CLEMATIS.

By NORA CHESSON.

Her eyes and hair are dark as night,
Her mouth is like a rose in this—
It is so red, so sweet to kiss.
And she has chosen clematis
In some vague dream of twilight hours
To be her emblem of all flowers.

Her cheek and throat are hawthorn-white;
No blossom that the privets bear
Matches the whiteness of her brows.
She is a shrine wherein no vows
Have dared aspire—no voice dared rouse
The echoes that lie sleeping there.

She has but seen for eighteen years
Suns rise and set, and rainbows wrought
Out of wild skies all thunder-fraught.
For storms that were she takes no thought,
Nor has she ever chanced to see
The portent of a storm to be.

She holds against time's gift of tears
Her talisman of happiness.
None looks upon her save to bless
And every touch is a caress;
Life is so kind to her that is
As white-souled as the clematis.

"THE WHITE HOUSE CLASS."

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

PART I.

There was great excitement at Merton House. The master and mistress were going out to dine. This in itself was no extraordinary thing. But as it was a vice-regal dinner-party to which they had been bidden, this particular feast excited much interest. First of all, the dress proper for such an occasion had to be thought of; feathers and lappels arranged according to the Chamberlain's order; ancient buckles fished out of a grandmother's chest; diamonds burnished up and fresh flowers begged, borrowed or stolen.

It was early when Mrs. Merton set forth in the festive chariot, it was late when she returned. It was very late when she showed her face next morning, for the dinner had been heavy and her sleep deep in consequence.

Now, I should not have mentioned this dinner-party save that it determined Mrs. Merton to give all her growing-up daughters a course of cookery lectures. It came about in this way. Mrs. Merton went, as usual, to a certain little white house round the corner to tell a certain invalid, there resident, of how the grand dinner-party had gone off. It had not been a success in one way; though a cook had been hired for the occasion at one hundred pounds for the week, the dinner was sadly lacking in many points. The lemon sponge had been lemon rock, the ice pudding full of lumps, the soup cold, the *entrées* uneatable.

"It has determined me, dear Miss Benson," concluded Mrs. Merton, as she finished the recital of all the defects as well as the pleasures of the last night's entertainment, "to have Linda and Lucilla and Eva taught the rudiments of cookery at all events. If Lady Carnforth had known anything about it, she would never have allowed her guests to go hungry away from the table."

"Probably not," answered little Miss Benson calmly. "Such a thing as housewifely training amongst the 'upper suckles,' as Jeames Yellow Plush called them, is almost unknown."

"And it is almost as sealed an art in our middle-class circles as well," moaned the mother of five. "It ought to be one of the courses in our elementary schools. Isn't it Mr. Ruskin who writes, 'The education of girls should begin in learning how to cook'?"

"Yes," answered Miss Benson. "And he says even more than this. He considers a knowledge of cookery to imply a pretty extensive acquaintance with most other things. Give me my commonplace book, dear, and I will look it up."

Mrs. Merton brought the thick strongly-bound volume to her old friend, for, alas, Miss Benson was tied to her couch with an incurable disease. From that couch, however, radiated more light and wisdom than from most of the scholastic centres in our midst. Mrs. Merton, at least, relied almost more entirely on the old lady's sound sanctified common-sense than on anything else in this world. So near the veil of futurity lived Miss Benson that she seemed to have drunk in a sibylline spirit, and to have a stock of good advice on almost every subject. The

quotation she was looking for was quickly found. She bade Mrs. Merton read it aloud.

"A knowledge of cookery means the knowledge of all herbs, and fruits, and balms, and spices, and of all that is healing and sweet in fields and groves, and savoury in meats; it means carefulness, and inventiveness, and watchfulness, and willingness and readiness of appliance; it means the economy of your great-grandmothers, and the science of modern chemists; it means much tasting and no wasting; it means English thoroughness, and French art, and Arabian hospitality; and as you are to see imperatively that everybody has something pretty to put on, so you are to see yet more imperatively that everybody has something nice to eat."

Mrs. Merton was silent for awhile. This extract had altogether raised the subject into a higher realm than that of an ordinary kitchen. Then she broke out.

"If cookery is indeed all that Mr. Ruskin claims it to be, however are we foolish enough to leave it to the ignorant women called 'plain cooks'?"

"I think, my dear, we do not leave it as much as we used to do. Kensington has done much towards making it into a fine art. It trains its students on a sound principle; it supplies reasons for each act of the culinary calling. For instance, it tells its students why potatoes are peeled thinly and why turnips are peeled thickly; it gives rules about the proper course of events in a kitchen—why onions should be shred before potatoes are cut if we wish to eliminate their particular flavour from a knife; it teaches economical habits, it insists on cleanliness."

"I had thought I might teach the girls myself," said Mrs. Merton hopelessly, "but you and Mr. Ruskin show me how little I know myself, after all."

"You know enough to teach your young fry," answered Miss Benson firmly. "All the same, I think you had better not do so. The fact is, one of the chief moral lessons taught by learning how to cook is self-reliance. It is far better that too much help should not be given at the commencement. For this reason I, who seem a useless log lying on this sofa"—Mrs. Merton made a gesture of denial—"am a far more competent teacher than an active mother could ever be. Lucilla and Linda will have to cultivate their powers of memory because I cannot get off my chair to fetch forgotten ingredients for them."

Miss Benson looked quite pleased at the prospect of her cooking lectures, and Mrs. Merton gave in gratefully. A somewhat lengthy conversation followed the compact. In it Miss Benson spoke of the observation required by cooking, of the self-control cultivated by preparation of dainties which might never be tasted save in the preliminary stages, of the accuracy indispensable, of the alertness acquired even by the most lethargic young person when a few minutes may turn a light sponge into a piece of lead, of the deftness and delicacy of touch so valuable; lastly, but by no means leastly, of the habits of tidiness and cleanliness engendered by the culinary art when properly understood. Mrs. Merton went away from the White House thinking more of the moral than the economical side of the classes to be given her young fry. She felt that Miss Benson would raise the subject even higher than Mr. Ruskin had done, that her three daughters would understand more forcibly by means of her instruction than by any other the sacredness of food and our responsibility in connection with it.

His wife enlarged on all these points to Mr. Merton when he came home from the City that night. Manlike he thought more of the physical than of the spiritual side of the question.

"Why, my dear, I shall be able to retire from business years sooner than I had contemplated, for Lucilla and Linda and our little Eva will require about half the *dot* I had thought would be necessary for them! Any man will jump at the chance of such virtuous and educated wives. They have each a certificate for swimming, haven't they?" Mrs. Merton nodded. "Well, if any suitors come, I had intended to meet them armed with that fine piece of parchment. 'Here,' I would say, 'is a wife who will help you out of deep water whenever you get into it. Is not she a valuable person?' But if Miss Benson teaches my girls all she intends, I shall wave a far more important document in my right hand. 'Here,' I shall say, 'is the hall mark on Lucilla and Linda and the rest of them which shows that any of them are capable of keeping you out of deep water.'"

Mrs. Merton smiled. Her husband would have his joke, as she knew. But there was truth in what he said, nevertheless, for, by teaching the girls cooking, her old friend was giving them a good dowry of common-sense and usefulness.

Not many days after this a small group were gathered in Miss Benson's kitchen. It was a "lovely" one, if loveliness consists of perfect adaptability to a purpose; it was long and rather low, with thick rafters intersecting its ceiling. Originally a barn-like excrescence from the house, these rafters could not be hidden, but were found useful for hanging up flitches of bacon and the home-cured hams Miss Benson delighted in. The windows were two; in one of them was placed a solid square table, in the other a small couch on which lay the mistress of the house. Behind it on a writing-table—Miss Benson supplied her housemaidens with many luxuries not usually given to servants, and had cheerful willing service rendered in consequence—rested a cookery-book, a ledger and pencils. Ranged on the walls were cover-dishes and jam-pans in silver and copper and block-tin. Roses peeped into the two windows, and God's sunshine permeated the room, lighting up its comfortable corners, and allowing no place for dust or *débris* of any sort. A tile-patterned linoleum was on the floor, pretty prints bound with red braid, and therefore easily replaceable when an annual turn-out called for spotless prints, a bookcase full of intelligent readable volumes, a bright steel range and a glowing fire. These were some of the object lessons which surrounded three demure apron-clad figures on the morning of Miss Benson's opening lecture. What was taught thereby I will tell in our next paper.

(*To be continued.*)

VARIETIES.

A Catch Somewhere.

A lady, wishing to insure her house, said at the end of her inquiries, "You don't ask who set the house on fire, do you?"

"Oh, yes," replied the clerk, "we should want to know all about that!"

"Then I won't insure," said the lady. "I thought there was a catch about these insurances, and now I see where it is!"

Quite a Mistake.—Human nature readily falls into the mistake of thinking that those who make the most fuss and noise in the world are doing the most work.

A Good Motto.

On every banner blazon bright:
"For toil, and truth, and love we fight."

Cures for Melancholy.—Melancholy was considered by the old herbalists as a disease. They had several "secrets" purporting to cure it, which were at one time in great request. It is, indeed, no wonder that dames and maidens were fond of gathering simples, when we consider the cheering virtues which were attributed to them. A syrup of borage and bugloss, they were told, cured melancholy, caused light hearts, and took away grief. Who would not drink a cup of this mixture to the dregs?

evidently with them, for there were whispers of annoyance on all sides.

"Bother!" muttered Bob, "what does he want here?"

"Oh, Jack, do go away, we are so comfie," said Phyllis.

