

"HOW TO HANG CHINA.

By LINA ORMAN COOPER, Author of "We Wives," etc.

Bits of beautifully coloured oriental china may be so inexpensively bought in these days that it is easy for our girls to make their own rooms pretty. Jars of bright satsuma, plates of fine Japanese ware, saucers of dragon ironstone, cost only a few pence. But the frames to mount them on come to as much more. Out of sixpence a week, our young readers might collect quite a wealth of richly-coloured treasures. It would need more than treble that to hang them on the walls as decorations. The following plan has been proved for many years and not found wanting. I flatter myself that, like the white knight's pudding, it is my own invention with a foundation of experience instead of blotting paper.

Buy a penny packet of large white hooks—common dress hooks. They can be procured without accompanying eyes.

String three of them on a strong, fine piece of twine, taking care that all the hooks point

one way. Now fix them equidistant on the edge of your plate.

The back must be very strong. Draw the twine as taut as you can. It will form a triangle.

Be sure and tie the ends together very firmly as everything depends on this knot. Then either leave a loop, or attach another piece of string to form one.

This last is to hang on the brass-headed nail previously hammered into position.

For very heavy plaques tape is firmer and stronger than twine, or the gold wire sold for hanging pictures is dependable. It is not so easy to manipulate as string, and requires nippers to twist it together. Be careful to renew cord or tape or wire occasionally. The metal hooks ironmould tape after a time and leave it unsafe. They eat through string and rust wire. But, in a dry room this apparatus for hanging china will last for a couple of years. It can be renewed, when necessary in a few minutes.

I cannot close this paper on hanging china, without giving a few hints as to grouping. Nothing is so ugly as isolated spots on a wall. If you have only one plate to hang, place it close by a picture, not away from every other object.

If you have several arrange them round a common centre.

Group families together. Hand-painted Chelsea, cream-coloured Wedgwood, royal blue crown Derby, common golden earthenware or willow pattern, according to their order. In this way the full beauty of each piece is added to, and intensified.

In some future paper, perhaps, the Editor may tell a few of the marks by which we can recognise "treasures" when we come across them. But remember that beauty of form and colouring is quite independent of intrinsic value or cost. An artistic eye will pick up such for a song if the said eye is kept wide open and educated in a Ruskinian fashion.

THE SORROWS OF GIRLHOOD.

BY LILY WATSON.

PART VI.

LOSS OF FAITH—BEWILDERMENT AT MODERN IDEAS.

THE subject that forms our title can only be approached in these pages with a certain amount of reserve. It is obviously impossible to enter into minute details in this, as in other difficulties that beset the modern girl. For, should religious doubts be first suggested and then solved, it is very probable that the doubts would remain with some reader, and the solution be forgotten. All that I can do therefore is to try affectionately, and in a general manner, to give help where it is needed in this trouble.

It is a very real trouble in this *fin de siècle*, when there is a feeling of unrest abroad, and many clever books and periodicals are permeated by a spirit of scepticism. Girls cannot avoid—at least many thoughtful girls cannot—their share in this heritage. They may lead healthy, happy lives, entering with zest into out-door occupations and amusements; may be expert bicyclists, tennis-players, and everything that is "up to date," but silent hours will come, and thoughts on the graver aspects of life will come also.

It is for the healthy, morally sane girl I am writing. There is a sort of religious doubt and melancholy among women which is the offspring of ill-health, and is purely a morbid condition. For this, no argument or reasoning will avail much, and it is the general health which needs vigorous bracing.

Another word of caution is also necessary. There has been, perhaps, of late too general a tendency in some quarters to glorify the "honest doubter." There is such a thing as a shallow and conceited pleasure in professing to doubt everything just because it is considered a note of intellectual distinction so to do. The faith by the aid of which parents have lived unselfish, beautiful lives, and died calm and holy deaths, is lightly waved aside as being unworthy the attention of some impertinent young student fresh from college. I do not however, think that girls, from the very constitution of their nature, are the worst offenders in this respect, so perhaps it is

hardly necessary to dwell upon the point. Only I may just say—hold your faith reverently, as a sacred possession. Do not let the first superficial article or pamphlet that comes in your way, upset it like a house of cards! One reads of such cases in which apparently fervent and earnest souls have, at the bidding of some half-educated scribe, cast Christianity from them almost without an effort. It is strange and sad, and shows that there must be something gravely lacking in the very foundations of the faith which can thus collapse at a touch.

This leads me to the need for an intelligent faith, on which pages might be written; but my object is rather to help and comfort those who are in trouble at seeing what is dearer to them than life, in danger as they think.

For a time, indeed, a girl may be content to take everything for granted. She will perhaps be indignant that every one does not see, in religious matters, exactly as she does. "Why, of course it is so-and-so," she may reply, in a surprised tone, should anyone want her reasons for any form of belief. Or she may be of a humbler, wiser mould and yet never know the faintest breath of doubt. While the life is good and beautiful, it is cruel to disturb this serenity, even though one may suspect "narrowness" in some degree.

"Leave thou thy sister when she prays
Her early heaven, her happy views,
Nor thou with shadowed hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days."

So Tennyson sang, in words that have often provoked cavil and question. It is always a dangerous thing, however, to try to destroy a belief that has become part of the nature, unless one has anything else better to put in its place.

Some women, then, go through life untroubled by doubt in any form. Others, again, are very different. As they approach the threshold of womanhood their views may become "unsettled." Sometimes this arises from the society in which they find themselves. They have lived in unquestioning compliance with their father's mode of faith and worship,

until they are suddenly brought into contact with others who believe and worship in a somewhat different way, and what they had thought as stable as the solid earth, seems to yield beneath their feet.

"Have they not the Bible as their guide?" it may be asked. Yes, and they should never fail to study it; but they cannot help seeing that others with equally conscientious intentions, draw somewhat different conclusions from the Bible, on one point and another.

There is danger in such a crisis. Because one doctrine which may, after all, not be of vital moment, is questioned, it seems to the inquirer that everything is questioned, and a state of mental chaos, with often great spiritual distress and bewilderment, is the result.

There is a class of stronger minds that have more claim upon our sympathy.

These are they who, as they enter upon life in earnest, cannot resist the inroads of doubt, Dear and cherished beliefs, they cannot help seeing, are quietly assumed in many quarters to be "outworn." To strengthen these suggestions comes many an inner questioning caused by the problems of the world. I well remember, when a very young girl, how glibly I used to try and console sufferers from bereavement, or from sorrow in any form. "We know it is all for the best," was my hackneyed form of consolation. How differently one now looks upon sorrow of the deepest kind! "All for the best!" It is wiser not to use such words before the mystery of human loss and anguish. Does not the Saviour at the portal of a grave, show us the better way?

"Jesus wept."

This leads me to one important consideration.

There is much in the world that it is better not to try and explain. Many doubts have been occasioned or strengthened in the young by well-meant efforts on the part of their elders to answer the problems of life, either with regard to personal or general application. For instance, one is told when brought face to face with the pressing questions raised by the