do and think of.

Directly after breakfast each morning, she had an interview with nurse to get her report,

and consult as to the invalid cookery for the day. Then Bertha, the cook, had to be talked to, and arrangements made for the day's meals; then there were the fowls and ducks to feed, the one-eyed pony to visit, and talk to while he nibbled his daily apple, and the peace to keep between the seagull and jackdaw, whose habitual friendship could hardly stand the test of breakfast-time. And if she lingered too long with these and the dogs, Sir Paul, the parrot, was screaming loudly, threatening to "tell the missus," while the whole cageful of little birds were twittering and scolding that they had not been attended to first of all.

"The mistress always did them herself," the cook said; and Ella supposed it was her duty to do the same. These various duties occupied most of the morning, and the afternoon was spent in her aunt's room, while the nurse rested, and prepared for the night's watch.

The arranging of meals was Ella's greatest difficulty at first, but she managed it more easily than she expected, for Bertha generally had something to suggest for her own and the kitchen meals, and the nurse always knew what to advise for her patient. Some of the dishes she ordered seemed to Ella anything but appetising; one especially, suet and milk, she thought sounded absolutely nasty, though the nurse assured her it was very light and wonderfully nourishing; and, indeed, when at last Ella was persuaded to taste it, she had to acknowledge that if she had not known what it was she really would not have disliked it. The nurse generally prepared this herself, as she said all depended on the care in making. She put a  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of suet in a pint of milk, and simmered it gently, stirring frequently, till the

milk was as thick as good cream. She then strained it carefully, and flavoured it with almond or lemon, which so effectually disguised the taste of the suet in it, that it became a favourite dish with Mrs. Wilson.

Coffee jelly was another dish which nurse introduced to vary the too constant beef-tea, and which had the advantage of being very quickly and easily prepared. She made a cupful of strong coffee, strained out the grounds very carefully, and added as much sugar and milk as though for drinking hot, and enough isinglass to stiffen it, and either left it in the cup or poured it into a mould, and when cold it was ready to turn out and serve as a jelly. This was only given occasionally, as it was not considered very strengthening; but nurse found it useful to make a variety.

Ella expected a great quantity of arrowroot would be used; indeed, that was her one idea in regard to invalid diet, but the doctor did not care for it, and never ordered it.

"It is no use," he said, when she once suggested it, "unless you add nourishing things to it; it is nearly all starch, and there is nothing in it that could sustain life by itself. Common wheaten flour is far more valuable, and either that or corn flour should always be used in preference to arrowroot when it is important to get as much nourishment as possible."

The nurse was a kind-hearted woman, as well as an efficient attendant, and was as ready to teach the duties of a sick room as Ella was to learn them.

"It is a cold day, Miss Ella, you must keep the fire up," she said one day before retiring for her afternoon rest. "Do not wait till the fire has gone down, but put more coal on when this seems nearly burnt through. Many nurses will tell you that you should have some coal



wrapped in paper, ready to lift on to the fire without making any noise, but I do not like that way myself, the paper makes such a dirty fire. So look here, miss, I take care to have plenty of pieces of coal of a nice size in the scuttle, and then I keep this old pair of gloves by the side of the fire (I will leave them there for you to use), and I slip them on and lift the pieces of coal up with my fingers; I don't make noise enough to wake a baby that way, and can lay each piece just where I want it too."

Ella felt very nervous at first, when she was left alone in charge of the sick room, but gradually she became accustomed to the dark-some silent room, and rejoiced in finding herself less awkward and stupid than she had imagined herself to be. At home it was Kate who was always at hand when anyone was ill, Kate who entertained callers, and Kate who always knew the right thing to do or say; while Ella believed herself to be by nature awkward and devoid of tact. She was finding out now, however, that it was only the opportunity to make herself useful, not the ability, that had been lacking, and though her want of experience caused her some difficulties which might have been avoided, she soon found that prayerful patience and careful thought enabled her to undertake duties which astonished herself.

The first disturbance of the general peace was occasioned after she had been only a few days at Hapsleigh, by the nurse's objection to take her meals in the kitchen with the servants. She had never been expected to do so before, she said, and she really must ask to have her meals prepared comfortably. The servants were offended at this slight upon their kitchen and their company, and retorted that "they had had enough of her stuck-up ways," that "they were every bit as good as she was, only they did not give themselves such airs," and so on; all of which greatly dismayed poor Ella, when the disturbance reached her ears. She thought the matter over, and had decided that nurse should have her meals in the dining-room, so that the servants could not complain of extra trouble, as they would only have to lay another place at the table; but Mrs. Mobberly, who came in very opportunely in the midst of her deliberations, dissuaded her from it.

"It is all very well now," she said, "while your aunt is so very ill that you must of necessity be in her room whenever the nurse is away having her meals, but we hope she will soon be so much better that there will be no need for that, and you will sometimes find it awkward then to keep nurse waiting till you have finished. No, you had much better insist at once upon her meals being comfortably prepared for her upstairs."

"But where can she have them? There is not even the tiniest sitting-room upstairs, only the small bedroom which nurse uses for herself, and the large one where I sleep."

"Then I think, if I were you, as yours is such a large, airy room, I would have one of these small tables moved into it, and let nurse have all her meals there. You will find she will prefer it to coming downstairs, as it is near enough to the sick room to hear every sound, and if you make a rule that your bedroom shall be put straight directly you leave it in the morning, and the windows thrown wide open, it will be quite fresh by the time she wants it."

Ella thanked Mrs. Mobberly warmly for her advice, which she promised to follow, and as she walked down the garden with her to the gate, she told her of her mother's parting advice, that when it was necessary to speak to the servants, she should first of all make quite sure she was in the right herself, and then assert her authority decisively, so that there might be no doubt about her intention of being obeyed.

In spite of her brave words, however, Ella felt her courage ebbing away as Mrs. Mobberly disappeared in the distance, and she had to summon up all her resolution and give her orders at once, before it all evaporated.

The servants listened to what she had to say in perfect silence, and after waiting in vain for a reply, she had to leave them, feeling very much discomfited, but no sooner was she safely within the shelter of the breakfast-room than their tongues were loosed, and she heard their loud, rude voices angrily discussing what she had said, and declaring they would not put up with such interference, and adding, to Ella's dismay, in almost the very words she herself had used before leaving home, that "she was a fine one to come ordering them about, for they did not believe she even knew how to boil a potato." Poor Ella felt very much hurt, for she had tried to speak kindly though firmly, and she had flattered herself that they had not discovered her ignorance. That evening's entry in her diary was—

"My first attempt at asserting myself a failure. Decided that managing a house is not my vocation."

In spite of all these difficulties, however, the time passed very quickly, and Ella had the happiness of feeling that she was really useful. As Christmastide approached, a fierce struggle went on in her mind; she had never thought of being away from home on Christmas Day, and it would be very lonely and dull at Hapsleigh, so different from the merry party who always met at home on that day; but her mother had written that she must judge for herself if it would be right to leave, and when she thought of her aunt, who was beginning to look to her for entertainment and company, and of the quarrels certain to arise between the other members of the household, her mind was soon made up, and, although with a very heavy heart, she wrote that she thought she must stay.

The answer came promptly, and was full of praise and warm encouragement, which comforted and helped her.

"If your happiness cannot be with us, my child," her mother wrote, "remember that we celebrate the season when our Lord left His Father and His home to bring happiness to mankind, and you are treading closely in His footsteps just now. Let your Christmas joy this year be in making joy for others, and you will find a depth of happiness you never imagined before."

A short time before Christmas Ella was sitting in her aunt's room, putting the finishing touches to sundry little presents she was making to send home, when her aunt interrupted her: "I shall want you to go into town for me to-morrow, Ella," she said; "you had better write the things down as I tell you them. You will find a pencil and half sheets of paper in that little drawer in the table."

Mrs. Wilson loved to make unexpected presents, and her circle of charities was wider than anyone guessed. She had that spirit of thoughtful generosity which is as rare as it is valuable, and she was never tired of finding out and relieving those who, from poverty or friendlessness, were likely to be overlooked in the general rejoicings at Christmas. This year her illness made her private gifts difficult to manage, and Ella had to be taken into a good many secrets which surprised and touched her.

"Well, first I want you to buy an interesting book, the sort that a boy would like, to cost about six or seven shillings, and have it sent to this address; you can put in my card and say I hope the boy will like it. Are they poor, did you say? No, not very, but this boy is the 'ugly duckling' of the family, and everybody snubs him, they say he is so dull and stupid, and I think a little kindness will

help him to assert himself. Then go to the poulterer's, and have a turkey or goose sent to these addresses."

"Oh, Aunt Mary," exclaimed Ella, aghast, "I daren't choose turkeys, I don't know anything about them."

"Stuff and nonsense, my dear!" replied her aunt, who had little pity on ignorance; "it is high time you learnt, then. You had better get a basket of nice hothouse fruit for the Miss Duquesnes; they are as proud as princesses and as poor as church mice. I don't believe they get half enough to eat; you must manage to give them some money, somehow."

"Would postal orders do? I could post them in the town, and there is no need to put any name on them."

"Very well; they are nasty new-fangled things, but I suppose you must use them; there were no such things when I was young. And do not forget to go to Miss Alexander's as soon as you can. Dear me! I had no idea Christmas was so near; she ought to have had her order long ago."

"Is that the queer-looking little lady with blue spectacles?"

"Yes; she used to be a governess, but people think no one can teach children unless they have certificates and degrees now-a-days, and her eyesight failed too, so she has to live on a small annuity, but she can see to knit, and she likes to make a few things to sell when she can. You had better ask her to make a nice warm shawl for your mamma, and one of those nice little garments, boot-socks and overalls in one, for the Jenkins' baby; ten to one its mother is sending it out with hardly anything on its poor little legs, and its head and shoulders wrapped up like an Eskimo. You can look round and see if she seems to have anything else made ready, and buy a few little things."

Ella did not much like these vague and general orders; she would much rather have been told exactly how much to pay for each article, but she promised to do her best.

Mrs. Wilson's last commission was to call on an old gentleman, in feeble health, who had lost his money through the failure of a bank, and was now unable to procure any of the comforts which his failing health required; his only son had lately died, and the old man was now alone. The one relic of his past wealth was a store of beautiful old china, which it had been the happiness of his life to collect.

"You must go and call on him, Ella, and say that I want a piece of fine old china for a present, but I cannot go out myself to buy it, and cannot trust you, and I thought he might know of some one who is breaking up a collection. If so, will he kindly choose a piece and send me? Then you see, my dear, if he needs the money he can send me some of his own china."

Ella did not know old Mr. Dudley, and felt rather shy and embarrassed when she went to pay this call, and afraid of betraying her aunt's real intention; but he put her so much at her ease at once, that instead of running away directly she had delivered her message, she spent a long time with him admiring his treasures. His old-fashioned courtesy pleased Ella, and she readily promised to come again and tell him if her aunt was satisfied with his choice of china, for he had undertaken the commission, and Ella felt sure, from his manner, that he had understood Mrs. Wilson's real intention, and intended to avail himself of it.

Ella had to pay several visits to the town before all her shopping was finished; for there were presents to buy for the servants and nurse, and decorations for the kitchen, and the parcel of gifts for her own family to pack and send home; and all these matters took up so much time that Christmas Day dawned before she had time for any regrets.

(To be continued.)



severance. Without these the teacher can do nothing. If she works in the best spirit she will feel that, like David, she cannot offer to God of that which doth cost her nothing, and she will be ready to forego little pleasures in order that the practice may not be interfered with, or the evening of the week changed. This last is a most important point; as the lives of working people, from whose ranks most members of choirs are recruited, do not adapt themselves to change, they seldom receive in its integrity a hasty message sent round to put off, and of all things, a walk for nothing after a day's work is to be avoided. Of course rules must be elastic and not unbending as iron, but experience shows that the above advice is really needful. Regularity in the teacher is sure to be imitated by the learners, and steady work must tell in the end.

The next point should be firmness tempered with wisdom. The teacher must be supreme, or no choir will prosper. Infallible she cannot be while here below; but even so, one will must rule or anarchy will be the result. Twenty (or whatever number may compose the choir) views of doing the same thing cannot conduce to harmony, moral or musical, and this fact must be impressed. At the same time there are local prejudices and fancies in most places, which a clever tactful teacher will soon discover and understand, so as to know when she had better give way.

Enough has been said to show that we do not consider the task of teaching a choir an easy one, nor will it always repay with success those who have given it much trouble. The teacher must sometimes find herself grappling with the effort of making the proverbial "sow's ear into a silk purse." She has impossible materials to weld, such as, *e.g.*, excellent, but roaring basses, trebles possessing no high notes, tenors out of tune, and leaning to amalgamation with treble, altos none! What is she to do? Courage! Go on, do your best, teach, exhort, scold, coax, never lose hope, and if you get no credit, try not to mind. Man does not know, but God does, what work you do for His sake, only be sure that you are so doing it. If the music be really the unattainable "silk purse," how much may be done in teaching the inharmonious little choir to phrase well, to throw out by judicious accent the sense of canticle and hymn, and so lead the congregation to think of the lesson it contains! How much zeal may be kindled by the teacher's energy! How speedily the broad dialect peculiar to the place will disappear before a little good-natured chaff and imitation from one in whose lips it is seen, even by its votaries, to be ridiculous! How the ill-used letter "H" may be helped and restored with the advice of breathing over it.

The reader will not, perhaps, think us

very encouraging; but it is obvious that where excellent voices are to be had, forming them into a choir only needs intelligence and a firm hand from one who is equal in knowledge to the task undertaken. We have, therefore, tried to suit our advice to the needs of the many, who must perforce work under difficulty, being obliged to take, not the materials they desire to have, but only the heterogeneous ones at hand.

A few practical suggestions and we have done! Do not attempt too much in public. Congregations are very critical. One piece of music badly done will be more noticed than several faultless ones. On the other hand, keep on learning some music above the power of the choir for improvement and interest. In cold weather, when possible, choose music which does not try the voices too much by giving them sustained high notes to sing.

Lastly, work according to the views of the vicar of the parish, who is responsible for everything in it; try to carry out in the best possible manner whatever form of musical worship he desires to have in his parish church. You may not be of the same opinion; but you will gain nothing but good by putting your own views in the background and thus learning to obey as well as to teach. And may we not hope that the loving Father will acknowledge such work, even if imperfect in its results, as done by His child to His Glory?

## "SHE COULDN'T BOIL A POTATO;"

OR,

### THE IGNORANT HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE.

By DORA HOPE.

MRS. WILSON'S recovery was slow and tedious, even more trying to herself, perhaps, than to her nurses. She had always been particularly brisk and active, and had scorned to consider, or, as she said, "coddle," herself in any way, and it was a great trial to her energetic, self-reliant nature to be waited on hand and foot, and watched over "like a baby."

Ella, entirely unaccustomed as she was to illness of any sort, save her mother's occasional attacks of asthma, thought the nurse was unnecessarily checking her aunt's attempts to help herself, till Mrs. Mobberly explained to her what different treatment is necessary for different people, and how impossible it would be, with Mrs. Wilson's active temperament, to prevent her from getting excited and over-tired if she once began to take any part in what was going on around her, although a little exertion might have been actually beneficial to one of a calmer and more indolent nature.

It seemed a long time before Mrs. Wilson was allowed any food more substantial than beef-tea, of which she wearied greatly in spite of the nurse's many devices for varying it. She showed Ella how to alter the nature of it altogether by making it with half the quantity of mutton, or veal, instead of entirely beef; or with all three together. This not only made a pleasant change, but the doctor told them it was often found more easily digestible than when made of beef alone. Then again, both flavour and consistency were varied by adding cream, or an egg well beaten up, or thickening with corn flour, tapioca, wheaten flour, or rice, while at other times it was served clear, without either flavouring or thickening, or in the form of a jelly turned out of a tiny mould not larger than a teacup.

Gradually, however, Mrs. Wilson began to take more solid food, and then Ella's great difficulties began. By the end of her first

week's experience of providing real meals for her aunt, she wrote to her mother that she had come to the conclusion that it was quite impossible to arrange dishes suitable in every respect for a sick room.

"Do pity the sorrows of a poor young housekeeper," she wrote, "with three people to please, the doctor, the nurse, and the patient, and they all want something different. First comes the doctor, and tells me I must now devote my attention to making the dishes as nourishing as possible, as it is time aunt was picking up her strength again; so I crowd in all the strengthening things I can think of, and flatter myself I have made a mixture strong enough to restore the weakest invalid; and the consequence is that next day nurse tells me she has been up all night with her patient, whose supper was too concentrated to digest. Next time, inspired by nurse's tale of sufferings, I make the simplest dish imaginable, which could not disagree with a baby, and it comes down almost untouched, with a sarcastic remark from Aunt Mary that when she is well she does not mind how plain her food is, but that in her present state of health she needs something to tempt the appetite a little. And yet—but I will draw a veil over the doctor's reproaches when I ventured to make her a spicy little dish."

But on the whole, in spite of her poor opinion of her own performances, Ella managed to supply the needs of the sick-room very satisfactorily; and she was much comforted on hearing from her mother that even the most experienced housekeepers find it a hard task to tempt the capricious appetite of an invalid, especially when it is necessary also that the food should be very nourishing, and at the same time so light as not to overtax the most feeble digestion. Mrs. Hastings sent her daughter a list of suggestions for little

dishes for the sick-room, and added, at the close of her letter—

"At any rate, my child, if your task is difficult, as I know it must be, it is also satisfactory, for you can watch your patient each day able to take a little more nourishment, or a little more substantial food than the day before. You are saved the terribly sad duty of vainly trying to tempt an appetite which daily gets a little poorer, or of watching a dear one getting each day a little weaker, proving only too clearly that all your efforts are in vain."

Happily Mrs. Wilson liked oysters, and, though she soon tired of them, as of everything else, they formed the basis of a number of tempting little dishes. The favourite of these, a suggestion of the doctor's, was called "Angels on Horseback." Ella was very anxious to know what the ridiculous name meant, but could get no information from the doctor, who said he had often wondered himself, but all he knew was that it was a favourite dish with invalids, and that was the name it had always gone by. Each oyster was taken from the shell, and the beard cut off, and was then rolled up in a very thin slice of bacon, tied round with cotton, and fried. Usually three of these little rolls were enough for a dish.

At first Ella's generous nature led her into the mistake of sending up too large quantities of everything for the patient, but she soon learnt that a dish which would tempt an invalid if offered in small quantities, would be pushed aside in disgust if large and substantial-looking.

Next to "Angels on Horseback," the favourite dishes were scalloped or stewed oysters; while for a little additional nourishment between meals, the nurse would often suggest a "Prairie Oyster." This exceedingly



simple dish is not an oyster at all, but merely the raw yolk of an egg, served like an oyster on a small shell, with the smallest possible sprinkling of salt and pepper over it. The white must be very carefully strained off, so as to preserve the yolk unbroken, and it can then be slipped into the mouth and swallowed without any trouble to the patient.

Two other favourite dishes which the cook was particularly clever in making were jellied veal and faggots. For the former a small knuckle of veal was boiled till the meat slipped easily off the bones, which were then taken out. The meat was cut into very small pieces, and pepper, salt, mace, and thyme added to taste, with a small shallot chopped very fine. This was all put back into the liquor, and boiled again till it was thick, and then turned into a mould. When cold it formed a stiff jelly. Ella always found the flavouring a difficulty, for Mrs. Wilson's taste as an invalid was of course very different from what it was when in health, and her digestion was very easily upset; but the cook obstinately declared that she knew her mistress's tastes better than Ella, and in spite of all orders persisted in putting in flavouring according to her own fancy; so that many dishes which might have been simple and nourishing enough to be frequently asked for, had to be altogether prohibited, as being too spicy for the invalid's delicate digestion.

For the faggots, a rump steak was cut into thin strips of about three inches by two, and on these was spread a little butter, with pepper, salt, and the smallest atom of minced shallot, or sometimes a few herbs. The strips were then rolled up, tied with string, and fried in butter or clarified dripping, and served up in gravy.

Then there were the different kinds of panada, made of slices of chicken or game cut off the bones, and scraped and pounded, and gently simmered in milk; not to mention the numberless ways of cooking eggs, buttered, scrambled, poached, and boiled, besides omelettes, custards, and milk puddings of all descriptions.

At last, Mrs. Wilson began to show signs of real improvement, and as her strength returned she was allowed to spend part of every day on her comfortable, old-fashioned sofa, while a few visitors were admitted to see her. The nurse kept a very watchful eye over these visitors, and after their departure sometimes expressed herself in very strong language to Ella, saying that, "They ought to know better than to tire out an invalid with stopping such a long time, and as for some of them, why, they don't never seem to care how high they send Mrs. Wilson's temperature up, with their worriting talk, and exciting the poor creature so."

The nurse would have soon taken the matter into her own hands, and requested the visitors to retire when her patient began to look tired, but that Mrs. Wilson preferred Ella's attendance in the room to that of the nurse when visitors came, and she was not sufficiently experienced to know when her aunt was beginning to get tired. The nurse hit upon a plan, at last, which afforded Ella a good deal of secret amusement. Mrs. Wilson's spectacle-case was always placed on a little table by the side of her sofa, and the nurse arranged that, whenever she began to feel a little tired, and wished to be relieved of her visitors, she should take up this spectacle-case and lay it beside her on the sofa, which should be the signal for Ella, or the nurse, to suggest to the caller that Mrs. Wilson had talked as much as was good for her.

Every morning Ella had to bring an account of all the pets to her aunt, and under her searching questions revealed an amount of ignorance that quite appalled the old lady.