"Nance, please tell Jack to go away, he will make Toddles bark," chimed in Ethel and Tom, while Arthur rolled over and over till he was well out of the way of his cousin's long arm, and then lay watching him suspiciously.

Jack Lovel frowned slightly, but said nothing beyond a sharp—

"Shut up, you young idiots."

He was strikingly handsome, but his whole face was spoilt by the restless look in his dark eyes, and the weakness of his mouth and chin. His father, Henry Lovel, had been the ne'er-do-weel of the family, and his only child, who resembled him closely in appearance, also, unfortunately, inherited his character, and had caused Dr. Lovel many an anxious hour by his recklessness and folly. He was now working in the Meriton Bank, but his idleness and bad temper were already beginning to make enemies for him among his fellow-clerks. The one soft spot in his heart seemed to be his fondness for his cousin Nance, and a gentle word from her often went further than a long and stern reprimand from his uncle.

The story being satisfactorily finished at last, Nance turned to him, and said—

"Well, Jack dear, how is it you are home so soon?"

"Oh, I had a bit of a headache, so knocked off work early," replied her cousin. "I saw Aunt Margaret and Audrey, but they did not see me, I am glad to say," he added under his breath.

"Where did you see mother? She and Audrey were going to the Rectory first, I think, and they hoped to get over several more distant calls after."

"They were standing talking to that woman Mrs. Sinclair, who was driving as usual in her antiquated washing basket. Why on earth she cannot shell out a little of her spare cash and buy a more decent-looking trap, I can't think."

"Was Miss Sinclair there also?" queried Nance, with a reproving look at Jack.

"No, the amiable Evelyn was not there, for which Audrey would be devoutly thankful I should imagine. Ten minutes with that acidulated drop is enough to settle anyone. She tried to nail me in a corner the other day at the Haywards' and would have talked me blue in five minutes, but, fortunately, I spotted her little dodge, and a sudden but very severe attack of bleeding from the nose obliged me to make my retreat with all possible speed."

"Nance!" suddenly remarked Tom, who had been sitting very quietly for some minutes, "why are Mrs. Sinclair's eyes like Brighton? I'll give you three guesses."

"Oh, Tom!" cried Ethel reproachfully, "you never told me!"

"How could I, silly, I have only just made it up myself. I'll whisper it now if you like."

Nance guessed in vain, so Tom proudly produced the answer—

"Because they are both well-known watering-places. You know she's always crying. I watched her in church last Sunday, and she cried once in the first lesson, three times in the Litany, and nearly all the sermon, and it wasn't a bit a criey one. It was full of dreadful long words, and I couldn't understand half of them."

There was a shout of laughter from the children at Tom's riddle, in which Jack Lovel joined heartily, but Nance looked grave, and when the mirth had subsided she said quietly—

"Tom, dear, you must not laugh at poor Mrs. Sinclair. She has had great sorrow. Her husband died only a few months ago. Think for a moment—if our dear father was dead, should we like Jim Conway or Teddy Stevens to be noticing when mother wiped away her tears, and to make fun of her?"

Tom was a tender-hearted little chap, and, jumping up, he kissed Nance and whispered—

"Indeed I never thought of it like that, Nancie. I won't laugh at her again."

Then the first tea-bell rang which was the signal for them to go and make themselves tidy for tea, so all ran into the house, and Nance was following them with her basket, when Jack called her back.

"Can't you stop a minute, Nance? A fellow never has a chance to get a word with you because of those children."

"Why, Jack dear, I would have sent them away sooner if I had known that you wanted to talk to me. What is the matter, old boy?"

"Everything is the matter!" said Lovel with a groan. "It's no good, Nance, I can't and won't stand that office work much longer. Look at my salary too—a miserable hundred pounds a year! Is it wonderful that I cannot make it do?"

Nance's blue eyes looked anxious.

"Jack," she said, putting her hand through his arm, "are you in debt again? Oh, I do hope not. What will father say?"

"Uncle Lovel won't know, so he can't say anything; besides, it's only a small amount. It's those wretched cards. I have had a regular run of bad luck lately. Cheer up, old girl, though; don't look as if I were on the very verge of ruin. I've no doubt my luck will change soon, and I shall be all serene again."

Nance sighed deeply.

"Oh, Jack dear, if you would only give up those wretched card evenings—I'm sure they cause all the trouble. There goes the second bell! Come, we must run in or tea and father will be waiting."

(*To be continued.*)

"THE WHITE HOUSE CLASS."

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

PART II.

A LOVE of cookery, or rather, of cooking, is born in all children. From their earliest years they will make sand or mud pies, turn puddings out of buckets on the shore, or make feasts in winkles and cockle shells. Who does not remember the toffee of childhood boiled only on snowy days and as hard as the nether millstone? Who does not recall the tallowy, crimson drops evolved by application of a sugary lump to a smoking candle? Who does not recall the delight of snow pancakes and even of those wonderful flat loaves made from courtcards? Who does not love doughy pigs with currant eyes, or pastry mice with tender tails?

Yet how few of the maidens who esteemed an hour in the kitchen as the greatest pleasure of all their pleasurable childhood carry out this love into intelligent interest and manipulation in other years? Miss Benson had not been in error when she said that the three young Mertons would look upon the classes as a grand bit of fun. They came in sparkling and dimpling and bursting with eagerness. For the first morning their instructress let them work their own sweet will, "Just to let them know their own ignorance," as she said. When this was manifested by a pile of burnt pies and sodden cakes, she raised their spirits by telling them that she would see they made no mistakes in future.

"Listen to what I say and follow what I say, and you will be successful." And successful they were in the end, though inaccuracy and carelessness and inattention spoiled many a dish even after they had set themselves to learn in real earnest.

As Miss Benson's classes were no formal ones, so no

formal sequence of proceedings marked them. Just as was convenient she taught them various things, so my readers must not wonder if the lessons hopped from pastry to turnips and from soups to sweets.

"The first thing a cook must learn is, how to lay and light a fire," said Miss Benson, as her small class came in the next day. "I have not allowed cook to do mine this morning so that you might have a chance. Coal, sticks and paper are the articles wanted. Rake out every bit of dust and cinder. Your fire requires air to breathe just as much as your lungs do. Now put a few of the larger cinders at the bottom. On them place a handful of sticks. No, not in a bunch like that, Linda! Build them up as you would do bricks. You have in your hand a bundle of prepared kindling twigs. Each end has been dipped in resin, as you see, to make it catch easily. A bundle costs one halfpenny, and half a bundle should be sufficient to light up a big range fire quickly. If speed be not an object the bundle can be made to light three fires, and it should be expected to do so, when used in the parlour or bedroom. For one penny, therefore, you have sufficient kindling material for three fires. Remember this when you have servants of your own, my dears."

"But when wood is so cheap, is there any need to be so particular?" inquired Lucilla with her most *grande-dame* air. "It hardly seems worth while, does it?"

"My dear child," said Miss Benson, "you have evidently never mastered the first principles of economics! A wise man has said, 'Political economy consists in spending a pound to save a penny. Household economy consists in spending a penny to save a pound.' This is true, and every penny saved is a penny gained. I will not bid you add up the amount to credit if you save just one farthing in firewood per diem! Such statistics are futile to most folk! But I will demonstrate truth in another way. The heap of firewood in that corner beside you cost sixpence. There are twelve bundles. Take a third from each bundle, and you will lose four bundles at once! That is, that you waste twopence out of every sixpence, or nearly seven shillings out of every pound!"

Lucilla looked convinced. It was all as clear as day when Miss Benson put it that way!

"Now use that wire shovel beside you for taking up each bit of cinder. Heap it on the wood, and intersperse it with lumps of round coal. Not large ones, Linda! Just the smallest in the bucket. There! Your fire is alight!"

"But you use expensive matches, I see, Miss Benson," quoth Lucilla, remembering the little lecture on saving she had just been given.

"Yes, my dear, for two reasons! One is that common Swedish matches at fourpence a dozen are apt to catch fire when not wanted. Only the other night a child came in to me with her hand badly scorched by a box of these cheap things exploding in it! Extracting one match is often sufficient to cause the whole box to ignite. The second reason is, that most match-making is a most fatal trade. By improper sanitary precautions the match-makers of England suffer from a most terrible and fatal disease called 'Phosphorous jaw.' Manufacturers know that unless certain precautions are taken this dreadful disease is sure to attack those who engage in it. If these precautions are taken, it makes match-making a more expensive process than if they are given out to be made at home. For this reason, I always use the matches made by the Salvation Army. These are made under healthy and safe conditions. And I believe Bryant and May are careful about their employees too, and their matches are very well made!"

"Then we should all use safety matches from unselfish as well as selfish motives," remarked Lucilla. "I have only heard the cheap ones condemned because they are unsafe."

"That is the reason usually given, because folk have not looked into the matter," said Miss Benson earnestly. "But my reason is, as I have told you, because in safety matches, which are said to light only on the box, the head of the match contains no phosphorus as do those of ordinary make. They are tipped with a mixture of chlorate of potash and sulphide of antimony. These are comparatively harmless chemicals."

Linda, whilst this talk had been going on, had the fire well laid and blazing. Miss Benson bid her carry away all refuse, and, when the first blaze was a little over, she was directed to add more coal.

"As Mr. Ruskin says a knowledge of cookery includes many other things, I must give you a little lecture about coal, I suppose," sighed Miss Benson, for her class was eager to get "forrard." "I wonder which of you girls can tell me to what kingdom it belongs."

"As it is dug out of the ground, I suppose to the mineral," quoth all three at once.

But the old lady shook her head.

