



## IN THE "FALL" OF THE YEAR.

By MEDICUS.

"AREN'T the days drawing in!"

This is an exclamation that, with considerable emphasis on the first word 'aren't'; we very frequently hear at this time of the year, and more than likely the reply will be akin to the query—

"Yes, *aren't* they drawing in!"

It is true, girls; summer I fear has fled, and we will not see anything more of it until 1884. Very pleasant is the sunshine even now, however, but no matter how fine the day has been, I myself for one like to see a little fire in the grate towards evening. It does make the room seem more cheerful; no need for going too near it though, the season for gathering round the fire has not yet arrived; nor should the fire be a large one, for if it be, the room will be uncomfortably hot, then you have more chance of catching cold when you go out.

A fire in a grate is advantageous in another way: it helps to ventilate the apartment, and thus keeps the air in it fresh and pure. I need hardly remind you that as the fire draws the vitiated air up the chimney, more must be supplied from without, and here the danger of a draught should be thought about. The air has no business to come pouring in under the doorway, nor whistling through the keyhole. It should be filtered in, so to speak, through a ventilator.

Now, it is a curious thing that there is no danger to be apprehended from sitting in a draught that is in a manner broken up into innumerable little streams, and this is precisely what a piece of perforated zinc, in the panel of a door or in the window, does, and therefore I am never tired of recommending this very cheap and very safe and simple form of ventilation, either for bedroom or sitting-room.

Some months ago I wrote a paper called "The Girl's Own Room." I have not a copy by me as I write, but I do not think I said anything about the inside of the room door. Everyone with taste I know does something to the mantelpiece to make it look pretty—a cloth-covered board on top of it, with a hanging fringe studded with gilded tacks, a vase or two, or some chaste ornaments are all that is needed to make it a thing of beauty—but the door is usually allowed to remain in the condition the painters left it.

It is not my intention to give a lecture on the æsthetic decoration of doors, further than to say that any girl of taste can, at a trifling expense and with the help of a few pieces of cretonne to paste on the panels, a little gilt and a little paint, make the inside of her room door look charming indeed. But if she wants her room to be healthful, as well as pleasant to the eye, she will not neglect having two plates of perforated zinc, about a foot square, let into the upper panels, or these plates may occupy the whole of the two upper panels, if these be small; and two smaller pieces of zinc should be let tastefully into the lower panels as well, and framed or surrounded with a little edging of gilt or stained wood, such as may be bought cheaply at picture-frame dealers. Well, this is carpenter's work, unless you have a versatile brother who is good at everything, but after the zinc has been nicely and evenly put in comes the girl's own work, and that is painting the zinc plates. Many of my readers I happen to know are quite geniuses in the way of *terra-cotta* painting. Let them turn their talents to painting ventilators for their room doors. The thing can be done before the plate is put up. Care must be taken not to choke the little orifices, therefore the paint must be thin. I only give the hint for what it is worth,



and if health is worth having that is not little.

As in autumn people begin to live less out of doors, endeavours to have the air in the house as pure as possible should not be relaxed. During several hours of the day the windows ought to be thrown wide open, that is, they ought to be opened quite half-way up, and quite half-way down. I would not be afraid of your sitting at a window so well opened as this, because you could not catch cold, it is your inch-open windows that cause deadly or dangerous draughts, and give you colds and toothache, and all kinds of aches and ailments. Dwellers in the country may open the windows almost at any time of the day, unless the rain be actually beating against them, but the inhabitants of large towns or cities must exercise some little judgment about the matter. They must take a look outside to see what the atmosphere is like, before they throw up the window-sash and welcome it in. Do not admit nasty fogs, nor dust, nor damp, nor drizzle. Make a point of opening the window in the forenoon if possible, and also a little before sundown.

Always look upon dust as one of your greatest enemies, and remember this, there is indoor dust as well as outdoor dust, and it is equally as dangerous. A room ought to be most carefully dusted about an hour after it is cleaned, for by this time the dust will have had time to settle. I need hardly tell you not to chase the dust or flop and flog it all about; a damp cloth should be used, and it ought to be rubbed and not switched off.

What a deal of disease carpets may be, and doubtless are, accountable for! When not kept properly clean, they are in reality enemies to the public health. They are enemies that we trample on I grant you. But unluckily they rise again, rise in invisible dust in which the seeds of disease may take root and grow; dust that we breathe to our danger and detriment. Therefore, I say, keep the carpet clean, or banish, or burn it.

Smoke pollutes the air indoors. "Where there is reek there is heat," old-fashioned Scotch folk tell us, and in some parts of the Highlands the great immunity from consumption that the people enjoy is attributed by them to the fact that the rooms of the houses are almost always filled with smoke.

Let me give you a short sketch of a West Highland cottage I visited the other day; it may amuse you, and it is not much of a digression, after all. I had walked fifteen miles among the mountains and had about ten more before me. Besides, I had succeeded in losing myself; there was no one about to put a question to, so I kept straight on, and was glad enough when I came at last to a crofter's (small farmer's) house. It was a long low building, thatched with turf, with the door in the gable and no visible windows, unless the wide-mouthed chimney was intended to do duty as one. The farmer himself was in his cabbage garden. A drink of water was it? he said. To be sure, and wouldn't I walk in and sit down on a stool and rest me, and "to be surely" it was a drink of the best buttermilk in the world I'd have, and nothing else at all at all.

I accepted the kind invitation and went in. The gable door opened into the cow-house, and we had to pass through here, then open another door which led into the living apartment.

"The breath of the kine is wholesome, sir, to be surely," he said.

Perhaps he was right, but I would not care for them at my bedroom door.

