



HOW TO BE MERRY IN MAY.

By "MEDICUS."

I CAN assure you, girls—at least I can assure most of you—that if you take the advice I shall give you in this short paper, you may be merry not only in May, but all the year round.

I am quite convinced, however, that not more than ten per cent. of you will listen to the advice. It may sound very disagreeable in me to say so, but I really fear it is pretty near to the truth. Again, there are a large number of readers who are willing enough to take advice, but very much opposed to acting on it. Others, again, begin very bravely to lead a new life as far as health and hygiene are concerned, and continue to do so for perhaps a week, then fall back into their old lazy-golucky habits, and so do not benefit a single bit, but quite the reverse.

I remember once, years and years ago, recommending girls to get up early enough on May mornings to wash their faces in the May dew. Very good advice it was, but I ought to have added that having got up early one May morning, they should make sure of beauty and a fresh complexion by rising soon all throughout the year. Mind you this, reader, I am no advocate for excessively early rising. This rather tends to debilitate the nervous system, irritates the brain and makes one cross, and sleepy and stupid all day long. But if you have had a sufficiency of exercise during the day, and you are in bed and asleep before eleven, you ought to be up by seven o'clock.

Do you know what too much sleep is apt to do—ay, and does do? You don't? Well, listen. During sleep, the brain is comparatively bloodless, and it is supposed that it renews its cell-power at this time. But if it has too much rest it is not so easily restored to activity, then the mind becomes blunted and dull, and even the appetite degenerates. Sometimes, indeed, a person who has slept a very long time has no appetite at all, and may even suffer from slight nausea. Again, if you sleep long, the body lacks nourishment, the muscles become flabby, and the blood poor, and watery. A roughened skin, want of colour in lips and gums, papular eruptions and lack-lustre eyes are only a few of the bad results that over-indulgence in sleep induces.

Over-much sleep also invites early wrinkles around the mouth, and rook's-feet around the eyes. On the whole, I do not envy the feelings of any girl who sleeps so long that she has to hurry dressing and comes dawdling down to breakfast when everybody else is nearly finished. I don't envy her, and what is more I don't quite respect her.

But this is not all. For I presume your room is not particularly well ventilated. No rooms are in this country. So the longer you occupy your dormitory, the more vitiated does the air become, and the more and more poisoned your blood.

Well, now I have, let me say, persuaded you to rise early. What next? Well, as I don't want you to shiver and catch cold, you had better go off and have your bath at once.

I have no power to prevent you from putting a dash of hot water in it if you wish to, but I must tell you that by doing so you are destroying quite a deal of its tonic and bracing properties. So please yourself.

Regarding the cold matutinal tub, a medical journal of high repute recently made the observation. "Happy is the man or woman who can take a cold bath before breakfast every morning all the year round, and have sufficient reaction after it."

I agree with this authority, even when it is stated that some people are so constituted that the cold morning tub would do more harm than good. But I am of opinion, and so are a great many other medical and hygienic students, that the habit of bathing is by no means difficult to acquire. Some girls, for example, try a cold bath one morning. They look upon it as a dreadful ordeal, the very thought of which is almost enough to make their teeth chatter. But "Here goes," they cry, "the doctor says I must, and so I shall," and having washed the body quickly over with hot water and some really good non-alkaline soap they commence operations in the shallow bath. But lo, the very first large spongel of water makes them gasp and blow as if they were facing a blizzard of ice-dust. The second takes every morsel of courage clean out of them; at the third they drop the sponge, spring out and make a plunge for the towels.

"How anyone can stand that!" they say as they scrub and rub, "I cannot tell; but no more cold tubbing for me."

And as they rub and scrub, I, poor "Medicus," do not come in for any very large amount of blessing.

But there are others again, girls of greater fortitude or courage, who determine from the very first that they will bear a temporary pain for a lasting profit. They do not spring into the floor after the third spongel of cold water, but bravely take ten. They repeat the same operation day after day, and to their surprise and delight they soon find that there is no gasping on entering the bath, and that they are able to take ten large spongel of water over them, or even a dozen—and this is about the regulation limit. Moreover, they have a fairly good reaction, although they may not actually glow with heat. This "glow," by the way, which some people think should always follow a cold bath, is to a great extent a delusion. Only novices get it; the person who bathes before breakfast all the year round never expects such a thing. He is perfectly content to find that by the time he has finished towelling his mind is clearer, he is delightfully refreshed, life seems worth living, and the duties of the day can be looked forward to with a considerable deal of pleasure. Something else can be looked forward to with pleasure also, reader, and that is breakfast. For the matutinal tub never fails to give a good appetite, if the person who takes it be in a fairly healthy condition.

As regards appetite and exhilaration of mind let me paint two little pictures.

No. 1 is the girl—in these pictures—who does not see the fun of tubbing, or has got an idea that though the bath may suit some, it doesn't suit her, and who therefore does not have a tub from one year's end to the other.

No. 2 is Miss Brighteyes. She found the tub rather tiresome at first and a great trial. But now she would not give it up to be made a queen. But Miss Brighteyes isn't going to give up her sponge-bath now for anything, and she has actually thought once or twice of going in for a shower bath itself.