"You should not feed the ducks and hens

together," she said, one day, in answer to a remark of Ella's. "Of course, the ducks eat more than their share, with their great flat bills. Where are your brains, child?"

Ella had a good deal of trouble with the fowls' food at first. Their morning meal was soft food, consisting of "sharps" (the outer part of wheat, which is separated in grinding the corn for white flour) and barley meal, mixed in equal parts, and added to any kitchen scraps there might be. This was wetted with boiling water, and should have been made into a stiff, dryish paste—a point Mrs. Wilson had been most particular about. The cook, however, objected to any extra trouble; as it was much easier to pour in water enough at once to make the mixture wet and sloppy, she always did so; while, as for the kettle really boiling—well, that was only one of her mistress's many fads.

Then there was the Indian meal, which ought not to have been used, except in the cold weather, and then only occasionally mixed with the other meal, but this had all been used up, and no fresh had been ordered, so the fowls had been fed on Indian meal alone, till that, too, was finished.

Again, with her liberal ideas, Ella gave them far more food than they could eat, and the wet, sour mess lay about all day; so that it was not at all to be wondered at that the fowls drooped, seemed out of order, and did not lay their proper quantity of eggs, and Ella, afraid of exciting her aunt by telling her they were ailing, only increased the evil by increasing the quantity of food.

This state of things had lasted some time, when the nurse took pity on Ella's difficulties, and told her it would do her aunt no harm to be asked for advice about the fowls; so, to Ella's great relief, they talked the matter over together, and a change was instituted in the feeding. Fresh meal of all kinds was ordered, and Ella had a practical lesson in mixing it.

Mrs. Wilson had all the materials brought into her room, and directed the process, while Ella, arrayed in a large apron, and with her sleeves turned up carefully, followed her instructions.

Some potato peelings and kitchen scraps had previously been boiled together till they were quite soft, and now Ella cut these up small, with an old knife, and then mixed the meal in equal parts, while waiting for the kettle to boil.

As soon as it boiled, the scraps were mixed in with the dry flour, and Ella, seizing the big wooden spoon, began to stir vigorously, while the nurse poured in the boiling water.

"Enough water," Mrs. Wilson cried, in spite of the incredulity of the two operators, who had intended to put in twice as much. "Don't stop beating it up, child," and Ella continued till she was hot and breathless.

"Now take up a handful and squeeze it."

Ella did so, and it fell from her hand a stiff lump, leaving her palm quite clean.

"That is quite right," said Mrs. Wilson, encouragingly, after slowly arranging her gold spectacles, and peering at the mass in the basin. "See that it is always stiff like that; and never give them more than they will run after when you throw it for them. If you find any is left, do not give them so much next time. At night give them each as much grain as you can take up in your hand, but no more. You may give the ducks a little more, but stop at once when their hunger is not keen. Now go and feed them, child; I am tired."

Under this treatment the fowls soon revived, and Ella was happy about them again, at any rate till she discovered that she had made other mistakes. She found the eggs she got now were much better and richer than those bought in shops, or even than those she got when the fowls were being carelessly fed,

and that in consequence fewer of them were necessary in cooking.

One day, before she had begun to take solid food, to the great delight of her nurses, Mrs. Wilson declared she was hungry, and had taken a fancy for a boiled egg. There were not many eggs from the hens now, but the ducks laid regularly; so Ella picked out a fine large duck egg, and carried in the prettily arranged tray herself; but what was her disappointment when, on breaking the shell, the egg was found not to be fresh. Her aunt pushed the tray away in disgust, the sight of the bad egg had quite turned off her appetite, and she refused to eat anything at all.

The nurse was very much vexed, and Ella herself was greatly distressed, and went off with the tray, more convinced than ever that housekeeping was not her vocation, and that she never would succeed in it.

The next time she was alone in the sick-room her aunt told her that she was evidently very careless about the eggs, and must begin to manage them differently. To begin with, she must use up all in the house as quickly as possible for cooking, and every fresh one that came in must be dated with lead pencil, and placed in order, with the large end downward, in a board pierced with round holes for the purpose, and which was kept in the cool larder. They were to be used in the order in which they were brought in, and, Mrs. Wilson added, severely, she hoped they would not soon disgrace themselves again by serving up a musty egg.

At the beginning of January, Mrs. Wilson directed Ella to bring a certain note-book and the writing materials.

"Now," she began, as soon as Ella was ready, "you will find a list, at the beginning, of all subscriptions that are due. I want you to write to all the people, and enclose the amounts. I will write cheques for the large sums, but for the others you must get postal orders. Make a list of all you will want, and then you can get them when you go out."

"But they have not applied for the subscriptions yet, auntie. I have brought you every application that has come. Would it not be better to leave them till they are asked for?"

But this did not suit Aunt Mary's views at all. She pointed out to Ella that she kept a note herself of the date when her subscriptions were due, and therefore knew the time as well as the recipients; and so she did not see the good of making the charities expend a penny postage, in addition to the cost of paper and envelope and clerk's salary, in merely reminding her of the fact.

"And be sure," she continued, "that you put a stamped envelope in with each subscription. I want them to get the benefit of the whole amount, without having to spend part of it in reminding and thanking me."

"There is another notice under the 'January' heading, auntie, about paying the dog tax. Ought that to be attended to?"

"Oh, yes, to be sure. Now you see the good of keeping a memorandum book, for I had quite forgotten that January was the month for renewing the licence. That will be seven and sixpence. Two dogs, did you say? Dear, dear, child, how ignorant you are, to be sure! Don't you know that dogs are not taxed till they are six months old, and the puppy is not nearly that yet?"

Ella looked rather crestfallen at this rebuke, which her aunt perceiving, hastened to comfort her by saying—

"Well, it can't be helped. You are a good girl, and do your best, my dear; but things were different when I was young, and girls were expected to know all the ways of a house. Ah, yes! girls were very useful, in the old days, when I was young."

(To be continued.)



but I am going to take this girl to her place," interrupts the matron, as a respectable-looking, neatly-dressed maiden appears amongst her schoolfellows to bid them good-bye.

She has passed her term of years in the Home, and is about to make her start in life. A good outfit and a respectable place have been provided for her somewhere in Kent, and the kind matron will not lose sight of her until she places her in the care of her new mistress. Indeed, the girls are never lost sight of, as their touching letters and frequent returns home prove, as well as the communications made to the matron on each change of place.

"If you keep your situation and have a good character for one clear year, the committee will give you a guinea as a reward, together with a new dress," says the secretary, encouragingly.

How little we realise the feelings of the young servant as she leaves the best home she has known for a stranger one, and hurries off to the train about to whirl her away into a new world! When we inquire her previous history, we are told that she was "surrounded by immoral influences, and rescued just in time."

Let us hope that her mistress will be able to write of her as many mistresses have written this year of girls sent to service before her—in terms of high commendation. Here are one or two extracts:—"Mary has been in my service for three years, and I have much pleasure in testifying to her continued good behaviour. She works hard, is very trustworthy, and I should be very sorry to part with her." "Ellen is a very good girl, and during the two years she has been with me has given me great satisfaction. I hope she may remain with me many years," etc.

When we consider what may have been the fate of these young people had not friends of the Home intervened, we are thankful for what our readers have done to help them. We are attracted by one who sits rather apart, and is bigger than the others. She was rescued from a life of such awful terrorism that even now, when reproved, she hides under the beds, creeping from one to another like a wild animal. She has, it is said, lost half her wits from fear; but it is hoped that kindness may recall them from their "wool-gathering." She seems less perplexed than she was.

We should like to linger, and learn the story of all the girls; but we are summoned from the outworks to the keep, where lessons and housework alternate, just as they did

when last we were here. As to the dormitories, they are literally ablaze with colour, for a generous, anonymous donor has sent seventy scarlet woollen coverlets, and each bed boasts of one. But there are at present only sixty-one inmates, and, accordingly, nine of the said coverlets are set aside. We are anxious to fill the home, which will hold one hundred. Therefore that last resource, a bazaar, is still in contemplation. Adverse circumstances prevented its taking place in 1886, the jubilee year of the Institution; so we hope that 1887, the jubilee year of our well-beloved Queen, may see it consummated. Will the readers of *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER* continue their kind efforts, and send us work or money, as seems to them best? Some eight hundred pounds resulted from the last bazaar, which was mainly attributable to the start they gave it; and already numerous contributions have been received, the work of their willing fingers. Five years ago the office of the Princess Louise Home was crowded with packages containing their gifts. May it be so again, and may the writer once more be privileged to record them, and may another round dozen or more of girls be safely housed, taught, and placed in service, as the result of their labours.

Several distinguished and influential ladies have already promised their aid in various ways, and we are stirring ourselves up to hope for "a great success." H. R. H. the Princess Louise will open the bazaar, life and health being granted to her. We will pray that they may be extended and lengthened, and that she may see the Home that bears her name full to overflowing.

We are thankful that our readers have such good memories, and that they have not forgotten this, their first love, while contracting an attachment for another, equally worthy. Happily the philanthropic heart is large, and its hand ever open.

We have been so long the historian of the Home that we find nothing new to say about it, therefore we will wind up by a visit to the secretary's private abode, in order to see one of the girls, now in his service, who was a Woodhouse bird when last we looked into the nest. A drive across Wanstead Flats, through a portion of the Forest, and past the picturesque village, brings us to his hospitable domicile. Hence he walks almost daily to oversee the Home, so that he, at least, is not idle, since he must also supervise monetary matters in London diurnally. We congratulate him on having such a quiet halting-ground midway.

It would be out of place to describe it, or

the excellent luncheon of which we partook, but it is quite allowable to say that the neatly dressed, rosy-faced parlour-maid waits uncommonly well, and that she is a good specimen of Woodhouse training. We are gratified by her recognising us, and if all the readers of *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER* could have seen her bright smile of welcome and respectable appearance, they would have rejoiced with us. But she is only one of the many who have been aided. During the fifty years of the existence of the Institution, nearly three thousand have been rescued from danger of one kind and another, fifteen hundred of whom have been received since it has been known as "The Princess Louise Home." Forty-three of these were admitted only last year. Close upon eleven hundred have become domestic servants, and who can calculate the inestimable good done to them and society by rescuing them from indescribable evils?

As we stood upon the platform of the Snaresbrook Station awaiting the train, we moralised on this. Sunset with its heavenly glow overspread Epping Forest and Wanstead-park, beyond which lies the Home. We reflect on the Divine love which has inspired in the human heart the desire to devote all we see around us to the overworked citizens of the largest city in the world; and to open to some of her tempted children the gates of the rescue house in the distance. We recognize in the evening glow that *God's love* never fails. We will strive to obey His command, which says "Let brotherly love continue."

We perceive both degrees of love in the subjoined list, and feel assured that Christ's little ones will be still held in tender remembrance.

In addition to the seventy coverlets already mentioned, we are requested to state that 224 valuable articles have been received at the Home from a lady who desires her name not to be announced. These vary from scarlet blankets to children's hose.

Lady Greenall and Mrs. Edward Lloyd have also sent magnificent gifts of clothing, made and unmade; and "The Hampton Court Association of Ladies for the Care of Friendless Girls" has likewise contributed a valuable parcel of clothing, through the Dowager Lady Clifford.

In money, three guineas from Lady Martin and ten shillings from C. W. B. D. have been received.

Contributions sent to the Secretary, Mr. Gillham, at 32, Sackville-street, W., will be immediately acknowledged by him, and subsequently in this Magazine.

## "SHE COULDN'T BOIL A POTATO;"

OR,

THE IGNORANT HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE.

By DORA HOPE.



ALTHOUGH Mrs. Wilson was very much better, her improvement still greatly depended upon having perfect quiet and freedom from all excitement, and her nurses found that if she was in any way disturbed or agitated in the evening, she either lay awake the greater part of the night, or, when worn out for want of sleep, was compelled to take the soothing medicine, which

always had a depressing effect upon her next day.

One evening, Ella had just left her aunt, who was drowsily watching nurse's final preparations for the night, when the whole house suddenly rang with piercing screams and cries for help from the kitchen.

Greatly annoyed and frightened, Ella ran downstairs to stop the noise, and, on reaching the kitchen, was horrified to find Annie, the housemaid, rushing about the room with her dress in flames, and shrieking wildly for some-

one to save her. The cook, meanwhile, was crouching in a corner with her apron over her head, so that, as she said afterwards, she "might not see Annie burnt to death before her eyes."

Ella quickly shut the kitchen-door, thereby stopping the draught of air, which was blowing the flames in all directions, and then, with more presence of mind, although not much better success, than the cook, she seized a jug of water, and flung it over the flames, and ran for more.



Unfortunately, it was burning oil that had caught fire, and was setting alight to the matting that covered the floor, and the water only spread the mischief further.

Happily, nurse now appeared in the doorway, and instantly perceiving what was the matter, tore up a heavy hearthrug, and wrapping it round Annie, soon succeeded in extinguishing the flames; while Ella, perceiving the good effect of her plan, promptly imitated her example, and pulling up door-mats, and anything woollen she could reach, threw them on the burning oil on the floor, and she and nurse soon stamped out the flames.

Directly the fire was quite out, nurse urged Ella to return to her aunt, while she herself examined the extent of Annie's burns. Happily, the poor girl was wearing a dress of thick woollen material, which had taken a long time to ignite, so that, although her muslin apron had made a great blaze, she herself was hardly injured at all. It was, in reality, Mrs. Wilson who suffered the most, the excitement causing her a sleepless night, followed next day by a violent headache and feverish attack.

After breakfast the following day, Ella made up her mind to hold a solemn inquiry into the causes of the accident, the result of which filled her with amazement that the whole house had not been burnt down long ago.

There was no gas in the house, and, as a great deal of oil was required, a large tin vessel containing several gallons was kept (or was supposed to be) in an outhouse; while, in order to avoid the danger of taking a light near this supply of oil, Mrs. Wilson had given instructions that the lamps should always be cleaned and re-filled during the morning.

But the outhouse was cold, and the lamps were often forgotten until they were wanted in the evening; so the large can of oil had been surreptitiously brought into one of the pantries, where it could be more easily got at.

On this occasion, as on many others, Annie had forgotten to fill the hall lamp, and when it reminded her of the fact by smoking, making a choking smell, and finally going out, she took it down and filled it, using the naked flame of a benzolize lamp to light the dark little pantry.

Even this foolhardy act did not, as it might have done, set the whole store of oil in flames, and she actually trimmed and re-lighted the lamp in safety, and was carrying it through the kitchen, when a sudden draught blew the flame of the benzolize lamp against her hand, on which some oil was spilled. This flamed up, and the frightened girl dropped both lamps. The larger one exploded in the fall, setting fire to the oil and to her own apron, and, but for nurse's quickness and presence of mind, she would probably have been burned to death.

All this information, very unwillingly given, added to cook's remark that there was not a lamp that would burn properly in the house, so frightened Ella that she felt inclined to give up the use of lamps altogether, and burn nothing but candles. On second thoughts, however, and after consulting Mrs. Mobberly, to whom she always referred in all her difficulties, she sent instead for the man who had supplied the lamps, and had them all reviewed.

He declared that all the mischief arose from the dirty state of the lamps, which, much to the indignation of the maids, he requested Ella to look at, to prove the truth of his words.

"If you have good lamps, and keep them perfectly clean, and burn good oil, you are quite safe," he said; "but if you neglect any of those three, they are the most dangerous things you can have about a house."

Ella honestly acknowledged that she knew nothing at all about lamps, and had never cleaned one in her life, but she was determined to understand the matter thoroughly now, and begged the man to explain exactly what cleansing was necessary to keep them in good order.

He advised that the lamp glasses and globes should be washed every week with warm water, soap, and soda, but they must be most carefully dried before using. The different parts of the burner should be brushed out, or rubbed clean with a cloth every day; and at least once in two months the whole brass fittings taken off and well washed.

In a well-made lamp all parts of the burner should take to pieces in order to be cleaned. The wick-tube and perforated plate through which the air has to pass to feed the flame should be most particularly seen to. Charred wick and paper, match heads and dust are often allowed to fill up the holes of the grid, causing a poor flame, a bad smell, and, not unfrequently, an explosion.

"Don't be afraid of plenty of warm water and soap and soda," the man repeated; "only you'd better look out pretty sharp, miss, and see that they get the whole thing perfectly dry before it is lighted again, or you'll be having another explosion, and perhaps you won't come off as well next time."

Ella thanked the man for his goodnatured advice, and determined henceforward to examine the lamps for herself every day, to make sure her directions were really carried out. Both she and the nurse made as light as possible of the affair to Mrs. Wilson, who, on seeing for herself that Annie was not much the worse, was quite contented that it had been a very trifling matter which had unnecessarily frightened them; and feeling herself worn out and irritable with sleeplessness, and the consequent feverishness, she indulged in some rather biting sarcasms on the "hysterical young ladies of the present day, who make a fuss about nothing at all," and begged Ella to remember that she liked the house kept quiet last thing at night.

These very undeserved reproaches were rather hard for poor Ella to bear, but she managed to keep silence, and as soon as she was released consoled herself by writing a doleful letter to her mother, with a full account of the whole affair, adding the oft-repeated remark that "she would never be able to manage a house—it was not in her."

As she expected, her letter brought a speedy reply.

"You must not be discouraged, my child," wrote her mother, "when you have to accept blame for the faults of others; that is the very essence of self-denial, to give up everything, even the credit you feel you have deserved, for the sake of others; and if it cost you no effort to do, it would be no denial of self. At any rate you have been successful, for the very fact that you are blamed proves that you have saved Aunt Mary the worry and annoyance of knowing her servants to be careless and incompetent, and thereby you have done much to help on her recovery."

"Now about the lamps. My own experience has taught me one or two other lessons, which I will pass on to you."

"The wick must fit the lamp, and be the right kind for that particular burner. If you are not sure about the kind to get, they will always advise you if you go to a good shop to buy the wick."

"Then, again, the oil is not (or should not be) all burnt out before the lamp is refilled, but fresh oil is added to what is already in. After this process has been continued some time, however, the oil becomes turbid, and gives a disagreeable smell when the lamp is lighted. To avoid this, the oil should occasionally be emptied out of the lamp, and

the whole thing washed before being refilled with fresh oil."

"You cannot insist too strongly on proper care being used in filling the lamps; one brilliant housemaid we had when you were children was caught filling a lamp holding it over the kitchen fire, that the oil might run over on to the fire, and not make a mess on the floor. After that I filled them myself till I got a maid whom I could thoroughly trust."

"And do not try to be economical in buying the oil; I cannot advise you which kind to use, as I do not remember what the lamps are like, but go to a good shop, and get the best they recommend. I have generally used a very good kind, called 'water-white.' The poor oils throw off a most explosive gas at a low heat, and do not give so much light as better oils. If you are careful on all these points, you need not be in the least nervous about the lamps; we have always used them till the last year or two, and have never had an explosion or accident of any sort."

With all this information to guide her, coupled with her own observation of the construction of the lamps, Ella felt herself mistress of the situation, and determined that for once she would insist upon having her own way.

She had the oil removed to the little outhouse again, the door of which she locked, and kept the key herself, only giving it to Annie at the time she had appointed for filling the lamps.

The result of this decided measure was that Annie became sullen and disobliging, while the cook, taking her part, made rude remarks in a tone purposely loud enough for Ella to hear, about the discomfort of having two mistresses in the house; and nurse caught her, a short time afterwards, complaining to Mrs. Wilson of Ella's overbearing ways and unreasonable orders, and of the "nasty, stuck-up ways" of the nurse. She was very quickly and unceremoniously turned out of the room; but the mischief was already done, for Mrs. Wilson, with the natural irritableness of an invalid, insisted on having the servants admitted to the room whenever they wished to see her, and partly, too, in consequence of her weakness, which made her unwilling to have any kind of upset in the house, and partly that she believed the servants to be honest and trustworthy, while she knew Ella was ignorant and inexperienced. Mrs. Wilson made matters worse by always taking their part, and blaming Ella for actions which had existed only in the imaginations of the maids.

One complaint especially annoyed Ella. At home they had always been accustomed to arrange the work and the meals on Sundays so that not only the family, but the servants also, might attend a Bible class in the afternoon, in addition to the regular morning or evening service; and as she was very anxious that the servants at Hapsleigh should have the same liberty, Ella had done as much as she could of the necessary work for the sick room herself on that day, and had so managed that one or other of the maids had been able to go out every Sunday afternoon since her arrival.

It was, therefore, with considerable surprise and vexation that Mrs. Wilson one morning showed her a note she had just received from the teacher of the Bible class Annie was supposed to attend, asking if she could be spared to come once in the month, so that the lady should not lose sight of her altogether.

This was rather too much for Ella's patience, and after with some difficulty convincing Mrs. Wilson that the girl had not even once been hindered from attending the class, she went straight off to call on the teacher. It seemed that Annie had lamented to that lady that with sickness in the house and an unreasonable young mistress, she would be unable to attend the class until Mrs. Wilson was well again;



whereas in reality she had been going every Sunday to visit some friends whom she knew would be disapproved of both by her mistress and her teacher.

However, happily for all parties, matters were coming to a crisis.

Ella went, as usual, one morning to speak to the old gardener, whom she found digging in a secluded corner of the garden, with the ducks following closely at his heels, and poking with their flat bills into the freshly-turned earth, searching for worms or any other choice morsels that good fortune might bring in their way.

The old man evidently had something on his mind, and, after the usual greetings and

inquiries after Mrs. Wilson, he stuck his spade into the earth and leaned his arms on the top of it, as if prepared for a long conversation; at which the old drake cocked his head on one side, and stared at him out of one eye with an air of virtuous indignation at having his own labours interrupted in this way.