The fireplace of this cottage house was in the centre of the floor; an arrangement of burning peats around an upright stove, and the smoke quite filled the room, but finally found exit by the wide chimney. It was some time

before I could either speak or see—I was blind and choking—but my host was very talkative and told me a great deal about the curative properties of peat-reek that I hadn't known before.

I told him that I knew peat smoke was good for curing hams, but never was aware it was also a cure for consumption.

He scouted all my notions of the laws of health and hygienics as new-fangled, and therefore unsafe, and gave me a long lecture on the virtues of simple herbs and seaweed, oatmeal, Scotch kail, curds, and cream, and buttermilk. I listened attentively, frequently rubbing my smarting eyes, and though I was very thankful for the rest and refreshment, I was not sorry when I found myself outside once more, among the blooming heather. I may state that the hens roosted on the rafters of the principal room, and that a little piggie made itself at home in one corner.

But my entertainer was a sturdy old Highlander, apparently about eighty, and he firmly believed it was constantly inhaling peat smoke that kept him in such robust health.

It was not so in my opinion, but the pure air of the mountains amid which he dwelt.

The kind of coals burned in our grates should be made a matter of more thought. Many girls have little to do with this, I know, but it can do them no harm to know that the fumes of the cheaper kinds of coals are dangerous to the health, and affect the throat and lungs, or at least their lining membrane. A dusty coal is also bad.

No girl who values her health and complexion will drink bad water, if she can help it, whether she be a young girl or an old girl. It is painful to think that nearly all the water supplied to towns is bad. There are one or two ways of remedying this. The cistern should be kept clean, free from access of dust or dead spiders; then, to soften it, the water should be boiled, and when cool run through the filter. Every girl that has a room to herself should have a filter. A flower-pot makes a good one. I believe I showed you how to manufacture a flower-pot filter in a previous paper. If I find I have not done so, I promise you an illustration of one for next month. It may be painted very prettily with flowers or figures, thus granting to my artistic readers another opportunity of displaying their genius.

Now, as the evenings are getting long, it will be time to think of winter amusements and employments. One cannot be always reading, and a girl should not be always sewing or knitting. I leave the choice of such amusements to your individual taste, only warning you that they must be of a nature to keep the mind interested, without fatiguing or necessitating a cramped position of the body.

The sun does not rise so soon now, neither need you, unless you have to go very early to work, in which case you must get all the earlier to bed, for a girl needs more sleep in winter than in summer.

Dress leisurely, especially if not very strong, but do not dawdle over your toilet. Be very careful with hair and teeth. Wash in warm soft rain-water, and let the water in the bath be also soft. If you can take a cold bath, continue to do so. There is no greater protection against colds and coughs than the morning bath, taken cold, or with the chill off. It is the best of tonics, too, and keeps the action of the skin as perfect as possible.

It will be time now to wear somewhat warmer clothing, for the weather may be very changeable and it may be both damp and cold.

Garments should not be heavy, for out of doors you ought for health's sake to take all the exercise you can get, and heavy dress impedes progress in walking; it moreover draws the blood too much to the surface of

the body, and induces perspiration, the under-clothing becomes damp, and there is consequently greater liability of catching cold.

Never sit for a moment in damp clothing. It is best not to run the risk of getting your dress wet. I do not hold with wearing water-proofs a minute longer than can be helped, but they certainly are a capital protection against a shower. They should be light, and made of cloth, not of india-rubber.

Lawn-tennis is an excellent game for summer, but when the grass is damp it is a somewhat dangerous one for delicate girls, and this leads me to say a word about shoes or boots and stockings. Few people are aware of the thousands of illnesses, often serious, sometimes fatal, that are induced from what is commonly called a chill through the feet. If the feet are not quite comfortable the warmth of the whole of the blood in the body is materially interfered with. Neuralgia and toothache, colds and coughs, and diseases of all the most important organs of the body may be brought about from cold damp feet. Standing on the damp grass with thin shoes in autumn is highly dangerous. Thin shoes should indeed never be worn in autumn, for the cold will strike through them if you are standing on bricks or flags, or even on gravel itself, so beware. The soles of boots and shoes need not be heavy, but they should be of the best leather possible. However thick they may be, if composed of worthless leather, they absorb the damp, just as a bit of chamois does.

Boots are better than shoes for autumn wear, and they ought to be soft and pliable in the uppers, and made to fit the feet well, for corns and bunions are as likely to be produced by wearing a too big, as a too tight boot. Stockings should be soft and warm, and changed whenever in the slightest degree damp. Indeed, it is a capital plan to always change the stockings and wash the feet after coming in from a long walk. The feet should be dried with a soft towel, and well dried, not forgetting to rub well between the toes; if this were always done, what are called soft corns would be unknown.

Now a word in conclusion. Do you suffer much from cold in winter, from harshness of skin, chapped hands or lips, or from chilblains? If so, it is now in autumn that you have got to prepare yourself to defy the ills of wintry weather; you ought to do all you can to purify and strengthen the blood and circulation. Live plainly but well, do not drink fluids of any kind between meals, and just as little as possible when eating. Avoid strong tea and coffee. Do not take tea in the morning at all. Never eat too much at a time. Try to get your meals at the same hour every day, and let a good proportion of your dinner each day be meat of some kind. Do not use too many green vegetables. Take all the exercise possible, and go early to bed. You will thus, without the aid of medicine at all, get your whole frame into a healthy and strong condition.

Exercise with the dumb-bells about twenty minutes every morning and evening. This tends greatly to develop chest and lungs. If you think you need a tonic, try the light-brown cod-liver oil. It is a capital remedy for poverty of blood, and not only that, for it helps to purify and alter the condition of the blood, owing to the iodine it contains, and the straw-coloured oils are not possessed of this virtue.

Lastly, study to maintain an equable temper. If you do not learn command over your feelings when young, you never will; your feelings will rule you and make you old before your time.

