

forming one of the magpie-looking swarm in black coats and continuations and white shirt-fronts and neckties, collected together on the hearth-rug. Young men are not invited to meet ladies in society, only to be entertained amongst themselves, but to make themselves generally useful and agreeable. The natural obligations of polite society should never be lightly regarded, nor trifling opportunities for saying a gracious word without flattery, or performing a gracious act, overlooked and despised.

"Thus not for yourselves, ye bees, do ye make honey;" and the wise will learn that lesson. Let us now return to the question of a girl's home-life, and its apparently trivial, but really important duties.

Not for one moment would I deny to the blithesome season of youth those health-promoting recreations which are naturally its birthright, at least when circumstances render them attainable; for health, and means, and locality of residence may interfere very materially with their enjoyment. All I would impress upon my readers is the obligation to regard out-door and in-door recreations of every kind as matters of secondary importance, and merely pleasant little interludes amidst the weighty and momentous duties of a rational, useful, and Christian life. The American writer, Ellen Sturgis Hooper, says:

"I slept, and dreamed that life was beauty,
I woke, and found that life was duty."

You need not feel as if a cold shower had

fallen and extinguished the kindling sparks of youthful hope, and anticipations *couleur de rose*; but feel assured, that in every way of kindly thought for others, and practical usefulness, far more of happiness is to be found, and an underlying peace amidst the petty vexations and disappointments of daily life, which embitter your days. Riding and driving, garden and evening parties, and the various methods of knocking about balls—according to the rules of many games—small talk and gossip, the reading of ephemeral works of fiction, and the purchase and wearing of fashionable apparel, could not offer an aim and an object in life, nor fill the heart and satisfy the aspirations of an intelligent human being. Such is too frivolous a way of expending the chief energies of mind and body. "To every thing there is a season . . . a time to weep, and a time to laugh;" and laughter is wholesome, and to be encouraged, more especially in the happy spring-time of youth. But when work and play are given their proper places and their respective importance—the latter being subordinate to, and only the handmaid to wait on, the former, and strengthen the hands for greater exertion—then "All goes merry as a marriage bell."

Supposing that the young eighteen-year-old daughter—fresh from school—be musical, and her instrumental or vocal powers need to be kept up by practice, she should consult her mother as to when she might get an hour for such work without incommoding her, and deny herself (unasked) on days when she has

a headache (so common to mothers). On such occasions she should offer to write any letters for her, in lieu of giving her time to violin or piano. Any little act of filial consideration, and self-denial for her sake, is well-pleasing to God. It is one of the daughter's religious obligations, and one that mere natural feelings of affection must render easy of performance.

A course of regular reading should be carried on, taking up subjects scarcely, if at all, entered upon in school. Travels, works of research, archæology, astronomy, geology, natural history in its many branches, and the great standard works, of poetry and fiction. If your hand be unformed, practice daily, taking some nice graceful writing as a model, and write notes of invitation and acceptance. To acquire quickness and correctness, never let a single word, nor even two, fill a whole line, and avoid all eccentricities and flourishes, which are indicative of affectation, in the form of your letters, and beware of bad spelling.

Set up a cookery recipe book, and one for useful household requirements; also one for addresses. I might add many more little suggestions, but think I have said enough, and leave my readers to supplement them, so as to suit the circumstances and the conditions of each. And now, as I began, so I would close my advice, by reminding you once more that you are "not your own;" and should strive to be followers of Him "who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and to give His life a ransom for many."

HOUSEKEEPING ON THE ALPS.



SWITZERLAND, from the tourist's point of view, has been described *ad nauseam*, but the domestic side of *chalet* life, from the house-keeper's point of view, has received but scant notice. Yet the daily round there is not devoid of novelty and interest, and there is much in it that differs considerably from the home *ménage*.

