

apprenticed to a straw-bonnet maker. She had an aunt residing at Stretton, wife to a respectable farmer, whom she came to visit. Pretty and nicely dressed, she fixed the attentions of a little sprig of a journeyman tailor living near her uncle's, who managed, by some means or other, to get acquainted with her. He was a man of bad character, a drunkard, and wretched temper, and plain in person. In spite of these disadvantages the lady was peculiarly struck, clandestine meetings were agreed upon, and executed till she returned bewildered to London. The affair was made known to her parents, who, of course, dissuaded her, with some success, from such a match. Unfortunately and foolishly, they allowed her again to visit Stretton. She renewed the intimacy, promised marriage, and he followed her to London for that purpose. Her parents reluctantly gave their consent, and he promised

her a servant to do everything for her that she may be allowed to carry on her trade, and promised fair on all sides. They were married, and what an alteration soon took place! They were unfitting for each other. He engaged no servant for her, and unacquainted with household affairs, from a fine town lass she became a country slattern. He quarrelled with her, nay more, beat her and used her cruelly. She has now three children, and, poor little woman, looks the image of care and despondency. She works at her trade, takes care of her children and household, and appears truly miserable. His conduct is somewhat better, but they can never be happy. These unequal marriages, even in the lower ranks, are never happy. They cannot bring themselves to one another's ideas, and consequently discontent is the consequence.

(To be continued.)



WHAT CO-OPERATION DID IN OUR VILLAGE.

PART I.

WITH OUR GARDEN FRUIT.

I MUST begin by introducing Agnes and myself to the reader. We are two maids—I was going to say old maids, but that is not quite correct, for we are just at the age when health is strongest, faculties brightest, and judgment soundest, so that we cannot be called aged. But we have little time or inclination to give to sentimental dreaming, nor have we any illusions to keep us from giving the whole of our attention to the business of life. This business of life, as far as we two are now concerned, is to make our living—as good a one as we possibly can, and to help others as we go along. As we are entirely dependent upon our own exertions, having no money but that we earn, no rich relations to appeal to, and of course no children to fall back upon when we reach old age, our position is serious enough to make us take it seriously.

That is the debit side of our account however; on the credit side we have, as I said before, health, and that best of all the senses—common-sense; also we have the will to work as well as some knowledge of how to work, so we do not look forward with fear, knowing there is One above who is watching over us, Who

“ . . . shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.”

So much then for our personality. At the time of my writing we have been five years located in the village of E., and we seem likely to remain there for some time yet to come. E. is an old-fashioned place, situated just within the borders of Norfolk, and is in the very heart of the fruit and flower country. It is not pretty country, being flat, barren of all trees but those of the fruit-bearing order, and it is a country where the wind blows perpetually; still it is

not without a certain picturesqueness, with its broad fields and long canals, its windmills, its red-sailed boats and barges, and besides this there is—as the Scotch say of grimy Glasgow—“money in it.” It was the money that was to be made there which at first attracted us, and in some degree it is that which keeps us there now; but there are also those interests of life in every place, with the kindly associations that gather round one as one makes friends, and there is the absorption of work, the ties that make home, and we all know, be the land ever so ugly, or humble, or commonplace, “east or west, home’s best.”

Having introduced ourselves and located our position, I want now to plunge into that piece of modern history which constitutes my reason for putting pen to paper, believing as I do that the record of what has been done in our village may serve as a helpful example of what it might be possible to do in many other villages, when women bring their energies to bear on the land question, as they now are beginning to do.

I must say that before we took up *petite culture* as a means of earning a living, we had had some experience in flower and fruit buying and selling. I mention this as it is important. The grower who does not know what becomes of his produce after it leaves his hands is handicapped to a great extent by his ignorance. He cannot tell what it is best to grow, what it will look like when it has travelled, nor what uses it may be put to; whereas after a few years of practical work as a floral decorator in the West End of London, and an intimate acquaintance with Covent Garden market and the commission agents there, my sister had accumulated a store of knowledge that was worth much to her as capital.

My experience had lain along more domestic lines; occasionally I had been Agnes's helper when a pressure of work had made a helper necessary, but I had also gathered

a little *clientèle* of my own together as a manufacturer of home-made jellies, jams, and marmalade. It was partly in order to extend this industry of mine that we had inclined our steps towards this fruit-growing country, but also to give Agnes the opportunity of starting as a grower on her own account. Our money capital was perilously small, just a few hard-earned savings and no more; but youth, hope, brains, and the capacity for hard work—are these not good capital to start on? At least, we meant to give them a fair trial.

It was early spring when we took possession of Wood Cottage, and we seemed to feel the influence of the rising sap in the trees, of the little trickling water-rills, and the building rooks, and to be in harmony with them all.

Wood Cottage was prepossessing too; violets were soon to be found blooming in the hedgerows, and the green sheaths of daffodils were showing, but best of all, the orchard promised to be a grand sight presently. Nor were we disappointed in it, for the blossoming was something to be remembered that year.

The kitchen door opened out into the orchard, and I think I stood in that doorway a full half of my day just then, in my delight at the promise of the harvest that was to be.

Agnes laughed, and twitted me for indulging in fancies that might not come true, but I could not help dreaming that first year; indeed, who could have done, with that sheet of pink and green spread out before eyes that had looked so long on dull walls and streets? I knew she rejoiced in it as much as I did in reality, for did I not often find her leaning on her spade for long intervals, when she was supposed to be engrossed in digging and planting? We neither of us dreamt so blissfully again.

As time went on the foliage grew and thickened until we could barely distinguish one tree from another in the orchard, and the cottage began to deserve its name. We saw then that trees were far too thick upon the ground for profit, and began to mistrust the wisdom of taking an old orchard and garden; the blossom had not "set" well at all, and so my visionary harvest was likely to remain visionary as far as our own crops were concerned. Fortunately other people could tell a better tale. The neighbours tried to console us by telling of the neglect with which our garden had been treated, but it was Job's comforting, when we had to stand aside and see that for that year at least our portion would be "nothing but leaves." As most of the bush fruit had been planted underneath the larger trees, it also promised no better crop.

