

of your health. A boy so angelically good cannot be well."

Roddie's eyes blazed.

"You're laughin' at me, Uncle Paul."

"Laughing at you—what next? Ellen, I call you to witness. Is there the shadow of a smile on my solemn countenance?"

"You're laughin' all the same," asserted Roddie, and then his lips trembled.

"Never mind, Roddie," said his uncle, "you laugh back at me."

The sunshine suddenly broke over the boy's troubled face, and his uncle patted him on the head.

"He isn't such a bad little chap," he said, glancing at his sister. "Perhaps we'll be able to get him into order."

"He'll find that here he has to obey orders," snapped Ellen.

"I never unobey orders," said Roddie. "I'm a very good boy."

"Then see that you keep out of the surgery," returned his aunt, "and don't you dare to go into the drawing-room."

"Or venture to poke your nose in here either," added his uncle. "I spend a good deal of time in here, you see."

"I won't have you in the kitchen—do you hear, Roddie?"

"Where may I go?" asked the boy.

Ellen flushed scarlet with annoyance, for her brother was looking quizzically at her.

"In this house," he said, "it is a rule that little boys shall be heard and not seen. You cannot possibly go anywhere without disobeying orders, Roddie."

"Then I don't know what to do," said the child, looking troubled, and taking it all in earnest.

"You have not got to do anything—that's just it," continued his uncle, "because if you do, you are certain to do wrong, and if you do wrong, you'll be spanked, and if you are spanked, you'll cry, and then you'll get spanked harder, and cry more, and the more you cry, the harder you'll be spanked."

"I shall hit back," said Roddie, "because it isn't fair."

"Yes," said his uncle, "you are a good little boy."

"Do try not to be silly," put in Ellen.

At this moment the doctor burst into the room.

"Have you told Roddie that he's never to go beyond the gate?" he asked.

"No," said Paul, "we hadn't got as far as the gate, we've only forbidden him the house."

This was said in an aside, half to his sister, and half to the bewildered child.

"Listen to me, Roddie," thundered the doctor. "While you are here, you are never to go outside the garden gate. The whole village is teeming with fever, and I won't allow you to run the slightest risk. Ellen, see that he obeys." With that he disappeared as quickly as he had come.

"Please, miss, there's a little girl wants to speak to you," said the housemaid, "at the door."

Ellen was rather glad to escape; she was thoroughly upset, and Paul's raillery by no means soothed her temper, while every word of Roddie's angered her yet more. Ellen had no patience with children; they were always tiresome and in mischief when with her, and she concluded that that was their normal condition.

The little girl at the door looked rather scared as the flushed face appeared, and Ellen asked her sharply what she wanted. It was a mumbled answer, but Ellen understood that someone was down at the garden gate asking to see her. At first she was inclined to refuse such a curious request, but curiosity overpowered her, and she merely dismissed the young messenger, and kept the suppliant waiting a little while at the gate before condescending to grant the interview. Then she put on her hat and sauntered down, doing her best to look as if she had been going out anyhow.

As she turned the bend in the drive and looked up, she was startled to see that it was her own sister, Agatha, standing outside, with clasped hands and tear-drowned eyes.

"Ellen, Ellen, is there really any fear?" began Agatha. "We isolated nurse, and Roddie has not been near her."

"I understand that you've been nursing her," sharply returned Ellen, "and at the same time have been attending to Roddie. Of course there's fear. Really, you and

Roger are nothing but a pair of babies. You don't understand the first principles of infection. What you ought to have done was to send that girl to the fever hospital. But if you will live down in the slums—"

"We cannot help it," pleaded Agatha. "We cannot afford another house so large, and with a bit of garden for Roddie to play in, and Roger's work is there."

"Very well," snapped Ellen, "then stay there and get fevers, but I don't see why we should have the bother, all the same."

"Oh, you will be kind to Roddie—to my poor little darling, Ellen? He will be so lonely away from us, and Roger says it won't do even to see him, as it would only make him miserable. You will be kind to him, Ellen dear?"

"I'll see that he obeys me," returned Ellen, "and if he doesn't, I'll punish him well."

"He is such a dear little fellow," pleaded the young mother, "and so very sensitive. Oh, Ellen, Ellen, you will be kind to him, won't you, dear? And if he frets for me, you'll comfort him, won't you?"

"Be satisfied," said the elder sister, "he won't fret—he'd better not," she added, under her breath.

"There isn't really any fear that he'll catch the fever too?" persisted Agatha.

"There is—every fear. There's not the shadow of a doubt about it."

"Oh, you're only teasing me," sighed Agatha. "I know it. You and Paul are very fond of teasing. But you do not know what it is to have a little child of your own, Ellen, or you'd have some pity for me now. You do not know."

"I'm thankful to say I don't," said Ellen, "for if the possession of a child produces such deplorable folly, I'm better without the experience. Go back to your ridiculous duty of nursing a maid, I can't stay here chattering, Roddie will be in mischief, and I'm so busy I hardly know where to turn."

Agatha shrank, and then she went away without another word, and Ellen angrily smothered a feeling of compunction that bid fair to master her.