I am not now alluding to those *pensions* and private establishments in fashionable health-resorts, well-frequented by English people, and almost as English as London

itself, but of life in a *chalet* on one of the Savoy Alps, at such an altitude as to be buried under the snow during the winter, and which even in summer is nearly cut off from communication with civilisation, except as represented by the shepherds who inhabit the mountain side until the end of September.

It was my good fortune to spend some time in such a *chalet*, built in the loveliest possible situation, looking out on the snowy tops of Mont Blanc and the serrated ranges of the other Alps, and looking down upon gloomy gorges, silver streams, and smiling valleys. The temptation to descant on Alpine scenery is strong, as once seen, the love of it becomes a sort of mania; but all that I could say has been better said by others time over time, and only the humble, Martha-like *rôle* remains to me of saying a little about the domestic side of the visit.

The *chalet* itself was both picturesque and comfortable. It had been built by an Englishman, with a large family, and there was plenty of room, also a Turkish bath, and a "dark room" for photographic purposes. It was the most compact dwelling I have ever seen, and resembled the arrangements of a ship, inasmuch as every inch had been utilised.

All the cupboards were in the walls—a delightful contrivance whereby all china, linen, clothes and other impedimenta could be stowed away, without filling up the rooms with boxes, chests of drawers or wardrobes.

Besides the large cupboards in the walls, there were queerly shaped little lockers in all sorts of unexpected places, and a secret receptacle in which the silver and valuables were put away when the *chalet* was locked up for the winter.

A propos of this winter locking up, it struck me as a wonderful state of affairs that so dry was the climate that the white muslin blinds left on the windows were found in the spring as clean and crisp as when put up the year before. The bedding, too, is dry, except when the snow damages the roof, and then melts down on whatever is in the room below. The bedsteads are mahogany frames containing three deep drawers to hold the extra blankets, pillows and sheets. They are heavy but movable on the castors with which each one is supplied. The beds were rather short, the pillows square, and the sheets abnormally long. In the *chalets* of the shepherds the beds are wooden bunks, and there are long-legged stools to enable one to get into them.

We had, of course, the overhanging roof and the verandah round the two sides of the *chalet*, the wood-house at the back, and the loft for storing wood above the kitchen. The heat of the sun was so strong during the day that all the outside shutters had to be kept closed, yet, once in the shade, the air was sharp; and the larder was so cold that milk, meat and butter could be kept there, fresh, almost as long as in our winter.

As far from shops as in the Australian bush, the provision supply depended upon the mountaineers, who used to bring up all sorts of food in long baskets, tapering in shape, and flat at the back, to which they were strapped on. The women and children who supplied us carried immense weights, and the amount of things extracted from the baskets recalled the feats of certain prestigators. There were the huge round loaves of the bread of the country, white or brown, cheeses, eggs,

fowls, milk, fruit, vegetables, and occasionally a ham and other articles, which our hostess felt bound to keep, whether she wanted them or not, as she could not find it in her heart to send the tired climbers back without easing them entirely of their load. The white bread was porous and the crust rather leathery, but it was good. The brown bread, which some preferred, I thought sour and heavy. The milk was very rich, an inch of cream showing on a tumbler four hours after it had been left to stand. The goat-cheese as well as that made from cow's milk was exceedingly good. The hams were smoked and of delicious flavour. The fowls were not always young, although there was no lack of chickens. The mutton was scarce but tender; the veal very tender; but beef almost always a thing to be avoided. This arises from the fact that only old, worn-out cows are killed for eating, the young bulls being despatched for veal.

There was no fish to be had at all. Besides the provisions brought by the Swiss, there was in stock a good supply of tinned soups, dried salmon, sardines, etc., which rendered us independent when the fresh meat ran low. The vegetables were similar to those at home, with the exception of the "sugar peas," the pods of which were eaten after being prepared like French beans. Strawberries, raspberries, and bilberries grew wild, and appeared to have a sweeter flavour than their garden-grown relatives. Gooseberries and currants did not do well at all, notwithstanding the amount of sun which they got. There were some mushrooms, and a species called the cauliflower mushroom, from its resemblance to the cauliflower, which was boiled slowly and flavoured with vinegar, but which had no perceptible taste of its own.