In the autumn we revenged ourselves for our disappointment by reducing the size of our trees with such energy that we cleared away more than half their growth, paying little regard to which was new wood or old; tree-pruning, you see, had not formed part of our education. Many bushes we maliciously uprooted altogether, and gave them over to feed a bonfire, until at last we had got our orchard into almost geometrical precision. There would be fine fruit and plenty of it next year, we felt sure.

In the meantime Agnes had been diligent in tilling and planting seed, bulbs, cuttings of fine carnations and chrysanthemums, etc., so that her next year's crop might also be a paying one. It was not much that could be gathered for sale this first season except annuals, and they are of little use for travelling. But with a crop of fine Shirley poppies she did well, and she was opening up a market for the produce of our neighbours' gardens, as there were some who cultivated them with skill. Several times during that first season large consignments of flowers went up to certain commission houses in Covent Garden and brought a very fair return, but this kind of selling was not exactly what my sister had in view, and when our own crops could be relied upon to give sufficient quantity, with the help of others she intended to send out through the parcels post to private customers, disposing of seedlings and cuttings in this way also. But I am getting on too fast, and must hie me back to my fruit and what we did that first year.

I had gained, as I said before, a small connection for the purchase of my jellies and jams, and as this had been done whilst having to buy wholesale from the London

markets, I was not going to lose it because my own garden disappointed me. To buy from my neighbours could not cost me any more than I had hitherto paid. As a matter of fact it cost me rather less, and yet I was able to offer a better price than the same retailers had been receiving hitherto when selling locally, and this of course pleased them well.

But the work and the sales soon grew to be more than I could manage single-handed, and I bethought me of the advisability of co-operating with others, rather than of hiring other working hands and paying them, which I could then ill afford to do.

The first to whom I mentioned the scheme was a Mrs. Steele, a dear little widow woman in fairly comfortable circumstances, industrious, and by no means unwilling to do something to add to her income if she could. In her garden she had nearly a score of good-bearing currant bushes, and the finest rows of raspberry canes it has ever been my fortune to see. She gladly acquiesced in my proposal of joining together in partnership, and came daily during the busiest time to help in picking and preserving our stock.

When greengages began to ripen Mrs. Cousins and her grown-up daughter asked to be allowed to join us on the same terms of co-partnership. They were proud of possessing the three finest plum-trees in the whole country-side, and their yield rarely failed of being abundant. Of course we were glad enough to accept of their help, for the more we had to dispose of the more we could sell, and our little circulars went out freely, always bringing us fresh customers, especially from hotels.

It was one of our rules that a postal order should accompany every order for goods, as we also paid cash for everything we bought and used, and so kept exact account of our expenses, and knew what our profits were as we went along.

From time to time we had to lay out on jars, sugar, etc., and these were necessarily large items, as we must get them wholesale—the sugar from the refineries, the jars from the potteries—so as to get them as cheaply as possible.

In the autumn we balanced up in order that we might judge of the advisability of carrying this business out on a more extended scale the next year. Our receipts proved so encouraging as to make us decide to plant a few more young bushes ourselves, and several of our neighbours did the same, and all carefully pruned and tended their present lots.

The following spring we sent out many more circulars, and advertised as well, besides receiving numerous recommendations from those who had tested the quality of our goods and found them satisfactory. We began operations again as soon as ever the gooseberries were ready for use, and went steadily on, increasing our working staff, as first one and another begged to be allowed to co-operate with us; by the end of that season almost all the villagers who had fruit to dispose of had joined our company, and we were sending out a very respectable stock daily.

But what was best of all was that the industry worked good in other ways. It brought many more plots of land under cultivation, and it stimulated the care of those already held, while it aroused a desire for doing productive work amongst the women, saving them from much idle frittering away of time, and teaching them good business principles as well as the value of quite humble talents. While some among them were rapid pickers but unskilful at managing the boiling process, others proved adepts with the pans, and others again were especially neat in tying up and labelling the jars.

Altogether we worked well *ensemble*, and I used often to pause a moment on busy days and think that the animated scene in our outhouse would have been well worth a reporter's visit.

In five years' time the one shed has increased to three, and we have apparatus of the best types, with generally at least twenty pairs of hands at work. Our fame has spread abroad, and orders reach us from all the large cities of the United Kingdom and even Ireland; that it pays us well may go without saying. I will now go back to the early days and tell you what resulted from co-operation when it was applied to flower-growing.

LUCY H. YATES.

and tooth-powders. We do not intend to describe or even to enumerate the various mouth-washes and tooth-powders that are before the public, for nothing would be gained by doing so; we shall rest content with two washes and one powder—and nobody wants any other.

A very good mouth-wash may be made by mixing half a dram of borax, twenty drops of liquefied carbolic acid, and one ounce of compound tincture of lavender with a pint of an equal mixture of glycerine and rose-water. This may be used diluted with three times its volume of warm water, to form a pleasant mouth-wash.

A few drops of tincture of myrrh, or of a mixture of equal parts of tincture of myrrh and glycerine of borax in a wine-glassful of water is a favourite mouth-wash and one which is especially useful where the teeth are loose or the gums have a tendency to bleed.

A really good tooth-powder fulfils several conditions—it is finely gritty; it contains some form of antiseptic, and it leaves a pleasant feeling in the mouth after use. There are thousands of powders which have these properties. Nearly all tooth-powders have chalk and powdered cuttle-fish as their base, to which is added orris-root, carbolic acid, scents, etc., to render them pleasant. Powdered chalk alone is not an efficient tooth-powder.

Powdered charcoal used to be used for many purposes, and one of its applications was as a tooth-powder. Charcoal when dry absorbs ill-smelling gases, but when wet is absolutely inert. It is therefore perfectly useless to give it to absorb gas or to destroy the smell from ulcers or bad teeth or anything else. It is no better as a tooth-powder than any other gritty powder is.

The tooth-powder is not nearly so important as the tooth-brush. You can wash your teeth perfectly efficiently with warm soap and water or indeed with water alone. But the powder helps to make the teeth look cleaner and removes slight deposits of tartar.

In very many persons, for some unknown reason, the saliva deposits layers of carbonate of lime upon the teeth chiefly at the line where the teeth leave the gums. This deposit is called tartar, and the treatment of it is a very important point in dentistry.