"To the vegetable, my dears! Coal is of vegetable origin. It is, indeed, the remains of vast forests which grew in the carboniferous period! There is a long word for you, little Eva! Wherever coal is now found was once, ages and ages ago, vast swampy forests, in which grew gigantic trees. These forests subsided beneath the sea, and the accumulated vegetable matter was covered with a layer of sand. The wet vegetable matter underwent slow decomposition, and consequently became richer and richer in carbon. Our ordinary household contains, I believe, on an average about 88 per cent. of carbon. That is why it fizzes in little jets and gives out such a cheery flame. Another form of true economy, Lucilla, is connected with coal. The cheapest is never the cheapest in the long run! Good, hard, clean coal is far less wasteful in use than cheap, soft stuff. It burns itself and does not leave behind clinkers and cinders and ash. I save the proverbial pound by spending the proverbial penny in this matter."

The kind of fire necessary to our different processes of cooking were next dwelt upon. For roasting, Miss Benson said, a clear hot fire was called for. This could be secured by having the front surface built up of lumps and kept in place by a background of damp slack.

"In large kitchens," she said, "the fireplaces are built very shallow. At King's College, Cambridge, where the kitchens are almost as beautiful as the Chapel, long grates measuring only about three inches in depth are found. These give a large surface and very little background. Spits hang before these long gratings, and food is cooked in the most digestible way. In roasting, our object must be to seal up the juices of the meat in a kind of envelope. Hence we hang a joint as near the fire as we can. Intense heat freezes the surface, to use a Hibernianism. After a time the meat is drawn backwards and basting begins. This keeps the inside moist and helps to make the envelope crisp. The rule for roasting is, twenty minutes before the hottest part of a fire to begin with; then twenty minutes to each pound at a reasonable distance from the same.

"For baking we need much the same kind of fire, but it must be as fierce at the back as in front, otherwise our oven will not heat. This fire must be kept at the same heat all the time the oven is required. Regulation of it must take place by letting in air to the oven and letting out air from it. Twenty minutes to each pound is again the rule for all meat cookery in an oven. Roasting and baking may be called the aristocratic branches of heating. The poor must be content with boiling and stewing—indeed so must the dyspeptic! No way is meat so digestible as when stewed. By stewing I mean extracting the juices and goodness of meat by slow boiling. French people seldom cook in any other way, and in stewing, inferior, or, I would rather say, less expensive parts of a carcass can be used. Really inferior meat is never economical. Go to the best butcher in the town, is my advice. If you cannot afford to buy the best joints buy the cheaper ones. But by dealing with an honest well-to-do man you are sure of getting good value for money, and of getting even the less tasty parts of meat of good quality. It is the duty of a cook to so present these inferior parts that they may be just as nourishing and toothsome as the superior ones. A good cook in this way is a most economical thing. I pity housewives who have to put up with a 'slavey' at £6 a year. She will waste more through ignorance than one realises. If you cannot have a good trained cook, girls, then do the cooking yourselves! So much depends on the kitchen in a modern household—health and spirits and brain and cheerfulness!"

Miss Benson had apparently forgotten the last branch of cookery. Lucilla reminded her she had said nothing about boiling.

"For boiling," amended the old lady, "you need a gentle heat. For what is called boiling a joint is not boiling at all—or certainly not beyond the first two minutes. Here again our object must be to produce an envelope capable of resisting the action of hot water. This we obtain by plunging the leg or shoulder or chicken into a pot of madly bubbling water. Introduction of the said shoulder, etc., immediately stops boiling. But let the pot come up to a bubble again and you will have sealed the pores of the meat, and can depend on juices being retained until it is cut at table. All delicate-looking white-complexioned meat is produced by not attending to this rule. And then not only is the meat tasteless, but its most nourishing properties have been left behind in the pot from which it was lifted. That contains the essence, as it were, extracted by the process of stewing."

"Mother told me to ask you, Miss Benson, if New Zealand frozen meat is as nourishing as English-fed animals? It is so much cheaper, you know."

"Yes, I know," replied Miss Benson. "It may be prejudice, but I must confess I prefer nice English mutton to any which has come over the sea. New Zealand lamb, however, and American beef are much in vogue now. It depends entirely on how they are cooked whether they are as nourishing as English produce. In some ways I rejoice at the introduction of ice chambers and refrigerators. It has done away with much of the dreadful trade of shipping living animals for consumption in our little island. It makes one inclined to forswear all animal food to read of the torments inflicted on poor brutes during the passage, say, from Ireland to England, or from Normandy to us."

"Do you, then, approve of vegetarianism?" queried Eva with wide-open eyes.

"Yes, in many ways," answered Miss Benson. "But for ourselves I believe our cold climate calls for use of animal food in moderation. We eat far too much as a rule, little Eva. If milk and eggs could be procured as cheaply and easily as flesh, I think our artisan population might be largely benefited by using them more generously. I am sure our 'upper sukkles' would benefit largely by knocking off half their daily meat allowance."

By this time the hour was up. Miss Benson and her two pupils looked ruefully at the clock.

"We have done absolutely no cooking this morning," urged the trio. "Can't we go on for awhile?" But Miss Benson shook her head.

"I perceive these classes will be as diffuse as Mr. Ruskin could wish!" she said. "But one hour is quite enough, my dears, both for teacher and taught. Next week, I promise you, you shall do some real cooking. But you will have to light the fire first, remember."

(*To be continued.*)

SILENT STRINGS.

By SARAH DOUDNEY, Author of "Lady Dye's Reparation," "A Cluster of Roses," etc.

CHAPTER V.

A GLIMPSE OF WOODMERE.

SIS, waking up in the morning, wondered for a moment where she was, and how those queer chintz curtains came to be hanging round her! The blinds were down, yet the light of a spring day was pouring into every corner. How big and chill the room was! She nestled down on her pillow again, and felt that she did not want to get up to face this new world.

But when Judith, fresh as a rose, came smiling to her bedside with tea and buttered toast, she felt ashamed of her laziness and depression. Kindness must be repaid with kindness. Sis answered the first question cheerfully, and said that she had slept well.

"Oh, you'll soon get accustomed to everything here," cried Judith gaily. "We are not quiet people, although we live in a dull place. And now I'll draw up the blinds, and give you the full benefit of the sunshine while you dress."

The windows overlooked the sweet lone country, bounded by the far-reaching hills. The land, sprinkled lavishly with the gold of the gorse, was like a vast playground for the living things spending their wild lives there as they pleased. Sis felt a longing to be out and away with the rabbits and the birds; or, better still, to climb those softly-rounded heights, and see what was hidden in their green hollows. All was fresh, and beautiful, and new. She went downstairs prepared to be happy in spite of any little thorns that might beset her path.

Martin Bourne was doing his very best to make himself agreeable to his cousin's friend. Already he had thought out a plan for the day.

"I'll come for you and Miss Wilmer in my park-cart," he said to Judith at breakfast. "Then you can have a rest, and a bit of lunch at my place, and walk as far as Woodmere in the afternoon. Of course I'll drive you home in the evening."

"That's a capital idea!" Judith cried. "You want to see Woodmere, don't you, Sis?"

"Very much," Sis answered, secretly wishing that she could see it without being indebted to Mr. Bourne.

"The Hervies are away, worse luck," Judith went on. "But the housekeeper is not at all a bad sort, and she'll show us all that worth's seeing. I'm in a good mood to-day, Sis, and I'll let you admire the pictures and the rotten old furniture and tapestry to your heart's content."

"What a barbarian you are, Judith!" said Martin Bourne with disgust. "Now nothing pleases me better than things which belong to the past. I really believe I should have been a—what do you call it?—an—an——"

"Antiquary," suggested Sis.

"That's it—thank you. Yes, I should have been an antiquary if circumstances hadn't made me a farmer."

Judith's eyes were twinkling with amusement. Martin's efforts to adapt himself to Sis's tastes were rather clumsy, she thought; but with all her heart she wished him success. Her cousin had always been good-natured to her mother and herself; and she was not in the least in love with him. Judith had her ambitious thoughts, and they soared high over the head of Martin Bourne.

He arrived about twelve o'clock in a pretty little cart, drawn by a well-groomed cob, and Sis soon found herself trundling along one of the narrow white roads which wound like ribbon across the waste land. It was still cold; the air had all the keenness of a backward

HOW TO BE POOR.

HAT a queer title, I fancy I hear my readers say. "How to be poor." I should have thought that was easy enough. Do you? Well, then, just try the experiment. Knock off your little luxuries, give up a few of what you think necessaries, and let me know the result in a few weeks. No, my friends, it is not so easy to be poor—respectably poor. It is easy enough to be a tramp or a pauper; you have only to let everything go—respectability, self-respect, etc.—and there you are, but that is not being poor. One of the very hardest lessons a man or woman has to learn is how to be poor after having been rich—to have to economise in the little things which seem to be absolutely necessary. The bigger things, such as carriages, bouquets, men-servants, silk dresses, etc., are obviously unnecessary, and they are the first to go. But there are countless smaller things with which it is not easy to part: the summer holiday, which is supposed to be absolutely necessary for health, a pew at church, which made us appear so eminently respectable and differing from our poorer neighbours, the fresh-cut flowers, that made our tables look so pretty, the dainty lingerie and fresh ribbons and sashes, even the unconsidered postage stamps. All these have to be carefully adjusted to one's new position.

