

she had never held that mother's hand in hers.

The instant she glanced at the paper which came by the post this morning she thought that the writing before her bore a strange, close resemblance to the beloved characters; and the longer she looked at it the more certain she became that she was not mistaken. Yet how could it be really true? How could a letter come to her from one who had been so long in another world? Her brain grew dizzy at the question, her whole frame quivered, her eyes filled with tears, tears that prevented her for some time from reading a word in the written paper, the sight of which was causing her so much disturbance of mind.

At length, with a strong effort (Ruby was a girl with a good deal of decision of character, and she was learning to make good use of that quality in gaining rule over herself) she conquered her emotion sufficiently to be able to read what was before her. The first words which met her wondering, eager view were these—"If I should die at my child's birth, and that child should be a daughter, I should wish her to read this as soon as she is beginning to pass from early girlhood into womanhood; what I have written here is the only legacy I have to leave her."

These words were written on an envelope which had been enclosed in the other which came by post directed to Ruby in a handwriting, as has before been said, quite unknown to her. This second envelope, with the superscription given as above in Ruby's mother's hand upon it, was open; inside of it was a written paper, also in Mrs. Stanton's hand. That was what Ruby's still half-tear-veiled eyes were now resting upon. It ran as follows:—

"My child,—When you read this I shall have been for several years with God. I have no earthly heritage to bequeath you, but I can at least leave you these few words of love. In the first place, my bird, my flower, my jewel, my Ruby (I shall tell them to call you Ruby, for it was my own mother's), anchor your young heart firmly at once upon the Rock of Ages, then shall it be well with you whatever are the storms and trials of your future life. Let one thing be the star of your whole story, and let that thing be love, love of God and love for man. Be all truth, my Ruby. Even in your looks, let there never be a false point about you, even in your dress and outward appearance; my gem must be in everything a real stone. Recollect that a Christian woman must be at once the bravest and the tenderest thing on God's earth; very brave and uncompromising in standing up for the right, very tender and gentle in raising up those who have fallen; she must stand as a queen on a lofty pedestal, but a queen who is never weary of stooping and stretching out her strong, soft hands to lift up those who have sunk the lowest. Always be ready to believe the good in others, for a suspicious temper is a very dark shadow in the fairest female character where it exists; it is an especial disgrace to womanhood, even more than it is to manhood. Remember, it is never

thought a disgrace to be cheated and deceived. My Ruby, when women ministered to our dear Lord, He showed thereby His sacred will and pleasure that Christian women should do good work for Him in all time; be a bold, large-hearted worker for Him, Ruby. Such are the last words to you of your mother,

LUCY STANTON."

Who shall tell the mingled feelings that were in the girl's mind as she read? What words can paint the flood of joy, and fear, and unutterable wonder that rushed over her whole being? It seemed to her as if a great incredible thing had happened to her: as if the curtain between this world and the next had been drawn aside by a friendly angel's hand, and a voice from beyond it had reached her.

She stood there in the morning sunshine, feeling like one who has been surrounded by a radiant cloud, and who half exults in the brightness, and half dreads its excess of splendour; and then the question went whirling through her brain, From whence did this letter come? In what strange, incomprehensible way had it reached her, to-day, this message, this legacy from the dead? She was completely unable to find any reply, though she sought after one until her head was giddy, and the trees in the garden seemed to be spinning round and round.

After that she returned again to the letter, and covered it with kisses, and dwelt upon each single word until, at length, her over-full heart and mind found relief in a shower of tears.

"Ruby! Ruby! where are you?" cried a sharp, very imperious voice at the window.

It was Miss Nancy calling her to breakfast. The sound made her start, but it also recalled her to the actual, everyday life around her. She dried her eyes, thrust the letter hastily into her pocket, for she had an instinctive feeling against saying a word about it at the breakfast table, and hurried in.

"Why, Ruby, how pale you look!" cried Ella. "I think your morning walk must have disagreed with you. I always thought it would. It is such a foolish habit getting up so early and going out. You have not half the appetite that I have."

And the young lady helped herself most complacently to a slice of ham.

"Oh, it's just like all the rest of her ridiculous whims," grumbled Miss Nancy, behind the tea urn.

Ruby took all these and like remarks, many of which were bestowed upon her that morning, with the meekest patience. Her whole mind was far too entirely wrapped up in the subject which had occupied it before she came in to heed what was going on around her. She did her best, however, to eat her breakfast much as usual, and so escaped further notice. When she left the table she crept quietly into Mr. Lindhurst's study, and, with all her former agitation coming back into her face, said, showing him the letter,—

"Guardian, look at this. Can you

the least imagine who could have sent it me? It came by this morning's post."

Surprised by the emotion and earnestness of her manner, he fixed his eyes curiously upon the letter, and his face first was a face of wonder, then a face of deep thought as he read it. Then he folded it up very gently and slowly, and turned to the window, while he said, with nothing of the astonishment in his tone which Ruby had, of course, expected,—

"My child, I would not trouble myself if I were you with trying to guess or discover who sent you this letter. There is not the faintest clue by which you can find out anything about it. I would think of it, Ruby, only as a precious treasure which God has sent you to cheer and light you throughout your whole life's journey, to show you the way into the highest paths."