We are writing this article on dental decay—destruction of the teeth by lactic acid. Tartar has little or nothing to do with decay of the teeth. Tartar is an alkali, and is

deposited in an alkaline medium, and so one would not expect it to occur in connection with decayed teeth; but the crannies in the tartar and between the tartar and the gums are such convenient homes for organisms, that the teeth of persons with tartar usually suffer sooner or later. This is all we will say here about tartar, as we shall reserve the subject for a future occasion.

The treatment for teeth which have decayed is extremely important. No sensible person would ever have a rotten tooth in her head when she knows the dangers which it may produce. It is quite impossible to keep a hollow tooth clean, and it is a perfect nest of germs of all descriptions. Like one rotten apple in a sack, which will rot all the fruit around it, one rotten tooth may be the source from which the next is infected, and so on from tooth to tooth until all are useless. Therefore lose no time in having bad teeth seen to.

Decayed teeth can be removed or they can be repaired. Of course, whenever possible, they should be repaired. Mechanical dentistry has advanced to such a state that scarcely any tooth that can be seen is beyond the hope of repair, but it is well to remember that it does not follow that because a tooth can be repaired it is necessarily the best treatment to have it repaired.

Personally we should not have a tooth repaired unless it possessed a reasonable amount of healthy crown. It is simply a waste of time and money to "crown" a tooth unless the whole of the natural part of the tooth which is left is healthy. The person who is careful of her health and appearance will have her teeth seen to as soon as she discovers anything wrong with them, and by this she will save many teeth which a less careful person would lose.

Whenever a tooth has been removed, unless it has been taken out to make room for others, it should be immediately replaced by a false one. Let us warn you against the absurd prejudice for false teeth which so many of you have. You cannot tell the number of persons whose latter end is made miserable by constant dyspepsia due to indigestion from absence of teeth. Unless false teeth are put in soon after the decayed ones are removed the other teeth open out and leave intervals between each other, which intervals become the resting-place of much offal and many germs.

A fine set of teeth is one of the greatest blessings we can possess, and if it is denied to us, we can obtain the next best thing, which is a fine set of false ones.



WHAT CO-OPERATION DID IN OUR VILLAGE.

CHAPTER II.

WITH THE FLOWERS.

THE open, sunny side of our garden before long assumed a most business-like aspect. A narrow cinder-path divided the long strip into plots, and after manuring and lime-dressing, these were sown or planted in due course.

We possessed a lean-to greenhouse, and in this our boxes of seeds were put, so that young seedlings might be raised early for sale and for transplanting.

The first season's bloom had to be taken from such things as could be had from spring-sown seeds, and the bulb plantation which figured large in Agnes's mind had perforce to wait until the autumn. There was a piece of field

land beyond the end of our garden upon which she set her heart; it was the very place for a bulb field, being open to the sun on all sides, and on a gentle slope, and of course nothing less than a "field" would satisfy her. In imagination I believe she saw that field ablow with Pheasant-eye Narcissi, and she early began negotiating for its rental. In October she was made happy by becoming its tenant for five years at a rental of five pounds per year. She immediately laid down a few pounds of her capital in the purchase of bulbs, chiefly of three kinds, *Incomparabilis* "Sir Watkin," *Poeticus Ornatus*, and the ordinary *Poeticus*, which I called Pheasant's eye.

"Will that repay you?" I asked, "to have so few kinds, I mean."

"They form a succession, following each other within about three weeks, so that I shall be able to guarantee a certain amount of bloom regularly, and besides the bulbs themselves will afterwards yield more than their cost to sell as such, as they are all popular varieties."

"But I don't see how you can lift bulbs to sell and yet expect to have them come up the following season," I persisted, and was told, "Wait until the time comes for lifting them, and you will see then that every bulb will have multiplied itself to two or three more, one of which it will be sufficient to replant, while the remainder can be cleaned for sale."

Some long rows of stately Spanish Iris were planted in the garden where they would not be likely to be disturbed; their bloom was scant the first year, but afterwards they always gave an excellent crop during June, and they travelled well, fetching a very good price too. Some white gladioli—the Bride—were planted in boxes and kept under the staging in the greenhouse until all fear of the frost was gone; then they were brought out into the sunshine and these too flowered during June. As we got them into the market in good time, they fetched a price that well remunerated us for the trouble they had given, and a larger stock we replanted in the autumn, so that a succession could be ensured.

We discovered some Michaelmas daisies along by the boundary wall, and lifted these, dividing the clumps and replanting in a better situation; they would make a reliable autumn crop to come in just before chrysanthemums were ready. Of the last-named we had a fair stock of cuttings of the best outdoor varieties, from which we hoped to make money by selling them as slippings and rooted cuttings rather than from their bloom. As early as July Agnes began to take cuttings from these, rooting them in the open ground, as they had then a chance of forming strong, hardy plants before winter should come. White and yellow marguerites were treated in the same way, yielding several hundred young plants altogether, most of which we sold during the following autumn and spring.

She also sowed seeds of Iceland poppies and of *Coreopsis grandiflora*, transplanting them into open ground, then subdividing and transplanting again as they grew stronger. All these were for sale as young rooted plants, not for bloom, as they would be worth as much as half-a-crown a dozen the following spring. Shirley poppies, being quick-growing and free-flowering, were sown in beds, thinned out as soon as big enough to handle, and thinned again as they grew tall, so that each plant had space to develop itself. I never saw finer blooms or more lovely colours, although it was few of them that were allowed to expand and display themselves for my admiration; they were cut whilst in the bud, the calyx just cracked, then laid in damp fern and despatched, their full beauty to be revealed only to those who purchased them.

Poppies of any kind had been thought to be of little value in this district before, perhaps because it was the outer fringe of Poppyland where, though beautiful to look at, they too frequently got like weeds into the wrong places, and so were hardly thought worthy of a right one. There was a good deal of chaff about our care of them; transplanting and re-transplanting seemed a waste of trouble, and the spare roots that we bestowed on others were not much prized. However when we were able to show that every dozen buds brought in twopence, and the next spring had more demand for our roots than we could supply, the genus Poppy went up in popular estimation, and our neighbours dropped their chaffing and began to imitate us.