The conversation did not seem easy to begin, however, and it was only after a good deal of hesitation that he said at last—

"I've lived along of the missus now these forty year."

"Yes, I know you have, Mallard. Why, I remember you all my life," replied Ella, wondering what was coming.

"Well, Miss Ella, I ain't told no tales, and

I ain't goin' to tell no tales; but what I say I say; and that is as 'ow *there's things goes* on in this 'ouse as 'adn't ought to; and I ain't lived along o' the family, man and boy, these forty years without knowin' as when the doors is locked at night they ought to be locked, and not so many goin' in and out as what there is."

And having finished this enigmatical speech, accompanied by many mysterious nods and winks, the old man pulled up his spade, and, touching his hat to Ella, disappeared amongst the bushes, leaving Ella and the ducks gazing after him in mutual astonishment.

(To be continued.)

## NOTES FOR FEBRUARY.

A PAPER in *Science Gossip* for August, 1886, gives a very interesting description of the sprouting of a sycamore seed.

These seeds have wings especially adapted for floating a heavy body. In November they are caught by the wind, and whirl round and round till they reach the earth. They always grow in pairs, although, if looked for now among the grass or on the wayside, many of them will be found single, having been separated from their companions. If a few of the double seeds are brought into the house, placed in a warm situation under a bell glass, and kept watered, their growth may be watched, and some marvels of nature learned.

Every process is wonderful; the separation of the double seed, showing their junction to the stalk, then the appearance of the rootlets which are the first signs of growth, and then the cotyledons, or "nursing leaves," whose function in life is to nourish and protect the pair of true leaves hidden within their embrace, till they are strong enough to defend themselves, when the cotyledons fall off and die.

The folding of the cotyledon is a study in itself. "They are folded so as to occupy the least space, *i.e.*, first fold in half, and then in half again, like a ribbon reduplicate, and not coiled round (circinate) like a fern frond, which, growing later in the season, requires less protection."

So the life goes on, showing fresh wonders and beauties at every stage of its growth, each step showing the wisdom and love of the great Creator and Designer.

Plants grown indoors need constant care; it is advisable only to keep as many as can be properly attended to. Very few can stand gas, and all thrive better if removed when it

is lighted. The watering, too, needs careful attention; they should not be kept too wet during the cold weather, although they must never get quite dry. They need plenty of light, so it is important that the windows should be kept clean, to allow a full measure of sunshine. The pots must be kept clean, and when a green growth appears on the outside they should be well scrubbed. They must not stand in a draught, which causes a chill, and checks the growth of the plants.

Outdoor gardening this month depends greatly on the weather. If cold, all tender plants must still be protected, and even if warm they should not be encouraged to grow, as frosts may be expected for some time to come yet. Unless it is actually frosty, rose-trees needing it may be pruned, also raspberry, gooseberry, and currant trees. Turf may be re-laid, and, if necessary, grass-seed sown; the grass should be rolled after wet weather.

Pay attention to bulbs now; crocuses and snowdrops should be starting. As soon as tulips, hyacinths, and other bulbs show their foliage, they should be protected at night by a light covering, until the frosts are over.

In February, annuals may be sown indoors in boxes, and gradually hardened off for the garden, where everything should now be made tidy and ready for the spring, which will soon be coming.

In the warmer counties of England the wild daffodil will soon be flowering. The old-fashioned "daffly-down-dilly," though only of late years fashionable in town drawing-rooms, has always been a favourite with poets and artists, and all true lovers of the country. Wordsworth gives a beautiful description of "a host of golden daffodils."

"Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance."

And who does not remember Herrick's quaint but beautiful verses, beginning:

"Fair daffodils, we weep to see  
You haste away so soon."

Or Spenser's equally charming description of Cymoent with her companions playing by a pond, and

"Gathering sweete daffadillyes, to have made  
Gay girlonds from the sun their forheads  
fayr to shade."

The name sometimes given them of "Lent Lilies" is peculiar to places where they flower; in colder countries, where it would have no significance, the name is unknown.

Like every other growing thing, the daffodil has much about it worthy of notice. It deals in sixes; six lobes to the corolla, and six pollen stamens, but a three-lobed ovary, and only one seed-leaf.

The wild daffodil has little scent, but being, like the majority of spring flowers, of a bright yellow colour, it is easily seen by the day-flying insects, on whose visits it depends for fertilisation, while some of its near relatives, which are chiefly visited by night moths, are white and strongly scented, in order to be conspicuous even in the darkness.

At this time of year, when the more hardy birds are beginning to return to our shores, as well as in autumn when they are migrating, a great number of our songsters are killed annually by flying against telegraph wires.

Those that fly by night are the most frequent victims, but besides these many either fly or are blown against the wires, and killed or injured so severely that they die before long.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### EDUCATIONAL.

MELISSA MATHESON.—The Braille System is the invention of M. Louis Braille, who was a blind professor at one of the national French institutions for the blind in Paris. The work of copying the cut-books is done by ladies, and the blind copy the embossed copy five times at least. You can obtain full particulars on applying to the secretary, British and Foreign Blind Association, 33, Cambridge-square, Hyde Park, London, W.

A LOVER OF HISTORY.—Sir William Wallace was defeated at Falkirk, July, 1298, by Edward I., brought to London, and hanged at Smithfield, 24th August, 1305, seven years afterwards. His public life extends over a period of fifteen months, and as to the history of his private life, there is an absolute blank. The whole of the fables about Sir William Wallace are the product of Blind Harry's imagination.

A MARTINITE.—You do not mention where you live, so our help will not be as effectual as it might be. You would obtain evening classes at the Birkbeck Institution, Bream's-buildings, Chancery-lane, E.C., in all the branches you name. Subscriptions, 4s. quarterly, 12s. annually.

S. A. U.—We should think you fully capable of taking a situation as governess with your certificates, which say so much for your general education, as well as attainments in music. Your handwriting is certainly not good, and looks uncultured. The only way you can improve it is to take some pretty handwriting and form yours on it.

M. B. B.—You should write to the secretary of the College of Preceptors, 42, Queen-square, Bloomsbury, W.C., for their prospectus, and all information for the current year or coming term. It holds half-yearly pupils' examinations, the certificates given being recognised as guarantees of a good and general education. The fee is 10s.

### ART.

MERMAID.—Seaweed taken from rocks should be placed in a basin of cold fresh water to spread itself out, and removed from thence on to a sheet of blotting-paper by sliding a card under it. See directions already given, and the article on how to preserve seaweed.

MEMORY.—The price mentioned in the article upon crystalloids for finished pictures was obtainable when the work was new, at which time the paper was written. Five years have elapsed since that time, and many people have learnt the art, so that the price it could fetch at first is no longer given, unless the work be very superior and the subject of large dimensions.

MARY.—Fan painting is decidedly remunerative, and has the advantage of being home-work; but a certain amount of originality is essential for it, as well as practical skill and experience and very great neatness.



# "SHE COULDN'T BOIL A POTATO;"

OR,

## THE IGNORANT HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE.

By DORA HOPE.



ELLA was, unfortunately for herself, very timid at nights; and even when at home had always been ready to imagine burglars and alarms of fire; and Kate had often laughed at her, and asked what she

would do if, in her nightly searches round her bedroom, she should find a burglar under the bed, or hidden amongst the dresses secreted in her wardrobe.

As she had always been thus ready to take alarm on the smallest provocation, it is not to be wondered at that the old gardener's mysterious warning filled her with anxiety; the more so that, in spite of all her efforts to persuade him, he resolutely refused to say anything more, and she was left in a state of hopeless bewilderment as to what his strange hints could mean.

The only thing she could do was to be specially watchful, and she determined that, in spite of her fears, she would sit up at night till the servants had gone to bed, and make sure that everything was properly secured.

It was very evident that they did not like it, and they did their utmost to compel her to go to bed first, by sitting up till very late themselves. But Ella had a determination of character which caused her, when once she was sure it was her duty to do anything, to persist in carrying out her intention in spite of all obstacles, and the servants' objection to her sitting up last at night made her only the more determined to do so.

One night they had tried her patience sorely by lingering about, but when they had at last departed, Ella went her usual round, and found they had carelessly left a side door unfastened.

Having locked the door she went up to bed, and, in spite of feeling nervous and uneasy, she soon fell asleep, but only to be awakened a short time after by a stealthy sound in the room below.

She sat up and listened; it was true at last—there was certainly someone getting into the house.

What should she do? Should she cry for help, or follow her first instinct to bury her head under the bed-clothes? But her better judgment prevailed; and remembering that her aunt was often restless in the night, and that it was probably only nurse who had gone downstairs to get something for her, she slipped on her dressing-gown and the warm slippers Kate had provided her with, and crept quietly out of the room and down the stairs.

Her heart beat so fast that, to her ears, it drowned all other sounds, and it seemed to her almost that it must alarm the thieves. When she reached the hall she found her fears verified: a light gleamed under the dining-room door, and she heard voices whispering inside.

She thought of calling the dogs, but dared not risk alarming her aunt; so at last, summoning up all her resolution, she opened the door, and to her amazement found the table laid for supper, and a party seated round it, consisting of the two servants and two men.

The men instantly disappeared through the

open window, without waiting to see who had interrupted them, leaving Ella alone with the two angry but frightened servants. The cellarette, which Ella was sure she had locked before going to bed, was standing open, and the contents were on the table. The cook's face was flushed, and she had evidently been drinking a good deal.

Ella was so startled that she was quite silent for a few minutes, and the cook recovering herself first, began pouring out a torrent of abuse; when, to Ella's intense relief, the door again opened, and Nurse entered, while at the same moment two dark figures appeared, clambering in through the open window. Annie, the housemaid, thinking them the same two who had just escaped, rushed towards them, but to her dismay found herself seized by a stalwart policeman, and old Mr. Dudley came to Ella's side, begging her not to be frightened.

With this reinforcement Ella felt herself victorious, and soon regained her self-possession sufficiently to consider what was to be done. The policeman assured her that she had a perfect right to turn the two maids out at once, but her own good sense, even without Nurse's advice, showed her that it would be wrong to turn out two young women late at night, however badly they might have behaved. Accordingly, acting on Mr. Dudley's advice, she told them to go to their bedroom at once, and prepare to leave first thing in the morning.

Mr. Dudley accounted for his unexpected appearance by explaining to Ella that he had been sitting up late reading, and on looking out of his window before going to bed, he had noticed the two men lurking about, and having several times suspected that something was wrong, he had gone for a policeman, hoping to be in time to catch the thieves.

To Ella's great relief Mrs. Wilson was at last convinced that the servants were untrustworthy, and made no objection when she heard that they had both left the house, with their boxes, immediately after breakfast next morning.

A respectable charwoman, recommended by Mrs. Mobberly, was engaged to do the work temporarily; and Ella, very much dismayed at such an unexpected responsibility, had to consider what steps must be taken to engage new servants.

To begin with, Mrs. Mobberly advised her to mention the matter to the tradespeople, who often hear of good servants, and at the same time she would herself go for Ella to a registry office in the town, which she knew to be thoroughly respectable. At the same time she gave Ella a very solemn warning against ever going to any registry office about which she knew nothing, as some so-called offices are places to be scrupulously avoided, both by mistresses and servants.

The result of this vigorous action was that Ella was besieged and overwhelmed by the number of applicants for the situations. Mrs. Wilson's was a well-known place, where the work was easy, and the rule in most respects very light; and in addition to the respectable and pleasant-looking young women who came, Ella had to run the gauntlet of incompetent girls, impudent girls, girls who amazed her with the elegance of their attire, and others who disgusted her with their dirty slovenliness, not to

mention all the middle-aged women in search of a comfortable home, and mothers anxious to secure a good place for their young daughters.

A good many of them were so evidently unsuitable that Ella soon disposed of them, and easily reduced the number to three or four applicants, who, however, all seemed equally suitable, and she felt so incapable of deciding between these, that she dismissed them all for the present, promising to write to each of the selected number the next day.

So far the task, though rather overwhelming for so inexperienced a housekeeper, had been comparatively simple, for Ella had been coached up beforehand, both by her aunt and Mrs. Mobberly, as to the most important questions to ask each applicant:—what had been her last situation, and why she left it; what wages she asked, where her home was, whether she belonged to any church, and whether she would be obliging and willing to undertake the rather miscellaneous duties, which included feeding the various animals, and occasionally helping to water or weed the garden, in addition to waiting on Mrs. Wilson, and the usual house-work. Ella was especially advised to explain the varied nature of their duties to any likely applicants, that there might be no *misunderstanding* about it afterwards. But the task of finally selecting the two best was rather more than Ella felt equal to; so, as usual, she consulted Mrs. Mobberly, who, feeling that Mrs. Wilson was not likely ever to be very robust again, and that it would therefore not be wise to have only young girls in the house, when Nurse should have left, advised Ella, if her aunt consented, to engage as cook a middle-aged widow, in whose son (a sailor) Mrs. Wilson took great interest, and whom she had known for several years as a respectable woman.

"I liked her very much directly I saw her," said Ella, "but I was afraid she would not be so active and brisk about her work as a younger woman."

"Very likely not, but with such a small household she can easily manage all she will have to do; and even if you should occasionally be obliged to have a charwoman for extra cleaning, it would be quite worth your while to do it, for the sake of the comfort of having an experienced woman in the house, whom you could depend upon to take care of your aunt, and who would know what to do in case of sudden illness."

Then having, from Ella's description, decided which of the young girls seemed most likely to suit, Mrs. Mobberly directed her to write to the girl who was still at her situation, and tell her to ask her mistress if she would kindly appoint a time when it would be convenient for Ella to call upon her about the girl's character.

"Some ladies prefer to write direct to the mistress about a time to call," Mrs. Mobberly explained, "but I always think if the girl is still in the situation it saves her mistress trouble if she can take a message."

Ella felt very nervous at this part of her task, but carefully concealed her feelings from her aunt, from whom she knew she would get no sympathy, but only sarcastic remarks as to how, in her young days, people were more plainspoken, and called nervousness and shyness by their proper names of conceit and affectation.



Ella found the visit, when the time came, less alarming than she had expected, though in some respects less satisfactory; for she had never doubted but that the mistress's report would at once decide her either for or against the maid, which did not prove to be the case. She told Ella the girl was honest, and sober, and knew her work well, but that on the other hand she was disobedient and pert in her manners.

These serious drawbacks would, of course, have decided Ella against her, but that being naturally a shrewd observer, she could not help being struck by the lady's imperious manner, and very unpleasant, dictatorial way of speaking, which so disagreeably impressed her that she made up her mind there was probably a good deal of excuse for the girl, and resolved, if Mrs. Mobberly consented, to give her a trial.

This lady not only agreed, but warmly commended Ella for being observant, and added that she was sure servants had often a great deal to put up with from unjust and unreasonable mistresses, who would goad them into speaking rudely by their overbearing manners, or make it almost impossible for them to get their work done properly by constantly calling them off from it to attend to other things; and then, having the poor girls' characters entirely in their hands, ruin their chances by blaming them for faults which they themselves had caused.

Thus encouraged, Ella sent for the girl again, told her the whole truth about the interview with her mistress, and asked how she came to have a character of that sort; to which the girl replied at once, with a straightforward manner which convinced Ella she was speaking the truth, that she had stayed longer at the place than any other servant she knew of, and that they all had the same character given them on leaving, the fact being that the mistress kept nagging at them all day long, and spoke in such a disagreeable way to them that she tried their tempers

almost beyond endurance, and she was afraid that sometimes it was true, they were driven into answering her rudely.

So the matter was arranged, and very shortly afterwards the household settled down again into quietness and peace, with Mrs. Moore, the good widow, in charge of the house in general and the kitchen in particular, and Sarah, the "pert and disobedient" girl, to act under her supervision, as house and parlour maid. The very first day of their arrival, Ella, prompted, of course, by her aunt, explained to them both the rules of the house; that all windows and doors must be fastened by ten o'clock every night, that they must ask permission before inviting visitors to the kitchen, though leave would always be gladly given for suitable friends and at suitable times; and the same applied to going out. There were a few other matters Mrs. Wilson was particular about; that breakages or accidents of any sort should be reported to her at once, and not left to be found out accidentally; and that as good wages were given, there should be no perquisites of any sort.

Mrs. Wilson had a very great objection to clandestine "followers," but saw no reason why servants should not be as openly engaged to be married as their young mistresses; so as soon as she found that the new maid, Sarah, had a "young man," whom she ascertained to be a thoroughly respectable young mechanic, she told her she might invite him to the house once a fortnight, and to begin with, he might come to tea and go to church with her the following Sunday, but she must invariably come straight home after church, as Mrs. Wilson greatly disapproved of young women being out after church time: "If they must have a walk," she said, "they could go before church, but all girls were better at home late in the evening."

Mrs. Moore turned out to be a great help among the poultry, and relieved Ella's mind greatly by her knowledge and cleverness with

them. Almost her first work among them was to "set" two of the hens. She showed Ella how to make their nests in a secluded corner where the other fowls would not disturb them, and to arrange them so that they could not steal each other's eggs. Then she selected the eggs, refusing the extra large ones that Ella suggested, and taking only well-formed, medium-sized ones.

"It is rather early in the year yet, miss, so we won't give them too many eggs. It is better to get all out of a small sitting, than a few out of a large one. They are good-sized hens, though, so I think we will give them eight eggs each."

The nests were made of hay, from which the longest stalks had been removed; and all round the nests Mrs. Moore scattered a thick layer of ashes.

When all was ready she brought one of the hens and put her near the nest. Directly the hen saw the eggs she went straight to them, and with a contented chuckle settled herself on them, carefully arranging them with her beak and legs. The other hen was not quite so quick, and preferred taking a survey of the premises first, but after a time she also settled herself, and they were left for their three weeks' solitary confinement.

Every morning they were turned out to take their daily meal, and to dust their feathers with the dry sand and ashes provided for them at one corner of the run. In their anxiety about their precious eggs they would sometimes have omitted this duty, but Mrs. Moore was firm, and explained to Ella that it would be bad both for the hens and the eggs if they never left their nests.

Ella soon took a great interest in the hens, and became quite clever in lifting them from their nests (when gentle persuasion had not the desired effect), and after a little practice learnt to accomplish it without either pulling out the whole nest or jerking an egg or two out with the hen.

(To be continued.)

## MERLE'S CRUSADE.

By ROSA NOUCHETTE CAREY, Author of "Aunt Diana," "For Lillias," etc.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

#### THE RED FARM.



PERCEIVED a great change in Mrs. Markham after my mistress's visit. She took less notice of the children, sent fewer messages to the nursery, ceased

to interfere in the nursery arrangements, and often ignored my presence if she chanced to meet me in the hall or garden. Her manner convinced me that she was deeply offended by her sister's patronage of me. Very probably Mr. Morton had spoken a few forcible words in my defence. They made her understand that they trusted me implicitly, and that any interference in my department would be displeasing to them. It was easy to read this from her averted looks.

Now and then I heard a word or two about "Violet," "ridiculous infatua-

tion," when I passed the open drawing-room door. Rolf once asked me curiously why his mother disliked me so. "You aren't so very wicked, are you, Fenny? Is it very wicked to be stuck up? Mother is so fond of using that word, you know."

I tried not to listen to Rolf. I could afford to be magnanimous, for I was very happy just then. Gay's partiality for me was evident, and I soon conceived the warmest attachment for her. She seized every opportunity of running up to the nursery for a few minutes' chat, and she often joined us on the beach. One afternoon she asked to accompany us in a country ramble. Hannah had gone to Wheeler's Farm to have tea with Molly, and Luke was to walk home with her in the evening. I thought how they would enjoy that walk through the cornfields and down the dim, scented lanes. Life would look as sweet to them as to richer lovers; youth and health and love being the three-fold cord that cannot lightly be broken. Gay made the excuse that she would be useful in

taking care of Joyce while I wheeled Reggie in his perambulator, I overheard her saying to Mrs. Markham, but her speech only elicited a scornful reply.

"If Miss Fenton encourages Hannah in gadding about, there is not the slightest need for you to take her place, Gay; but, of course, you will please yourself."

"Oh, I always please myself, Addie," returned Gay, cheerfully, "and I shall enjoy a gambol among the lanes."

And, indeed, we had a delightful afternoon gathering wild flowers, and resting ourselves in any shady corner where a fallen tree or stile invited us.

We were gathering some poppies that grew among the corn when Gay called me. She looked a little anxious.

"Merle, I am really afraid there is a storm coming up. You were noticing just now how close and sultry it felt; those clouds look ominous, and we are a mile and a half from Marshlands."

I felt conscience-stricken at her words. We had been talking and laughing, and had not perceived how the sunshine had



# "SHE COULDN'T BOIL A POTATO;"

OR,

## THE IGNORANT HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE.

By DORA HOPE.



the first time.

Mrs. Hastings had been feeling rather anxious about her daughter for some time. The young housekeeper had had a good deal of worry and anxiety, and her letters had quite unconsciously betrayed the fact that she felt in low spirits. Her depression soon disappeared, however, when her father came, and his strong common sense and masculine way of ignoring the little trials of housekeeping were as good a tonic to her mind as the sharp walks he took her were invigorating to her body.

Thinking her looking pale and languid, Mr. Hastings inquired as to her daily exercise, and found that on many days she did not go out at all, except to feed the fowls, or gather a few flowers from the garden, as her household duties took her so long that she felt she had no time for walks. Mr. Hastings considered that this quite explained her want of colour and appetite, and insisted that it must be altered. In vain Ella pleaded that it was impossible for her to go out always, and would be still more so when the nurse left. Mr. Hastings was quite unmoved by all her arguments, and insisted on her promising to take some open air exercise every day, even if it were only a quarter of an hour's run up and down the quiet lane behind the house.