Porridge was a standing dish at breakfast, and very acceptable in the chilly mornings. The Swiss meal was by no means bad, but we preferred that brought from home. Honey was a *sine qua non* at breakfast and tea, both with us and in all the Swiss hotels. The coffee given at the mountain inns is quite as good, if not actually better than any I have tasted in France, and the boiled milk is sent in large jugs to be used *ad libitum*.

We frequently had meat and fowls roasted, if that be not an *Hibernianism*, in saucepans, instead of in the oven or before a fire. The meat is put in a covered saucepan with sufficient butter to brown it, and turned until it is of the required colour. A little water is then added, and it is slowly cooked. Everything done this way was particularly tender and nice, and potatoes could be baked in the same saucepan. This mode of preparing food might be copied with great convenience by women at home, who could thus cook a dinner over a little gas stove without heating an oven. The saucepans were quickly and thoroughly cleaned by means of small steel chains, the links joined together so as to make a square of the whole. These whisked rapidly round and round the saucepan with a little water, soon disposed of anything adhering to the sides. Most of the household utensils were capitally suited to make labour light. The meat-choppers were composed of a half-moon of sharp steel with two wooden handles, and the motion was a rocking one, less fatiguing than the up and down movement, and which chopped the meat very fine. The knives were cleaned on a narrow board raised on two bars over a shallow box, the box serving to hold the Bath-brick and cloths, and also to receive the dust during the process of cleaning.

The sugar was bought in loaves, and after being broken into moderately sized pieces, was cut into the regulation lumps in a very pretty, compact wooden box, down the centre of which was an iron ledge, under a lever-like sharp knife. The sugar was put between the two and quickly divided. The bottom of the

box was full of holes, through which the very small pieces and the sugar dust fell into a drawer below, to be subsequently pounded in the stone pestle and mortar, as crushed sugar.

The wood was brought to the *châlet* in lengths of six or eight feet, and packed in the wood-house. For burning, it had to be sawn on a wooden trestle. Beyond this as much of the tree trunk was pushed out as would make a log of the size required, and then it was sawn off close to the trestle, and the rest pushed on until all was disposed of. For lighting the fires, the smaller bits were chopped up with a hatchet. Although the days were so hot, it was very cold before sunrise and after sunset, and there was scarcely an evening that we were not glad to have a good fire. The quantity of wood we used was astonishing, and paper was a difficulty. We had carefully to treasure up any newspapers we received, and the most unpromising bits which came round anything. With the exception of flies, which were very troublesome in the day, and moths, which were equally unwelcome at night, there were no objectionable insects whatever, which added considerably to the enjoyment of our stay in the mountains.

Nothing could exceed the perfect stillness during the night and early morning. We were far away from other dwellings, and there were no birds to sing, cocks to crow, or cattle to low. The cows are all shut up in stables for the night, and, strange to say, during the afternoon as well. We got up when we wakened, regardless of the hour, which indeed we seldom knew, as no one troubled to wind up a watch; and we were satisfied to go by an erratic kitchen clock which was not particular as to an hour or so. There were no posts to come in or to go out, no trains to catch, or appointments to be kept, and half the enjoyment of the holiday to busy women was the utter freedom from the usual routine of town life.

We passed most of our day out of doors, climbing up or scrambling down the mountains. Far and away the best costume for this are tweed knickers and a Norfolk jacket, or the shortest skirt compatible with the maintenance of the proprieties.