"Yes, it is indeed all that to me," cried the girl, clasping her hands. "But, guardian, I should like to know how it could have come to me in this strange way."

"I cannot bother myself, Ruby, with making all sorts of fruitless inquiries for you about the matter," he answered, with a sudden severity in his tone.

"Guardian," cried Ruby, as a thought suddenly flashed across her, "can this letter have anything to do with the mystery which, you said a little while ago, would very likely now and then approach me in different ways?"

"Perhaps it has, little Ruby; perhaps it has not," he replied, with a half smile. "Now run away to your books or your music, and wear the words of that letter always on your heart, as a sacred talisman to guard you from all evil."

Ruby did not ask any more, for she saw it would be useless to do so; but she put on her hat and went for a long walk alone through the fields and woods, and came back looking very calm and bright.

(To be continued.)

WHAT MAY BE DONE WITH SIMPLE HERBS.

By MEDICUS.



On board ship, in the merchant service at all events, the cook is usually addressed by the men as "doctor." This, however, is no reason why I, a medical man, should permit my advice to interfere with the province of cook. Nevertheless, as there are many so-called pot

herbs which possess medicinal properties of no mean value, I cannot, I think, be greatly exceeding my duty if I say a word or two about gathering and storing them. The old-fashioned plan was to tie the dried leaves in bunches, and hang them on the walls, or to the roof of the kitchen. This is neither a good nor a tidy plan. From the month of May to the end of

August is the best time for collecting these herbs. Most of them can be gathered in July, but at all events they must be at the time in full beauty and luxuriance. In olden times they tell us that witches used to wander over moor and mountain, seeking herbs for love philtres, at the dead of night, and under a full moon. There is no occasion to risk catching cold by being abroad at such unwholesome hours, gathering pot herbs. You do not require the aid of the moon, but it is important that you should avoid the noonday sun; at the same time there should be no moisture on the herbs when collected. Next, you must dry them as speedily as possible. This is best done before a moderately hot fire. When they are perfectly dry you may proceed to store them. If you mean to collect, say, half a dozen different sorts, procure six nice air-tight bottles of small sizes, and label them with the names of the herbs. The dried leaves are then picked from the stems and powdered, then passed through a sieve, and then bottled. I have known a young girl-housekeeper to possess a highly useful and quite ornamental collection of powdered herbs.

Now I do not wish my readers to constitute themselves doctors in embryo, amateur pharmacutists; no, nor little skilled old wives either; but there are very many things about some of the commonest herbs, which it will do every girl who means to make herself a useful member of society good to know.

I'll take them as they come to my memory. The name *chervil* brings back to my mind the days of my youth,

"When I roved a young Highlander o'er the dark heath,"

and used to gather and chew, for sake of its aromatic flavour, a pretty little green plant that grew under hedges and by the waysides. It was called myrrh, however, in my country. It smells exactly like paregoric, and if you do not know it in any other way you may know it by that. But be sure of it, because it grows where the deadly hemlock thrives, and the leaves of the two are very much alike. Chervil makes a nice addition to a salad, and although not to my knowledge used in medicine, possesses, nevertheless, aromatic qualities, and would therefore tend to strengthen the digestion. There is also a kitchen garden chervil, and it makes a pretty border for a walk. It should be gathered in June for powdering.

The flowery tufted *thyme* brings to my recollection the words of Virgil, as translated by Dryden:—

"No more, my goats, shall I behold you climb
The steepy cliffs to crop the flowery thyme."

That would, of course, be the wild thyme. Let us go to the garden to gather ours. It is aromatic in a high degree, the lemon-scented variety being probably the choicest. It is used in making perfumes, its essential oil being called marjoram oil. Gather it in July.

Sweet basil is worthy of cultivation in gardens. A nice aromatic sauce for table use is made by gathering the fresh leaves in August, putting them in a bottle, covering them with vinegar, and steeping for ten days. This also possesses aromatic qualities. *Fennel* is a well-known plant, and its leaves are gathered about June for drying. Independent of its table use, an infusion or tea may be made of its leaves, a teaspoonful now and then of this being useful in many forms of indigestion. *Tarragon* is easy of cultivation, and if grown on a dry soil is quite hardy. It may be dried as other herbs, or a deliciously flavoured vinegar may be made from the leaves. If the latter is wished, they must be gathered before coming into bloom, and steeped in vinegar for a fortnight in a jug. Fermentation takes place, and it is then strained through flannel, a little isinglass added, and bottled.