Space was too limited to admit of our growing carnations on a scale sufficient to make them pay for cutting as bloom, so that Agnes deemed it best to confine herself to a few good varieties and to propagate these as layers, for sale as such. Accordingly one plot of ground was given over to them, and they were carefully selected, planted out, staked and layered in due course. But on the whole after some years of trial we have pronounced carnations to be a disappointing investment. For one thing, it is almost impossible to keep the strains pure, cross-fertilisation will occur in spite of the greatest care, and even the seed that is taken from an isolated plant can never be guaranteed to come up as it would

be expected to do. We had more complaints and fault-finding over our carnations than over anything else, and finally gave up the fancy kinds in despair, confining ourselves to a few of the sturdier and less changeable standard sorts, such as double crimson and white cloves. Whilst endeavouring to grow others, we had adopted the plan of starting them on a yearly visiting system amongst the best families of the neighbourhood, and found it to answer fairly well, but I have heard that a would-be successful carnation grower must either travel round the kingdom himself, resetting his stock in a new place every year or two, or he must be constantly importing new soil on to his own ground. We had neither the capital nor the convenience for doing so.

It was my ambition to grow lilies of the valley, and there was a damp sheltered border below the shrubbery which seemed to me to be just the place for them. With all the grace I could muster, I made love to my little widow friend Mrs. Steele, in whose garden these lilies had established themselves and where they flourished *en masse*; but, though she gave me root after root, they refused to reward my hopes—and Mrs. Steele only laughed at my discomfiture.

"Ay, they're as human, them little flowers, as we are ourselves," she would say. "They knows just what they likes, and they must be let alone and not meddled with, no matter how thick they grow together. They love home and to abide at home—they're no gad-about like your gay carnations, they ain't!"

And so we had to leave the lilies to her, and proud she was to bring in an armful every morning ready for packing in our boxes, and to receive the very excellent price that these lilies always fetch.

Something like a quarter of a mile further down the E—high road there was another cottage garden, kept and tended by an old sailor. Here Pomponne dahlias grew luxuriantly. How the old sea-dog had acquired the happy knack of inducing them to bloom as he did, year after year, we could never get to know; but there they were, from early July to October, and many a sheaf did we gain, although nothing but the crossing of his palm with silver would induce the old tar to part with them. It was useless to explain co-operation to him, but we were glad enough to be allowed to purchase.

In another garden, belonging to a retired railway signalman, we discovered during our first summer a large patch of yellow, which, on investigation, turned out to be sweet sultans.

Here, again, there was money to be turned over, and we were lucky this time in gaining the ear of the ex-signalman and in convincing him of the wisdom of propagation. By some happy artistic perception he had grown blue cornflowers also, and these we knew were equally sure of a welcome in the market. The old man eagerly fell into line with us, and willingly brought in the best he could gather every day. He also proved himself quick of hand in packing and bunching, and moreover took upon himself to act as porter, and conveyed our packages to the railway until these grew important enough to make it worth the company's while to fetch them with their vans.

"Them there sweet peas o' yours ain't as good as mine be," a voice announced, speaking suddenly over the hedge one day.

Agnes looked up from her picking.

"Well, no, Lofts; that's true. I noticed yours as we passed on our way from church yesterday. Those white ones are particularly fine. Blanche Burpee, are they not?"

"Ay, good seed! Wuth a goodish bit, ain't they?"

"Yes, I believe there is always a good sale for white peas. They make up well into wreaths and so forth, you see."

"What 'ud ye offer for them, gin I were willin' to sell?"

"I can't say." Agnes had grown wary at last. It was so difficult to make some people understand the all-round side of co-operation; they were willing enough to sell if the money was forthcoming at once, but not so willing to take a share in the fluctuations of the market. "I can't say," she replied this time. "You would have to take the same risks that we all take with marketable stuff."

"Um!" he said. "You mean that I might get paid, and I might not—that's about it, I reckon!"

"You would certainly get something," my sister answered; "and it is just possible that you might get the top price, as your stuff is the kind that is always wanted."

"An' what might that amount to?"

"I can't say at all. You must trust to the agent who sells for us, as others have to do."

"Um, then I guess I won't sell!" he said slowly; but the next morning a lad arrived in our packing-shed with a large flat boxful of cut sweet peas of purest white, "from Mester Lofts's," and deposited them on the bench. As it happened then, one of those coincidences that do sometimes occur, there arrived also within the same hour a telegram of inquiry for white peas, if by any means possible to get them, so the box was despatched at once, and "Mester Lofts" was encouraged to cut again.

It did not always happen as fortunately as this, however, and sometimes we received our goods back unsold; but Agnes, who knew well the cause of these fluctuations, was able to take the rough with the smooth with equanimity, only, as I said before, it was just here that the difficulties of co-operation came in. Had we had sufficient capital, she would have found it far easier to buy from the others and to make what profit she could. Not being able to do this, save in small quantities, she was forced to adopt the plan she did. Eventually it worked all right, being right in principle; but it needed a certain amount of education first.

However, we had other aims in view besides that of money-making, and social and material progress for the

community was one of these. It was some reward to us when we could see that even the tiniest gardens received care, while wastefulness of plant life, before thought nothing of, was unknown when the true value of every little slip and cutting was understood. Then there was an extraordinary interest taken in "varieties" and "strains," and the preciousness of the land was more than doubled. Gardening papers began to be studied, and when during our third year we were able to arrange for a course of lectures on practical horticulture, given by members of the Royal Horticultural Society, these were attended by an audience of thoroughly interested men and women. This proved too that the villagers were as capable of education as townfolk and as eager and willing to learn.

Several times we had competitive flower-shows, and some practical demonstrations of what it is possible to do in the way of decoration; but what was most enlightening after all was the jingle of coin in the pocket, especially in pockets where hitherto "pocket-money" had been an undreamed-of luxury.

It had been our aim to rouse the women to take a diligent share in working for profit, and we had so far succeeded in this; there was now little time for that gossiping and light reading that had before filled up so much of their spare hours, and both mind and body showed the benefit of the change. To grasp true business principles in any measure could not fail of exerting a wholesome influence, and these showed in other ways as time went on.

Other developments of co-operation I must leave to be told in the chapters that follow.