Now for my pictures. They are both morning sketches. I must take No. 2 to begin with, as she is down first. She has had her tub and looks as happy, sweet and "calmer" * as one of those speckled, crimson-spotted mountain trout you may see sporting in sandy-bottomed pools in the sunshine, in Welsh or Scottish rivulets. No. 2 may run out for a few minutes to inhale the fresh air or have a peep at the flowers; but it will not be for long. Why? Because Nature calls her to breakfast. And this breakfast she heartily enjoys and feels the better for, and as soon as it is over she goes to her duties. There is no excitement about her. She is calm and reposeful, but she has plenty of what her brother would call "go" and "staying power." She not only gets on with her work cheerfully, but she does it well and systematically. If therefore she is the employed of any firm, she earns the good opinion of her employers, and is certain in time to be advanced to a better post. But her regularity also earns her time for exercise. She knows both from theory and from practice how invaluable this is for her health, so she takes very long walks every day. In doing so she is also wooing good rest and refreshing sleep at night. The servant when she comes to make No. 2's bed never finds it tossed. The pillow has not been tumbled, for she has lain almost in the same position all throughout the night.

It is different with No. 1. She has not slept over well. She has been dreaming wearily more than is good for her, and now that getting-up time has really come she feels that she could do with another hour very well indeed. But the exigencies of duty forbid. She feels chilly as she dresses. Her reflection in the glass is not reassuring. Her eyes are certainly not over bright; her lips are not so rosy as they should be, and her gums are pale instead of pink. But come, we must not criticise poor No. 1 too severely. She gets dressed at last, and after a longing lingering look at the bed—rumpled sheets and tumbled pillows—she goes down to breakfast. No appetite, at least not much. She has to encourage it by shivering over a cup of tea before venturing on a bite of anything solid. Well,

* Fresh and wholesome.

this is a bad beginning to the day, for if the body be not well nourished it is folly to expect to get good work therefrom.

However, the call of duty must be obeyed, and No. 1 goes wearily away to her work. The excitement keeps her up for a time perhaps, but long before evening she is pretty well fagged out. She is listless, tired and not in the sweetest of tempers, and as likely as not her back aches or there is a weary feeling in it that makes her long to lie down. Oh, she can't take exercise. She is glad to get home, and before she can eat, she feels she needs a stretch upon the sofa and perhaps even a cup of tea. Poor No. 1!

But, it may be asked, do I propose the cold morning tub as a panacea for all the ills poor No. 1 is suffering from? Certainly I do not, but I say this, that the bath will assist her most materially, and that it may be the lever that shall lift and transport her into the rosy realms of health.

I repeat, that if a girl is fairly well, and suffers from no chronic ailment inherited or acquired, and has a heart of ordinary strength, the cold bath taken every morning, followed by a spell of dumb-bells or even body-movements, will give her strength of body and repose of mind, and what more does she need to make her merry and happy?

If, however, you are afraid of actually cold water at first, rather than you should not have

the bath at all, you can begin with it luke-warm—always swilling down with hot water and soap before going into the tub—and gradually lower the temperature till you can take it as cold as it may be.

You will thereby insure a good action of the skin, and this means that the blood itself will become purer every day. If the blood be pure, take my word for it that your health will soon be excellent.

The shower-bath is even more bracing and exhilarating than the sponge.

No convenience. This is very often alleged by my readers—boys and girls both—as an excuse for not taking the bath. But I won't have it on any account. Now just listen. A pailful of water is poured into the shallow bath over-night, and the big sponge placed handy. Then all is ready for the morning.

But you have to swill all over with hot water and soap at your hand-basin before taking the tub. And you can't get hot water? Is that your difficulty? Well, I can solve it. Get one of the nice new oil-stoves, and in five minutes it will boil you two quarts of water, and the cost is almost *nil*. I speak from experience.

Drink half a pint of this water as hot as you can bear it, and pour the rest in your basin.

Gymnastics are generally gone into in the evening. I may have a paper treating on this subject soon. They may be beneficial, or quite

the reverse. Anyhow, you cannot do harm by taking the spell of light dumb-bells before breakfast, which I so frequently recommend.

We have recently given papers on bodily movements. Go in for these if you would abolish extra adiposity, harden your muscles, and give yourself a neat and willow waist without the aid of corsets. Why, these movements if judiciously taken, will even increase a short girl's height.

I have already spoken of exercise; just one hint about food. You must eat slowly, and masticate well. You must not take fluid of any kind to wash down the food. Reserve fluid until you are nearly finished, or quite. A too-fluid diet even is objectionable. If it can be well borne there is nothing in the world strengthens the body so much as solid food in moderation.

About Medicine.—For all chronic cases of what I may call "only middlingness," physic, unless prescribed by a physician, should be abjured. There is incalculable mischief done every day in this country by the objectionable and dangerous practice of self-drugging. But above all, abjure those swindling quacks who advertise their remedies, here there and everywhere, as capable of curing all the ills that flesh is heir to. "Throw physic to the dogs," said Shakespeare. Well did this wise man know that the dogs would have none of it. Dogs know better.