He also planned in his own mind to send Ella's two brothers, Robin and Norman, to Hapsleigh for their Easter holidays. They were good boys, who would not make unnecessary noise in the house, and they would supply a complete change of thought for their sister.

Nor was this the only alteration Mr. Hastings urged in Ella's daily routine. In her restless anxiety about her aunt and the housekeeping, she had entirely omitted all her own studies. The piano was rarely opened, and all the useful books her mother had packed up for her still lay untouched at the bottom of her trunk. Mr. Hastings strongly disapproved of this, and pointed out to Ella that not only was it a great pity for her to lose the

knowledge she had spent so many years in acquiring, but that it was very bad for her health, both bodily and mental, to give up all interests in life, save the cares of a household; nor would she be an agreeable companion for her aunt or their visitors if she had no topics of conversation more interesting than the difficulties of servants, or the best food for fowls; it was quite imperative, therefore, that she should set apart a certain time every day for reading and music.

Mr. Hastings was quite ready to acknowledge that Ella would find it difficult to manage, especially at first; for her inexperience in household matters made her twice as long over them as she would otherwise have been; but she felt she could do it if she made effort, and a little conversation with her father soon convinced her that it was well worth exerting herself for.

In order to make her studies as easy as possible to her, before leaving Hapsleigh Mr. Hastings went through the library with Ella and chose out a selection of books which he thought she would find interesting as well as instructive, for he held very strongly the theory that unless a book interests us, it is waste of time to read it, for though we may imagine ourselves to be getting a great deal of information, if the facts do not take sufficient hold upon the mind to interest it, the knowledge is as soon forgotten as acquired. He was very careful, therefore, in advising a course of reading for Ella, to consult her taste, and to select only those books which she would really enjoy reading.

Nor was this the end of Mr. Hastings's suggestions, for Kate had commissioned her father to explain a new enterprise of her own. She had joined a water-colour sketching club, and, without waiting to consult her, had proposed her sister's name also as a member. Each member was expected to send in an original sketch once a month, the subject being proposed by each in turn. The sketches having all been sent in to the secretary, they were then submitted to a professional artist, who put his initials on the back of the one he considered the best, and wrote a short criticism on each. The portfolio was then sent the round of the members, who each in the same way marked the one they liked best.

Kate had sent a supply of all the necessary materials by her father, with an injunction to Ella to be sure to send in a trial sketch in time for the next month.

Mr. Hastings's visit came to an end all too soon, but not till his loving counsel had done Ella good in every way. His experience smoothed over all her difficulties with an ease which seemed to her almost marvellous, while she was encouraged to fresh exertions by the unstinted praise he gave her for the manner in which she fulfilled the duties of hostess.

To Ella's surprise, when her aunt heard of these new schemes for study she took a deep interest in them, and suggested that Ella should read her instructive books aloud to her. The fresh subjects of interest quite roused the invalid, and Ella had the great satisfaction of finding that the little mental stimulus they produced not only helped to soothe the irritability and restlessness which troubled her, but that as the mind naturally re-acts upon the body, she was actually better in health for it; while, for her own part, Ella found that her aunt's sharp intelligent remarks

often cleared up points which would otherwise have been a difficulty to her.

In the sketching, too, her aunt took a great interest, and once, when Ella was lamenting over an effect she could not catch, abruptly asked why she did not get Mr. Dudley to help her.

Ella felt shy of asking him; but shyness had no chance of thriving in her aunt's presence, and Sarah was despatched to ask if he would have half an hour to spare that afternoon. He soon showed Ella where she was wrong, and henceforward was always ready to give her just the advice she needed; and as the weather grew warmer, and made outdoor occupations possible, she was surprised at the many charming "bits" he found for her to sketch in the flat, uninteresting country in which Hapsleigh was situated.

Soon after Mrs. Wilson's new servants arrived, Mrs. Moore, the widow woman whom Ella had engaged as cook, asked her if she might "make so bold as to say, could she not have family prayers for them in the morning; for, not being a very good scholar herself, she could never manage to read her Bible, and Sarah, though a nice steady girl, was not so fond of her Bible as to care to sit and read it to her."

Ella was a good deal dismayed at this suggestion, but promised to think it over and consult her aunt. This was a mere matter of form, for she was sure that her aunt would approve of the suggestion, so that the decision really rested with herself. She felt sure it was the right thing to do; but she was really very bashful, though she dared not say much about it at Hapsleigh, and this seemed to her taking so much upon herself. And what should she read? and when?

A very short reflection decided her that it must be done somehow, and for the rest she had no choice but to consult her aunt.

Mrs. Wilson warmly approved of the idea, but seriously added to Ellen's discomfiture by remarking—

"You had better begin to-morrow, my dear. I wonder we none of us had the sense to think of it before; and, nurse, if you will begin from to-morrow to give me my breakfast punctually, we will have prayers here in my bedroom directly afterwards. Yes, my dear," she went on, in reply to an exclamation of dismay which Ella could not altogether repress, "it is so long since I have attended a service I feel a perfect heathen, and need to be read to quite as much as Mrs. Moore."

And having once taken the idea into her head, nothing would induce Mrs. Wilson to give it up; though, on nurse's advice, she agreed that they should meet in the evening instead of the morning, as being a more convenient time for an invalid.

Mrs. Wilson had one or two books of prayers in the house, but as they were old and most of them rather too long, she told Ella to look through the books beforehand, and select a prayer each day, marking with a pencil which portions to omit. At the same time she talked over with her the most suitable portions of the Bible to select for reading.

"You know, Ella, that, as St. Paul tells us, the whole Bible is given us for our instruction, yet some portions are not easily understood unless a rather long passage is read at a time, and as that cannot be managed at daily prayers, it needs care to choose a portion



which gives a complete thought in a small compass, so that those who, like Mrs. Moore, get no other reading during the day, have something definite to carry away with them."

It was with considerable inward trepidation and a trembling of voice she could not altogether control that Ella made her first attempt at conducting the family prayers the next evening; but she struggled to forget herself, and as she went on her voice grew steadier, till, when they all repeated the Lord's Prayer together in closing, she was able to join in the spirit of the prayer as simply as anyone present.

It was with sincere pleasure that, a few days afterwards, Ella helped her aunt downstairs for the first time; but her delight that her patient had advanced so far towards recovery was mingled with a certain amount of nervousness lest she should find anything to disapprove of in the rooms, which she had not seen since she was first taken ill. For several days the servants had been expending a good deal of hard work on polishing the furniture and rearranging all the ornaments of the sitting-rooms, and Ella had exercised all her skill in arranging flowers to make the rooms look bright to welcome the invalid, so that Mrs. Wilson could not but be pleased, and she expressed her approval with a warmth which greatly gratified Ella, and which sent Sarah into the kitchen with a beaming face to tell Mrs. Moore that -

"Missis do seem pleased like, and she says to me, 'Sarah,' she says, 'I never saw that bookcase look so bright before; why, you must have got a patent polisher.'"

This well-earned praise was very gratifying to all the household, and spurred them on to fresh exertions.

Ella's interests just now were chiefly centred in the fowls. She took the greatest care of the sitting hens, and brought her aunt each day a minute report of their welfare. When the time drew near for the chickens to appear, her eagerness became so great that she would have disturbed them a dozen times in the day to see how they were getting on but for the exhortations of her aunt.

The hens were allowed to remain on the nests the whole of the day before the chickens were due, but were well fed, and had a plentiful supply of water given them. When the day for hatching came, Mrs. Moore refused to go near the nests till late in the afternoon, but at last when she and Ella approached them very quietly, so as not to disturb the hens, a gentle peeping sound announced that some chickens had already broken their way into the outer world. They found, indeed, that one hen had hatched all her chickens, but the other had still two eggs unbroken. Mrs. Moore removed the hen which had finished her work, and while Ella went into ecstasies over the fluffy round balls, she made the mother dust herself well with the ashes sprinkled about, and then escort her lively children to a clean new nest, while the old one was burnt and the box which had contained it was put into the open air to sweeten.

The mother hen was given a good meal of barley and plenty of water, but no food was given to the chickens.

In answer to Ella's remonstrances, Mrs. Moore explained that chickens need no food for from twelve to twenty-four hours after they are hatched, and, indeed, are much better without anything.

Mrs. Moore then brought a basin of warm water (heated to 105 degrees), and placing it near the other nest, deftly removed the two still unhatched eggs without disturbing the hen, and put them in the water. In a few minutes one of the eggs began to bob about in a curious manner, whereupon Mrs. Moore took it out and returned it to the hen. The other one remaining still, she held it close to Ella's ear, and shook it for her to hear the fluid contents shaking about, proving that the egg was useless.

The shells of the hatched eggs were then removed, and Ella was much interested in noticing that the two ends of each shell had been laid one inside the other, so as to take up the least possible space; but Mrs. Moore could not answer her questions as to whether it is the chicken or the hen who does this, whether it is done deliberately, or as the

result of the chicken's struggles to free itself from the shell.

The next morning the last egg was hatched, and the two "hen-wives" congratulated each other on having fifteen eggs hatched out of sixteen set.

For the first day or two the chickens were fed on hard-boiled eggs, chopped up and mixed with breadcrumbs or oatmeal; and for a time they needed such constant feeding that Ella's generous mind was quite satisfied, and the chickens soon knew her so well that when she appeared they would come running to meet her, and flutter up all over her dress and into her lap.

The hens were put into coops and brought into the garden, and as long as they were too young to do mischief, the chickens were left loose to run about where they liked near the mother's coop.

It was in the midst of these cares and pleasures that Ella's two brothers, Robin and Norman, came for their ten days' visit. Robin was nearly sixteen, and Norman fourteen, and, considering their ages, they were good, considerate boys. For the first night and day after their arrival they were extremely subdued, and afraid of disturbing their aunt, but this unnatural quietness soon wore off, and Ella found her powers of mind and body fully exercised in supplying them with amusements which would not excite or tire her aunt too much.

Happily the weather was fine, and the boys delighted in long excursions into the country after mythical rare ferns, herons' nests, or other treasures. Frequently Ella went with them, and she told Mrs. Moberly, much to that lady's amusement, that they made her feel like a child again.

Mrs. Moberly, being very anxious to encourage the feeling in Ella, that although she had reached the mature age of eighteen her youth was not quite a thing of the past, came in several times to spend a few hours with Mrs. Wilson, so that Ella was set free for a long day's excursion with her brothers.

(To be continued.)

## VARIETIES.

### HINTS FOR TRAVELLERS.

Take one-fourth more money than your estimated expenses, and have a good supply of small change.

Acquaint yourself with the geography of the route and region of travel.

Arrange, if possible, to have but a single article of luggage to look after.

Dress substantially. Better be too hot for two or three hours at noon than be cold for the remainder of the twenty-four.

Arrange, under all circumstances, to be at the place of starting fifteen or twenty minutes before the time, thus allowing for unavoidable or unanticipated detention by the way.

Do not commence a day's travel before breakfast, even if it has to be eaten at day-break. Dinner or supper, or both, can be more healthily dispensed with than a good warm breakfast.

A sandwich eaten leisurely in the carriage is better than a whole dinner bolted at a railway station.

Take with you a month's supply of patience, and always think thirteen times before you reply once to any supposed rudeness, insult, or inattention.

Do not suppose yourself specially and deservedly neglected if waiters at hotels do not

bring what you call for in double-quick time. Nothing so distinctly marks the well-bred as waiting on such occasions.

Comply cheerfully and gracefully with the customs of the conveyances in which you travel, and of the places where you stop.

Respect yourself by exhibiting the manners of a lady, if you wish to be treated as such, and then you will receive the respect of others.

Travel is a great leveller; take the position which others assign you from your conduct rather than your pretensions.

### GOOD REASONS FOR LEARNING SINGING.

The following eight reasons why everyone should learn to sing are given by Byrd in his "Psalms, Sonnets, and Songs," etc., published in 1588:—

1. It is a knowledge easily taught and quickly learned, where there is a good master and an apt scholar.

2. The exercise of singing is delightful to nature, and good to preserve the health of man.

3. It doth strengthen all parts of the breast, and doth open the pipes.

4. It is a singularly good remedy for a stuttering and stammering in the speech.

5. It is the best means to procure a perfect pronunciation and to make a good orator.

6. It is the only way to know where nature has bestowed a good voice . . . and in many that excellent gift is lost because they want art to express nature.

7. There is not any music of instruments whatsoever comparable to that which is made of the voices of men, where the voices are good, and the same well sorted and ordered.

8. The better the voice is, the meetier it is to honour and serve God therewith; and the voice of man is chiefly to be employed to that end.

"Since singing is so good a thing,  
I wish all men would learn to sing."

AN ANTIPATHY TO CATS.—People who have a strong antipathy to cats detect their presence by the odour, in circumstances which would be thought impossible. A lady in my study, one day, suddenly remarked, "There is a cat in the room." On my assuring her there was none, she replied, "Then there is one in the passage." I went out, to satisfy her. There was no cat in the passage, but on the first landing, looking through the railings, there, sure enough, was the cat.—*G. H. Lewes.*



left her again until the professional nurse arrived.

One by one the children went in and kissed their mother that night, the little ones looking with wonder at the stranger who sat beside the bed, and Mabel and Mary almost heartbroken with grief, yet not daring to let a sob escape them, for fear of endangering still more the precious life that now seemed to hang by so slender a thread.

A long fervent kiss, a tenderly murmured "God bless you," was all the farewell that either dared to utter, although there was present to each the unspoken thought that they might never again meet in this world.

The next day Mrs. Randolph was to remain wholly undisturbed until the doctors came, and nurse took the children out for the day, that no sound might reach the patient at the critical time.

Mabel and Mary shut themselves up alone, for although Mabel had knelt and prayed, and sobbed out her grief and anxiety before God the previous night, until she was well nigh stupefied, she wanted to be alone still, for only so could she endure the hours of anguish that must elapse before she knew whether her mother would live or die.

At last the doctors came, went into the room, and the door closed. It seemed an eternity before it opened again, and their own doctor's voice was heard softly calling "Mr. Randolph." Then Mabel opened her door and went out, but her throat felt dry, and her tongue would not move, when she tried to ask whether it was life or death within her mother's chamber. But the doctor saw her white face and straining eyes, and hastened to say, "The operation is happily over, and we have every hope of a successful termination now, provided our patient is kept very quiet, and no unforeseen contingencies arise."

Mr. Randolph was listening to the same words, so there was no need to repeat them, and the doctor went back to his patient, leaving father and daughter in mute thankfulness. The relief was

so great from the tension of the last few hours, that Mabel turned away with a sob, to pour out her joy where she had carried her grief, and Mary found her still upon her knees when she entered her room nearly an hour later.

"Papa says you must come down and have some luncheon now, Mabel," she said, laying her hand on her sister's shoulder.

Mabel rose obediently. "Is there any more news?" she asked, hoarsely.

"The doctor came out to papa a few minutes ago, and said she was as well as they could expect."

"Mary, don't you feel as though you had lived half a lifetime since yesterday? I feel ten years older to-day, and I shall never be a girl again," said Mabel, with a sigh.

"Oh, nonsense, Mab! You mustn't talk like that; mamma will soon get well now, and everything will be comfortable again," said Mary, lightly.

But her sister could not lay aside the trouble so easily. It had been a very furnace of affliction to her, and she could not feel that its fires were yet subdued. She swallowed a little soup, and persuaded her father to lie down on the couch instead of pacing uneasily up and down the room, but she could not feel joyful and glad as Mary did.

"I feel as though my life was all over," she said, as she sat by her sister's side, waiting for the doctors to come downstairs.

Luncheon had been prepared for them, and the servants were going in and out the dining-room, while Mabel sat and listened for their footsteps on the stairs. She heard the door above open at last, and a hasty footstep, and then a hurried call: "Mr. Randolph! Mr. Randolph!" She ran to the door and saw the doctor, saw her father leap past him on the stairs, and then she attempted to rush up after him, but Mr. Carstairs laid his hand on her as she was passing, and said, hoarsely, "Not yet, my dear; you must wait a minute."

"But tell me—tell me," gasped Mabel.

"I will. There is a change, and not

a favourable one. You must be calm, remember."

"Yes, yes. Oh, Mr. Carstairs, if mamma dies I can never believe in God again," she said, in a smothered tone.

"Hush—hush, Mabel, that is not what she would say—what she did say a few minutes ago," said the doctor, pausing to calm the trembling girl.

"Tell me what she said?"

"Well, she overheard some words we spoke about the change in her condition, and she evidently understood what we meant, for she said, 'It is well—well for them, and well for me.'"

"Oh, doctor, how could she say it was well for us?" burst forth Mabel, with irrepressible anguish, and wringing her hands as she spoke.

"Come, you are forgetting your promise to be calm," said the doctor, sternly, and he led her to her own room, before returning to his patient.

In a few minutes the door opened again, and the professional nurse came in.

"You may go in now," she said; "I am going to fetch your sister."

"Tell me—is there any hope?" But it was scarcely needful to ask the question, for the sorrowful look in the woman's face was sufficient to tell its own story, and Mabel did not wait for the answer, but went on to her mother's room.

The doctors had gone downstairs now, and her mother lay calm and white, and apparently free from pain, her hand clasped in that of her husband as he bent over her. They did not notice Mabel for a minute or two, but at length her father drew back, that she might kiss once more those gentle lips, and hear the last murmured farewell. Then the nurse led her out, and Mary took her place, but followed her almost immediately, for the doctors had given orders that no one must stay above a minute, except Mr. Randolph.

The precaution, however, was needless. The angel of death entered the household about midnight, and for Mrs. Randolph there dawned the morning of eternal day.

(To be continued.)

## "SHE COULDN'T BOIL A POTATO;"

OR,

### THE IGNORANT HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE.

By DORA HOPE.

ELLA sat by the table in the breakfast-room one morning, with a comical expression of despair on her bright face, gazing ruefully at a trayful of cut flowers and half-filled vases.

They ought to have been arranged an hour ago, but it had been what Mrs. Moore called "a contrary morning," and nothing would go right. The young housekeeper had been hindered in everything she undertook, and now she was trying vainly to arrange the flowers, a task for which she always felt she had no talent whatever, while her aunt sat sipping her lunch of beef-tea, and watching her niece the while with a quizzical look.

"I can't think how Kate does it," said Ella, as she looked up and caught her aunt's gaze. "The flowers look as if they grew so, when she arranged them."

"And yours look as if someone had been making hay," suggested Mrs. Wilson. "I should advise you to begin again."

Ella dolefully took all the flowers out of the vases, but did not seem inspired to begin afresh. Her aunt, having finished her beef-tea, pushed away her luncheon tray, and drew her chair nearer, to advise and direct.

"To begin with," she said, "you have gathered too many flowers, and of too many

kinds, but that cannot be helped now. The first thing to think of is, which kind of vases will suit the flowers? What have you got there? Daffodils? Well, how do they grow? Think of that."

Ella followed her aunt's glance out of the window, to where the daffodils grew in the old-fashioned garden, and catching her idea, drew a tall, clear glass vase towards her, and arranged a few flowers in it as well as she could, to imitate the clumps in the garden.

"What next? Crocuses and snowdrops? Well, look at them in the garden again, and copy what you see there; nature generally



seems to know how to grow flowers so as to look their best."

And Ella looked to such good purpose that soon crocuses and snowdrops seemed to be growing again out of a bed of moss in a shallow glass trough. Inspired by this new idea of taking nature for her guide, Ella continued her work with real pleasure, while her aunt sat by watching and talking. Her garden had always been one of her greatest enjoyments in life, and she felt a personal interest in each shrub and plant, and had an almost caressing way of handling flowers, as though she really loved them.

"You do not understand the first principles of arranging cut flowers, Ella," she said; "you starve the poor things in those small glasses. You should have vases that hold plenty of water."

Mrs. Wilson really preferred a glass tumbler herself, and very often would have no other kind of vase.

"Do not crowd the flowers; many of them go on growing after they are put into water, and the buds will always expand if you give them room. A single rose in a slender vase is quite sufficient for beauty, but if you want to fill your rooms with the sweetest odours of summer, add a few sprigs of mignonette."

Ella tried to interpose a quotation from a book of Miss Bird's travels, about the feeling amongst the Japanese of the extreme beauty of the solitary in decoration, but her aunt went on without heeding the interruption.

"You may fill a wide shallow bowl with large flowers, but never put many in a tall, slender vase. I know many people do not agree with me, but for my part I always like clear, colourless glass vases, so that you can see the stalks plainly; but if you don't like white, it is better to use china instead of glass, and above all choose a subdued shade of colour, that will have some chance of harmonising with the flowers. But, dear me, child, where did you get those ugly, vulgar things?"

Aunt Mary's sudden wrath was aroused by two bright blue vases on the table.

"I found them in the china pantry," said Ella, meekly, "and I had not enough with-out them."

"Well, never let me see them again," returned Mrs. Wilson, rather sharply; "better do without flowers than ill-use them by putting them in a glass that offends your eye every time you look at it. Yes, that terracotta jar will do very well for the wall-flowers, the tone of colour agrees with them very well; but do not put them in like that. First, strip off all the leaves from the part of the stalk that is to be in the water, or they will decay, and not only smell disagreeable, but prevent the flowers lasting half as long as they otherwise would."

The flowers were all arranged at last, so as to satisfy even Mrs. Wilson's fastidious taste, and Ella herself was delighted with the result.

Ella was beginning to get accustomed to managing a household now, and felt her cares sit less heavily upon her than before; her brother's visit had passed off happily, and had given her just the stimulus and change of thought her father had been so anxious to provide for her.