LUCY H. YATES.

(To be continued.)

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

EMPLOYMENT FOR WINTER EVENINGS.—"*I live in the country, and have a bicycle, so that through the summer I manage to enjoy myself; but in winter I find it very dull. I have not much to do in the afternoon and evening: is there anything I could do to fill in the time? I should like to earn just a little pocket-money. Could I address envelopes? I am a fairly good writer. I am not particularly fond of sewing; I do a little fancy work, but get so tired of it. I simply wasted away last winter, and the evenings seemed so long.*"—
CORNFLOWER.

We have given "Cornflower's" questions almost in full because her case is unfortunately but too common a one. It is this extreme dullness of life in many parts of the country that drives girls as well as boys into the towns where, though they may be able to live neither so cheaply nor so healthfully as in the country, they at least find occupation, which for all human beings is one of the first of necessities. Many people, no doubt, might tell "Cornflower" that if she did all she might do, even under her present circumstances, she need certainly neither be wasting the long months of winter nor aspiring merely to do something that should "fill in the time." In a measure this is probably true. There are many duties that can be performed in the most comfortable home whereby family happiness and even the welfare of people outside the home is increased. In "Cornflower's" home, we imagine that one servant at least is kept. Otherwise, "Cornflower" could hardly be free to spend so much time in bicycling. Why should not "Cornflower" undertake one department of house-work, and thus leave the servant to perform the rest of her duties more efficiently? If company is not often entertained, we see no reason why "Cornflower" should not act as the family parlourmaid, and undertake the entire care of plate, glass, table-linen, and lamps. She would find it useful in after life to understand such duties as these; and it is always satisfactory to have some work that must be done every day. Or if "Cornflower" preferred cooking, perhaps her parents would let her do this, even

though at first her cooking might be rather in the nature of a series of unsuccessful experiments. But for the satisfactory performance of home duties, and still more of duties of a more public character, it is almost necessary that "Cornflower," and other girls placed as she is, should receive some good teaching. They cannot learn everything by themselves, or from books, and even parents cannot always teach their children so successfully as strangers may do. Some novelty and freshness in the method of teaching, some association and friendly competition with other girls, are important in enabling a girl to master any kind of work. The Technical Education Committees of the County Councils are looked to by many of us to stimulate such girls as "Cornflower." It is to be feared, however, that their teachers do not yet succeed in penetrating into the quietest and dullest districts. "Cornflower" will probably forgive us for mentioning that she writes from Somerset, for we wish to give her the address of Mr. C. H. Bothamley, Somerset County Education Committee, Weston-super-Mare, in order that she might write to him and inquire whether there are any classes not too far from her home that she could attend. Upon her bicycle she could probably get to any place within ten or fifteen miles of her home. Then there is the Home Arts and Industries Association, the headquarters of which is the Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, London, W. The Secretary of this Association would tell "Cornflower" what home industries are being pursued in Somerset which a girl might learn. From the British Spinning and Weaving School, Blenheim Street, New Bond Street, "Cornflower" could learn particulars of the two industries named, by which some girls are earning money. Addressing envelopes could not be carried out in the country. It is only in large and busy towns that any work of this kind is required. We may remind "Cornflower," in conclusion, that for all such woman's work as cookery, laundry, and dressmaking, there is a constant demand. We strongly advise her to take any steps that she can to study one of these industries thoroughly. They pay much better than clerical work in the long run, and are more interesting.



WHAT CO-OPERATION DID IN OUR VILLAGE.

PART III.

SOCIAL GATHERINGS.

THAT there is infection in example we proved over and over again before our industries reached anything like their later development. Suggestions and new ventures were tried whilst the main ideas in view were being carried out. One of the most successful instances that I may cite was that of tomato-growing, which was begun and carried out at the instigation of a member of the firm with whom we had been dealing at Covent Garden. He one day telegraphed to us in haste, having an unusually large order for tomatoes, demanding that we should make up what he wanted to complete his contract; and on our replying that this was impossible his answer and his condemnation of us came in such strong language that I could hardly dare repeat it. However, this stirred us up to do something, and no doubt that was the effect he had intended to produce. We broached the plan of growing the fruit to several others, offering to be the medium for their sale when ready.

Most of the small gardeners dabbled in tomato-growing, producing as many as they required for immediate use, and they wanted waking up to the fact that money was to be made out of their crops if these were grown well. Forcing and growing in hot-houses was out of the question to any great extent, but as there is always a sale for good outdoor-grown fruit, this was no drawback. The light, warm, sandy soil of E. is exactly what the tomato delights in, and as early outdoor crops could be grown when the plants were raised under cover to begin with, and as by protecting the beds from the wind by means of wire screens and a belt of growing corn, the plants could have the benefit of sun and air, there was every chance of success for those who would make the attempt.

Agnes volunteered to raise the plants from seed in our own hot-house, if those who took them from her would follow her directions afterwards. This they nearly all agreed to do. Accordingly much study of many authorities was undertaken by my enterprising sister, and she made a practical digest of what she learned, some of which I can give in a few words.

1. For profit it is important to raise the best kinds, so as to put upon the market only good fruit.
2. To starve the plants until the fruit blossoms open, and after the fruit has set to feed liberally, in order to cause them to swell rapidly.
3. To thin out every badly-shaped or malformed fruit as soon as imperfections are seen; never to let these take the strength of the plant uselessly.

4. To endeavour to secure strong, hardy plants, but to keep back leafy growth. When grown in the open to stop the plants when they have set three clusters of fruit; the lower the stem the better.

In the first week of the following February, the seed was sown in shallow boxes in our greenhouse. As soon as ever the young plants were large enough to bear handling, we transplanted them into other boxes, leaving them about two inches apart. When the second pair of leaves was made, we cut them all back to the seed-leaf, after which it was not long before each plant sent up two strong shoots. Early in April they were ready to go into cold frames, where for the last week before planting out they were left entirely uncovered, no frost having appeared. By the first week in May they were pronounced ready for setting out in open ground.

Agnes's cares did not end with the transference of the plants to other hands, however; she had constantly to keep watch to see that the plants were being treated as she wished, and so that they should produce fruit, not a mere stocky growth of leaves, and to see that, when the fruit had begun to form, they were fed with plant food and some soot water.

