

**A BROTHER OF "THE GIRLS."**—A quarter of an ounce of tobacco is contained in an ordinary cigar, and two grains of nicotine. But some of the strong kinds of tobacco contain fourfold the comparative amount. The proportion inhaled by the smoker varies also according to the rapidity of burning; and in the case of a pipe, according likewise to its length, form, and material of which it is made. A cigar is less injurious than a pipe, because most of its narcotising and volatile principle escapes into the air, and is not discharged into the mouth of the smoker. It may not be generally known that watercress destroys the "toxic" principle of tobacco, without damaging its other qualities; and thus, were you to moisten it with its juice, the deleterious effects of the tobacco would be destroyed.

**COLONIST.**—"Cook's Islands" are also known as "Hervé Archipelago." They are seven in number, and are coral islands in the South Pacific. They were discovered by Captain Cook, in 1777; they belong to Great Britain, and there is a Resident paid by the New Zealand Government, and reporting to it, who represents British interests. We regret to be unable to say whether the islands be suitable for colonists or not; but you could inquire at the New Zealand Offices, in Queen Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.

**A WOULD-BE TRAVELLER.**—The railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem was opened in September, 1893. It is nearly fifty-five miles in length. Ordinary trains perform the journey in three hours. It was the work of a French Company of engineers. There are said to be 42,000 Jews in Jerusalem, and 100,000 in Palestine altogether, and the number is said to be increasing.

**A. B.**—The "British Gynaecological Society," about which you inquire, is occupied with surgical studies, specially with the anatomy of the female structure. We believe we are correct in so saying, without making any inquiries as to further details of its work. Your own doctor might tell you more.

**ALGOA BAY.**—The duties of what is called a "useful maid," are of much the same character as those of a "mother's help," only they are performed in the case of an adult, instead of a child or children. Service in every capacity, as occasion may require, personal attendance, needlework, performing of commissions, waiting at table if need be, dusting, or even the making of her mistress's bed and care of her wardrobe. In fact, to be useful "all round," this homely expression being very significant. Your writing, though legible, is not yet formed.

**MARJORIE.**—The story of the deadly effects said to result from the effluvia emanating from a certain remarkable upas-tree in Java does not seem to be well-authenticated. In any case, the real upas is the *Antiaris toxicaria*, one drop of the latex of which would kill a dog. The latex means the specialised juice of a plant, as seen in the "milk" of the dandelion. Upwards of seventy specimens of this tree are under cultivation in the Botanical Gardens of Tjikomolli, but no ill-effects have been reported as occurring to persons from merely remaining in their neighbourhood. The natives poison their arrows with the sap.

**W. L. B. (Dublin).**—What are known as "Blue Books" are the official reports, papers and documents printed for the British Government, and laid before both Houses of Parliament. They derived their name from the fact that they are invariably covered in dark-blue paper covers or wrappers. Germany prefers to cover her "Blue Books" in white; Italy, in green; France, in yellow; Spain, in red; and Portugal, like Germany, adopts white. They are of immense use as reference-authorities on all subjects.

**MARSH MARIGOLD.**—Some words are pronounced differently in poetry and in singing, from when employed in colloquial English. For instance, "wind" is pronounced as "wynde" in poetry, and "often" is pronounced "of-fen" in ordinary conversation, but the "t" is pronounced in singing and dramatic reading.

**KETTLE.**—We are informed that spirits of salt will get rid of the fur in kettles. It is to be got at any chemist's, and, as it is a strong remedy, great care must be taken with its use. To two ounces of spirits of salt add four ounces of water, and pour this into the kettle, rinsing it round several times, but do not leave it in so long as to eat into the metal. After this the kettle must be rinsed out several times with water, to take out the salts. All the fur will thus be removed, with a little care, we believe.

**SMALL-FARMING AMATEUR.**—You could not keep more than two sheep, we think, on an acre of ground, but the nature of the grazing must be taken into account.

**RHODOBENDRON.**—When a lady of title inquires whether any of the family be at home, you should reply, "Yes or no, my lady." If she be styled "Honourable," you must only say "Yes, ma'am." Your handwriting is not quite formed, but promises well, and we thank you for your kind letter.

**E. M. B.**—You will find no sale for your silkworm-silk. It is only purchased in such very large quantities at the silk manufactories.

**POPPYHEAD.**—We recommend you to show the condition of the leather to the upholsterer who made up the furniture for you. If so recently done he should do something for you for his own credit sake.

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#### A WORD ABOUT HERR ROSENTHAL THE PIANIST.



HERR ROSENTHAL.

(From a photograph by the London Stereoscopic Company, London.)

STILL another pianist has come among us, and we have gone to welcome, hear and applaud the new-comer. He has a great reputation; for is he not likened unto Rubinstein? And Rubinstein was our ideal (O

for the touch of a vanished hand). Let us then hear his successor. Well, we have taken to our arms Stavenhagen, Paderewski, Sauer, Siloti, etc., and we have room in our heart for Rosenthal. He glided in there through the bars of the Andante of the Appassionata Sonata; he stormed his way there with the thunders of the Paganini-Brahms Variations; scaling the runs of Weber's Invitation to the Waltz he leapt in there; he sang his way in with the Schubert-Liszt Linden-tree.

But is he a Rubinstein? A perfect technique is the laboriously-gained but indisputable possession of a legion of pianists. And perfect technique is much; it is the expression of high talent; in itself it is, like Mr. Briefless Junior's clerk, "excellent and admirable." But it is only the starting-point for an original individuality, the foundation on which a powerful personality builds. When the pianist has made a faultless technique his own, then comes his opportunity of calling forth and giving forth the soul in his composer and in himself. His hands are equipped for the complete manipulation of his puppets, those "white and black slaves;" it remains for his mind and emotions to make the mechanical live even for a brief hour of glorious life.

To recall Rubinstein is to remember a

peculiarly interesting personality. Original, magnetic, intense, emotional, he was visibly played upon and swayed by his own recital, and thus the more deeply moved and electrified his audience. It must be said that Herr Rosenthal does not answer in all respects to this description. Herr Rosenthal sits calm and still, playing for the most part with the placidity and reverence of Hallé (O for the touch of his vanished hand). He never manifests the "fine frenzy" of Rubinstein. In fact he is too accurate and reserved to let his whole self go as Rubinstein did. And yet Rosenthal in an immensely difficult show-piece like Liszt's Fantaisie (Auber) can force from the piano orchestral effects. Then the whole key-board is ranged over by the digital hammers, and the end comes with a great crack on the top and bottom of the compass. This is sublime. But it is the sublimity which suggests the ridiculous; and the excited listener laughs as he pictures what seems the appropriate *finale* of the exhibition, namely, that the player should jump and fall bodily upon the keyboard and then roll away into retirement!

Rosenthal's use of the pedal is a unique feature in his performance. His method and skill in this were most notable in the Linden-tree, when a great volume of sound was so sustained as to produce the effect of a rush of wind in the branches.

Rosenthal commands a refined *piano* quality of expression, and he rippled through one or two lighter pieces with charming delicacy and lightness. But my recollection is that Rubinstein excelled in his magical gradations of light and shade whereby he passed from the very softest to the very loudest in tone.

I would fain hear Rosenthal repeat the recital of the Appassionata Sonata. The lingering, caressing tenderness of the Andante remains in the memory as a perfect interpretation; but I am not so sure that in his rendering of the other movements, Herr Rosenthal realised in all its fullness and depth the composer's meaning. WILLIAM PORTEOUS.