But now that it was over, Ella's personal anxiety for her aunt had greatly increased, for a few days after their departure the nurse had gone too. Mrs. Wilson was now so far convalescent that she could quite well dispense with the services of a regular nurse, and the new housemaid, who proved to be a quiet, willing girl, was carefully drilled in the art of waiting upon her mistress before the nurse left, so that nominally Ella was not required to do anything for her aunt at all. As a matter of fact, however, her cares were increased tenfold. The nurse had foreseen that

it would be so, and had warned her that she would need to be constantly on the alert, for Sarah, the new maid, though most anxious to do all that was necessary, was totally inexperienced, and, like all young girls, was sometimes a little forgetful; while Mrs. Wilson herself persisted that she was quite well again, and that the nurse's departure was a signal for her to resume all her old active habits, whereas in reality she was still very feeble, and the smallest fatigue or excitement brought back her bad headaches at once. Consequently Ella had to be always on the watch to prevent her wearying herself without seeming to interfere with her movements, for she was still irritable with weakness, and resented any appearance of opposition on Ella's part, whom she still considered as little more than a baby.

This was especially the case with her food, and in spite of Ella's constant care to provide dishes which would suit her, and which at the same time would tempt her appetite, Mrs. Wilson would constantly insist on having the very things the doctor had forbidden.

Mrs. Moore was a very good cook, and did her utmost to tempt her mistress's appetite by gratifying all her whims, but as they were quite of one mind in despising "doctor's new-fangled notions," the result of her efforts was to entirely frustrate all Ella's attempts to follow the medical directions, and she found it a little trying to be scolded by the doctor for indiscretions of diet which she had done her best to prevent.

But in spite of all drawbacks Mrs. Wilson continued to make very satisfactory progress; she was soon able to go out into the large old garden, where she had long arguments with Mallard, the gardener, whose excessive obstinacy was a match even for her own; or she sat in her easy chair in the sunshine, while Ella read aloud to her, and guarded the chickens from the attacks of the tame seagull, whose greatest delight, next to quarrelling with the terrier, was to chase the chickens and terrify the mother hen.

Ella still found plenty of occupation amongst the poultry. The first chickens were too old now to be allowed in the garden, for they had learned to scratch up the seeds and spoil the flower-beds, so they were sent back to the poultry yard, but their place was taken by fresh comers. The first hatching of ducklings were out too, and were already tormenting their hen mother by expeditions into the little stream at the bottom of the orchard.

During this month, too, Ella first began priving out alone in the little pony carriage; previously she had never been without Mallard to drive her. Old one-eyed "Billy" was not a rampant steed, and like all the other retainers of the house, he thought he knew best about most things, so that, as a matter of fact, driving him meant little more than holding the reins, and letting him go where he chose, and at his own pace, which was not dangerously rapid. The only way that she could excite him to any degree of speed showed that he had a good memory. After hearing an anecdote of Mallard's about his late master's habit of invariably starting late for the train, Ella one day suddenly tightened the reins, tried to crack her whip, and cried out, in an excited tone, "Train, Billy, train!" Billy pulled himself together, and started off at a great speed, for him, the dogs barked, and raced along by the little carriage, and the whole cavalcade dashed up to the station (where Ella did not want to go), and stopped with such a sudden jerk that she slid off the seat on to her knees.

If anything was wrong or uncomfortable in the harness Billy soon let her know; he would stop short, and look round at her reproachfully if she did not alight at once, and would refuse to move till she did her best to put it to rights. There was always the comfort,

however, when she had Billy to draw her, of knowing that her inexperience in driving was not likely to lead her into any danger, for he knew the rules of the road much better than she did, and if she wished to go to the wrong side of the road, or to turn a corner too sharply, or to do anything else which he considered unbecoming, he only shook his head indignantly, and went the way he thought proper.

Ella had felt so painfully with the last servants the disadvantage of being entirely ignorant of cookery, that she persuaded Mrs. Moore to give her lessons, and happily Mrs. Wilson highly approved of the idea. Ella was able to turn her new accomplishment to good account, by making the particular dishes her aunt was advised to eat, for she could often be persuaded to eat them if presented as the last triumph of Ella's skill, although she would have scorned them if simply prepared by the cook.

Mrs. Wilson was specially advised to take eggs, as supplying the nourishment she so much needed in a light and digestible form, and as they were very plentiful just now, Ella specially devoted her attention to cooking them, and served them boiled, poached, and fried, curried, stuffed, and buttered, as well as in numberless light puddings, following carefully the endless recipes given in the cookery books. Her aunt's commendation of the first omelette she cooked with her own hands gave her as great a thrill of delight as did Mr. Dudley's kind words when she finished a sketch of a corner of the old garden.

Finding that she could succeed with them, Ella made a good many different kinds of omelettes, but the one her aunt liked best was a very simple one, made of bacon, thus:—

Two or three eggs were well beaten up with a tablespoonful of milk and a slight flavouring of salt and pepper. Meanwhile, two ounces of fat bacon, finely minced, was frying slowly on the fire, and as soon as it was done the eggs were poured over the bacon in the frying pan, which was tilted, so as to allow the mixture to run to one side. The mixture was stirred gently till just set, and lightly browned; then turned out on to a hot dish, and served as quickly as possible. Ella found that this last point was essential to the success of her omelettes, for they became tough in a very short time if allowed to stand.

Though Ella little thought it, the difficulties and trials of her position had already ripened and strengthened her character. It was so short a time since she had left school, that she had never thought of taking any interest in the management of the house at home. She had never noticed how the servants did their work, nor had it ever entered into her mind to take upon herself any of the duties which Kate performed so naturally and so well; while, if any difficulty arose she had only to apply to her parents or Kate to have it solved at once. Consequently she had not, as one of Jean Ingelow's characters complains, "Grown any responsibility of her own."

Now, with her usual advisers at too great a distance to apply to in any matter requiring immediate settlement, she was compelled to depend upon herself, and finding so little reliable there, she was driven to carry her troubles to the one ever-present Friend, whom, theoretically, she knew well, but whose willing loving help, in the duties of everyday life, she had hitherto hardly tested.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God . . . and it shall be given him."

She had always known this text, but now it seemed to have been written on purpose for her. So constantly did she find afresh how much she lacked wisdom, and so unfliningly did she find the promise fulfilled that it should be given to her when she asked for it.

(To be continued.)



"Alf and me knows," repeated Julie, laughingly; "where is your grammar, Janet?"

"Well, well," interrupted the mother, "do not let us boast of what others fear and what we do not. We none of us know what we are made of until a real test comes, and I should not be at all surprised if in a case of real danger Céline would not be fully as brave as either Alf or my dear little tom-boy here, who thinks she does not know what fear is."

"Perhaps," said Alf, very doubtfully; "only until Céline gets over such ridiculous fear of nothing, I'm afraid we shall always think her a coward."

Céline sighed rather heavily, but said nothing.

It was quite true what Alfie said, and she was always the first to admit how foolish and unreasonable was her terror of dogs; but the terror was so real to her that overcoming it seemed almost an impossibility. Alf had no idea of the courageous effort it had often required for the timid girl to put out a reluctant hand to stroke his inoffensive pet dog; an effort which, had anything cost that young gentleman as much, he would probably have been unable to make.

This great terror, which no effort of ridicule or expostulation could overcome, all dated back from a certain day seven years ago, when

Céline was a bright, healthy, rosy-cheeked lassie of eight.

How well she remembered that day! A fine hot afternoon in August in the dear old orchard at home; how she had found her sister sitting under the shade of her favourite tree, and how she had run to her for her admiration of the apronful of flowers she had been gathering by the side of the stream.

It was while the two were bending over the floral treasures, admiring them and arranging them into bouquets for the decoration of the house, that they were suddenly startled from their quiet occupation by a fierce-looking dog, which, with foam-flecked mouth, and pursued by an excited crowd of farm labourers with sticks and pitch-forks and wild cries of "Mad! mad!" came bounding over the low boundary and right upon the spot where the girls sat. In another moment he had flown at Céline, and his cruel fangs had closed upon the child's arm. Her elder sister shrieked wildly for help, trying ineffectually to beat the savage animal from his prey.

Happily the dog's pursuers were close at hand, and in another minute the child was rescued and the animal killed.

Whether he had been really mad or not they never knew, but the wound his cruel teeth had inflicted, and the sudden shock to the child's nerves, were sufficient to cause an illness of several weeks; and even when she was pro-

nounced well again, it was found that the nerves had not recovered their tone, and though the medical men declared she would outgrow the weakness in time, that special phase of it had remained ever since—an unconquerable terror of all dogs.

She had never been so strong again either, and it was when she was feeling below par that this fear was at its worst, and perhaps no one—not even her kind, thoughtful aunt—had any idea of the agonies of terror she often endured, nor of the brave efforts she made to conquer her weakness.

But a great deal of the latter both Mr. and Mrs. Marston observed, and commended her warmly for it.

"You will get over your fear in time, my love," her uncle would say, "if only you persevere in your brave efforts. And you, Master Alf, with all your boasted courage, if you knew anything of your cousin's feelings I doubt very much if you would be brave enough to overcome as much as she does."

At which Alf would shake his head incredulously, silenced, but not convinced. He did not know what the question of constitutional nervousness meant, and could not understand how anybody who was frightened of a small, harmless dog could be anything but a coward.

(To be continued.)

## "SHE COULDN'T BOIL A POTATO;"

OR,

### THE IGNORANT HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE.

By DORA HOPE.



ELLA was kept very busy during the first few days of this month, looking over and putting away her own and her aunt's winter clothes.

Mrs. Wilson prided herself on being an old-fashioned person and clinging to old-fashioned ideas, and so, in spite of what she considered Ella's "new-fangled" arguments to the contrary, she still held firmly to the opinion that the summer months were always warm, and that therefore winter clothes, with the exception of a few shawls, might safely be packed away, with the comfortable conviction that they would not be wanted again till the autumn.

Ella gladly undertook to carry out all her aunt's wishes, though with an inward presentiment that she would long for her fur cloak many times before the summer was over. But she found that she had undertaken a good deal more work than she expected. First of all each article had to be looked over, to see if it was worth keeping at all.

"Whatever you do, my dear," Mrs. Wilson exhorted her, "do not hoard up rubbish. Plenty of people will be glad to have the things we do not need, and they will only harbour moths and dust here."

So after a great deal of sorting and consultation, a large bundle was made up of half-worn garments, together with all the patches and fragments of material belonging to each, and was despatched to a home for waifs and strays, in which Mrs. Wilson was interested.

Then there was a further looking over, to see which of the remainder needed mending before putting away; and a needlewoman had a day's work strengthening thin places, putting new buttons on underclothing, and shaking,

brushing, and repairing furs and outer garments.

At last everything was so thoroughly cleansed and mended as to pass even Mrs. Wilson's critical examination, and to satisfy her that they were ready to wear again directly they were needed, without any fear of finding loose strings or worn braid. Ella had bought a quantity of bitter apple at the chemist's the previous day, and now she sprinkled this over each article, being particularly careful to shake it well into the fur.

She was then directed to find several large bags of thick, unbleached calico, into which the garments were laid, and they were then stowed away on the top shelves of wardrobes, which had been previously well dusted and sprinkled with bitter apple.

Ella thought this was all rather unnecessary trouble, but she changed her mind when she heard from Kate one day that a shawl of her own, which had been laid by without any such precautions, had been found eaten by moths into such large holes as to be quite unwearable, and this unpleasant experience made Ella resolve that she would never again have her clothes spoilt for want of a little trouble.

The spring cleaning had been carried on with the rather headlong vigour natural to a young housekeeper, and the whole house would have been thrown into a state of chaos but for Mrs. Mobberly's timely warning, to keep it as comfortable as circumstances would permit, by only turning out one, or at most two rooms at once.

Mrs. Wilson had been too ill at the time to take much active interest in the work, and had not previously warned Ella of the necessity of looking out for moths; and consequently, owing to Ella's inexperience, a good deal of

the work had to be done over again, for it was a large house, and many of the rooms were hardly ever used, so that the woollen curtains and covers and horsehair mattresses were very liable to become infested with moths—a danger which Ella had never thought of, and had taken no precautions to prevent.

It was very trying to the temper to have to take down the curtains again, and upset the rooms which had only just been put straight, but Ella was soon convinced of the wisdom of the proceeding, for moths were found in several places. One cushion which seemed full of them was condemned to be burnt, as the only way to prevent them spreading to other things; and one or two other articles, not quite so bad, were wrapped in a cloth and baked in the oven to kill the eggs, and afterwards well shaken and brushed, and insecticide was squirted into all suspicious nooks and corners.

"Housekeepers, like poets, are born, and not made," was the remark with which Ella began her next letter to her mother, after this experience. "I have overcome some of the ignorance which our departed and lamented domestics so much sneered at, and not only can boil a potato, but could make a large and miscellaneous assortment of dainty dishes at a pinch; but I feel that I was born without the genius necessary to manage even a small establishment like this. It requires a massive intellect to always know at what particular juncture curtains will get full of moths, unused beds will get damp, and steel fenders rusty."

Her mother's reply, as usual, was a comforting one, giving her as it did the assurance that unless girls have had the good fortune to learn the art of housekeeping at home, they must of necessity find out what is necessary



by their own experience, which might generally be translated by their failures and mistakes.

This clearing and turning out of the house had kept Ella busy for some time, and Mrs. Wilson, who was always fearing she might feel dull, was very glad to hear that Mrs. Mobberly had two lively nieces coming to stay with her, and that she was depending upon Ella to help her entertain them.

Ella had been living a secluded life with her aunt for so long that she felt very shy, and was not at all pleased at the prospect of entertaining "two lively girls"; but her nervousness soon vanished when Doris and Joan Mobberly appeared, for they were so merry, and took so much for granted that she would be ready to join in all their girlish pranks, that she quite forgot her cares, and the two houses were soon ringing with laughter and merriment.

Before long the girls made a plan which at first shocked their elders' old-fashioned ideas of propriety; but very soon Mrs. Wilson, as Mrs. Mobberly said, "went over to the enemy," and declared that tricycling was the most healthy amusement possible, and that the sooner the girls carried out their scheme and hired machines, the better she would be pleased; and if Mrs. Mobberly did not care to have them, there was room to keep all three tricycles in her coach-house.

This was all the encouragement they needed, and in a marvellously short space of time the three girls had stowed themselves into the little pony-carriage, and were off to the town to see what they could hire.

Joan seemed suspiciously well acquainted with the merits of the different tricycle shops, and led the others straight to an establishment which she said was kept by a fatherly old man who would take an interest in getting what they wanted. He certainly had a very paternal way of giving them good advice, and insisted on them taking the tricycles which he thought most suitable, regardless of their own ideas. At Joan's request he showed them how to alter the height of the seat, and how to oil the machines properly, and explained the action of the steering wheel; and finally promised to send the machines home the same evening in good order.

Joan had ridden a good deal and Doris a little, and they beguiled the homeward journey with anecdotes of feats and accidents, which alternately made Ella long to start, and vow she would never mount a tricycle at all.

"Come in and see our dresses first," said Doris, as they drew near home, "and then we will consider the best way to manage yours."

Their tricycling dresses were made of rather thick grey homespun, with well-fitting but not tight Norfolk jackets fastened with a belt, and with a convenient outside pocket for a handkerchief and whistle. The skirts, to Ella's surprise, were neither long nor wide, in fact Joan's, which answered very well, was barely longer than an ordinary walking dress, and measured hardly three yards round the bottom; and Doris said she must take a perpendicular tuck in hers, to reduce it to the same measurement, as the extra width caught in the wheels. The skirts were perfectly plain at the sides, and the necessary fullness was supplied by one or two box pleats in front and behind.

For the rest of their costume they wore soft felt hats, or on sunny days, when there was no wind, straw sailor hats, and either tennis or ordinary walking shoes. Joan preferred the former, finding they did not slip off the treadles so easily as those with leather soles.

"The first time I went for a long ride," interposed Doris, "I wore laced boots; and when I reached home I found a row of blisters all down my foot and ankle, where the laces had crossed, so I have used shoes ever since."

"And gloves are not such a trifling matter

as you might think," chimed in Joan. "I have tried most kinds. Once I went out in silk gloves, and I came home with my hands thick with the mud and dust which had worked through the silk, and covered with blisters into the bargain. Another time it was cold when I started, and I wore woollen ones. They were black, and when I got warm the dye came out, besides letting the dust through, and my hands did not look clean for a week after."

"What should you wear then?" asked Ella.

"I like good, stout leather, with gauntlets, the best. You see, your hands are so near the wheels all the time that you cannot help getting a good deal of dust thrown on to them; so you must have something thick to keep it out, as well as to protect your hands from chafing; but you need to be careful that they have not seams where the friction comes, or you will soon have your hands blistered."

As Ella had no proper tricycling costume, they chose one of her old skirts, which she would not mind spoiling, and after taking out the steels and all unnecessary frills and bows, all the drapery which would be likely to catch in the cogs or wheels, but which could not be dispensed with, was sewn down as closely as possible to the foundation skirt.

The next morning the tricycles arrived, and the girls eagerly mounted and tried them up and down the quiet lane between the two houses. They had chosen a "Sociable" and a single tricycle, and as Ella was a beginner, she rode the double machine with Joan. There seemed to her a bewildering number of handles, and as the pedals moved and the wheels began to turn, she felt a great inclination to fall forward, and entreated Joan to stop. Joan, however, had no mercy, and in a few minutes Ella was able to sit upright, her feet worked up and down almost unconsciously, and she even dared to raise her eyes now and then from the road before her, and glance around.

After a short practice in the morning they arranged to have their midday dinner early, and go for a proper ride afterwards, so that Ella might settle her aunt for her afternoon nap before leaving her. Accordingly, early in the afternoon Mrs. Wilson was comfortably tucked up on her couch, with a hand-bell on the little table at her side, so that she might ring when she wanted anything, without needing to rise, which she could not easily do without help; and the door was left just unlatched, so that the maid, Sarah, could look in now and then without disturbing her mistress if she should be asleep.

Having made all these preparations, Ella started with an easy mind, feeling sure that her aunt could wait for nothing during her absence.

Before starting, as Joan intended to steer the Sociable herself, she explained to Ella that her share of the labour would be to work as hard as she could, and ring the bell whenever it was necessary. Joan had insisted on having a spring bell fixed on to one of the handles, instead of the ball bell which was provided, but which would have kept up its aggravating tinkling all the time. Ella soon felt so perfectly at her ease, and they enjoyed themselves so thoroughly, that they were very loth to turn homewards; but Joan was stern, and insisted on turning back long before the other two felt tired. Indeed, it needed a very vigorous tinkling of the alarm bell, worked by Ella, and an ear-splitting series of calls on the shrill whistle with which Joan had provided herself, to recall Doris, who had shot ahead on her lighter machine.

"It is a great mistake to do too much the first day," Joan said, when the others protested. "Ella will be almost too stiff to move to-morrow as it is, and I will undertake to go

as far as you like, and probably further, before I give you up."

They were out altogether two or three hours, and like most beginners, alternately rode at the top of their speed till they were hot and breathless, and then stopped in some shady spot to rest and cool themselves; and before turning homewards they sat for some time on a mossy bank, enjoying some fruit which Joan had brought in a little basket slung under the seat.

Consequently, the next day, to Ella's great mortification, not only was she, as Joan had predicted, very stiff, but she had in addition caught a bad cold. Happily, it soon passed off, and did not, as she feared, develop into one of the bad sore throats to which she was subject; but she could not hide the fact that she had taken a chill, and Mrs. Wilson came to the conclusion that tricycling was a less healthy amusement than she had imagined.

Joan, who felt herself responsible for the party, was very penitent, and begged Mrs. Wilson to believe that it was all her fault for not remembering to warn Ella of this risk. She herself, she said, used to take cold at first, from getting over-heated, and then trying to get cool as quickly as possible by sitting in the most breezy and shady place she could find; but she had learnt wisdom by experience, only, unfortunately, had forgotten to pass on her knowledge to Ella. She herself always put on flannel or merino under-clothing for tricycling, even when she was not using them for ordinary wear, and she found that they not only made her much less liable to take cold, but added very much to her comfort also. Moreover, when she did not forget it, as she unfortunately had on this occasion, she always took a light jacket or wrap of some kind, to slip on whenever they took a long rest.

This explanation mollified Mrs. Wilson, who made no further objection to the girls riding again as soon as Ella was well enough; and during the remainder of Doris' and Joan's visit the trio had short rides almost every day, besides making several long excursions. On these occasions they always carried a small bundle of wraps slung under one machine, either rolled up in a mackintosh or packed in a small leather bag, as they found that without some such protection, by the time they wanted their jackets they were either saturated with dust or splashed all over with mud, according to the state of the roads. Under the other machine they carried a good-sized basket with a lid, which held a little fruit, and cakes or biscuits, as well as their sketch-books when they started, and served as a receptacle for flowers on their homeward journey. At first they used to take a bottle of milk or lemonade in the basket; but it added considerably to the weight, and they found, too, that when they were tired and thirsty, nothing refreshed them so much and gave them so much vigour for the start home again as a cup of tea, which they generally managed to obtain in some of the little villages they passed through. To avoid any chance of being deprived of their favourite beverage, they generally took a tiny packet of tea with them, and they never found a village so poor that it could not at least supply them with boiling water.

Ella felt a good many scruples at leaving her aunt so much; but Mrs. Wilson took such a keen interest in the expeditions, and so decidedly refused all Ella's offers to stay at home with her, that she had really no choice in the matter; and she had the comfort of knowing that in her absence the servants were both able and willing to do all Mrs. Wilson needed, and that Mrs. Mobberly could always come to spend part of the day with her, and so prevent her feeling dull.

