

by the angle of the deck-house. Mrs. Cameron had no more headache, *Treasure Island* fell flat and forgotten on the deck.

"Now let's just go over it all again," said Challis. "Father'll come first. I don't want to kiss anyone till I have kissed him. Well, what's he like? No, don't you say, I'll say. He'll have a moustache—no, I think he'll have a beard—yes, a beard. Not a long one, just a short one and rather curly. And his eyes have a nice laughing look in them, just the nice look like M'sieu de Briot's, who said there was nothing in the world worth worrying about. You said, didn't you, that daddie hated worrying over things. I can't help thinking he'll have a brown velveteen jacket when he comes to meet us, like Mr. Menel's, at Fontainebleau, and paint all over it. But of course he won't. Let's see, he'll have a grey suit and a shiny hat like Mr. Warner. No, he mustn't have that—that's not like daddie at all. No, I'll tell you; it's very hot at Wilgandra, so he'll have a nice white linen suit and a white helmet, and he might—he might be holding up a big white umbrella lined with green—you know, mamma, like that nice man who came on board at Malta."

Mrs. Cameron was leaning back, her eyes shining, a fond smile on her lips as she listened to the girl's prattle.

"Then there'll be Hermie, and I know she's lovely. Don't you think she will be? You said you always thought she would grow up very beautiful. Oh, isn't it dreadful that we've never had a photo of them! Such lots of mine sent to them, and never any of theirs! It's like drawing their faces with your eyes shut. I think Hermie will have her hair in a thick plait. I suppose she goes to picnics and dances and everything, and always knows what to say to people. Mother, I don't think I shall ever get to know what to say. I'm fourteen, and nothing will come into my head to answer people. A lady said to me this morning, 'You play magnificently.' Now what can you answer to that? I really felt I'd like to say, 'Yes, don't I?' just to see how she would look. Only I was afraid it would be rude. If I'd said, 'Oh, no, I don't, you're mistaken,' she would have thought I was mock modest, wouldn't she? But Hermie, yes, she'll always know what to say. I can sleep in her room, can't I? You said there wouldn't be any other. It will be like Ellen and Edie Fowler we met on the trip to Dover; they always had their arms round each other and used to tell each other everything and everything. Hermie and I will; we'll whisper and whisper all night, just like they did."

The steward came up with eleven o'clock tea and

the glass of milk that Challis always drank. Mrs. Cameron left her cup to grow cold, Challis set her tumbler in an insecure place, and a lurch of the ship sent it flying.

"Never mind, I couldn't have drunk it," she said. Then as the man came back, "I am so sorry to give you that trouble, steward. If you like to bring a cloth up, I'll wipe it up myself."

"Well, about Bart," said the mother, "what will Bart be like?"

"Oh, Bart," said Challis, "I just feel as if we'll rush straight together and never come undone again. That's the sort of feeling you have when you're twins. I feel I'd like to give him everything and sew his buttons on and let him bully me. You notice the Griffithses here. They're twins, and she does everything he tells her, and he gets everything for her. Its lovely. I hope Bart hasn't forgotten we're twins."

"And Roly?"

"Roly? I'm not sure of Roly. I can hardly see him at all. I think, p'raps, he's like that little boy at our table who wears Eton suits and tries to walk like the boatswain. All I can remember about Roly is one day we were eating water-melon in the paddock, and Roly ate his slice away and away till there was just a green circle round his head."

"And Flossie—my little baby Floss?"

"Darling little Flossie, I almost love her best of all. She's got very goldy hair and a teeny little face, and she's as little as Lady Millbourne's little girl. And she likes being carried about, and she can't dress herself, and I shall dress her and fasten all the dear little buttons, and tie her sashes. And I shall put her to bed myself, nobody else must, and I'll tell her stories and stories. And every day there'll be something new for her out of my box. There are fifteen things for her, mother, not counting what she's to go halves with Roly in. Isn't it a darling little tea-set? I never saw such sweet little cups. And won't she like the little dolls from the Crystal Palace? I'd really like to play with them myself. And the big doll we got in the Rue de Grenelle. I must get on with its frock to-morrow, mother, or it never will be done."