One of the most imperative and the most disagreeable curtailments must be retrenchment in the domestic department. No more ladies' maids, valets, parlour-maids or page-boys. At one fell swoop away they must go, and let me say (*par parenthèse*) that you will be amazed at the result. It is not only the wages, but the cost of board which makes it real economy to pay one good servant rather than three or four indifferent ones. But then, you must do many things yourself that you never did before. You must make your own beds, dust your own china, mend all your household linen as well as your personal apparel, and not mind opening your own hall-door when occasion requires. Moreover you must buy one dress where you bought three or four, one bonnet or hat of serviceable material, and alter the trimmings instead of buying new ones. Never allow yourself to buy rubbishy material because it is cheap (it is very dear in the end); and you must put out of your head once and for ever the idea that you can be in the latest fashion at any time. You need not necessarily be quite out of the fashion; a little common sense and taste will make it possible to pass muster even at garden and evening parties with old dresses; but then you must adapt and make the best of what you have got.

Cotton dresses must be banished, and blouses and skirts take their place, and every bit of dress and underclothes-making, and of course all millinery, must be done at home if possible.

The economy in men's clothes is not so easy. They must have the stereotyped black coat and tall hat and other clothing, none of which can be made at home; so, as usual, the self-denial presses most upon the women of the family. But the men can do something; they can travel third class instead of first or second class as formerly, they can smoke fewer pipes or cigars, and knock off their club subscriptions and help a little more in the household, and not mind little necessary economies. Much more they cannot do, but they should do that cheerfully.

You will soon find, if taken up in the right spirit, that the riches of a man or woman do not consist in the abundance of their possessions, and that the comfort of knowing that you owe no man anything but to love one another is a state of things worth striving after; that your fires are not less bright because you use cinders where formerly you used recklessly all live coal, that your dinner-tables are not less attractive because arranged with intelligence by yourself instead of your parlour-maid, and that your bonnet pleases your husband's or brother's eye none the less because you are your own milliner.

It is worth while to be "brought low" and made poor to learn this priceless lesson—a lesson that nothing but adversity can teach. And I am tempted to add that no one can really enjoy the good gifts of God who has not had to earn them, and above all, who has not learnt how to sympathise with the friend and neighbour who is poor in this world's goods yet rich above all telling in the good opinion and affection of their family and friends—a state of poverty which kings and princes may envy and millionaires may strive after.

"THE WHITE HOUSE CLASS."

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

PART III.

MISS BENSON was a wise woman. She did not wish to make the weekly classes at White House too severely scientific. So, on the third morning on which the young Mertons came up her spotless white steps, and into her pretty, comfortable kitchen, they found a variety of tempting ingredients laid out on the table in the window. There were currants and spices, and sultanas and sugar, and flour and baking-powder, and butter and jam. The fire too was alight, and nothing but one of the most interesting of processes to be gone through.

"I am going to have a tea-party to-night. I want a sponge cake, *voila tout!*" explained the old lady, with a sweep of her hands.

"But how are we to make it, please?" quoth the proud Lucilla humbly. "I haven't the faintest idea!"

"What ingredients do you suppose you will want?" queried Miss Benson.

"Flour, of course," answered all three.

"Butter as well," added Lucilla.

"Eggs," said Eva.

"Milk," supplemented Linda.

"Eggs certainly," assented Miss Benson. "And maybe a very little flour. But no milk and no butter. Sponge cake is one of the easiest of cakes to make. It is also one of the least expensive. On the other hand it takes the most time, and requires a good deal of elbow grease. Now, Lucilla, take two eggs, and their weight in flour. Put the latter in a basin, and, whilst you are breaking up six more eggs, Linda must sift the flour carefully. My last cook broke my sifting-wheel, Linda; but pass the flour carefully through that tiny wire-sieve and it will do as well. Now, Lucilla, break each egg separately. This is always necessary if eggs are bought in a shop. It is unnecessary if they are home-laid. As you see that the white of each is clear, you may add it to the ones already broken. There, that will do. Now, with a spoon, Lucilla, remove those little white specks and threads attached to so many yolks. If you forget to do this, the cake may taste strongly, and will be heavy too. Now whisk with that wire erection. It cost eightpence, and is better than any double fork. Nay,

child, but you have to whip for twenty minutes, and if you do it from the shoulder, you will never last out! Whisk with the wrist, as I show you—what a mercy I have the use of my hands, isn't it? Now, take a quarter of a pound of sifted sugar, and add it to your eggs. Go on whisking all the time. I see that the mixture is more like milk than cream, so we must add the flour Linda has already prepared. If you were expert enough at whisking, this would not be necessary. Now squeeze half a lemon into the cream."

Poor Lucilla went on labouring at the beating, whilst Eva was directed to put a walnut of butter into a round cake-pan.

"Melt it, and then sift over some white sugar, turning the tin in all directions as you do so in order that it may be coated with the oleaginous compound. This little addition is the secret whereby confectioners manage to give their sponges the syrupy, frosty appearance so taking, and apparently unattainable by an ordinary amateur. The oven must be hot. Put a crumb of bread in it, Linda. Is it brown at once? Then the oven is hot enough. Now pour the cream into the pan, Lucilla, as quickly and deftly as possible. Cover its face with a sheet of tissue paper, and put at once into the oven. Don't attempt to look at it for ten minutes, girls. At the end of that time it will have risen as much as it will ever do, and the heat must be moderated in order to cook it thoroughly all through."

All three girls were intensely delighted at the result of this morning's work. Their cake emerged from the oven in first-rate condition. Though the cream had only half filled its tin when introduced to its fiery ordeal, it was a couple of inches above the top rim when finished. Loosening it with a knife from its surroundings, it slid out freely and satisfactorily without leaving any morsels of ragged sponge behind it. Then it was set on a sieve to cool.

"If we lay it on a flat surface like a plate," explained Miss Benson, "it would become moist and heavy with the condensation of steam. On a sieve it dries evenly and completely, and even its bottom layer will be as crisp as its crown."

So it was. And great was Mrs. Merton's satisfaction when she eat a bit of the first cake made by her daughters' hands.

Not to be prolix, I will say that this sponge mixture may be used in many different ways. It can be poured into patty-pans and made into spongelets. It can be spread out evenly on the tin top of an ordinary biscuit-box, then cut in two, sandwiched with jam, and so made into Swiss roll. It can, *par excellence*, be made into apricot shape. As this is a famous supper dish of Miss Benson's, I will tell you how she prepared it.

After making and baking a square sponge cake after the above plan, she caused the girls to scoop out its crumb as far as possible. This was done with the point of a knife. Then this hollow was filled with apricot mixture and covered with apricot glaze. To prepare the latter, she soaked a quarter of an ounce of sheet gelatine in about two tablespoonfuls of water. In order to do this, it was set over gentle heat in a small saucepan. As soon as it was melted, two tablespoonfuls of apricot jam was added to it. If too thick to run nicely when dropped from a spoon (and gelatine rather varies in strength), a little syrup from an open tin of apricots was added to it.

This glaze was then poured over the sponge-casing, which rested on a tin, through a fine wire-sieve. This enabled any glaze which ran down the sides to be pasted up again with the back of a spoon. That left over finally was taken up and poured into the centre of the casing.

Then two whites of egg were beaten up as stiffly as possible with a flat wire-netting spoon. Two and a half ounces of sugar were added to the froth and mixed up in it. This compound was next forced through a paper bag (the pattern for which I gave in a recent number of the "G.O.P.") on to the sponge. It was sprinkled with sugar.

"Never forget this sprinkling," directed Miss Benson, when she was teaching her class this particular recipe. "If you do, the meringue will entirely lose its crispness and character."

It was set in an oven for five or six minutes, taken out and let cool.

Then, lastly, the centre of the apricot *gâteau* was filled up with good tinned apricots.

"Would fresh fruit do as well, Miss Benson?" queried Lucinda, as she piled up the apricots. "Mother has a great prejudice against our eating any tinned things, and we would like our share of this delicious dish."

"To be sure," answered the old lady. "Any fresh fruit would do as well. Strawberries might be slightly mawkish, but raspberries would not be too sweet to use, or stewed apples. There, it is done now, girls; but it looks a little dry. So put away the syrup out of the tin, and I will tell cook to add a little to the cake before bringing it to the table. This must be done at the last moment, or it would soak into the sponge casing and make it sodden. But, for gracious, Linda, don't leave the juice in the tin! Pour it into a cup or bowl. No wonder your mother objects to your eating canned things, if that is the way you manage them. Never leave any contents of a tin in its former receptacle when once opened; that is what causes the few cases of poisoning we hear of. If it be fruit, an acid will be formed which is highly injurious. Why, even potted meat should never be left in the tins in which it is bought! It should be scraped out and put into a china pot. I have them of all sizes with tight-fitting covers. By using such, all danger of ptomaine poison is avoided."

As Mr. Ruskin's definition of cookery included a knowledge of fruits, Miss Benson told her class a little about the process of preserving fruits in a tin.

"I was for awhile in California," she said, and the girls set themselves to listen as to an interesting tale, "and saw several canneries at work. All prejudice on the matter was taken from my mind at seeing the way in which peaches and apricots were treated. Warm and luscious, they were brought from out of the hot sunshine into the cool depths of the store. They were always carefully covered with layers of their own glossy oval leaves. Then each downy, orange-brown skin was looked at, and if bruised in any way, that particular specimen was tossed aside into a large basket and sent away to feed the pigs; if whole and sound, the fruit was laid on a stone slab, and with one sweep of a sharp knife detached from its stone. Some of the kernels were bitter, others sweet; when this last was the case, the kernel was added to the quartered fruit and put into the tin with it. Syrup was then poured over all, and the air being expelled by artificial means, it was soldered down. Now, besides the care exercised in choosing only sound apricots, the tins were subjected to strict scrutiny before being used. It is almost impossible to say how quick and deft the packers were in discerning any flaw in them. Thousands of tins are passed through a store in the season, but quite as many are rejected as being unsuitable."