The well-known *elder* tree is a shrub which is to be found in hedges, and from its flowers or berries many useful articles are made. I may mention one or two. *Elder flower ointment*, for instance, is a very nice cooling application for the skin when red and irritated. The fresh flowers of the elder are simply boiled in the purest lard until crisp, the whole is then strained through a linen cloth, and the ointment thus obtained is poured into stone jars. It has to be kept in a cool place. *Elder flower vinegar* is a nice cooling adjunct to the toilet, but of this and of *elder flower water* I hope to have the opportunity of writing another day, as well as about other harmless luxuries for the dressing-room. I might tell you how to make elder-berry wine, but would sooner you should apply to the other "doctor"—the cook.

Parsley cannot always be got fresh. It possesses medicinal qualities of great value, for it not only stimulates digestion but cools and purifies the blood. It is best gathered in July for powdering.

Sage.—This is a well-known garden herb, and one of great utility. Like the domestic cat, it is too well-known to need description. Again I refer you to the other "doctor" to describe its table use; be it mine to inform you of its curative properties. The tea is made as ordinary tea from the dried leaves, and is useful as a stomachic or aid to digestion, and also as an astringent tonic. The smaller leaves only should be used. A large handful of sage leaves may be boiled in a pint of water until it is reduced to half-a-pint. This makes a nice cooling gargle in sore throats, and surely so simple a remedy should be more often used, for, you see, it is always at hand, which a physician is not.

Peppermint.—Three kinds are usually employed. The vinegar of mint is thus made:—Any large open-mouthed bottle is filled with leaves, covered up with vinegar, and left for three weeks ere it is strained off. Peppermint is a valuable stimulating stomachic. Chewing the young green leaves, while in the kitchen garden, is often sufficient in itself to restore an absent appetite.

The herb called wormwood is a much more valuable tonic and appetiser, in my opinion, than many imagine. I will tell you how to make a tincture of it. Weigh half an ounce of the dried herbs—get it from a chemist's—and cut it fine. This is kept for a week in a bottle containing six ounces of what druggists call proof spirit; it is then squeezed through muslin or fine linen, and afterwards filtered. It is a good thing to know how to filter such preparations as these. The plan is very simple. A common funnel used in filling bottles is placed in a wide-mouthed glass vessel, say a pickle bottle. You must next prepare a piece of blotting paper, so that it will just fit the inside of the top part of the funnel. Fold the paper in the centre twice on its own length, you can then easily form a filter to fit the funnel, which will have three thicknesses of paper at one side and one on the other. You do not tear a hole in the bottom, the liquor makes its way through the blotting paper and drops slowly into the receiver. The dose of the tincture of wormwood is a small teaspoonful or less in a little water twice or thrice daily.

Dandelion is usually looked upon as a mere weed, but it is a very valuable one indeed, for not only are the young and tender leaves delicious and wholesome when used in a salad, or even as a salad with cheese, but it has a mild yet efficient action on the liver; and even young people's livers are apt to be out of order at times. The roots are used medicinally. You may prepare the juice, or wine, in the following way:—First dig your roots clean, and well wash them, cut them in pieces, and put them in a mortar, then well bruise them to

extract the juice, and having strained it off, and having measured it, add a third of its bulk of rectified spirits of wine. (Do not make a mistake and put methylated spirits.) It must stand for a week before it is filtered. The dose is about thirty drops three times a day. The decoction of dandelion may thus be prepared:—Boil an ounce of fresh sliced dandelion root in a pint of water until it is reduced to half a pint; having strained it, add thereto an ounce of the compound tincture of horseradish, and the same quantity of the compound tincture of oranges, and your decoction is complete. The dose is two or three tablespoonfuls thrice a day. *Memo*.—I only order safe doses, and rather under than over the quantity needed for a girl of from twelve to fifteen. Girls under this age should not physic themselves, nor anyone else. A good remedy for anyone who is troubled with biliousness is dandelion tea. You make it thus:—Take of dandelion root, bruised, one ounce. This is to be boiled for ten minutes in a pint of water; pour it off, and add boiling water to make up to a pint. A small wineglassful may be taken three times a day.

Chamomile.—This is one of the most useful herbs that ever grew. I have hardly space to tell of all its virtues, whether it be applied externally as in a poultice, or decoction, or taken internally. It is best used internally in the form of tea. I give its recipe as under:—Take of the flowers one ounce, of bruised ginger one ounce, of boiling water one pint, and a few cloves. Infuse this in an earthenware teapot for half an hour, and when cold your tea is ready. The dose is one or two tablespoonfuls three times a day. If a decoction is wanted for an inflamed surface omit the ginger and cloves, and boil for an hour. I can earnestly recommend chamomile tea to young weakly girls with little appetite, and if they take from five to fifteen drops of tincture of iron three times a day at the same time, much good is sure to accrue.



ON METHOD IN TEACHING THE PIANOFORTE.

By EDWIN M. LOTT.



It may perhaps appear hardly necessary to preface these few remarks on method in teaching with that trite old-fashioned saying that "Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well," yet so convinced am I of the truth and enormous value of the old saw—which, like many venerable and generally-accepted maxims, is frequently accorded but scant attention—that my friends, and especially my younger ones, must pardon me for not choosing a starting point of a more novel character.