(To be continued.)

SOME HEALTHFUL EMPLOYMENTS FOR GIRLS.

By W. GORDON STABLES, M.D., C.M., R.N. ("MEDICUS").



IF I did not feel convinced that this paper of mine would appeal to many, I should not be writing it today. It is still early summer, and I might be putting the finishing touches to my caravan decorations, as I am, in a few days, starting on a tour to the very far north. In fitting out a caravan like mine, there are far more minutiae to be considered than you may imagine. Such a house upon wheels is one's home for long months by day and night, and even needles and pins and little pearl-buttons must not be forgotten. It is the little things that help to make the "mickles," and by the mickles I mean comfort and happiness. Now, during this summer and autumn cruise, with the exception of my coachman and valet, who

sleep at the inns where my nags are stabled, I shall be all alone. Not even a little daughter or niece shall penetrate with me into Scottish wilds, only my beautiful St. Bernard, Fair Helen of Troy; so this poor little gipsy boy will have to sew on his own little buttons and mend his own stockings. This last is good fun if one has the darning-needles threaded, and I can always rely upon the kindness of lady visitors to do that for me. I can thread ordinary needles with cotton, but wool is wicked, and won't go through.

We, the "G.O.P.," I mean, have a very large circulation among all classes of the community. I need hardly tell you that, but we are read even in the highest circles, not only as regards wealth, but nobility. That, too, you may well believe, and I'm sure you will not be surprised to learn that our bonnie magazine graces the tables of Royalty itself. I learned this while visiting Braemar and Balmoral in my "Wanderer."

Well, now, many who read this article do not require to take up any kind of employment for the sake of filthy lucre. This goes without saying, but they ought to do so in order to

retain health and the beauty and freshness of girlhood. On the other hand, some of you may not object to earn a little pocket-money by your fancy or fad, for this comes in wonderfully handy sometimes, even when "biking," and you get tired if you have no monetary allowance and have to beg pater or mater for every shilling or half-crown. Oh, I can assure you that independence is a glorious thing!

But as regards the particular kind of fancy to adopt, much will depend upon your surroundings, and upon whether you live in the country or in town. In any case, however, the employment should take you out-of-doors as much as possible. Let me mention a few, then, just as they come to mind. There is growing here in my orchard a very large cherry tree—red hearts. It is called the starlings' tree, because they get all the fruit. Yesterday a swarm of bees settled there. I myself have no time to keep these busy insects. But if living in the country or suburbs you might improve the shining hour by doing so. It is a most healthful, interesting, and enjoyable fancy, and there is money in it. But I

must inform you that bees need a good deal of attention, especially in winter, so I advise you to buy a book and study their tricks and their manners, and all about swarming, honey-making and honey-taking, skeps, supers, feeding, etc.

Bees are very charming to watch and study. Moreover, you need have not the slightest fear of them, for they soon come to know their owner, and do not get angry with her even in swarming-time.

The heather-honey is the best. This the bees can only gather if they are near to moorlands in autumn. The next best is clover-honey, or that gathered from a mixture of wild flowers.

The skeps should be placed in a well-sheltered, cosy, sunny part of the garden. Bees like to have their immediate surroundings pretty, for they are lured by beautiful colours, so have a nice little enclosed garden about their straw homes or hives, with flowers to suit each season. Primroses and auriculas and forget-me-nots look nice, and the bees love them. So they do foxgloves, and many other old-fashioned flowers that are very easily cultivated.

Next, as to gardening itself. I believe I have several times recommended this as a most healthful employment. If you are a country girl of any age betwixt sixteen and sixty, try then to get a garden. Do not attempt anything extensive at first. You will find a cheap handbook better far than a large learned treatise on gardening, for this last is very puzzling to a beginner. Well, whether you go in for flowers or vegetables, or a little of both, they will need daily attention. The first thing to be done in late autumn is to have the ground deeply dug, and some months after it should be very well manured and dug again. This is too rough work for your pretty hands, so have it done for you. But all the rest you can do yourself. I can only give you a hint or two here. Do not try too much, then. Over-crowding is fatal to the life and the health of plants. All growing things must have space around them, space for air and sunshine, the more the better, and remember that even the breath of one flower or bush may kill a plant of a different species if too near. Plants crowded together are not only unable to expand their roots and leaves properly and benefit by the sunshine, but they are deprived of exercise. That is, the wind cannot wave them about enough, and thus lure up the sap.

Your garden-tools may be light and tiny, but they should be good. Learn to use the rake properly. The surface of a bed or border should be as level as a billiard-table, and not a clod one quarter of an inch in diameter should be left unbroken. Yet some girl-gardeners leave their beds in a shockingly untidy condition, as if hens had been scraping over them. Be tidy, then; be clean, too. War upon weeds must be your motto. A weed is a plant out of place. Of course there are the ordinary indigenous weeds, but even a potato, for instance, though a very nice person among his fellows, is a weed if he pokes his haulm up through your flower-beds.