"Does the apricot tree flourish in all parts of the world, Miss Benson?" queried Linda.

"I do not know," replied the old lady frankly; "but it is not indigenous to England, though it flourishes so well on a south wall in our cold island. It was introduced only in the time of Henry VIII. The agent was his own gardener named Woolf, and this man brought it from Italy. The fruit was, however, well known to the Greeks and the Romans, so its antiquity is great."

"It is rather hard sometimes to tell an apricot from a peach," quoth Lucilla thoughtfully. "Do they belong to the same family, Miss Benson?"

"No," answered the old lady, who seemed to have such knowledge at her finger-ends; "the peach is of the genus almond, and of the natural order *Rosaceae*, whereas the apricot belongs to the plum family. Nectarines are a tender variety of the peach, with a smooth instead of a hairy skin, but apricots are quite distinct. I suppose you know that the tiny bottles of bitter-almond flavouring are distilled from peach stones and from the pulp of the bruised leaves. It is a deadly poison."

"Why do we so seldom come across canned plums?" queried Eva, whose special favourite was the above-mentioned stone fruit.

"There is no need to tin plums when we can procure them so easily in a dried form," answered Miss Benson. "Heavy pressure to extract moisture, and a thorough

drying in a southern sun, is enough to preserve this fruit to us. If prunes be properly cooked, they are almost equal to fresh plums, and their medicinal properties are too well known for me to enlarge on them."

"I suppose it is incorrect cooking that makes the stewed prunes, one is so often given, like nothing but hard skin and stone," went on Eva. "How do you cook them, Miss Benson?"

"Just gently stewing them," said the old lady. "But the secret is not so much to soak, as to plump them by pouring over them boiling water. The prunes, if treated in this way, ay, and dried figs too, will 'swell wisible,' like Mr. Guppy. Then they must be stewed in a prepared syrup until tender. Taken as a laxative, they are invaluable. But if given to very young children, the skins should be passed through a wire-sieve and reduced to pulp, or the results may be disastrous."

Here the kitchen clock struck a sonorous twelve, and the class had to adjourn.

(*To be continued.*)

SILENT STRINGS.

By SARAH DOUDNEY, Author of "Lady Dye's Reparation," "A Cluster of Roses," etc.

CHAPTER XI.

AMICE'S ADVENTURES.

AMICE slept well, and came downstairs feeling braced, and ready for all the exciting experiences of the day.

The service at St. Mark's began at a quarter to eight. She had obtained all necessary information from Sis, who was always glad to talk about Claud and his work. It was a service for the poor, of course; all the people living near the church belonged to a very humble class, and at first the clergy had met with a good deal of opposition. Even now, although their footing was firmly established, there was an occasional outburst of wrath from certain roughs, who seized eagerly upon the smallest excuse for getting up a row; but, on the whole, St. Mark's was popular in the neighbourhood. Claud did not say much about himself, but his sisters were quite sure that he was winning many hearts.

It was one of those cloudy days which come to us sometimes in the middle of summer; all through the morning and afternoon a haze hung over London, and in the evening a fine, drizzling rain began to fall. It was a rain that drenched you unawares; and Martha, who had been shopping, was quite surprised on her return to find Amice prepared to start.

"I thought you'd give it up, miss," she said.

"Oh, no; I hate giving things up," the girl answered.

There was a bright flush on her cheeks, her eyes were shining gloriously. Martha gave her a swift inquisitive look, and said no more.

So sure was Amice that the rain would cease, that she provided herself only with a dainty umbrella and left her waterproof behind. She had decided on the omnibus route, although it would be longer, and believed that if she carefully followed Martha's directions she could not possibly miss her way.

Still, she almost admitted to herself, as she turned away from the house, that it was a depressing evening; the veil of mist thickened, no golden light shone over the crowded roofs and chimneys, the sky was a dense smoky grey. She hastened on, past the Museum, consulted a kindly policeman, and at length found herself seated in the omnibus which was to take her near to her destination.

It was not pleasant to sit squeezed among damp people, but now that she was fairly on her way to St. Mark's, her mood of exaltation returned. Her very fearlessness in coming alone would prove to Claud that she was quite fitted for London life, and did not mind roughing it in the least. She was so absorbed in her dreams that she did not notice the streets through which she passed, nor did she think of the lapse of time. Passengers got in and out, and at last the conductor set her down at a street-corner with a few hurried words of direction, and the omnibus rolled on.

The drizzling rain continued to fall; the pavement on which she stood was just wet enough to be greasy; a man in passing jostled her rudely, and grumbled because she had obstructed his way. It must be nearly eight, she thought, and the mist was like an early nightfall. A little confused by the strange surroundings, she turned down a street on the right—surely the bus-conductor had said right—and went on, passing dirty dwellings, and shops where unsavoury eatables were displayed in the windows. Grimy women, standing at the doors, looked inquisitively at her, tattered street-arabs peered up in her face, and still she pressed on, but no church came in sight.

"Am I going towards St. Mark's church?" she ventured to ask at last.

The woman to whom she spoke, dressed in tawdry finery, seemed a shade more decent than some of the others. She answered in a hoarse voice.

"St. Mark's? Lor, no. You're goin' straight away from it. You must turn back, and then go under the railway bridge; you can't miss it."

Amice thanked her, and began to retrace her steps, not daring to admit to herself that she was rather tired, and almost frightened. People and things seemed phantom-like in the murky gloom which was spreading everywhere around her. And then, through this blinding haze, came the faint sound of a church-bell, and her heart gave a leap of hope.

When she gained the end of the street she could see the arch of the bridge, and the red and yellow glare from the lighted windows of a public-house in its neighbourhood. She began to walk now at the top of her speed, feeling sure that she was very near the end of her journey, and sustained by the glow of excitement. A group of two or three were hanging about on the foot-path; once or twice someone asked her rudely "where she was pushin' to?" There was much confused talking, and once she caught the sound of a suppressed shriek.

Just as she reached the front of the gin-shop, a rough crowd poured noisily out of its doors; men and women, swearing, screeching, gesticulating, were making the wildest hubbub she had ever heard. There was no time to escape. In a moment Amice found herself in the very thick of the throng, pushed, twisted, hustled this way and that, and almost pressed to suffocation.

She could not make her voice heard; it was lost in the babel of vulgar tongues; she was forced onward, nearer and nearer to the railway arch, where some sort of struggle was going on.

Just under the arch there were three figures, standing out conspicuously in a small clear space. One, a woman, was leaning against the brickwork, wiping some blood from her face with the corner of a dirty apron, and a man, who seemed lately to have turned from her,

"THE WHITE HOUSE CLASS."

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

PART IV.

AVING had two "sweet" mornings, or rather two mornings devoted to sweet things, Miss Benson thought a lesson in savoury cooking would not come amiss. Mr. Merton, in fact, had gone out of his way in order to call at the White House and ask Miss Benson to teach his daughters how to cook a curry.

"Having been in India so long," he explained, "I am devoted to curry. No, my liver is not out of order, Miss Benson, but my life is incomplete without that spicy and toothsome mixture on my table occasionally. It is true, my wife gives me a yellowy, pallid compound, which she calls curry! But it is nothing like unto the crisp, browny, golden mixture I used to get in Bengal."

"Well, I think I can give your daughters instruction on that point," answered Miss Benson, smiling. "I, myself, learned from a shivering Bengalee in London many years ago. He came to my mother's house one bitter wintry day clad in his national costume. No, not in a neat postage stamp and a necklace, Mr. Merton; but swathed in snow-white muslin. The poor fellow was such an object of compassion, that my people took him in, until they could communicate with the proper officials interested in such stray Orientals. In gratitude, Mooza taught my sister and me how to make his national dish. I never eat a curry now in any house but my own. For what professes to be such is but a feeble imitation."

Mr. Merton was full of thanks.

"And don't forget the rice," he whispered, as he took his way down the white steps. "For goodness' sake, Miss Benson, don't forget the rice!"

So, on the fourth morning, the round spice-box, full of every kind of dry pod and bean which can be used, stood on the kitchen dresser when the three young maidens arrived for their weekly instruction.

"Condiments, my dear girls," began Miss Benson, in her most pedagogic manner, "are rather adjuncts to food than foods themselves. In fact they may be said to be medicines more than foods. Yet they are extremely valuable in rendering food more palatable, stimulating a jaded appetite, supplying a necessary substance, and assisting in the preservation of food. Your father was here yesterday, and though he did not plead illness, or complain of a jaded appetite, he did ask me to teach you all how to make him a savoury curry such as his soul loves. Lucilla, Linda and Eva, you are this day to make a curry, succulent enough to melt in the mouth, hot enough to tickle the palate, soft enough to be eaten with a spoon, and crisp enough not to be a hash!"

Miss Benson was evidently in good form this morning. Lucilla kissed the white brow which was so often wrinkled with pain, and looked lovingly at the thin cheeks.

"Yes," replied Miss Benson to the unspoken sympathy, "I am feeling better than usual. So you girls will have to look extra spry if you want to please me. I am all anxiety to turn out a first-class curry."

On the table the girls saw some raw beef cut up into dice, some cooked vegetables left from last night's dinner, a bottle of powder, and onions.