HOUSEHOLD ROUTINE.

THE following is the detailed system adopted by the wife of a London curate for keeping her house in good order. The family consists of husband, wife, child, and one servant. The house is small, being in size and appearance similar to the other little houses of which the district is composed. The curate's house is the centre of a vast parochial work, of a pastoral and charitable kind, so that it is necessary that a detailed system of household management should be written out and strictly followed, otherwise between the numerous services, meetings, visitings and visitors, the husband might have to go mealless.

Duties for Every Day.—To be downstairs at 7.0. Light fire. Fill the two largest kettles, and put the big one on. Sweep the stairs and passage, not leaving a little heap of dust in the passage. Sweep the dining-room with a hard broom, and with the window open. Then sweep the drawing-room, then dust the dining-room, when the dust will have settled. Lay the breakfast with a slip-cloth, and then see to the coffee, etc. On three mornings of the week, stir the porridge which has been cooked over-night for baby. Breakfast at 8.30 on service days and 9 on late day. At 7.50 bring me the water for baby's bath. At 8.15 on late mornings. Before going upstairs put a little coal on the fire and fill the big kettle and put it on. Then fill the large water-can and take it up with you. During breakfast, make our bed and your bed and empty our slops and your slops, and give our bed-room a dust and every other morning a sweep out. Every other morning stand on a chair and dust the top of my double chest of drawers.

This should all be quite done at latest by 10.15, by which time the water will be hot. Clear out the breakfast things and sweep up baby's crumbs, and then wash up the breakfast things, which need not take more than twenty minutes or half-an-hour. As soon as the kettle is empty fill it again and put it on the fire. From now till cooking wipe and trim, and fill the lamps each morning, and dust the candle-sticks. Now comes any necessary cooking. Any onion-peelings or potato-

peelings, etc., should be put on the fire at once as they make a smell in the dust-hole. On mornings when there is a cold dinner it is only necessary to peel and prepare the potatoes and baby's milk pudding, and you will then be free to do the especial work of the day, such as turning out a room or dusting the dresser if any extra time is left.

It is well to begin putting the table-cloth and knives, etc., on a tray at 12.30, so that you may have a full quarter-of-an-hour in which to dish up the dinner and see that the room is neat and everything is clean. Baby's slip-cloth and mug must not be forgotten.

The moment the dinner is dished and sent up, the large kettle must be filled with a view to washing up. The blades of the knives can then be rested in hot water as soon as they come down, and they will be far easier to clean. The saucepans should be cleaned the minute the dinner is sent up as they can be cleaned easily while moist. Any that require soaking should at once be put to soak.

After clearing the dinner and comfortably eating your own dinner you should at once wash up, and do the grate. The tea-cloth should be hung to dry before the fire. When that is done it is necessary to dust the soup tureens, etc., on the dresser and the mantel-piece, to look round the kitchen to see if any garments, etc., are lying about, and to take them up to your bed-room when you go to wash. Then fill both the kettles and put them on. You should always be upstairs before 3.30, and then you can be down at 4 looking fresh and neat to open to visitors, etc. From 4 to 5 you may sometimes take baby a walk to the park, etc., or to get the next day's necessities, and if not you may rest or read a story, or sew your own clothes, and then at 5 you must always have your own tea and prepare Mary's. Our tea must be laid by 6.15 in order that you may do any necessary cooking afterwards, and that we may begin tea at 6.30. While we are having our tea fill the kettle, empty all the bed-room slops, including yours, fill all the water-jugs, including your own, and see that the rooms are neat and fresh. Baby's bath-water must be standing by her bath at 7.

Directly after tea clear the table and brush the crumbs up, and wash up the tea-things. These can be quite finished by 7.45, and then every night all the knives and boots must be cleaned. The knives must always all be done at this time. There will be one special task for each evening, but for the remainder of the time you can sew or read. On Saturday afternoon the kitchen must be scrubbed and the kitchen larder cupboard, so you will not be able to get dressed till 5 o'clock.

Monday night.—Rub up all the brass things and candle-sticks.

Tuesday night.—Stir some porridge for baby and me for next morning's breakfast for fifteen minutes. Evening out.

Wednesday night.—Go to church one week. Tidy lumber-room next week.

Thursday night.—Stir some porridge for baby and me for fifteen minutes.

Friday night.—Rub up silver and plate.

Saturday night.—Cook a pie or a pudding for Sunday.

Sunday night.—Go to church.

In these evening times after the routine work is done, herrings may be pickled or any preparations for to-morrow's dinner may be started.

Bed at 10 at night.

Monday.—Turn out and sweep with tea-leaves the study at 11 o'clock.

Tuesday.—Turn out, etc., your own bed-room.

Wednesday.—Turn out my bed-room and spare room and turn over the mattress and dust in corners, and shake the carpet and sweep.

Thursday.—Turn out the dining-room and dust and clap one shelf of the books in turn from week to week.

Friday.—Turn out the drawing-room and dust and clap one shelf of books in turn. This is done by taking them to the front door.

Saturday.—In the afternoon scrub the kitchen and clean the dresser and larder.