On, on went the ship through the secret waters. New stars came out on the great night skies, new breezes played in the rigging. On, on, and the long days dropped away, somewhere, somewhere, beyond the edge of the sea. On, on, and the happy eyes saw at last the dear frown of the Australian coast-line.

(To be continued.)

SWISS GIRLS FROM AN ENGLISH GIRL'S STANDPOINT.



THE absolute simplicity of the living in Switzerland was brought home to me, one day, whilst giving a private lesson to the daughter of one of the wealthiest families in the Canton Aargau. To encourage her to talk English, I asked her casually to tell me how she spent her day.

In summer, she told me, she rose at six; in winter at seven.

Breakfast was every day at half-past seven; it consisted of coffee, bread, and butter. After breakfast, she made her bed, tidied her room, and then went to the kitchen, where she daily prepared a special dish for her invalid father; after this, she read her father's letters to him,

answered them from his dictation, and studied until dinner, at twelve. Dinner was a simple repast enough, followed at two by coffee, milk, and bread. After coffee, she went for her daily walk, returning home to occupy herself with mending or fancy-work. Supper at seven, consisting of coffee and potatoes, every evening the same, then a game of *bezique* with her father, and to bed at ten.

What a life! How admirable in its simplicity—how free from vanity, selfishness, or luxury! Potatoes and coffee for supper, and every evening the same! It is ludicrous and sublime at the same time.

Is it the right life? I do not profess to know; but there is a passage in Holy Scripture, referring to a good woman, which tallies rather minutely with this programme.

When first I came to Switzerland, I was put in a some-

what awkward position. The parson's wife—dear little woman, I owe her much for my Swiss training—invited me to coffee. Coffee is the most important distraction of the Swiss girl. It corresponds to our "at homes," with an immense margin of difference. The ceremony of coffee begins at two; and the ladies having arrived, they divest themselves of hat, cloak, and gloves, and sit down to a large bare table. Instantly each lady produces a cunning little satchel, and out from the satchel comes knitting, sewing, crochet, and the busy needles keep pace with the busy tongue. After a while the bare table is laid with a snowy cloth, on which presently appears a goodly array of bread, butter, jam, home-made biscuits, and coffee, and with a truly healthy appetite the busy little women enjoy themselves. Coffee is then cleared away, and out comes the work again. Unaccustomed to this usage, I went to my first coffee-party empty-handed. Reproachful eyes were levied on me from all sides, and it was useless for me to seek a subterfuge by declaring that in England we did not knit, but sang and played at our social entertainments. The next time I was invited out, I invested in quite a formidable array of needles and worsted.

Knitting, by the way, is the favourite occupation of the Swiss girl, apart from housework. On her walks, on her visits, when she is well or when she is ill, when she is merry or sad, the click, click, click of the knitting-needle accompanies her, and I think she finds the same consolation in its music as an English girl in her piano.

The fine arts? Yes, they do exist in Switzerland, but are of minimum importance for girls. I have occasionally come across Swiss maidens who can sing and play quite charmingly, and one of my pupils has a decided talent for painting. But the fine arts are not, as a rule, much encouraged when the maiden becomes a wife. A marriageable man in Switzerland seeks before all things a good *menagère*; beauty and talents are second-rate considerations; money is desirable, but not absolute. I remember once talking on this subject to a Swiss Benedict, engaged to a girl who was neither rich, clever, nor beautiful.

"Why do you do it?" I asked.

"Oh," he answered with rapture, "you don't know how comfortable she always makes me!"

Yes, that is what it amounts to. Can she cook, can she mend, can she manage a household? It is certainly for this reason that marriages in Switzerland are so often contracted at a tender age and on a most slender income. With a wife who can be cook, washerwoman, and general servant all in one, expenses are naturally reduced, and a hundred pounds a year, which is a starvation income in England, is in Switzerland a very considerable competency.