"First and foremost, Linda, those onions must be cut into rings. I have some compassion on your eyes, dears, so I asked cook to peel them for you. That is right, Linda, I want a good pile. Now, Eva, melt in a stew-pan a lump of good dripping or butter; when it boils, and it only does this when all bubbling has ceased, pour in your rings and let them fry. You may let them, indeed, look quite a dark colour and feel quite crisp before you remove them from the fire. Linda, if you peel a couple of potatoes with the knife you have used in slicing the onions, all unpleasant odour will be eradicated. Now, Lucilla, dredge over the meat and vegetables with flour out of its dredger. Don't be satisfied with a sprinkling, but see that every part is well covered with a white veil. Eva, whilst the onions are frying, mix a tablespoonful of curry-powder with a breakfastcupful of milk. If I had been able to get butter-milk, or thick sour cream, it would be even better. Mix thoroughly and take out every lump with the back of a spoon. Pour it into the pan. When it boils up, Linda must put the meat in. There, that will do; but as we have had to use sweet milk, Lucilla, please squeeze a lemon over the meat, and see that the sauce covers it completely. That is the foundation of all curries; but we must add much more if we want really a good one. I see an apple on the dresser, slice that in, and are not those green gooseberries in that basket? Top and tail a handful, little Eva; they can go in too. Is there anything else? Yes, that bottle of chutney is nearly empty and its contents too dry to use. Pop it in—the chutney, not the bottle, I mean. Now give it one or two 'rakes' with a fork, Lucilla, and, if it is bubbling, draw it away from the open ring and leave it to cook at the side of the range. The lid is well down, isn't it, Linda? Doesn't fit properly? Oh, then we had better dispense with it altogether! Our object will be to keep in all the steam which may arise; so put a plate over the compound, Lucilla; it will act splendidly."

"But when will the curry be ready, Miss Benson? It is scarcely cooking at all at the side of the range."

"It will not be ready till eight o'clock dinner," explained Miss Benson, "by that time every ingredient will be undistinguishable. It will be a golden brown mass of soft stuff, most toothsome and most appetising. Never be in a hurry with a curry. It is always better after twelve hours' cooking."

"Do you always make your curries of fresh meat, Miss Benson?" quoth Lucilla, the prudent. "Mother says she uses up all the cold meat and scraps in one."

"Your mother is quite right, Lucilla, as she always is. For I hope your motto is the same as I had when a girl—

"'What mother says is so—
Is so, even if it isn't so.'

Curries may be made of any scraps one has at hand. It's in the mixing and the cooking that success hangs; but, of course, a curry made of fresh meat or fowl is better than one made of dry, cold mutton, or any reheated stuff. As I wanted your father to have a really good one, I have been extravagant enough to-day to use fresh butcher's beef."

"Now for the rice!" exclaimed Lucilla. "That is a more fearsome mystery than the curry even."

"It is less seldom met with properly cooked," answered the old lady. "Let us try our 'prentice hands anyway."

So, according to directions, a quarter of a pound of Patna rice was well washed in clean cold water, every disfiguring dark grain being ruthlessly picked out. It was then put into a large saucepan of madly boiling water.

"A large saucepan is a *sine quâ non* for cooking rice," explained Miss Benson. "There must be room for each separate grain to whirl about in the water. If you put rice into a little water, it will absorb it, and become a glutinous pulpy mass. If there be sufficient water that is impossible. Keep it boiling quickly for fifteen minutes; at the end of that time try a grain between finger and thumb; if there still be a 'bone' in it, give another minute's boiling. Then strain quickly, pour cold water through it, and after covering the rice with a dry clean cloth, put the sieve and it into an oven, and serve when every grain is distinct."

"Is there much difference between the different kinds of rice we see in the grocers'?" queried Linda, who was particularly fond of the delicious little grain.

"There is a great difference in price and some difference in appearance, Linda," answered Miss Benson; "but there is not much difference in their nutritive qualities. The large-grained Patna rice at threepence a pound is quite indispensable for cooking with curries. It is so white and firm; but the smaller grains at twopence a pound do well enough for milk puddings, etc. The cheaper kinds, and there are cheaper, must be I think the sweeping of grocers' shops, and to be avoided. It is wonderful how we are able to get rice at even threepence a pound, which is the top price in the market, when one thinks that it is an entirely tropical or sub-tropical production, and the long way it has to travel to reach us. We ought never to grudge the price. Rice requires much moisture and germinates best in marshy surroundings. For this reason the paddy fields of India and the cultivated portions of the Nile banks grow the finest kinds. There is not much nutriment in rice itself, though from the earliest records it has formed the staple food of the great masses of population in both India and China. One has only to read of the way in which Death mows down his millions in those countries whenever an epidemic breaks out, to see how little stamina the people possess. It is the additions we make to it that makes rice wholesome. In India it is the 'ghee,' or rancid butter, they mix with their daily dole, which sustains life. In this country the milk and sugar we usually cook it with is what makes it valuable."

"Can anything be done with this plain-water boiled rice when there is any over?" queried economical Lucilla, looking at the pile of snowy grain left on the sieve after being boiled.

"One nice way of eating it is to add cold milk and raw sugar to it and eat it thus. As a child, I delighted in this mixture, and every other child I have ever given it to does the same; but, as a rule, rice is not worth heating up twice. You can soon tell how much you need to cook. Usually far too much is put into saucepan or pudding. Amateurs forget how much rice swells, one teaspoonful to half-a-pint of milk is quite sufficient for the milk-rice so much used. Skim milk will make this, if you replace the abstracted cream with a bit of finely-chopped suet. This suet is better than butter in giving a thin yellowy-brown skin to the baked pudding. It never tastes as strongly as does cooking butter, and it is more wholesome to weakly digestions. You know suet boiled in milk is largely given to consumptives as a fattening, sustaining, heat-giving food."

The curry prepared that morning at the White House appeared at the dinner-table of Mr. Merton that same night. It was of a dark-brown complexion, and encircled with a high wall of dainty grains of white rice. N.B.—This was freshly boiled, the trio of cooks having demolished the first-made pile with sugar and milk before they left Miss Benson's kitchen. In addition to the curry was a small glass pot of hastily-made chutney. As this is one of Miss Benson's specialities, I append the recipe for the same.

A handful of sultana raisons well cleaned and finely chopped, a few small chillies treated in the same way, a handful of fresh green mint chopped and pounded, and a fistful of raw brown sugar. All these ingredients pounded together in a mortar and moistened with a few drops of tarragon vinegar.

"The very nicest chutney I ever tasted," decided Mr. Merton, the connoisseur, as he helped himself for a third time. "More power to your elbows, girls, and may your shadows never grow less!"

(*To be continued.*)

VARIETIES.

The King's Surname.

The following letter will be read with interest by many of our subscribers.

"My daughter has just read me your note on this subject, which I happen to have been discussing during recent weeks with the Clarenceux King of Arms (Mr. Cokayne) and others. The verdict of the high authority cited is that Guelph is absurd, it having been only a Christian name, and that if, as you also say, the Royal Family has any surname at all, that name was d'Este up till the marriage of Queen Victoria. But the Prince Consort introduced his own surname, which is neither of the above but Wettin, and this must consequently be the name of the present King and his immediate relatives. I may add, however, that the Lord Chamberlain gave me the name of Guelph d'Este, but this can hardly represent the fact since 1840."—Ed. *Whitaker's Peerage.*

A Fact Worth Learning.

When Lady Broome was in office as the first Superintendent of the National School of Cookery, one of her earliest pupils was a very young and pretty girl. Her youth and good looks attracted notice. "We all," says Lady Broome, "took the greatest interest in her progress; but alas! she was privately reported to me as being a most unpromising subject.

"One day, when her lesson was just over, I chanced to meet her, and inquired how she was getting on. She took the most hopeful view and declared she 'knew a lot.' I next asked her to tell me what she had learned that day.

"'Oh, let me see; we've been doing breakfast dishes, I think.'

"'And what did you learn about them?'

"'I learned this'—with an air of triumph—'that they are all the same eggs which you poach or boil. I always thought they were a different sort of egg, a different shape, you know!'"

Sure to be Dry.

A "sweet girl graduate" wrote the following on the fly-leaf of her text-book on mental science—

"If there should be another flood,
For refuge hither fly,
Though all the world should be submerged,
This book would still be dry."

The Book-Lover.—She that loveth a book will never want a faithful friend, a wholesome counseller, a cheerful companion, an effectual comforter. By study, by reading, by thinking, one may innocently divert and pleasantly entertain oneself, as in all weathers, so in all fortunes.—*Isaac Barrow.*

The Editor has been besieged by visitors, clergymen, district visitors and others working in the East End of London. They keep on calling to know if there will be any clothing that they can give away to their shivering poor, and alas! there is no needlework competition this winter. So if any good, kind girl would like to send a parcel of old clothes that she has no use for, pray let it be sent to the Editor while the winter cold is still upon us, and he will, oh, so gladly! hand the clothes on to the applicants. The following letter from Bermondsey, one of the poorest parts of London, is one of many lately received, and will show our girls how useful they have been in the past and how useful they may be in the future. All parcels will be acknowledged by the Editor.

Dear Mr. Editor,

Shall you have any clothing from the "G.O.P." to distribute this winter? If you have, may I beg for some? What you sent me last winter was such a comfort, it cheered up some weary hearts and warmed their bodies, and brought down blessings on you and the readers of the "G.O.P." Clothing of any kind is welcome in this parish. With kind regards, I am, Yours truly,

M. C. Vansittart.

"THE WHITE HOUSE CLASS."

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

PART V.