As this was the first, and therefore the test season, it was particularly desirable that no deformed or immature fruits should be sent out to damage our reputation, and to guard against the sacrifice of quality to quantity Agnes was urgent in demanding that the plants should be looked over every day, mal-formed flowers and fruits being picked off as soon as they appeared. Her strictness was rewarded when an unexpected word of praise came from the London agents, with the request for all that could possibly be supplied of the same kind and quality.

The yield of tomatoes began to come in just as we had finished with the soft fruits and their preserving, and a few of those who had been co-operating in that branch of work volunteered to help in packing the new consignments.

We used punnets similar to those in which strawberries are packed, these again being put up in light wooden boxes holding six or a dozen punnets each, and in this way they travelled well and fetched a better price because they looked attractive. I give this hint for what it is worth to any who may think of imitating us.

Now I must tell you about an enterprise of quite another kind, but not less useful and helpful in its way, I trust.

Whilst working amongst the women in the preserving-shed I had gleaned a good deal of information about their circumstances, and was often much struck with the shrewd way in which they observed life. The village of E. was

to many of them the only world of which they had any knowledge; the larger world outside seeming to have very little real interest to them except when a son or daughter might happen to have taken a plunge into the unknown. Among the men, too, although on closer acquaintance both Agnes and I were agreed that "Hodge" possessed more brains and more capability than he generally got credit for, still it was undoubtedly true that village life in many of its conditions did not tend to bring out the best that was in the people, nor had they much encouragement towards development of mental life. Long hours of outdoor labour needed to be made up for by going early to bed, until—in the summer months at least—it really seemed to be, as they said themselves, "all bed and work."

As winter days drew on, making less outdoor work possible, I bethought me that something might be done to fill up the vacancy. Even we ourselves, although our long evenings were amply filled with work and our minds kept employed with the books that we received from the subscription library, felt somewhat oppressed with the dulness and quiet of the dreary days.

"However do people manage to live without books?" I said more than once; and Agnes answered—

"Many of them do not live; they just hibernate like the insects." It struck me that it was a poor existence, and in a small way I did my best to send our papers and books circulating wherever there seemed any wish to have them. But this was not enough, and did not satisfy me.

"What we want is something to bring the people together, so that they shall stimulate one another," I said; and by degrees a plan evolved itself and took shape in my thoughts. "A Guild—yes, that is it; a Social Union, for men and women, young and old; something bright, cheerful and entertaining, and perhaps instructive as well; but how is it to be done?"

To be attractive to all it must not be connected with either church or chapel, it must not owe anything to the patronage of the richer folk, and it must be self-supporting if it was to be permanently successful. But all this being granted, the place of meeting was the point of first consequence. I turned the latter question over in my mind with much seriousness. To a schoolroom—supposing we were given the right to use it—many would not go, and there was not one amongst us who had a room large enough to accommodate any number. At last I bethought me of a disused barn belonging to a farmer with whom we were on very good terms. It had been used for storing sacks of grain, and was well built, well floored and dry. For some reason or other he did not appear to be using it now. I approached Farmer Jones on the subject.

He told me that for that winter, at any rate, he had no particular use for the barn; we could have it in the evenings without rent, providing that no damage was done.

I was delighted at finding the way so far open, and at Agnes's suggestion took counsel with one or two of the people who could give practical help in assisting to make the place attractive. Having no money to spend, we went a-begging for furniture, and from one house and another, the poor as well as the rich, we picked up odd chairs and tables, a length or two of carpet, pictures, books and a few other trifles. Then we set to work and disposed these so as to give a habitable and homelike look to the place.

Our greatest difficulty was with regard to the lighting and warming—two most important features. Here I had to seek advice from one or two men, the smith amongst others. They advised the purchase of some swing lamps, such as are used above billiard tables, and a Radiator oil-stove. The cost of these was not excessive, and to defray it at first we agreed to subscribe the necessary amount ourselves, then to devote to the repayment of this such part of the subscriptions from members as should have gone to pay rent, if rent had had to be paid.

I am glad to say that both arrangements proved highly successful; as the lamps had reflector shades, they gave an excellent light below, whilst the shades hid the bareness of the raftered roof from view; by lighting the stove an hour or so before anyone came, the room got comfortably warm, and the red glass made a cheerful glow.

We also invested in some simple games, chess, draughts and dominoes, a local and a London illustrated paper, and did our best to get the loan of an old piano, but without succeeding at first. This last did come to us a year later, however.

But the greatest difficulty to me personally was felt when the time came for starting the "Guild." As far as the room went, it was distinctly attractive and inviting, but if it did not "take on" in popular estimation, then the venture would be a failure, and to make it a success some personal influence was necessary. I had not confidence enough to flatter me into the belief that I possessed such an influence, nor did I wish to come into prominence in any way. I could be secretary or treasurer, but we wanted a president who could really lead and be an authority. The happy thought came to me at last of asking our good village doctor to take this position. He was everybody's friend; he knew everyone and all about them, and he was as much trusted as he was beloved; moreover, he had the magnetic gift in a high degree.

Fortunately the good man was easily persuaded. He had long known that bodies had souls, he said, and he should be rather pleased to have the opportunity of experimenting on them; so he accepted the presidentship quite gladly. I warned him that a speech would be expected from him on the opening night, then left him. A few days later he himself came to me with another suggestion.

"You'll want something more than a speech to set the ball rolling the first night," he said. "I know you don't want to provide entertainments in the usual way, and hope it won't be necessary, but there's a young friend of mine who is just back from Matabeleland, and he might give them an idea of what country life is like in the wilds of Rhodesia, and perhaps it might stir them up to see that we in old England stand a likely chance of being left behind in a good many things, in spite of our advantages." This was capital hearing; and what with speeches and an impromptu lecture, and the social influence of "light refreshments," I felt quite at ease about the start of the Guild.