(To be continued.)



established for my working men and lads. I have started for them a reading-room, in which they have all kinds of papers, books, and games; a temperance refreshment room, and a brass band. I have also grounded in the village flourishing branches of the Church Temperance and Church Purity Societies. But yet more than for anything else that God has let me do among my men do I rejoice with thanksgiving over the Sabbath mornings, when the members of the Bible class come thronging up to the Table of the Lord.

My vast amount of work of different kinds makes it very necessary for me to economise my time, therefore nothing was more wanted

by me than a watch, and I set about thinking how I could have one made that I could feel. Opposite each figure on the dial-plate I had a little knob placed; the hour-hand also had a tiny excrescence put upon it; the minute hand was made very thick, and screwed so high that it would pass over the knobs without catching, and thus I had a watch by which I could tell the time to a minute. I have described my watch thus minutely, that my plan may be useful to others with darkened or failing sight.

I am no proficient in music, but listening to it is one of my greatest pleasures; indeed, those with sight have probably no conception

of what all sweet sounds, such as the melody of the wind, or the chime of the waves, are to those whose sense of hearing has been refined by blindness. I delight in walking through a picture gallery, and in having the pictures described to me. I take great interest in all natural history, and am never tired of tracing out with my fingers the delicate formation of a flower, or a leaf, or an insect's wing, if either of these is put into my hand.

Thus it will be seen that there are few things from which my blindness shuts me out; and that God's love, though it has closed for me one window, has opened for me many others.

## "SHE COULDN'T BOIL A POTATO;"

OR,

### THE IGNORANT HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE.

By DORA HOPE.



As the days lengthened and the weather grew warmer, Mrs. Wilson began to have a craving for a sight of the sea. She had not been regaining her strength as quickly as she had hoped, and, having reached a certain stage of convalescence, it seemed impossible to get any further. All Ella's coaxing could not tempt her outside the garden, and the most appetising dishes which Ella's and Mrs. Moore's united genius

could invent failed to win back her capricious appetite.

Ella was beginning to get disheartened, and to think that it was no use trying any more, as her aunt had evidently settled down into being a permanent invalid, when someone suggested trying the invigorating effect of sea air. The mere thought of the fresh sea breezes seemed to give Mrs. Wilson new vigour, and, to Ella's surprise, she declared herself quite strong enough for the journey, and was reluctant even to take the precaution of asking the doctor's advice before making her arrangements.

His consent was easily obtained, with the addition of a great deal of practical advice and help to Ella, who was not a little dismayed at the responsibility of removing her patient from the safe shelter of home, surrounded as she was there by friends willing to help in any difficulty.

The first point to consider was where they should go; but, happily, the doctor had very decided opinions as to which places would suit Mrs. Wilson, so that matter was easily settled. After a good deal of discussion, it was decided that Ella must go and take lodgings a few days beforehand, as Mrs. Wilson was not in a fit state to bear the fatigue of driving round the town while she looked for apartments. By going very early in the morning, she could spend several hours at Wyck, and still be home before dark. As Mrs. Wilson would not hear of her going alone, and no other companion seemed available, it was decided that she should take the young maid Sarah, partly as escort, and partly to give her a little

holiday, as a reward for her unwearying attention to her mistress through the winter. She had never been more than a few miles away from her native town before, and the prospect of seeing the real sea drove her so nearly wild with excitement that she was good for nothing at all during the next few days.

Ella felt very anxious at the responsibility of taking lodgings; she had never even been consulted in such matters, and was entirely ignorant of everything connected with them. Mrs. Wilson herself could not tell her very much, for she had always spent her holidays in travelling, and knew very little about the usual arrangements in lodgings. Mrs. Moberly, as usual, came to the rescue, and gave Ella a list of the chief points to be considered. She must have a dining-room suite—that is to say, a sitting-room on the ground-floor with, at any rate, one bedroom behind, so that Mrs. Wilson need not go up and down any stairs; and the sitting-room must be facing the sea, so that she might have the sight and the sound of it without leaving her sofa. It must be comfortably furnished, too, for invalids need luxuries that can be dispensed with by people in health; and in inquiring the price, Ella must be sure to ask what extras there would be.

"I have learnt that lesson by sad experience," Mrs. Moberly said: "for I once offered to engage rooms for some friends who could not well afford extravagant charges, and was very pleased to find just what I wanted at a reasonable rate. But you can imagine my mortification when they showed me their first week's bill. I had forgotten to ask what extras I must add to my estimate of the cost, and now there was a formidable array of additional figures—kitchen fire, hall gas, gas on landing, dining-room gas, use of cruet, washing bed and table linen, and cleaning boots; making altogether nearly a pound a week more than I had calculated—a very serious difference to people in rather straitened circumstances. So you must be warned by my mistake, and be sure to find out what the entire charge is likely to be, or when you come to pay your bills, you will feel all the time as if you were being cheated."

The doctor, too, gave Ella some very serious advice. He was a kind old man, who was always ready, by suggestions and hints, to relieve Ella as much as possible of anxiety about her patient, and he, too, like Mrs. Moberly, had learnt a lesson from the experience of others. One of his patients, he told Ella, had gone to the seaside with her children early in the summer, and had taken very clean and

comfortable lodgings; but they had hardly been settled in them for a week before one of the children seemed unwell, then another, and a third, and in a short time they all three were seriously ill. The doctor who was called said immediately that the house was full of infection, and there was no doubt the children had caught it. The landlady, finding it was no use to deny it, acknowledged that her own children had been ill, but they had been out and quite well for the last fortnight, and as she had well aired the rooms, and even had the carpets up and scrubbed the floors, she thought it was quite safe to let the apartments, forgetting how the germs of disease cling to the furniture, the hangings, and even to the paper on the walls. Happily, the children all recovered, but one, at least, was for some time in imminent danger; and the doctor warned Ella to make strict inquiries, as in Mrs. Wilson's enfeebled state she would be particularly susceptible to any infection, and would be quite unable to throw off any attack.

This idea so frightened Ella that she felt inclined to refuse the responsibility altogether. She was extremely severe in her remarks on the wickedness of lodging-house keepers who could allow such risk, and also of the makers of the law who could fail to punish them for doing it.

"You must remember, my dear Miss Ella," interrupted the doctor, "that the lodging-house keepers themselves are very often the victims of the carelessness—I might indeed call it criminal carelessness—of people who ought to know better, who having children not yet free from infectious diseases, do not hesitate to take them to seaside lodgings, without having even the common honesty to warn the proprietors of the state of the case, although they must know the risk they run of spreading the disease through the neighbourhood, and although they themselves would probably be amongst the most severe in denouncing those who exposed their own children to such risks. And on the other hand, the law does what it can to protect people from infection, though they seldom take advantage of it. There is an act, called the Public Health Act, under which any landlord can be prosecuted who takes lodgers, or even shows his rooms with a view to letting them, while his house is in an infectious state."

"But, doctor!" exclaimed Ella, "I do not see that it is much good to prosecute the landlord after one has caught diphtheria or



scarlet fever. It might be a solace to one's angry feelings, but even the sweetness of revenge would hardly make the attack less dangerous."

"No, the law is not much use after you have taken the infection, except in the light of paying your doctor's bill, but it is a great deal of use as a safeguard against getting into infection; and you can make practical use of it in this way. When you find lodgings that suit you, you should ask the person letting the rooms if there has been any case of infectious disease in the house during the last six weeks; and the Public Health Act provides that any person who 'knowingly makes a false answer to such a question' is liable to a penalty of £20, or one month's imprisonment; and you can see for yourself what effect this clause must have in ensuring truthful answers to your questions; but if you are at all doubtful about the place, it is better to have some one with you when you ask this, because the question is considered of so much importance that if you have not asked it, you cannot afterwards prosecute the landlord (as another clause of the Public Health Act allows you to do) for letting infectious rooms, and unless you have a witness, it is not easy to prove that you really did ask. So you see that the law does what it can for you, and as long as you make these inquiries, with your young maid to witness the fact that you do so, you are not very likely to run any risk."

Ella looked so overwhelmed at all these warnings, that the doctor regretted having said so much, and, taking her hand kindly, he added:

"You know, my dear young lady, that to be forewarned is to be forearmed, and I have only said all this to avoid any danger of your getting into infectious places, and not because I think you are particularly likely to do so, and though it is a duty to take these precautions, do not let anything I have said make you form a habit of suspecting people. That is a far worse evil than the remote possibility of infection. There are a few bad people in the world, and a good many thoughtless ones, and we need to be on our guard against them, but you will meet with many more who are both good and unselfish."

The doctor's kindness cheered Ella's drooping spirits again, and though still feeling rather overwhelmed with her responsibilities, she set to work cheerfully to make all her arrangements, and when the day came for her expedition in search of lodgings, she was secretly almost as excited as Sarah herself, though the necessity she felt of appearing dignified made her strive not to betray the fact.

As it was early in the year, they found lodgings much more easily than they expected. The landlady seemed a kind-hearted woman, whom Ella took to at once, and she promised to have everything arranged for Mrs. Wilson's comfort when she arrived. Ella asked her to have some beef-tea ready, and also to provide tea, bread, and so on, so

that she could get a meal for them if they required it, as soon as they reached there. The only thing lacking in the rooms was a convenient sofa, and as this was indispensable to Mrs. Wilson's comfort, the landlady told Ella of a shop where, as at most large sea-side resorts, invalid chairs and couches of all kinds could be hired. Having selected one, and engaged it, Ella went back to the lodgings, and asked the landlady to see that it came in time and was placed in readiness for Mrs. Wilson in the position she chose for it in the sitting-room.

Ella and her handmaid spent the rest of the day enjoying the sea air; Ella herself would rather have returned home at once, but stayed out of consideration for Sarah, who enjoyed the day to her heart's content, and Ella thoroughly enjoyed herself, too, in the effort to make it a happy day for her. The bathing was the great event of the day, and Sarah became so wildly excited over it that Ella felt convinced she would drown herself, and stood anxiously watching on the beach all the time, and begged the woman in charge of the machines to keep an eye on her. She longed to bathe herself, but her dignity would not allow of it; and after spending another hour or two on the beach, watching the sea and the people alternately, they returned home in the evening very tired, but very well satisfied with their day's work.

The next matter for consideration was the arrangement of the household during their absence. Mrs. Moore, the cook, had not been very well through the spring, and Mrs. Wilson suggested taking her with them to wait upon her and so relieve Ella, and at the same time to recruit her own health. This plan made it necessary to find someone to stay with Sarah. The old gardener and his wife lived in the little cottage close at hand, so that she would have had friends almost within call, but still Mrs. Wilson would not consent to her being alone in the house. She arranged at first that she should invite her mother to stay with her, but finding she was unable to leave her work, she sent Ella to see a very respectable needlewoman, whom she had employed for years, and invite her to come and stay in the house during their absence. She accepted the invitation very gratefully, and Mrs. Wilson instructed Sarah to take great care of her, and make her sit out in the garden every day, and do everything she could to strengthen her and give her a pleasant time. In addition to this visitor, Sarah had permission to invite her two younger sisters for a week each; so that every one concerned looked forward with eagerness to their holiday.

Instead of having board wages, which would be difficult to manage with visitors in the house, Mrs. Wilson gave Sarah a small sum of money to begin with, and an account book in which to enter all she spent, with instructions to go to Mrs. Mobberly each week for a further supply of money.

When the day came for their journey, Mrs. Wilson was rather nervous and fidgetty, and Ella found it difficult to persuade her not to get up earlier than usual and wear herself out with unnecessary exertions. To make her take a good breakfast was quite beyond her powers, so she put up a nice little lunch to be eaten in the train, and took also a little handbag containing a damp sponge, a bottle of Eau-de-Cologne, and some smelling salts, in case she should feel faint.

Mrs. Moore, being quite unaccustomed to travelling, was too much "flustered," as she said herself, to be of much use, so Ella had to think and plan for everyone; and she could not help contrasting this journey with the one only a few months ago, when she had travelled under her father's care to Hapsleigh to nurse her aunt. She felt years older since then, and was thankful for the change in herself, in spite of the many difficulties and anxieties she had gone through before learning the lesson of self-reliance. But she was not by any means perfect in her lesson yet, and was delighted to see Mrs. Mobberly arriving, to give what help she could and to soothe Mrs. Wilson, whose excited nerves made her rather irritable and difficult to manage.

Ella, at the doctor's suggestion, had made arrangements with the stationmaster beforehand, and when they reached the station he was looking out for them, with two porters, who carried Mrs. Wilson in a chair across the rails to the right train, where a carriage was prepared for her, with a board laid across the two seats, so that she could sit with her feet up comfortably. They had taken plenty of cushions, so that she could lie down altogether when she liked, and as they were very early for the train, Ella was able to settle her in an easy position before starting.

The journey was accomplished with less fatigue than they had feared; the porters and guard were very kind, as they always are to invalids or infirm people, and lifted Mrs. Wilson so carefully and cleverly out of the train and into the cab at the other end, that Ella had no trouble whatever.

Mrs. Wilson kept very quiet for the first few days after her arrival, and Ella was much disturbed at finding her apparently not so well as at home, and she secretly wrote to the doctor, asking what she had better do. His reply was comforting, for while suggesting certain remedies, he added that it was usually the case with invalids that the first week at a fresh place did apparently more harm than good, but he hoped there would be an improvement soon. Ella found this to be true, for after a few days Mrs. Wilson began to take an interest in all that was going on, and so far from needing any more urging to exert herself, Ella was now in constant anxiety lest she should overtire herself, and so lose all the good she had gained.

(To be continued.)





my father till I come back to-morrow, and then I will give you a *petit cadeau*. I shall order some cognac to be sent for him—see that he takes some; and mind, you are to make a very nice omelette for his *déjeuner*. If Miss Miller calls for me presently, tell her I had to go shopping; I will meet her at the Quai."

Half an hour later the party for St. Cloud were assembled, awaiting the steamboat, all except Miss Miller.

"I can't think why she is so late!" exclaimed Mariana. "It is so stupid of people to drive things so close!" Then, as the thought of Leonidas occurred to her, she turned to Miss Fairfax, adding—

"I am very glad you are here, for if you had not turned up in time I should have gone back home again."

And what had made Rachel Miller late? Not many minutes after Mariana had left the Rue de Bac, Rachel had arrived there. Finding no response to her knocks at Mariana's door, she had ventured into the little *salon*. Here she found Mr. Ross seated in an arm-chair. How different he looked to his usual self! Generally so neat and clean-shaven, to-day he was quite *en dés-habille*, and wrapped in a dressing-gown. Too restless to stay in bed, he was yet too weak to exert himself to dress.

"Is that you, Miss Miller?" he asked anxiously. "My daughter has only left five or ten minutes since; she could not

stay with me to-day. I am very glad you have come, for I feel so ill and depressed. But you will stay with me, my dear?" he added in a childish, beseeching tone.

What could Rachel say? She, too, as much as Mariana, had greatly looked forward to this day of complete rest and amusement; she, too, had pictured to herself with delight the beauties of the spring and of the country. The thought came now, "Why should my pleasure be spoiled by Mariana's neglect? and besides, old men get nervous: there may not be much the matter with him, after all!" But the next instant, catching sight of the thin, patient face of the old man, her heart smote her. "For my father's sake," she thought; then she said aloud—

"Yes, I will stay with you, if you really wish it."

She did not add "instead of going to St. Cloud."

And well for Mr. Ross that he had such a good nurse! His fears proved correct, for all the morning and afternoon Rachel was occupied making mustard plasters to ease the pain in his side, in cooking and administering beef tea, and in persuading him to sip a few drops of brandy. However, towards evening the pain was so wonderfully better, that when night came he would not hear of her staying with him. Indeed, her patient seemed so much easier that at about ten o'clock Rachel thought it best to return to her own

lodgings, leaving everything he could need ready at his hand. She really felt an affection for the good old man, and as she said good-night, she stooped and kissed his brow. Touched by her tenderness, he pressed her hand, saying, "Faithful in little, faithful in much—faithful in much!" Then added, "Don't trouble to come round early, my dear. My daughter will be home by nine o'clock."

Thinking it best not to seem too obtrusive in her attentions, she replied—

"Very well; then I will look in towards eleven."

Mr. Ross slept well the first part of the night, but towards morning he began to feel a return of the pain. When Julie brought him up his coffee he told her he should require nothing more; but that when his daughter returned she would require chocolate, after her early journey.

Presently, feeling very restless, he determined as a change to go and sit in Mariana's room. It would be pleasanter there, for the sun would be pouring in through the windows; and, moreover, he might watch for her coming. So he tottered along the corridor, feeling very weak; with some difficulty succeeded in unlocking the door, and made his way across the room, to a chair which was placed in the window.

(To be concluded.)

## "SHE COULDN'T BOIL A POTATO;"

OR,

### THE IGNORANT HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE.

By DORA HOPE.



WHEN Ella had been two or three weeks alone with her aunt at the seaside, her enjoyment was greatly enhanced by the arrival of her mother and brothers

and sisters, who took lodgings near them. Before they came she had been so

much occupied with her aunt that she had had no time for amusement, and, having no companion, she had not cared to make any excursions even when Mrs. Wilson preferred to remain quietly at home; but now it was very different. Mrs. Hastings was too delicate herself to bear much fatigue, and was glad to spend most of her time driving or sitting

quietly with her sister-in-law; so that Ella was free to amuse herself as she pleased.

On one of these occasions, after Ella had started with her usual merry party, and the two ladies fell into conversation, as was their wont, Mrs. Hastings remarked on the improvement in the thoughtless, impulsive Ella, and apologised for not having spared Kate to nurse her aunt; but Mrs. Wilson took up the cudgels on Ella's behalf, and said so much in warm praise of her that the mother's heart glowed with pride, and she treasured up the words to repeat to Ella, knowing how they would help her in times of depression and self-depreciation. She secretly wished that Mrs. Wilson would have spoken the smallest part of the praise to Ella herself; but, unfortunately, she belonged to a class of people who consider praise and sugar-plums alike injurious to youth.

Robin's greatest happiness was chasing moths, butterflies, and beetles, and Ella gratified him beyond measure by helping him in his collecting. He gave her a great deal of instruction as to the best places to find rare creatures and the best way to catch them. Some of their most successful hunts were amongst the seaweed left just below high-water mark. They found that by shaking a handful of it over a smooth piece of sand they often discovered uncommon and interesting creatures, which they would otherwise not have noticed, and before long Ella overcame

her horror of touching Robin's treasures, and helped to catch and bottle the running, wriggling, jumping creatures, instead of picking up her skirts and flying off the moment they began to hop about. Other happy hunting-grounds were the stubble-fields, the sandhills, and the waste ground near the beach. These they found the best places for catching moths and butterflies, though here also, by shaking the plants, they met with many curious beetles of varieties quite new to Robin, whose collection hitherto had consisted only of those found far inland.

Ella herself had set up an aquarium. The boys' only idea was to kill their specimens and preserve them, as best they could, for their various collections; but Ella gradually became very much interested in the habits of the different creatures she met with, and reserved a few for further observation in a large basin of water. The only thing that distressed her was, that as it was impossible to get fresh supplies of sea-water at Hapsleigh, she must of necessity leave all her treasures behind, and she was comforted, therefore, when someone told her that some shellfish, notably mussels, can be gradually accustomed to fresh water, till they can live in it quite well, although if suddenly plunged into it it would kill them before long. They must be first put into a mixture of fresh water and salt, the proportions of the latter being made gradually less and less each time the water is changed, till



they are finally left without any at all. Ella thought she would try this; for, though less interesting than some of the more lively varieties of fish, their feeding always interested her, and she determined to start a fresh-water aquarium at home with her marine shellfish.

But, alas for the family's enjoyment! after a week or so of bright sunshine a long spell of bad weather set in. Though the boys braved the weather, and went for walks, any further outdoor amusements were impossible, and the lodgings, which were quite large enough when only required to eat and sleep in, seemed lamentably small now that most of the day had to be spent in them, and if it had not been for Kate's ingenuity in suggesting amusements, and Ella's good-natured readiness to carry out anyone's ideas, they would have found the time hang heavily on their hands.

Norman was especially delighted at being allowed to use a small microscope which the thoughtful Kate had brought with her, but which he had never before been permitted to touch, and, however bad the weather was, he was always ready to run out once or twice in the day with a little bucket to get a fresh supply of sand, seaweed, or water in which to find objects to look at.

Then Kate remembered having seen very pretty brackets and frames covered with shells and seaweed, and determined to try her hand at it, promising the boys that if they would help her she would make them each a frame for their own. Their share of the work was to wash the shells and seaweed which they had all collected during the fine weather, and, in the occasional gleams of sunshine, to venture out to hunt for more. Ella and Kate went to a draper's shop where they wanted to make some purchases, and asked if they could buy some old cardboard dress or bonnet boxes; but the proprietor assured them that as broken ones would answer their purpose, he would give them as many as they liked, and be glad to get rid of them; so their material cost them very little, nothing else being required but a little velvet to cover the tops of the brackets and some glue to fasten the shells on with. They tried to use gum first, but found that, though it was strong enough for the seaweed, it would not hold the shells. They cut patterns for the brackets in paper first, till they got the right shape, and then cut them out of the cardboard, and stitched them into shape with strong carpet thread. They consisted of a half-moon-shaped piece for the top, a long piece for the front, shaped a little at the bottom so as to have a point in the middle, and a straight narrow strip, to add strength to the back. These were sewn together first, and the velvet was gummed on to the top afterwards, so as to extend just over the joins and hide them, and the shells were then glued on to the front piece, and all the interstices between them filled in with tiny morsels of bright-coloured seaweed.