The *dot* which every Swiss girl brings to her husband is the furniture and linen of the household, together with quite a formidable *trousseau*, which she begins setting to work on as soon as she leaves school. Another custom here is for the *fiancés* to exchange wedding-rings on the day of their engagement.

The study of foreign languages is perhaps the art most cultivated by the fair Helvetian. For a girl to be acquainted with less than two languages is a rarity, and she not infrequently knows three or four. This linguistic precocity will be easily understood when it is realised that in Switzerland Italian, French, and German are all national languages; and there is a fashion here for families in the French Switzerland to exchange their children for a year with families in German Switzerland, after the school-tuition is completed. Thus do the children acquire a practical knowledge of languages free of cost.

The Swiss girl is never ashamed of being seen at her work, be that work of the most humble description. On Saturday evening the daughters of rich and poor alike may be seen with long brooms sweeping the dust away, not only from their doorsteps, but from the very road itself in front of their house.

You dear, busy little maidens, proud of the snow-white duster on your heads, proud of your energy, proud even, I daresay, of your brooms—you are as much ladies at heart, in manner, by birth, and every other attribute, as other maidens I know of who are spending their afternoon drinking tea out of fine china, with their delicate little hands gloved, and their dresses rustling over silk petticoats!

Character depends much on education. The Swiss girl is taught to be humble and practical from the moment when at four she enters the infants' school, until at eighteen when she returns finished from *pension*.

There is absolutely no difference between the treatment of the masses and the classes. They sit together at school, are taught the same subjects by the same masters, receive the same punishments and the same praise. Little cares the daughter of the millionaire if her bosom friend is the daughter of her own father's coachman; they have been brought up together and remain together without let or hindrance.

Having finished their primary education, they proceed to the sewing and cooking school (*Näh-schule und Koch-schule*), where they learn fundamentally these two necessary arts. In the sewing-school they are taught to cut out, machine, sew, mark their own clothes, and embroider them; in the cooking-school they have to undergo a series of training not only in cooking, but in cleaning the pots and pans, plucking and preparing the game and poultry, scraping and cleaning the vegetables, carving, butter-making, etc.

It is not until a girl has perfected herself in the domestic arts that she considers herself fit to be a wife; then, armed with such a magnificent equipment, she can defy all the troubles and difficulties connected with her new state of life.

"Washing-day" is a supremely important institution in Switzerland. It seems to be always "washing-day;" and I warn you not to go calling when this domestic function is in *modus operandi*. My next-door neighbour, the lovely little wife of the *bürgermeister*, with a face like a poem, confided in me that she loved washing.

"My dear girl," I objected, "you surely don't do it all by yourself?"

"Every bit!" she answered, with that laugh of hers which reminds me of springtime and flowers. "I wouldn't let anybody else touch it! My linen is my pride!"

I went to see that linen one day, and oh, how sweet it smelt—how neatly was it ironed, folded, and sorted! And what a treasure of linen it was! What dainty lace, insertion and embroidery, and how immaculately white! I love my little neighbour, although I know we haven't an idea in common; she is so industrious, and so everlastingly cheerful! Even as I write, I see her from my window. She is carrying in her arms an immense bunch of linen, which has been bleaching in the sunshine.

"Good day, Frieda!" I call out to her.

"Good day! *Gott grüss dich* (God greet thee)!" she answers.

Her face above the linen is rosy as a peach, and like the peach is mellowed by the sunshine. Her name means peace.

Oh, you good, noble, valiant little woman! In the midst of your family and your home, you have discovered that treasure which many a scholar and philosopher has sought for in vain!

In conclusion, let me add that the race of Swiss girls is a sound one, both in mind and body; the school education excellent; and luxury à vice almost unknown. Still, with all her amiable attributes, the fair Helvetian has not the independence of character, the originality of thought, nor the brightness of intellect which characterises her bonnie English sister.