Nor were expectations disappointed. The people came in full number, even the Vicar and his curate, the Wesleyan and the Baptist ministers, the Squire's daughters and the farmers' wives. Our room was crowded to its fullest capacity, and the refreshments nearly threatened to run short. The doctor was in excellent form—humorous—but underneath his humour he gave some sound advice about the use of the brain, and the wrong of letting mental ground lie fallow, while he urged the need of having more fun and enjoyment in life as being good for health as well as for the mind. Then he brought forward his young friend, a bronzed, athletic-looking man of the true traveller type, and introduced him to us. This proved a real surprise, and the welcome given was a warm one.

The stranger held us entranced for something over half an hour while he described an African trek across the veldt, the beginnings and the growth of a township, and what a few years had seen accomplished in face of tremendous difficulties. As he talked, King Lobengula became a real person to us, and we seemed to see Buluwayo spring up in the place of the old savage kraal, and to feel immensely proud that it was our own countrymen who could do such great things.

The stranger's help did not end here either, for by moving about amongst the people afterwards he got them to start the games, and worked like a bee in making them sociable with one another. I thanked him warmly afterwards; undoubtedly the success of that first evening was due to him, but he would not hear it.

"I'll come again if you'll have me," he said, and was true to his word, appearing at the most unexpected times, but always bringing a bit of real African sunshine with him. I have only one fault to lay to his charge, and that is that before that winter was over he had extorted a promise from me that some day—but certainly not yet—I would go out to Rhodesia with him!

LUCY H. YATES.

(To be continued.)

attempting to recapture the monster. As I felt guilty in having destroyed his sport, I consented.

The evening sped on. At half-past ten, as before, he prepared to go. My aunt woke at his rising. The wind was shrieking fiercely and the rain struck the immense windows in volleys.

"You really shall not go back to Rathglen to-night," she said. "Your room here is thoroughly aired, and the last time you stayed here you left a whole portmanteau full of linen and clothes."

He shook his head.

"I must," he said. "I asked Penrose—you remember Penrose, my old college chum?—to come over for a few

days, and he's due at midnight. You are the last woman in the world," he added mischievously, "to recommend me to a breach of hospitality."

My aunt gave him her hand.

"If you must, you must," she said. "Come over to-morrow with Penrose if you can. Mary and I will be delighted. You will take one of the horses?"

"No," he replied. "I shall cut straight across the park and through the fir plantation. I can easily reach home in half-an-hour."

He disappeared soon, and my aunt, still sleepy, proposed that we should retire at once.

(To be concluded)

WHAT CO-OPERATION DID IN OUR VILLAGE.

PART IV.



CO-OPERATION was to prove many-sided in our case, for not in money-making only did we find it profitable, not only in social exercise either, but it assumed a variety of helpful forms. Out of the Guild there came into existence a co-operative benefit club, then a lending library; a debating union was established amongst some of the men, and from helping one another in the matter of advice and lending of patterns, a dressmaking and millinery club got started amongst the women. This last met in our sitting-room, and proved a very enjoyable fortnightly gathering, leading, we hope, to thrift and economy in the laying out of clothes-money.

The weekly social gatherings at the Guild retained their popularity, a steady membership being kept up and a marked increase of neighbourliness being seen. The games and the papers always attracted the men and boys, while the women liked to avail themselves of the opportunity of having a "bit o' chat" with one another as much as anything. On several occasions we had the help of a lecture or talk from someone passing through or staying in the district, and so had chances of learning about things concerning matters beyond our own limited range, as well as getting information on topics that bore on agriculture, and so forth.

One of these lecturers prevailed on some of the cottagers to start a Poultry Club, showing them how to carry it out on co-operative lines. A poultry show was to be held the next autumn in the nearest market town, and so it offered an inducement to many to improve their methods and try a better system of poultry-keeping. Warm, clean houses began to replace the tumbledown shanties that had hitherto been thought good enough, more care about feeding, and what I called more humanity began to be seen in the treatment of feathered stock; and though unable to go in for poultry ourselves, Agnes and I watched this development with much interest, and gave what encouragement we could.

Before I go on to tell of something else that grew out of that winter's work, I must hark back to what the children had done.

One of those sudden demands that came not infrequently by the telegraph arrived one day in the autumn for "foliage," "reds," "browns," and "yellows." An uninitiated person might have deemed this unintelligible, but Agnes understood it.

"Tommy," she said to a boy who had come on some errand, "ask the schoolmaster to give you a holiday this afternoon, and then come for me at two o'clock sharp—do you hear?"

Tommy grinned assent; holidays never came amiss, and by hook or by crook he generally knew how to get them.

He and Agnes set off armed with large baskets and strong clasp-knives; it appeared afterwards that they filched the hedgerows, the young oak and nut trees, the hazels and the berberis, wherever they could find a tinted branch to cut. The conclusion of this afternoon's work was that Tommy was despatched to the station with a great hamper of the best of this foliage, somewhat hastily bunched and put into marketable form.

This demand gave Agnes the idea of employing both boys and girls in collecting coloured leaves and branches, and to those who brought in really good and saleable contributions, payment was given. Some of the older boys were pressed into more particular service.

The south side of Wood Cottage was covered with a creeper of the close-clinging variety of Virginian, the *Veitchii*; being tolerably old its leaves were strong and they hung till they turned a deep crimson colour. The boys procured long ladders, and with baskets slung on their arms they mounted and gathered these leaves with care. As each basket was filled it was emptied out on to a big table, the leaves sorted into sizes, ten or a dozen making a bunch. Boxes of these bunches were then packed and sent off to market, where, true to her surmise, Agnes found they fetched from a penny to three-halfpence per bunch. As all the leaves did not reach their best at the same time, the work of gathering them was spread over a week or two, and, other people following suit with us, quite a considerable amount of business was done eventually. We calculated that our own creeper yielded us a clear five pounds profit—a fourth of our rent.

In addition to gathering foliage I persuaded the boys and girls into my service too, for blackberry-picking. Though the harvest of wild fruit was not large, still I was able to add a small store of blackberry jelly to our list of preserves. Rowan jelly, too, using the berries of the mountain ash, we made at the suggestion of an epicurean customer, and were able to advertise it as the correct accompaniment to game and venison. In all these enterprises, children's fingers came in very helpfully, and very proud were they to be able to give service that was accounted as worth paying for.

After most of the weeks of the winter had gone by, lightened and brightened by the new interests that came into the life of the village, there came what threatened to be a sudden check, but which afterwards turned into another blessing in disguise.