WONDER what Mr. Ruskin meant when he spoke of cookery as meaning 'the economy of our great-grandmothers'?" So queried Lucilla Merton as she and her two younger sisters found their way into the White House one fine morning. "I have been reading a very ancient household book which mother says belonged to her grandmother, and I can find no economy in her recipes. Listen to this, Miss Benson. 'Orange or lemon pudding. Fourteen ounces of butter. Melt it to the consistence of cream. Fourteen ounces of sugar, three ounces of preserved orange, the yolks of twenty eggs. Mix all together and bake it for one hour.'"

"Certainly no economy there," assented Miss Benson. "In fact, Lucilla, I think Mr. Ruskin was talking about what he hardly understood. As a rule we in this generation are perforce far more economical than our forebears were. I have a recipe handed down for the same lemon pudding which includes nine eggs and three lemons as well as a quarter of a pound of sugar and a pint of melted butter! The richness of the thing must be indescribable!"

"Since we have been taking these lessons," said Linda, "my elder sister has done nothing but pore over old manuscripts and documents. Such queer things as she has read out to us! Do let us have that cure for a pleurisy you spoke about last night, Lucinda."

"Here it is," assented the girl. "It comes in with our talk the other day of peaches and their stones. But you never told us of their curative qualities, Miss Benson. 'A peach stone baked in an oven or dried by the fire, then pounded fine in a mortar, sifted, and the whole given to the patient with a pleurisy in any suitable vehicle is a sovereign remedy. It produces a profuse sweat, and almost infallibly gives ease. The size of the stone to be suited to the strength of the patient.' Now isn't that last direction delightfully vague?"

After a good laugh the old lady bethought her of something.

"I forgot to tell you when talking of peaches, girls, that you must be very careful how you use essence of ratafia. It is simply the expressed oil of peach stones, and is a preparation of prussic acid. I lately came across an instance in a paper of the death of a cook from tasting this essence. She only wetted her lip, and there was apparently no diminution of liquid in the bottle, but she died in a few hours, poisoned with prussic acid. Another warning I must not forget in the use of all essences and oils. This is a purely culinary one. Always drop the oil on to a lump of sugar and not straight into the pudding you wish to flavour, otherwise the essence will float on the surface and be very useless as a general flavouring medium. Peach leaves give a better flavour than any essence of ratafia. Boil a few in the milk and take out before adding other ingredients. Experience will teach the number to use. The same thing may be done with laurel leaves. You then have a taste of bitter almonds. This acrid, aromatic addition is highly esteemed. The similarity of flavouring between peach and laurel and almond leaves is great. The essential oil in each requires to be used with caution, as it possesses marked poisonous qualities. For this reason I recommend boiling the leaves instead of spending money on essences. Prussic acid is colourless, but one drop of the pure substance is sufficient to cause death. Fortunately it is very volatile, and when once opened, a bottle of it loses much of its virulent properties."

"'Death in the pot' might be your prophetical subject this morning," said Linda a little flippantly. But Miss Benson took her up seriously.

"So it shall be, my child, for much ignorance exists of the dangers lurking in our most largely-used materials. For instance, I have long wanted to tell you about some of the dangers in milk preparation. It has been the boast of mothers and housewives for many generations that they never, if sensible, stint their milk bill. One has always applauded such a statement. But now science (and Mr. Ruskin says that true cookery includes all the science of modern chemists) steps in and says we are laying a very great danger in the path of the young by our indiscriminate use of milk. We all know that milk gathers to itself more spores and germs and microbes than any other given substance. Yet we seldom take the trouble to go and look at the yards or fields in which dairy cattle are kept. I heard of a man only last week fined largely for storing the milk he was to sell in a few hours under the bed in a common sitting-room. I have myself seen cream set to ripen in such a place. Now we should know just where the cows which supply our families are kept and milked, where the milk is put before being sent out on its rounds, and what the cattle are fed upon, in fact, make ourselves conversant with the minutiæ of life going on in the farm. A meal of turnip-tops or decaying potato holms, of which cattle are fond, is enough to sicken any little child who drinks that cow's milk. The food apparently does not affect the animal itself. It only works disastrously on the little things fed by them. One such case came under my own notice. I had a tiny, delicate nephew living with me some years ago. He was suddenly seized with vomiting and purging and all the symptoms of poisoning. His own particular cow was a goat. That goat was found browsing on a heap of decaying vegetable matter left in its reach. Another time a meal of laburnum on a cow's part nearly cost him his life. So how particular we ought to be to see how the dairy from which we get our daily supply is managed! Then we English are the only nation which drink raw cow's milk. That is a fact. And we are the nation *par excellence* afflicted with that dread disease consumption. Now much of this tuberculous matter is introduced into our national frame by the employment of raw milk. In a report of the Royal Commission prepared in 1890 occurs the following sentence: 'It is a somewhat curious fact that the inhabitants of the United Kingdom stand almost alone amongst civilised nations in the habitual use of uncooked milk as food. This is the more to be regretted because, by reason of this practice, human life, especially that of infancy and childhood, is being sacrificed on a scale which, to use the mildest term, is altogether deplorable.'"

"But, Miss Benson, boiled milk is horrid. I can't take it at all"—this from Eva.

"Only a matter of habit," replied the old lady. "But anyway, the peculiar taste of boiled milk may be done away with if it be left to stand for twelve hours after being boiled."

"Then I have heard it said that boiled milk is not so nutritious as raw," interpolated Lucilla.

"It certainly loses some," answered Miss Benson, "but only a very infinitesimal quantity of its nutritive properties. Practically the slight diminution of nourishment is not to be thought of in comparison with the immense gain in immunity from infectious disease and death. Once when diphtheria was raging in this place, it was clearly noted that those families who escaped were the families where the milk was used boiled. Boiling destroys all germ life."

"But isn't there another wonderfully scientific method of treating milk?" asked Eva. "I have heard Mrs. Carter, our doctor's wife, talking about it."

"Yes, you mean sterilising. The name is the most scientific part of this operation, little Eva. The process itself is quite simple. There are many kinds of sterilisers

in the market. The one I prefer is that sold by Allen and Hanbury, the great chemists in London. This is a jacketed tin vessel. It contains two tins with covers. These tins contain half-a-pint a-piece. I fill them, as you see" (cook had brought forward the Pasteuriser as her mistress spoke), "put on the lids, and then fill the hollow between the two jackets with boiling water. It takes just three pints to pasteurise one pint of milk. There, that is all. The boiling water, acting through the thin tin, immediately raises the milk within to the point of heat at which no germs can survive. We leave it aside for twenty minutes, and then it is done."

"No boiling or putting on the range?" queried Lucilla and the others in great surprise.

"Not in this particular steriliser," answered Miss Benson. "It is the most simple one I have used. There are many other makes which are put on the range, but I prefer Hanbury's myself. It has, however, one drawback to its use. The largest size only sterilises one pint of milk at a time. Other makes do as much as several gallons. So for a large family my pattern Pasteuriser would be useless, but for a single body, or baby, it is by far the best make."

"You said that many cows have tubercular disease and introduce it to the human consumer. Is not that impossible where cows are the property of the consumer and properly looked after, Miss Benson?" inquired Lucilla intelligently.

"When I tell you that twenty of the late Queen's herd of precious Alderneys were slaughtered for that reason after being tested, you will see that it is impossible to guard against this terrible disease. It is quite undistinguishable in the milk, so the use of any lactometer cannot be relied upon. It is only discoverable by a laborious, expensive process of examination of the living animal. So boiling is the only way, except sterilisation, of securing immunity from contamination on this point."

The three girls all looked duly impressed by the gravity of the occasion, and I believe raw milk was never used in the Merton family after this. One more point Miss Benson enlightened them upon. They had a vague idea that a Pasteuriser must necessarily be an expensive article. She told them her Allen and Hanbury's patent cost 7s. 6d., whilst many other makes could be got for half as many shillings. Their use therefore could be general amongst even the poorest of people.

"Death in the pot being our subject this morning," went on Miss Benson when her little steriliser had been removed, "I would like to talk about the evils of indiscriminate water-drinking. No wonder you look surprised, my dears! We of the temperance band in England sing so heartily and often foolishly about the virtues of

'Water! Bright water! Pure, sparkling, and free!'

that we seldom pause to think how very dangerous water can be. Now pure water and plenty of it is essential to the health of any household, but when are we sure of getting it pure? I myself have twice suffered from diphtheria from taking 'on trust' the supply given to the houses in which I have lived. Now water should be often tested for purity. The most sparkling, bright, and clear-looking fluid is not always the safest to drink. Filtering does not do much in removing deleterious matter from our drinking-supply—that is, when filters are used unscientifically. Very few people pause to think what a filter is supposed to do. Now our object in using one is to remove poisonous matter from our tumblers and cups. This is done by causing a certain quantity to pass through a bed of charcoal or prepared substance. In passing through, it stands to common sense that the layer of charcoal must become impregnated with the poisonous matter. It in turn, and very quickly too, becomes a mass of poisonous germ particles. Yet how few folk attend to the boiling of that charcoal veil regularly! I have known filters used for weeks together without any change of filtering medium whatever. Go to your own domestics, girls, and ask them when they last put in a new charcoal pad, and I venture to say they will confess to never having done so. So, in fact, the filter becomes vastly more poisonous than the water which is passed through it. I would say 'away' to every household filter except of the very simplest pattern. A good one is made as follows, but remember it, in common with the most intricate machine, requires frequent washing, boiling, drying and replacing of its charcoal. Get a large flower-pot, just a common one as used in the garden. Cover the hole with a piece of clean flannel or bit of perforated zinc, then fill up the pot two or three inches with small clean gravel. On the top of the gravel place a layer of well-washed white sand. This also must be about three inches thick. Cover this second layer again with about two pounds of animal charcoal. This last layer will need to be as carefully washed in several hot waters as was the gravel and sand. Pour the water on the top, and let it filter through the hole at the bottom into a water-bottle or jug. It will then, if all attention has been paid to cleanliness, be fit for drinking. A much easier and after all more efficacious and much safer plan is never to drink unboiled water. Boiling destroys all germs, as I told you when talking about milk, organic and vegetable impurity as well."