The most successful toilet of our party was a long skirt of Liberty silk, which was arranged with cords and rings in such a manner as to permit of its being looped up as short as needed, and which could be let down as a flowing garment at the shortest notice. This, with a light blouse for day wear, and a cloth coat for evening walks, and knickers, was the most suitable attire possible for mountaineering. A wide straw hat with a cotton handkerchief over the crown and hanging down behind to shade the back of the neck, is the best head-gear to don when the sun is strong; and a close-fitting felt hat or cloth cap, when the weather is cold or windy. Plenty of nails in the heels and soles of the boots are essential, as without them one is constantly slipping up or down the precipitous paths. Mules are the only animals who can traverse these steep roads with perfect ease. It appears quite the same to them whether they go along as if walking on their tails, or on their heads. Horses are not at all fitted for the mountains, and it was painful in the extreme to see the poor creatures straining in the upwards journey, or stumbling when going down. The wooden carts used to bring stones, casks, etc., were very narrow, and looked like wooden ribs coming out from long planks. The wooden sledges were also utilised to carry loads, which were firmly roped on, as the vehicle swayed from side to side, often hanging over the path in a style astonishing to behold.

There were no picturesque costumes to be seen in that part of the Alps. The men wore

wide hats or Tam-o-Shanters, with the ordinary trousers and coat, or the blouse, the latter sometimes embroidered in black or white, and a very pretty garment. The women were inclined to a number of short skirts, loose jackets, and a large straw hat. The matrons wore an extremely ugly plain linen cap, tied round their faces, and producing a funny effect in conjunction with the straw hat. Their stockings were warm knitted woollen ones, and their boots thick and rough with nails. They were provided with huge blue cotton umbrellas.

The women minding the cows often sewed or read, but none of the men or boys, whom we saw so employed, did anything but drive the cattle about every five minutes. There were scarcely any sheep, but plenty of pretty goats, exceedingly tame, and always ready to run after us, in hopes of getting a bit of salt, of which they are inordinately fond. All the animals have little bells round their necks, tinkling harmoniously at every movement, while they are allowed to be in the open air.

It was a delight to put on the linen washed at the *châlet*, so different to the chemically cleansed and the torn articles one gets back from the London laundress. Yet the washing was done on the most primitive principles. The girl came twice a week, and found most of the things soaking in the clear cold water in the hollowed-out tree trunk which served as a trough to catch the supply from the mountain-stream brought to the spot in another hollow tree, which did duty for the pipe. She washed quickly, with nothing but plenty of soap and rubbing, and the things were as quickly dried in the sweet fresh air and baking sun. The irons were broad, flat and very thin, and I did not consider them as good for ironing clothes as those in favour at home.

All the dwellings on the mountain were built as near to a stream as possible, and had the shepherds taken a little trouble to direct the course of the water, and to bank up the sides of the streams, so as to prevent them spreading out and wasting, the supply would have sufficed for all. As it was, there was constant war between one set of peasants and ourselves regarding the particular stream with which our washing was done. Unless the whole of the water was allowed to run down to their *châlet*, they regularly blocked up the bank and cut off our supply with the promptitude of a defrauded rate collector. We as regularly turned the stream back to its lawful bed, and these daily expeditions with spades and picks were quite an excitement.

Once arrived at the *châlet*, the living is cheaper than at home. The summer being the season for English visitors, prices are at their highest then. Yet milk, eggs, butter, and vegetables were sold for less than the average home price. Meat and groceries come to about the same figure, but paraffin oil is much dearer, owing to the charge for carriage. Telegrams and registered letters brought up to the house from the village cost four francs each.

As regards wages, cooks who really understand their business, get sixty francs a month; a housemaid, thirty-five francs; and a "running-maid," two francs a day. The occupation of the latter is to bring up letters, etc., from the village, and to assist with the washing and other work during the time she stays at the *châlet*.

All the washing is done at home; and except when one wishes to make tours through the mountains, there are no travelling expenses, such as cabs and trains; neither are many clothes required. Indeed, it is the best place imaginable to wear out any old things which are not good enough to appear again when one returns to civilisation.

SUSAN CARPENTER.