Then Ella was suddenly inspired with a taste for taking water-colour portraits, an accomplishment, by the way, for which she had no great talent; but the little ones sat still, greatly flattered, while she sketched them, entertaining them the while with stirring tales of the Hapsleigh animals.

Robin had been so vigorous in collecting butterflies during the fine weather that he had a great many more than he needed, and could spare Ella a good many for making what she called "butterfly pictures," with which she threatened to set up a rival collection to his own, which would have the great advantage of not being liable to breakages nor to the attacks of mites. She carefully pencilled on cardboard the outlines of a butterfly's wings, opened out in their natural position, then brushed the space over lightly with thin

colourless gum, and, having cut the wings off close to the body, pressed them down on to the gum and put them under a heavy book to press. When dry, she very carefully picked them off with the point of a needle, and found a perfect picture of the wings on the cardboard; for all the beautiful feathers adhered to the gum, and looked exactly like a painting. She then sketched in the body and antennæ, and so obtained an exact facsimile of the butterfly.

As Robin's birthday was approaching, she bought him a photograph of the place, and decorated the cardboard mount in this way with pictures of some of his choicest specimens.

By dint of these amusements, and games of many kinds, the days passed on, until at last they were awakened one morning by brilliant sunshine; and, except for occasional showers, the fine weather lasted for the rest of their stay.

It must not be imagined that Ella had neglected her aunt all this time; she never left her in the morning till she was dressed and comfortably settled for the day, and always returned, even though Mrs. Hastings or Kate had been there all day, in time to read to her, or attend to her numerous little wants in the evening.

Ella had one occupation at her aunt's lodgings which she was too shy to speak of, even to her mother. Before leaving Hapsleigh, Mrs. Moberly had begged her to make a point of speaking a kind word to the servants.

"You don't know, my dear Ella," she said, "what hard lives some of those lodging-house servants lead, and how lonely they are. Even ladies who are most thoughtful for their servants at home, seem to think that their stay in the lodgings will be so short that it is not worth while to get interested in the servants, or else they feel that they have left all their duties and household cares at home, and with them the duty of befriending desolate people; and, consequently, the poor servants at the lodgings, who always have more work than they can do through the season, rarely get a word of praise or thanks, or indeed a word of any sort except orders or complaints; and yet they are frequently as much strangers in the place as the visitors are, and do not know a creature."

In consequence of this exhortation, Ella had made a point of speaking kindly to the young maid who waited on them, and found her advances received with such surprise and pleasure that she grew bolder, and took an opportunity whenever one presented itself of having a little talk with the girl, being very careful, however, never to hinder her when she was busy. She was very ready to tell Ella all about herself, and her little crippled brother, and how lonesome she felt at coming away from home for the first time all amongst strangers. Ella soon won her heart by sending a picture book to the little brother; and finding that the girl did not possess a Bible, she bought her one, and having marked a great many of her own favourite chapters and verses, she gave it to her as a parting present, having first got her to promise to read a few verses every day. Before leaving, too, she found out there was a Young Women's Christian Association in the town, and went to see the lady at the head of it, who promised to take an interest in her *protégée* and invite her to a servants' Bible class.

Mrs. Moore, too, had been winning the heart of the landlady during their sojourn by helping her to get rid of the ants with which some of the lower rooms were infested. She had tried several remedies in vain, and was nearly in despair, for they were particularly numerous in the larder, and the lodgers were constantly complaining that they were served up in their food. After a long search, Mrs. Moore found a hole from which they issued,

and poured some carbolic acid down it; she then mixed a jar of the carbolic acid and water, about one part of the former to twelve of water, and sprinkled this freely all over the larder shelves and floor, so as to intercept and kill those which were away from the nest. The first application of this mixture very materially checked the number of ants, and after two or three attempts they were all driven away, and the grateful landlady had no further trouble.

All things have an end, and, much too soon for most of the persons concerned, the children's holidays drew to a close; and rosy and sunburnt they returned home.

Ella went back to Hapsleigh a few days before her aunt to see that all was comfortable, and ready for her. It was a trial to part from her own family again, but she had become very fond of Hapsleigh, and the inevitable feeling of homesickness which seized her when she returned to the lonely house was softened by the warm welcome she received from Sarah, the maid, and old Mallard, the gardener. Billy, the old pony, too, so far forgot his sense of the proprieties of life as to walk right on to the pavement outside the station, to put his nose into her hand; and the dogs of course were noisy in their welcome. Even the poultry seemed to remember her, and crowded and cackled vociferously when she went into the yard; and going into the drawing-room, she was gratified and touched to find a bouquet of his choicest roses as a welcome from old Mr. Dudley.

The day after Mrs. Wilson reached home, the whole household had a great fright. One of the dogs had been irritable and evidently out of sorts for several days, and that morning he flew at Sarah, when she assured Ella "she wasn't doing nothing to him," and bit her hand severely.

She was terribly frightened and sat moaning in a corner till the arrival of the doctor, for whom Mrs. Moore had rushed in hot haste. In the meantime Ella tried her hardest to remember the instructions she had read for treating bites from mad dogs, and having a vague recollection that the poison in the blood must be prevented from flowing to the other parts of the body, she tied a handkerchief so tightly round Sarah's arm, that she effectually stopped the bleeding, and all circulation at the same time; so that by the time the doctor arrived the hand was almost black. She had an uncomfortable conviction that she was acting like a coward, and that the only heroic conduct would be to suck the poison from the wound, and she had visions of herself figuring in history, like Queen Eleanor. But deeds which sound charming in a history book have their drawbacks in real life, and this required more moral courage than poor Ella possessed; and so, though she secretly despised herself all the time for her cowardice, she contented herself by stopping the circulation, and plying the poor girl with strong brandy and water, which, as she had been a teetotaler all her life, soon had the effect of stupefying her.

Happily the doctor was at home, and arrived before the treatment had time to do any serious harm; and after examining and dressing the wound he asked to see the dog, to which Ella replied, much pleased at her own thoughtfulness and promptness of action, that it was probably dead by this time, as she had given Mallard orders to kill it at once.

The old doctor was always so ready to praise and encourage her, that she was very much taken aback when he turned upon her quite angrily, saying he gave her credit for having more sense, and begging her to go as quickly as possible in the hope it might not be too late to stop him. She obeyed instantly, though very much astonished, and running quickly down the garden, was relieved to find old Mallard, with his usual deliberateness, only just preparing to execute the culprit.



By the doctor's orders, the dog was confined in an outhouse by itself, and a veterinary surgeon was sent for.

"Don't you see, Miss Ella," he said, "you want to know whether the dog has rabies, or is only out of sorts. I cannot possibly say at present, but a very short time will settle the question, and it will make all the difference to the way of treating the bite, while in the meantime, if kept securely shut up, the dog can do no harm even if he has rabies. If you feel afraid of him snapping in the future, and like to have him killed in a few weeks' time, that is a different matter. Surely a sensible young lady like you cannot believe the absurd tales you hear about the person bitten being affected

if the dog should chance to go mad years hence."

Ella had half believed in this curious superstition, and was comforted by the doctor's strenuous assurance that there was no truth whatever in it. She was bidden to inquire carefully into the dog's proceedings for the last few days, what food it had eaten, whether it had bitten, or been bitten by, any other dog, or had attacked any other person.

As he was leaving, after hearing the veterinary surgeon's opinion, the doctor gave Ella strict injunctions to keep up Sarah's spirits.

"Don't let that old woman" (it was well Mrs. Moore did not hear him) "frighten her into hydrophobia, by telling her of all the

cases she has known of girls who have been bitten by dogs, and have died raving mad."

"I know her style," he muttered to himself as he went out; and certainly that was Mrs. Moore's favourite manner of showing her sympathy.

Happily the medicine prescribed soon cured the dog of its temporary ailment, and though Mrs. Wilson was afraid to keep it after the fright it had given them, they all could see for themselves that there was not the slightest cause for anxiety on the score of madness; and Sarah, being a strong and hearty girl, soon recovered, and Ella felt that she had learnt a valuable lesson from the incident.

(To be continued.)

## GREYTOWN GRANGE:

### A TALE OF LAND AND SEA.

By GORDON STABLES, C.M., M.D., R.N.

#### CHAPTER II.

##### AUNT ETHEL'S HOME IN HANTS.



Of course I would go, though right well I knew I would be missed at home. Mother would miss me, Harold would miss me; but poor papa would miss me most.

The leave-taking was got over as bravely as such leave-takings usually are, and three hours afterwards I was past Perth, and rattling onwards and

southwards in the mail train to London.

I had heard so much about the world's renowned metropolis that I fancied I should alight in a city of palaces and grottoes and fairy-like caves, more wonderful because more real than anything ever the lamp of Aladdin could conjure up.

Town girls need hardly be told of my surprised disappointment when I at length alighted, on a rainy morning, at Euston. It was springtime, and I had left the Highlands with the buds all out, the tender, sweet green on the larch-trees, and the birds in song. But here—oh, everything seemed so dismal! The awful-looking cabmen, with voices that grated and jarred on my ear; the noise, the bustle, the independence, the grey and ugly houses, the slimy streets, and the people themselves—these latter, as they peered from beneath dripping umbrellas, hardly condescending to look at each other, but only at the pavement—seemed to me to be pale and woe-begone.

It was dreariness and loneliness beyond compare. And yet—this was London!

I was glad when I left it far behind, and when the green and beautiful country once more opened out to my view; then my heart began to fill with hope and joy, for I knew I should have a welcome from sailor auntie, of Greytown Grange.

I had stopped most of the day in London making some purchases for home, so that before I reached it it was getting dark; but a big round moon had just freed itself from a bank of clouds in the east, the sky above was

clear, and there was every prospect of a lovely night.

"Greytown Grange, miss?" said the cabman. "Why, I live at Greytown. Know Mr. Wilmott well, miss. Little over two mile; but I'll take you there for next to nothing. Going home for the night, you see. Jump in, miss."

It was a road with many turnings, that wound in and wound out through lines of elms and lime-trees, past level meadows where stunted pollards grew, past clumps and groves of tall weird-like poplars (such giants I had never before seen), past strange-looking foreign-like farms and curiously-constructed cattle-sheds and ricks; then up a long incline—I cannot say hill—between hedges snowed over with blossoming May. There were fewer trees now, so I could catch a glimpse of the country. Though not home-like, I had to confess it was interesting and pretty, and lo! away down yonder beneath us was a lovely lake slumbering in the moonlight.

I was just thinking about the delightful rows that auntie and I could have on that broad sheet of water, when the cab pulled up at a wall with a wide wooden gate in it.

"Here we are, miss," he said, cheerfully, as he rang the bell. "Thankee, miss. Shall hope to have the pleasure of driving you again. Good-night, miss."

A moment afterwards I was in my auntie's arms.

Even through the mist of tears that filled my eyes I could see that auntie was still as beautiful as ever, but ever so much more sad and subdued-looking.

After I had settled down a little, and we were enjoying our tea (we were all alone; the brother, my uncle, came from town but seldom), I naturally asked about auntie's husband.

She looked puzzled; then, after a pause, she laughed, looking more now like her old self than ever.

"Oh, I forgot," she said, "that I had mentioned my family, to whom you are to be governess. The family consists of two canaries, a starling, a jackdaw, and an old tom cat."

"So that is the mystery, is it?"

"Yes, that is the mystery; but how ridiculous of me not to mention it before!"

During the evening, having still that sheet of water and its promised pleasures on my

mind, I peeped out from behind the crimson blinds.

"Oh, Aunt Ethel," I cried, "we are quite close to the lake, as close as we are to Loch Rea at home. How beautiful the moon is shining on it! Won't we have some nice boating, auntie, dear? Of course, there is a boat. It will be just like the dear old times."

"Boat! Lake! What are you talking about, Idabel? You must be tired, child, and it is nearly time for bed."

"But the lake—the lake!" I persisted. "Come and see. Don't tell me I am dreaming, or distraught, or that it is only a mirage."

Auntie came to the window and looked out, then smiled—merrily this time.

"It isn't a mirage, child," she said, "but it is a bank of white fog lying all along in the hollow over Farmer Bennet's meadow land."

I soon settled down to my new life at Greytown Grange. It was a quietly enjoyable one. My pupils did not give much trouble, albeit Dick was seldom in his cage and Jackie never. On the other hand, while they affected to despise the seclusion of cage life, and loved to patter about and in and out at the freedom of their own wills, they were never out of mischief for a quarter of an hour at a time. Dick was of an inquiring turn of mind. Never a parcel came into the house that he did not bore beak-holes in to examine the contents. Jackie was hardly honest. Almost every day he used to return from the fowl-run looking very sly and guilty, his head, perhaps, bleeding, where the hens had pecked him, and his breast besmeared with yolk of egg.

Dick and Jack affected to despise each other, and sometimes open hostilities commenced, the bone of contention generally being that of a chicken. They talked as they fought.

"Ho, ho!" Jack would cry, aiming a blow at Dick that, had it fallen where it was meant to, would have speared him.

But Dick was too nimble.

"You rascal!" he would cry, hopping quickly aside. Next moment he would be on Jack's back, dealing him brisk, piercing pecks on the head, causing Jack to scream, "Kay! Kay!"

"There you are, then!" Dick would say, flying away up to the candelabra, where he knew Jack daren't follow, because he disliked the jingling the pendant crystals made. That sound was sweetest music to Dick, and he would perch for hours up there, shaking the



## "SHE COULDN'T BOIL A POTATO;"

OR,

## THE IGNORANT HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE.

By DORA HOPE.



MR. WILSON rapidly regained her strength after her return from the seaside; in fact, she felt the benefit of the change much more after she was settled down at home again, than she had done during the visit. They had a warm bright September that year, and Mrs. Wilson often let Ella drive her out in the little pony-carriage. They explored distant lanes, and paid visits to *protégées* in outlying villages, and came home laden with varied treasures; sometimes a particularly thriving plant in a pot, a present from a grateful friend, sometimes bright berries and brilliantly tinted leaves from the hedgerows.

Ella made beautiful bouquets of some of the leaves, and pressed others for use in the winter. She bought some sheets of paper specially prepared for drying botanical specimens, and used this for the choicest leaves, though she found, as Mrs. Wilson told her she would, that ordinary white blotting-paper answered the purpose almost equally well; while for the larger kinds of ferns and bracken no plan succeeded so well as the very inexpensive one of laying them between sheets of ordinary newspapers, and putting them under the loose seat of an old-fashioned sofa. Whatever kind of paper was used, however, it was necessary to change the sheets every day for the first week. Ella found that whenever she neglected this rather troublesome precaution, the leaves lost their colour, and often became absolutely mildewed from the moisture absorbed into the paper.

The berries they collected were preserved in large jars of strong salt and water. The majority of them were kept very successfully, although some varieties, hawthorn berries especially, lost their colour in the brine, and were useless; barberries and mountain ash berries answered particularly well. Ella found that the latter kept fairly well by simply tying them in bunches, and hanging them up, with the berries downwards. The berries shrivel a little, but if soaked in water for a day before they are wanted, they look almost as well as ever again. The first attempt Ella made at preserving berries in salt and water was not very successful; they soon became mouldy on the top, but she found this was caused partly by the brine not being strong enough, and partly by her carelessness in not filling the jars up again as the water evaporated, so that some of the berries were left projecting above the water; but the failure of the one jarful taught her wisdom, and she was more careful for the future.

The beautiful branches of bryony berries, with which the hedges were festooned a little later in the year, did not need any preserving, but could just be hung up, or arranged in ornamental baskets, and left without further trouble to brighten the rooms for the whole of the winter.

The wild clematis, too, needed no preparation, except to pick off its leaves and hang it up in a dry place till it was wanted; and the same simple treatment proved sufficient for the seed-pods of garden poppies, if gathered before they were quite ripe; and Ella was very much

struck by the effect of the handsome bright green pods in a winter bouquet.

Finding her aunt was so much better, Ella, by her father's express desire, went home for a few days, to keep his birthday and join in the picnic by which it was always celebrated. Aunt Mary sent her contribution to the feast in the shape of ducks and chickens of her own rearing, and pears and apples from her own orchard, while Ella provided jellies of her own making, to be kept in their moulds, and only turned out when wanted for use.

The only thing which disturbed Ella's enjoyment of this picnic was the presence of a young man, a friend of several years' standing, who made no secret of the fact that he had a great admiration for her sister Kate. It was not that Ella had any real cause for disliking him; indeed, under any other circumstances she would have been quite as ready as the rest of the family to welcome him as a friend. The only objection was that he was not good enough for Kate; indeed, Ella had such an exalted opinion of her sister's excellences, that it would have been difficult to find anyone whom she would think good enough, and what made it the more annoying was that Kate did not appear to see things in the same light, but actually seemed to prefer his company to that of anyone else. Ella looked upon the whole matter in such a tragic way that she took for granted that no one else could have noticed what was going on, or they must surely have felt as unhappy at the idea as she did; so, being anxious not to spoil the general hilarity, she kept her anxiety to herself, till she got safely back to Hapsleigh, when she confided her fears to her aunt. Mrs. Wilson, however, only laughed at her, and said that in the first place it was probably all imagination, and if not, she had often heard of Mr. Sharleigh as a very nice young fellow, and the best thing Kate could do would be to marry him if he asked her. This matter-of-fact way of looking at the subject, though not exactly reassuring, made Ella think that perhaps after all there was no particular cause for her low spirits, and she soon resumed her usual cheerfulness.

Mrs. Wilson's apple orchard was a celebrated one in the neighbourhood, and Ella largely increased her knowledge of the different kinds of apples in the course of this autumn. When a few years younger, she and her brothers had often rejoiced when a hamper of apples arrived from Hapsleigh, containing, in addition to the ordinary sized fruit, a specially large apple for each of them, but now her interest was increased by learning the name of each tree, and the character of its fruit.

There was the Emperor Alexander, bearing huge rosy apples, equally good for eating or cooking, but which would not keep long; and the Blenheim orange, longer in ripening, and rounder in shape, but delicious for eating and safe to keep till the spring came again; and the russet, hardly ripe until the turn of the year, when the other apples were almost done; and the pearmain, and by no means least important the Ribstone pippin, which lasted out all the rest.

The Siberian crab ripened its tiny, cherry-like apples early, and they were made into clear red jelly before most of the others were ripe. Ella confiscated as many of these as she could persuade Mrs. Moore to spare from

the jelly, and varnished them for winter decorations.

The red juncating and golden pippin were ripe almost first of all, and as soon as they appeared Ella remembered the pony's taste for apples, and, in consequence, old Billy and she became greater friends than ever. She hardly ever went out without an apple or two in her pocket or basket, and it was not long before all the little folks in the village as well as the pony became aware of the fact. Ella herself enjoyed the plentiful crop very much, in spite of Burroughs' opinion that "women are poor apple eaters," and she not only shared them with all her friends, both two-legged and four-legged, but found them very useful as models for sketching also. A few pear trees added to the wealth of the orchard, and in one corner a medlar kept its leaves, glowing with dark crimson, after the early frosts had stripped the neighbouring trees of all their foliage.

Mrs. Wilson always declared that she would never give in to the "new fangled" ways of keeping apples, and when Ella read accounts of apples stored in barrels in a cellar, and of how well they kept in that way, her aunt merely advised her to burn the paper, that it might not lead anyone astray by its false doctrines. Mrs. Mobberly, however, told Ella that she had often known them keep very well in barrels, and that in some countries it was the real old-fashioned way of storing them. Ella, to her amusement, found that this was a standing cause of argument between the two ladies, neither of whom would ever allow that the other was right on this subject, though ready enough to give way on most points. Mrs. Wilson, of course, always kept to her own way with her own apples.

When the fruit was gathered, Mrs. Wilson had a quantity of dry hay laid on the floor of the long rambling garret, and Mrs. Moore, with occasional help from Ella, placed the apples in long lines in the hay, packing them as closely as possible, but so as just not to touch each other. The pears were packed in the same way, and paths were left in every direction for convenience in examining the fruit frequently, for it was found that if one apple or pear went bad, the infection soon spread to all those round it, so that it was necessary to remove each one directly it showed any sign of being tainted. Ella found that when the pears began to ripen she was obliged to visit them every day to pick out those that were ready to be used.

Great numbers of apples were given away, and still more made into jelly, or preserved, sometimes with blackberries or other fruit. When the pots were arranged in the deep old-fashioned store-room, they made such an imposing array that Ella wondered how her aunt could ever use so much; but she found that a large proportion was to be given away. Several hampers full went to poor friends, to whom it would be impossible to offer help in money. A jar of each kind of jam went to Mr. Dudley, with a note from Mrs. Wilson saying that she had some doubts about the quality of this year's fruit, and would be much obliged if he would give her his opinion. The excuse for several other hampers full was that the jam or jelly was Ella's own making, and that she was anxious to know what her friends thought of her first attempt.



Mrs. Wilson was always on the look out for opportunities to send a few delicacies to a poor curate in the town, who had a very large family and very slender means, and who, being very sensitive withal, would have been offended at many little presents which a richer man would not have hesitated to accept. This summer she had what she considered a brilliant idea; she wrote quite a pathetic note to the curate's wife, describing the orchard full of fruit, waiting for some one to eat it, and the hedges full of blackberries dropping from the branches for want of some one to gather them, and her lonely niece Ella, who would be only too glad both to gather and to eat the fruit, if but she had a companion, and therefore would some of the children take pity upon her and come and stay for a few days; of course they would not be able to eat all the fruit, but they might all amuse themselves together by making jam of it. Of course they came, and went back with the little pony-carriage so full of fruit of their own gathering, and jam and jelly, which they flattered themselves was their own making, that there was hardly room to squeeze themselves into the carriage at all.