"Again I must be of the opposition," broke in Linda. "I object to the taste of boiled water as well as to that of boiled milk. Is there no method of finding out if water contains organic poison, Miss Benson, so that we could do without boiling it?"

"There is one simple test by which most organic impurity may be detected," answered the old lady. "Take a cup of water when you get home, Linda. Mix with it a few drops of weak sulphuric acid, then stir into it as much permanganate of potash as will turn it to a bright purple colour. Cover the cup with a piece of glass and let it stand for awhile. If there be any organic impurity, the beautiful purple colour will soon fade away, leaving the water almost as colourless as when freshly drawn. If it retains its purple face, it can be reckoned upon as relatively pure. I say relatively because there are gases and compounds which this easy cheap test will fail to locate. Boil the water, I advise you, even if it may taste a bit 'flat.'"

"Can it not be aerated in some way after boiling?" quoth Lucilla the scientific. "I have read that pouring it rapidly from one jug to another takes away from its disagreeable taste. Is that so, Miss Benson?"

"I have read likewise, Lucilla," answered the old lady with a twinkle in her eye, "but I must confess I never found it replace the oxygen or anything else in well-boiled water. Everything printed is not necessarily gospel, my young friends; so I cannot promise immunity from flatness. But just decide for yourselves. Is it worth while to run the risks of typhoid, diphtheria, and kindred diseases rather than drink boiled water? You see you need not drink it plain. Pour it whilst bubbling on to a few slices of well-sugared lemon, and you have delicious 'ade' at once, or on to tea-leaves, and the cup that cheers is the result, or on to toast, and a refreshing drink is evolved. Plain eau-sucrée, too, is not to be despised, and is decidedly fattening."

"Is there any other form of death in the pot?" inquired Linda after the trio had examined Miss Benson's flower-pot filter, tasted her lemonade, seen the purple tint quite permanent in her goblet of freshly-drawn aquose fluid, and set aside her steriliser.

"Yes, many," was the reply. "For instance, if you don't peel that turnip thickly enough, child, you will boil poison along with its nutritious properties. You see that dark hair-like line running about half an inch from the rind? That is the line you must always eliminate with the knife. I believe it to contain distinctly deleterious constituents. The nourishing qualities all lie in the heart of the turnip. Again, peel those potatoes as thinly as possible. The skin just covers its most valuable ingredients. Scrape carrots only, for in that genus of the order 'umbelliferæ' all valuable properties are in the skin itself. In parsnips this is also the case, as it belongs to the same family as the carrot. There is no fastidiousness to be laughed at in asking that the parsley we use should be well curled. In fact, when it is necessary to buy it, this point should be insisted upon, for otherwise it is possible to eat fool's parsley by mistake. Now that variety is a virulent poison. Onions are usually divested of all their outer casings as a precautionary matter

too. The outer skin contains a very acrid, pungent, volatile oil, which is both disagreeable and injurious to the human stomach. Beetroot, on the contrary, we cook without divesting it of its cuticle. This is in order to retain its sugar. If we skinned the beet before plunging it in boiling water, we should lose its pleasant, nutritive, fattening materials as well as its beautiful colouring."

"I have often wondered at the slavish following of custom in our cookery ways," confessed Lucilla. "I now see that most of our habits are founded on strictly scientific facts and sound common sense."

"That is a point to which I am delighted to have led you," answered Miss Benson pleasantly as the cuckoo gave warning of midday. "I think one can generally find a reason why and wherefore when one looks for it. Eating apple-sauce with pork is but adding a sensible corrective to fatty matter. Vinegar with beetroot prevents surfeiting from its saccharine. Lemons with oily fish and mint-sauce with young lamb are both judicious garnishes. The one neutralises fatty particles, and the other acts as a digestant for somewhat indigestible meat. So it runs all through the gamut. Do not sneer at any long-continued custom in cookery until you have made yourself acquainted with all sides of the question. You will generally find life's pudding made with a foundation of common sense, just as the White Knights had one of blotting-paper."

AGE FORTY.

CHAPTER II.

LOST in thought, Margaret roused herself with a start as the train slowed into the station at Wellminster. Here, then, was the place where she was to prove either a failure or a success; "and if honest endeavour can win it, success it shall be!" she told herself; and calling a porter, asked him to find her luggage.

"Where for, miss?" he inquired.

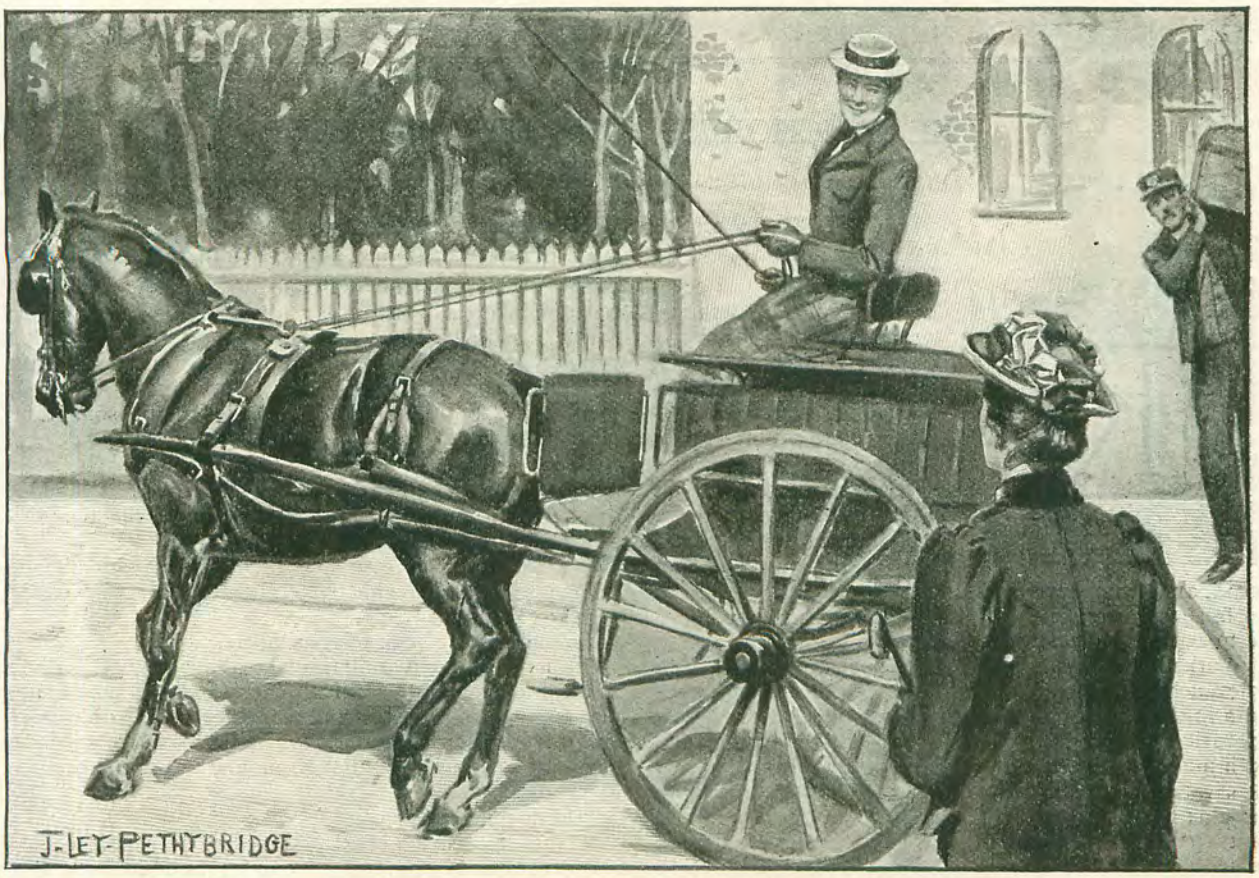
"Mrs. Wynford's, Hill Crest."

"Then the young lady's here with the pony-trap"—and piloting Margaret through the booking-office, he showed her a governess-car waiting in the station-yard.

"Are you Miss Ashton?" cried a merry-looking, tall girl who was holding in a somewhat restless pony. "Get in then, quickly, Ruby is crazy to be off. Wilson is here with the cart for your things; he can find them, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, everything has my name on it," Margaret replied, stepping lightly into the car. The pony sprang forward and trotted cheerfully up the hill, and the girl began—

"I'm awfully glad you've come, Miss Ashton. I'd better introduce myself, I suppose; my name is Eileen, and you'll find out before long that I'm the black sheep; so I may as well tell you at once that when anything dreadful happens, I'm generally to blame. My sister Lilian used to be as good at getting into a scrape as I am, till she got engaged to Geoffrey Mortimer just before he went out to Africa. And"—here the rough voice softened—"he died of enteric at Johannesburg last autumn, and since then poor Lily has been a very drooping flower. So I've been awfully lonely the last few months, longing for a kindred spirit. Tell me, are you fond of animals, and are you a good cyclist? It's very hilly about here."



"'ARE YOU MISS ASHTON?'"