Keep the ground always loose; water well at sunset in dry weather; trim obstreperous plants, but do not cut unkindly, for nature must have its way. Wear gloves when gardening.

Well, I claim for this fancy that it will not

only plant health on their cheeks and lips, but soften and mould your heart as well.

“God the first garden made, the first city Cain.”

But in a garden you stand side by side with nature; and if there be anything spiritual at all about you, any love for the beautiful, any romance, it will not be flowers alone you shall study here, but all the beauties of insect life, all the ways and manners of even the tiniest creature that creeps or flies will soon become known to you, and from these your thoughts must rise to heaven. And many a lesson God's tiniest creatures can teach us. Nay, more, they tend to make us more humble. For the Father careth for all, and has given them reason so that they are able to feed, to shelter, and to defend themselves and their offspring, often in ways that are quite marvellous. Besides, mind you, that in studying and admiring creations, you are positively worshipping the Creator.

“He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loves them all.”

Well, but gardening may be made to pay. Flowers hardly pay for cultivation, it is true, so many being imported, but your girl gardener may grow flower-seeds, especially annuals. This is a fancy which I take to myself the credit of introducing. Flowers for seed must be sown in drills, with a view not only to beauty of effect, but to freedom in gathering the seeds. These drills must be most carefully tended, watered and weeded, and *staked* in autumn if need be. A dry day must be chosen to pick the seeds, which, after being taken from the pods, should be picked over and dried further in the sun. They are then ready to store, and packet, and if advertised in, say, the *Exchange and Mart* in January as country-grown fresh last year's seeds, they will sell readily. For all know, or should know, that the flower seeds bought in shops are a mixture of old with new.

I now come to a different kind of healthful fancy, namely, pigeons. I daresay some of my articles on this subject, which I wrote for the *Boy's Own Paper*, are still to be had, and in one of these I gave special advice about the building of a garden pigeonry.

Well, my gentle readers, if you have got the taste and your brother has time and tools, between the two of you a very pretty place could soon be run up. There would be the house itself of wood with a felted roof and a bigish window—for birds must have light—the walls covered outside with virgin cork or elm-bark; the large aviary in front with flowers therein, chairs and a table at which to write or read, and where your pet pigeons could make themselves at home, and sing their mournful songs in spring, while the greenery of the trailing wild convolvulus sheltered you and them from too much sun. If a pretty kitten were trained to dwell here, rats and mice would never have a show.

Tumbler pigeons are the best to begin with, and how delightful it is to see them out for a fly. But after gaining experience by keeping these, or proud pouters or fantails, you might go on to the more fancy breeds, and if only you could gain prizes at shows, there is money to be made by them.

Perhaps, however, the Belgian voyagers—or carrier pigeons as they are sometimes called, though they are not the show carrier—might be your fancy, and a very pretty and useful one it is. I wish I had space to tell you all the story of these birds, their breeding and keeping, and their utility to mankind, both in peace and in war; some day I may. Meanwhile I only beg to suggest that a few of my girl readers who desire a pleasant recreative fad should take to homers. It is surprising how little is known about these feathered postmen. There are some who believe that they can be despatched anywhere and do anything; for example, that they may be lent indiscriminately to friends or neighbours and do work for them. This is a mistake. They will work for their owners and them alone. They are homing pigeons, and will find their way back to their lofts from places hundreds of miles away, to which they have been taken.

Another mistake made is believing that they need no training. For you must give them short journeys, that may be measured by yards, to begin with, and gradually these homeward-bound flights may be increased to miles, then to many, many miles.

You mount your bike, and with a pigeon in a basket ride off. It does not matter much how far if the bird is well trained. You throw him high in air, and, after a preliminary flight, he will start straight away bearing your message in a quill. When he reaches his loft he enters through a little swing door, and this communicates by means of an electric bell with those indoors, and soon the feathered postman is relieved of his letter. You may therefore easily conceive how useful these homers are, even in private life, for they far outstrip the speed of even a postal train.

But the keeping of pets of different kinds is a most interesting and healthful employment, and instructive to the mind.

Dogs rank first of all pet fancies. There is now a lady's kennel association to which you might belong. It holds its own shows, appoints its own judges, and so on and so forth. Why, it even has its own journal or magazine.

Cats rank next and are equally favoured.

Then come canaries.

Then foreign birds.

Then minor pets. These latter are very amusing and curious, and as a fancy they are not enough studied.

Minor pets that I have had myself and whose stories I have written in books and magazines—all from the life—are squirrels, flying foxes, mongooses, lizards of various kinds, including the marvellous chameleons, rats—white and piebald—mice, ditto, tamed wild rats and tamed wild mice, the daft, droll jerboa, hedgehogs, toads, gigantic spiders and beetles. Of course, this is not half my list. And as for major pets, I have had some “terrors” in my time, and concerning them I may tell you more another day.

But there are many fancies and employments for girls that I have not had space even to mention. Let this paper be, therefore, considered merely suggestive. It will do much good, however, if it only opens the eyes of a few of my readers to the fact that pleasant employment of spare time means health, and idleness means poverty of mind and body both.