A wet February brought in an epidemic of diphtheria, which declared itself first among the children. Afterwards, however, it spread to older people and became really alarming, and the shadow of sickness cast a gloom over many homes.

(To be continued.)

who selects a piece—say Ernst's "Elegy"—from a violinist's programme. Then the concert proceeds until it is Her Majesty's pleasure to retire; but often it is 11.30 or even later before the performance is concluded. There is no undue formalism, and everyone finds herself or himself quite at home. Thus, that eminent violinist Monsieur Tivadar Nachéz was once playing before the Queen when, just as he was about to begin, the Duke of Edinburgh merely beckoned him to come nearer, and he played only some three yards from the Queen. After the concert a *recherche* supper is provided, at which one of the Grooms in Waiting generally presides, following which the musical

visitors sleep at the Castle, or go to an hotel as they choose.

Altogether, music under the Queen's roof is a great thing and a great time—a matter to be remembered by all who have experienced it. No greater honour can an artist have than to find himself so placed; no more effective stimulus than such an appearance can be given to an artist's career. How content, for instance, to name only one individual, must Miss Ada Crossley ever feel from the fact that when singing recently by command at Windsor, Her Majesty paid the tribute of her tears to her rendering of "O Rest in the Lord."

WHAT CO-OPERATION DID IN OUR VILLAGE.

PART V.

OUR good doctor was nearly worked to death during the diphtheria epidemic, and he greatly deplored the ignorance that did so much to increase his work. "I wish one or both of you were a hospital nurse," he said one day to us, and the next day brought us word that he had sent for a nurse from London, and as ours was the only house where she could be lodged we must take her in! However, we were nothing loath, glad indeed to be able to assist our good friend so far. So in course of a few hours' time "Sister Eunice" arrived, and settled herself into her quarters. It was a treat to Agnes and me to meet with a young woman of our own age and of education again.

In one of our first chats together, Agnes and I recounted to our visitor something of what had been accomplished in the village, and of the success of some of our plans. But in a very short time, Sister Eunice had formed opinions of her own.

"My dears," she said, "there is nothing short of a revolution needed here, you may take my word for it. I haven't much faith in your improvements, get to the bottom of things and begin there."

"Radical remedies are not always possible when you are dealing with human beings, though," Agnes replied; "prejudice is a stiff hedge to get through, as we have found."

"Prejudice go to the wall; it's the only place for such rank, stubby stuff! I tell you I am shocked to find human life accounted so cheap as it is here."

"What do you mean?"

"There is no hospital, and no place that can be used as one, but bad as that is, it is not so bad as this. I tell you that in fifteen out of twenty cottages there is no room that a sick child, much less a sick man or woman, can lie in with comfort. Then there is never a window to be found open day or night. How do people expect to get well or be well without air, I wonder? Then look at the drainage. No wonder you have diphtheria here. I only marvel that typhoid and cholera are not here too. Talk about elevating people socially and teaching them to think! Teach them to be clean and wholesome first, and make their homes places fit to live in; then do as you like after; that is my plan."

At first we were inclined to laugh at her vehemence, but we grew sober again. "I believe you are right, and we have been self-deluded," Agnes said, "but you must stay with us long enough to put us on the right track now you are here. What would cause enmity if it came from one of us will come with a good grace from you, so you can take advantage of your opportunity, but you must not judge us too hardly, even if we have been mistaken."

Sister's sharp tone was distinctly softened when she spoke next, but it was full of determination as she said, "I don't leave here until I see at least the beginnings of a Cottage Hospital, and I shall deliver my soul in a course of Hygiene and First Aid, too, before I go!"

Like a fresh invigorating breeze, Sister perambulated the village and went in and out of the houses and cottages; the sick cases became rapidly fewer, and convalescents soon regained their normal way of life. She seemed to carry

health and vigour wherever she went. "Fresh air," was her trumpet-note, and she sounded it in season and out. Windows and doors seemed to open of their own accord when she was anywhere near. It was even said of her that one day she entered a sick-room and found a window closed for the second time in contradiction to her express orders. Lifting the poker she promptly knocked out the panes of glass from the offending casement and then laid a half-crown down on the table. "That will pay for its mending," she said, an angry light in her eyes, "but mind I never come and find that window closed again."

"Sister means what she say, that she do!" was the verdict that was passed on the occurrence afterwards.

But Sister had no intention of limiting her work to nursing and teaching cottagers. She had higher aims as well.

The Squire came almost to dread meeting the blue-cloaked figure, for she was importunate as the widow in Scripture, and for very "weariness of her coming" he at last gave the site for the Cottage Hospital, and got an architect to draw up the plans. Then his neighbour, as Justice of the Peace, was, for the salving of his own conscience, compelled to have the drainage of such houses as belonged to him overhauled and renewed, lest the sanitary authorities should be put upon his trail and his office brought into contempt; and whilst compelling himself to do the right thing, he had to insist on other property-holders doing the like.

One of the features of the meetings of the Guild when it met after Easter was the weekly lecture on First Aid, Ambulance Drill, and Sanitation. Sister's way of teaching was as thorough as her practice, and she was not content until she had brought roller bandaging into fashion, and instilled the laws of good housekeeping as well as of good health into her hearers.

Loud and deep were the lamentations when one summer day she left us to obey some call of duty elsewhere, but she bade us look out for her again, and prophesied that if we fell back into old ways her second coming would be a visitation we might dread. Fortunately her threat never needed to be fulfilled.

I must bring my history to a conclusion, for, being contemporary history, it is still in the process of making; we find the days bring ever-increasing opportunities to us whereby we may put the principles of co-operation into practice, and with the roughness worn off the handle, it becomes an easier matter to use the machine.

My moral is—what we have done others can do—and though all has not been done that might have been even in our case, still there is, I think, enough to show what may be achieved when hands and heads unite together.

Long ago the brave little kingdom of Holland formed itself into a nation against fearful odds, and made a fruitful land out of barren wastes and marshes, by taking for its motto, *Een-draagt macht magt*; namely, "In Union there is Strength," and that little kingdom stands to-day as an inspiration for all who in a great way or a small one follow the same grand law.

LUCY H. YATES.