Before her illness Mrs. Wilson had been a well-known visitor at the hospital in the town, so Ella was not surprised when she one day asked her to drive there with a few jars of jelly. "For the sick people, poor things—" Ella began, but her aunt interrupted her before she could finish her sentence.

"Oh dear no, it is not any of it for the patients; they get fed and petted up quite enough without my sending them anything. No; this is for the nurses. They all know me. Tell them I will send some apples for the patients, and I will come and see them as soon as I can, but this is for themselves, and they are not to give any of it away. And take a nice bouquet for the nurses' sitting-room;

not loose flowers that will take them all their little spare time to arrange, but a made up bouquet that they can put straight into water without any trouble."

This was a new idea to Ella. All her interest in hospitals hitherto had been confined to helping occasionally in preparing presents for the patients, but this visit exclusively to the nurses showed her how much they appreciate little attentions, and how very few they receive. Ella, like many other girls who know nothing practically of the inside of a hospital, had always thought of a nurse's life as a delightful, poetical sort of existence, with no particular duties beyond sitting in a spotless cap and apron and looking as picturesque as possible, by the bedside of a grateful patient, who did not require any attention beyond occasionally having his pillow smoothed. It was rather a shock to her feelings therefore to discover that "smoothing the pillow" was an occupation existing chiefly in the imagination, and that the real life of a nurse was a constant round of real hard work; a good deal harder, and till one became accustomed to it, infinitely more trying, than the work of an average general servant, while the patient, though very often grateful and uncomplaining, was just as often very ungrateful and given to systematically grumbling at everything done for him. It was no wonder, therefore, that when worn out with a day's hard work, the nurses should be gratified to find some bright flowers in their sitting-room, especially if ready arranged, and some little delicacies for their table.

The young people whom Mrs. Wilson had invited, enjoyed their visit so much, and were such pleasant company, that they prolonged their stay for some time, and amused themselves by doing a good deal of old-fashioned cookery.

As soon as the corn harvest was in, they

begged some new wheat from a neighbouring farm and made a dish of firmity. They put a pint of the wheat into a basin, poured hot water on to it, and left it for a whole day and night to swell. The next morning it was put into a saucepan, with plenty of water to cover it, and boiled gently for another whole day, water being added as required. As soon as it was thoroughly soft, a pint and a half of milk was added, with three tablespoonfuls of brown sugar, and three good handfuls of sultanas, and all was stewed together for two or three hours, when it was served hot, cream being handed with it for those who liked to add it.

They tried too, according to the old custom, making decoctions of different parts of the blackberry bush; but as they were all in excellent health at the time, they could hardly judge of the medicinal qualities ascribed to them. Mrs. Moore assured them that in her young days the water in which the buds, leaves, and young green twigs had been stewed was considered an infallible cure for quinsy, as well as very healing for ulcers, or sore places of any kind; while a decoction of the berries and flowers would heal the bite of the most venomous serpent. The flowers, fruit, leaves, and twigs all stewed together also would certainly cure weak eyes, if used regularly; and finally, if any of the young ladies were not pleased with the colour of their hair (this was told them mysteriously, as a great secret) they could quite safely turn it black by washing it with blackberry leaves boiled in lye. But they were all quite satisfied with themselves, or at any rate did not think that black hair would look well with their fair complexions, so contented themselves with copying the directions from Mrs. Moore's old recipe book, and declined trying the effect upon themselves.

(To be continued.)

## IN THE DAYS OF MOZART.

### THE STORY OF A YOUNG MUSICIAN.

By LILY WATSON.

#### CHAPTER XV.



Do you see that gentleman watching you?" inquired Elsa of her brother, as the two stood in a corner of Prince Kaunitz's brilliant salon. "He did not lose a note of your violin solo."

The personage described was a tall and haughty-looking man of middle age, handsomely dressed, who, as Elsa said, had listened attentively to the notes of Rudolf's Stradivarius. When he had contemplated the young man a few moments longer, he moved away, apparently to seek his host, for in a little while the august Prince Kaunitz himself was seen approaching. The tiny, dapper statesman, in his dainty trappings, formed a curious contrast to the tall, sombre man by his side, with whom he was conversing in an animated manner.

"My friend, Count Rosenkrantz, wishes to speak to you," said the pa-

tron of music to his young protégé. "He approves the style of your playing."

"Count Rosenkrantz! Where have I heard that name?" Elsa asked herself. Then it flashed into her mind; it was to the estate of a Count Rosenkrantz that Heinrich Stern had gone as wood-ranger. Meanwhile the stranger, in a sharp, businesslike tone, was catechising Rudolf. Was the theme he had played his own composition? Did he compose much? Here Rudolf was able modestly to quote his song for Metastasio's words, and the "Adieu," accepted by Marie Antoinette. Was he engaged in any definite work? and so forth. At the close of the conversation a colloquy between Prince Kaunitz and his guest again took place. Then the Count, turning to Rudolf, said abruptly—

"I am fond of music, and compose a little myself. I want a violinist and composer in my household. Can you play first violin and chamber music, play the clavier at times, compose a little, put my ideas into shape for me, and, in short, act as domestic musician? If so, you can enter my service, and I will

give you two hundred florins salary. I live the greater part of the year at my country seat at Perlensee, near Vienna, whither I go at the end of the week. If you accept my offer, you can travel with me."

Rudolf was startled, gratified, bewildered, all at once. He recognised the Count's name and his connection with the Stern family, and his first impulse was to accept on the spot. Then the thought of Elsa flashed on his mind. What should he do with her—or without her?

"What is the difficulty?" said the Count's incisive voice.

"Your Excellency's offer is very kind," hesitated Rudolf; "but I would ask that I may have a little time for consideration."

"Till to-morrow evening, then," replied the nobleman; "but no longer. There are many musicians in Vienna, young sir, and I wish to make a suitable choice before I leave the city."

Yes, there were "many musicians in Vienna," as the poor lad had been informed once before, and as he knew by bitter experience. Time was when Rudolf would have scorned the thought of



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AFTER the departure of the young visitors, life at Hapsleigh resumed its usual rather monotonous course, and if Ella's time had not been so fully occupied, she would have felt rather dull. Mrs. Wilson was well enough now to take the general superintendence of the household, though she still left the active management to Ella. She would spend a whole morning going from room to room, putting a picture straight here, and flicking away an imaginary speck of dust there; or "pottering" round the garden, leaning on Ella's arm, pausing at every few steps to tie up a straggling chrysanthemum, or to admire the clever way in which Mallard had arranged his cuttings; for she had a high opinion of her old gardener, and secretly thought there was no other so clever in all the country round, though every time she met him she began to dispute about something or other in the garden.

In some ways Ella found this the most trying part of all her stay at Hapsleigh. As long as her aunt was really ill, she felt that she had important duties to fulfil, and had no doubts about her usefulness; but now that her chief occupation was strolling round the garden, or taking messages of no particular importance, she began to feel a longing for home, and to wonder if it was really necessary that she should remain at Hapsleigh, though at the same time she saw quite clearly that her aunt was not fit to be left with no other companionship than that of the servants, however willing they might be to wait upon and help her.

In the midst of these conflicting feelings of longing for home and of desire to be a help to her aunt, Ella received a letter from her mother, which had the effect of still further unsettling her, for it brought the news that Kate was really engaged to be married.

"Your father is much pleased that such a man should see and value our dear Kate's sterling qualities," she wrote, "but we are greatly perplexed. In two months he must start for India, and he is most anxious to take Kate with him; but what are we to do? My health is unfortunately not good enough to allow of my taking charge of the house, and paying proper attention to your father and the children, so that it is really necessary for us to have a daughter at home; but I am sure you will feel, as we do, that aunt Mary cannot be left alone again. The knowledge of this difficulty makes Kate anxious, and is a serious cloud upon her happiness. Perhaps your aunt will talk the matter over with you, and her clever wits may suggest some solution of the problem."

This change in her sister's life, and the necessary alterations which must result from it, so filled Ella's thoughts that for the next few days her aunt found her a rather unsatisfactory assistant, for her absent-mindedness caused a good many mistakes; and as Mrs. Wilson herself was a little irritable with

anxiety at the prospect of losing her niece, a prospect which seemed to her inevitable, Ella was thoroughly unhappy for a few days. She acted now as her aunt's secretary, and wrote nearly all her letters for her. Mrs. Wilson as a rule did not dictate her letters, but told Ella the substance of what she wished to say, and then read and criticised the letter after it was written. This was an excellent, though rather trying training for Ella, who was in the habit of writing long and rambling epistles, without any particular information, and which might have led a critical reader to wonder why she had written at all. Mrs. Wilson, who always spoke and wrote very much to the point, greatly disapproved of her niece's incoherent letters, and especially of her habit of omitting both date and address; and insisted that before beginning to write, she should make a list of subjects she wished to mention, beginning the list with any matters of importance (amongst which she included the acknowledgment of any letters received, and replies to questions which might have been asked), and then going on to relate anything likely to interest the recipient of the letter. The natural result was, that at first Ella's correspondents wondered why she had suddenly begun to write such very stiff and unnatural letters; and several of her friends wrote to inquire what was the matter; but she soon got over this awkward stage, and found that it was quite possible to have definite subjects to write about, and still to keep to her usual free and unconstrained style. But just now it seemed to her that either her aunt was unusually difficult to please, or that she herself was unusually stupid, for she made so many mistakes that her letters had often to be written out several times before they gave satisfaction.

Just at this time Mrs. Wilson received a note from an old friend, which kept Ella so busy that for a time she forgot the family difficulties. This lady who, with her husband, had just returned to England, wrote to say that they wanted to settle down somewhere to recruit their health, which had suffered a good deal from a prolonged stay in India, and they thought no place would be so likely to suit them as the neighbourhood of Hapsleigh, whose refreshing breezes they had so often longed for. They would prefer to take a house for a short time first, to see if the place suited them; it must be very healthily situated, on high ground, with drains in good order, a large garden, and not many stairs. Could Mrs. Wilson tell them of such a house?

The consequence of this letter was that for the next few days old Billy had quite a hard life, and Ella assured her aunt he was speechless with astonishment when he found himself expected to draw the little pony carriage twice in one day; but his mistress steeled her heart against his reproachful glances, and she and Ella drove all round the country, inquiring for and looking over houses to let. When Mrs. Wilson was too tired to go, Ella took Mrs. Moore or Sarah as escort, and though her expeditions were not very successful, she gained a good deal of useful knowledge.

There was some drawback or other to every house they found; some had large gardens, but small and inconvenient rooms; others with large, handsome rooms had hardly any garden. One seemed perfect in every par-

ticular but that the walls were saturated with dampness, and in another, with singular perversity, when there was plenty of space, the kitchen had been built underground. But the greatest difficulty of all was the drainage. Mrs. Wilson and Ella both felt well up in this subject, having had extensive alterations made at Hapsleigh during their absence in the summer.

Mrs. Wilson had for some time previously noticed a slight disagreeable smell about her house, especially in the morning, after the rooms had been shut up all night, but had concluded it was fancy, as no one else in the house complained of it, till, on one of his visits, the doctor had suggested that it would be advisable to have a competent man to examine the drains, telling her that it was not always possible to judge of the poisonous character of the sewages by the strength of the disagreeable smell resulting from it; that sometimes a faint sickly smell, which some people would hardly notice, portended more serious evil than anything more decidedly offensive. He advised her to send to a firm of sanitary engineers, who, while charging very little more than an ordinary, and perhaps incompetent, builder, would do the necessary work on scientific principles.

At Mrs. Wilson's direction, Ella accordingly wrote to the firm, who sent a man at once to examine the drains. He began by closing every door and window in the house, and then explained to Mrs. Wilson, who was greatly interested in his proceedings, that he was going to pour a very strong smelling liquid down the drains, which would enable him to say with certainty whether or not there was any escape of sewer gas; and if so, exactly where the defect was to be found. Accordingly, after a short time, a decided smell of peppermint began to pervade the breakfast-room, in which Mrs. Wilson was sitting; and the man, who had been making a tour round the whole house, came in a few minutes and said that there was the same escape in all the ground-floor rooms on that side of the house, but especially in one corner of the dining-room; and it was evident that something was wrong with that particular part of the drain. He thought, however, that probably the fault was partly in the ventilating shaft, for he had been on to the roof, and found only a faint smell of peppermint, instead of the very strong one which ought to have issued from this shaft, which is intended to carry off all injurious gases from the drains, to a safe height above the chimneys. He complained of several other insanitary arrangements too, which are almost invariably found in old houses, such as the waste pipe from the bath, and from the sinks leading straight into the drain, so that it was almost impossible to prevent a small amount of sewer gas passing up the pipes. As it would have been a rather troublesome piece of work, however, to have these pipes disconnected from the drain, Mrs. Wilson refused to have it done, and the man promised to do the best he could, short of this, by removing the old inefficient traps, and putting in others of the newest and most scientific kind. The examination and repair of the drains was proceeded with directly Mrs. Wilson left Hapsleigh. It was found that, as in so many old houses, brick drains had been used, and were now quite worn out and leaking. These were replaced by new ones of a more modern sort.



In other parts of the house it was found that the pipes had not been properly cemented at the joints, and these defects also were remedied. Finally, when all the work was finished, immediately after the return of the household to Hapsleigh, the same test was applied as before, but this time without anyone being able to perceive the slightest odour of peppermint; not inside the house that is, for Ella, who at the request of the foreman in charge of the work had gone up on to the flat roof to see if the ventilating shaft was working properly, found it fulfilling its mission so very satisfactorily, that the strong smell sent her running downstairs again as quickly as possible, declaring that she would never again be able to smell peppermint without feeling ill.

Before leaving, the foreman told her that she might have been sure there was a defect somewhere in the drains, from the fact that they had lately begun to hear rats in the house, that they almost always come up the drains, but as long as these are strong and well cemented, they cannot make their way through into the house.

The consequence of this experience was, that now Ella went about her inspection of empty houses with a very learned air, as though she thoroughly understood the whole subject.

Mrs. Moore, though innocent of any pretensions to scientific theories, had a good deal of shrewd common sense, and was a quick observer. Some of her opinions amused Ella a good deal, but though they were rather curiously expressed, there was a considerable foundation of truth in them. On the subject of clean and healthy houses, for instance, she had very decided views.

"I haven't got any larning, Miss Ella," she said, "but I've got good eyes; and my mother used to teach me and the others when we was little, that there was nothing made but what it had got some use to it, and I believe as that's the truth. Now there's some as can't see no use in flies, and thinks they're nasty creatures, and so they are sure enough, with their dirty ways, but that's just where I say is the use of them; why they're just like them dogs as gentlemen takes out shooting with them, and when they see a rabbit or anything they stops still and points their tails, and that's how it is with flies; as sure as ever there's anything in a room that smells nasty or is going bad, they go straight to it. Now

that last house we went to, where you wondered where the nasty smell came from, well, I didn't make so bold as to speak when the gentleman was showing you round, but there was two big blue-bottle flies trying to get down behind the wainscot, and says I to myself, 'If Miss Ella was to pull down that skirting board, she'd soon find where the smell comes from; I'll be bound there's dead rats or mice there.'"

But in spite of, or perhaps in consequence of, the united wisdom of all the household, they completed their tour of the whole neighbourhood without finding a single house which seemed to suit in every particular; not one, except Mrs. Wilson's own, had all the necessary requirements, and Ella suggested, in fun, that her aunt should offer her friends her own house, and come back and live with the Hastings family for a time.

To Ella's surprise, Mrs. Wilson took the idea up seriously, and from simply joking about it, they turned to serious consultation as to the possibilities of the scheme. It seemed such a simple way out of the difficulty about Kate, that Ella was delighted, and urged her aunt to decide upon it; but Mrs. Wilson was not to be hurried, and said she must "sleep on it," and would make up her mind definitely in the morning.

Accordingly when the morning came, Mrs. Wilson told Ella that she had quite decided to go, if it was agreeable to everyone else concerned, and that she must write at once and ask her parents what they thought about it.

Mrs. Hastings replied immediately that the same idea had suggested itself to them also; they were delighted at the thought of having Aunt Mary with them. She should have her own rooms, and could, if she wished, bring one of her own maids with her, and they would all do everything in their power to make her happy with them.

When once Mrs. Wilson had made up her mind to anything, she liked to go straight on with it and get it done, so now her preparations were pushed forward as rapidly as possible. Her friends were very glad to take the offer of her house for six months, for she could not make up her mind to leave it for a longer time at first, and her own thought was that she could probably spend the winter months with her relatives in the town, and return to her own country home for the summer months.

She took the pony carriage, and one of the dogs with her. Mallard was left in charge of the garden, and his wife of the fowls, which were removed to their cottage at the bottom of the long garden.

The farewells were rather trying, though, as Mrs. Wilson assured herself and everyone else, it was only for six months, so there was no need to be very melancholy about it. The journey was easily and comfortably accomplished, for Mr. Hastings himself came to escort his sister and daughter home; and to Ella's great delight they arrived soon enough to help in all the final arrangements for Kate's wedding.

So ended Ella's year of probation as house-keeper. As soon as all the excitement of the wedding was over, she gradually took up one duty after another, till, finding her quite competent for the task, her mother gave up all the management of the house to her as entirely as she had before done to Kate, and Ella's happiness knew no bounds at settling down once more with her own family, to whom she was devotedly attached, and at finding how entirely her parents trusted and confided in her, thanks to the difficulties she had gone through, and the knowledge and self-confidence she had acquired during her sojourn at Hapsleigh.

"Why, mother," she said one evening, as they were sitting alone talking over the past, "how strange it is to look back. I hardly feel like the same person that I was a year ago. I never shall forget how unhappy I felt when I heard the servants saying with such scorn what an ignorant housekeeper I was—that I couldn't even boil a potato. It was true too, and I suppose that was the reason it offended me so."

"Yes, my child," replied her mother, "it was very hard for you to have to undertake so much responsibility, when you were so ignorant of all the ways of a house, but there seemed no help for it. It has been a hard school for you, but a good one, and you have learnt lessons which only experience could teach, and the most important part of all those lessons has been the one I am thankful to see you have learnt well—that the details of directing a house, or whatever else your daily work may be, are all included in the promise: 'In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.'"

[THE END.]

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### WORK.

DAISY.—The only way you could sell your frames would be by private arrangement with a friendly shop-keeper. At present your cards do not look saleable, and we doubt if you would like to spend any money on buying them yourself.

HERMIONE L. DE G.—We think your mother's idea of using the golden-hued Indian silk a very good one; the creamy silk will soften it, and no other colour should be added to take off the effect of softness. Have the dress simply made up, without trimmings.

NEEDLES and PINS.—The autumn leaves can be gummed firmly on any flat surface when dry—either wood or cardboard—for decorating boxes, writing-cases, panels, and window glass. After being securely fastened, they must be varnished with Canada balsam varnish, or any thin transparent varnish. Mixed with grass and a few dried ferns and small flowers, they may be made into bouquets, and many people use a little of Judson's green dye to refresh the colour of dried leaves, which are apt to fade.

NELLIE.—We doubt if you could take very bad mildew marks out of a delicate grey silk; we think you will have to get it dyed, but you might try cleaning by the new dry process, if the cleaner thinks the spots would come out by that means.

### MISCELLANEOUS.

FLOSSIE.—Bathing the ankles with salt and water or vinegar and water, or pumping on them, tends to

strengthen them. 2. You seem to lean too much on your own strength, and that is why you fail in time of temptation, notwithstanding your good resolutions. It is not necessary that you should do anything extra; for if you do your work as a servant, faithfully, and not as mere eye-service, but "as unto the Lord," remembering that He placed you in the position you hold, and that therefore you "serve the Lord Christ," you are "doing something for Him," in your faithfulness, diligence, patience, humility; and in remembering Him in all your ways, and trying to set a good example to others.

AGNES DELANEY.—The "seat of honour" for a man is on the right hand of his hostess; and for a woman on the right of her host. At a dinner-party a bride-elect should be taken in by her intended husband, of course. What a nice hand you write!

A SWALLOW.—The different colours which the sea exhibits owe their origin to various causes; the clouds, seaweeds, shoals of fish, currents, and the amount of salt held in solution, varying in different places.

MISTY.—We advise you to try Sidmouth, at least for a time, or Budleigh Salterton; and look about for what you want. You need local direction and information. There are good and reasonable hotels at both places, and there are agents who could direct you to houses more remote. Lodgings at reasonable prices are to be had at both places. Further westward there are Paignton and Teignmouth, and inland pretty villages near each.

MAGGIE.—We thank you for offering to illustrate our paper, but we employ experienced professional

persons. You give some promise, but need a good deal of teaching.

### ART.

MERMAID.—Your little flower paintings are very pretty; we think you should go to a school of art. LILY LEAVES.—You can use the water-colours as body colours, very thick, but we think oils would be more successful.

OWEN.—At a wood carver's or wood turner's you would be likely to get designs.

VICTORIA'S LAUREL.—The Home Arts and Industries Association was originally called "The Cottage Arts Association." It is intended to perform the double office of affording remunerative employment to teachers of the arts, and of humanising and affording training in manual dexterity to the working classes. The first art chosen was wood-carving, and the success of the experiment, both in England and Ireland, has been very great, the cost of starting a class in a village being small. Crockery, mosaic, clay modelling, repoussé work, stamped leather work, decoration, needlework, and flax spinning by hand are taught at the offices and studios of the association, 1, Langham Chambers, Langham-place, W. Address the secretary, with stamp for reply.

ARTISTIC TASTE.—The School of Chromo-lithography, in Red Lion-square, W.C., is a training school as well as a studio, where orders are received and executed. Girls are only eligible who have been trained for a year in the "Female Art School." Apprenticeship, three years' fee—30 guineas.