

THIRD PRIZE ESSAY.*

"WHAT I DO WITH MY TIME."

I AM the eldest daughter of a doctor. My home is in a pretty village by the sea, sixteen miles from the nearest railway station. Since I left school three years ago most of my time has been spent there trying to be the help and comfort that a good daughter ought to be in her home. Our household consists of Father, Mother, six year old Alice, a wee baby of three months, myself, servant and boy.

Now in order that you may know how my time is spent I will commence with my morning's duties which are very much alike all the year round.

I generally rise at half past seven. After dressing myself my little sister, who sleeps in a cot in my bedroom and is entirely under my care, has to be washed and dressed. After going down stairs my first work is to prepare the breakfast, and lay the table in readiness for it in the breakfast room. By the time the coffee, ham, and toast are ready, Father and Mother come down, and we sit down together to our morning meal. Directly breakfast is over, Alice has to be sent to school. When she has gone, the breakfast is cleared, and the dining room drawing room and hall are put in order and dusted. The dusting of the drawing room always takes me a good time, as it contains so many ornaments and nick nacks, that require most careful handling. If necessary I next go out into the garden, and pick some flowers, and arrange them in the vases. We are all very fond of flowers, and like to have a little of their beauty and fragrance in our rooms, as well as out of doors. The next work to be done by me is to go upstairs to make my own bed and little Alice's, and put our room in order. One morning in the week it is my duty to see that the servant girl gives all the bedrooms a thorough sweeping after which they have to be dusted by me. When my work upstairs is finished, I go down again into the kitchen to assist in the preparation of the dinner; or should the servant be busy with other work, to take the entire charge of the cooking of it. Any pastry or cakes required for tea are also always made by me during my morning's cooking. Mother having been unwell during the preserving season this year, all the jam and jelly were made by me. As our large garden supplied us with an abundance of fruit for the purpose, I was able to make quite a large quantity of preserves. If there is any time left before dinner after finishing my cooking, it is spent in changing

my dress, and in making Alice also presentable to appear at the table. My afternoons are spent in various ways. In the summer weather the first part of my afternoon is often spent doing some darning or sewing on a shady seat in the garden, where Father and Mother often join me. Whilst Mother and I sew, Father reads aloud from the newspaper anything he sees likely to interest us. After going in from the garden, unless Mother wishes me to take the baby for a while, I practise my music, which is always a source of great pleasure to me. Father and Mother are also very fond of music, so I try to devote a certain part of every day to a steady practice of scales and difficult pieces, in order to improve my playing. But it often happens, that my afternoon passes without my being able to do any practising. Some of our friends may call, and in that case the rest of the afternoon is spent in helping to entertain them. If they are musical like ourselves, we generally manage to have a little music before they leave. Of course Mother and I have to give an afternoon now and then to returning these calls; and seeing other less fortunate friends, who may be in sickness or sorrow.

When tea is over in the summer months, I generally go out of doors. There is nothing I enjoy better on a fine evening than a row in our little boat "the Daisy."

Two of us rowing, and one steering, we go along the water at a good rate, and soon leave far behind us the stone pier from which we started, and the little town with its white houses ranged in terraces along the side of the hill.

As the boat dances gaily over the sparkling waves, and the fresh sea breezes play about us, we feel our spirits rapidly rising, and one of us may break out into a song, which is joined right heartily in the chorus by the rest of the company. We pause now and then on our oars, to admire the scenery along the shore, where we see a coast bound by layer upon layer of stratified rock broken up into all kinds of fantastic shapes, and here and there into islets and caves. In this way time passes very quickly and pleasantly, and before long we are back again on the stone pier, talking over our evening's experiences, and making arrangements to meet again another evening for some more boating before we separate to go to our various homes.

Another evening Father may take me out for a drive along the pleasant country roads bordered by hedgerows which are in the summer time gay with honeysuckle, dog roses, and other wild flowers. We drive on

past waving cornfields and green meadows, or sometimes over moors on which nothing grows except heather and gorse. Presently we may see before us a cart in which a farmer and his wife are joggling along slowly and contentedly, with whom we exchange a friendly greeting in Welsh as we pass them by. Occasionally I have to wait outside a farmhouse or cottage, whilst Father goes in to see a patient. It often happens, that before I have been long waiting, an old Welsh woman appears in the doorway making a quaint picture in her short striped skirt, check apron, little red shawl, and clogs. In her hand she carries a glass of fresh milk, which she smilingly offers to me. Of course I have to accept it gratefully. When Father comes out he finds the kind old woman and myself having a friendly chat together in Welsh. On returning from my row or drive, Alice has to be given her supper and put to bed, also our supper prepared. The rest of my time until bed time at eleven o'clock is spent in Reading, sewing, answering letters, or copying Reports etc. for Father.

Girls used to the bustle and gaiety of large towns, would perhaps think my life here during the winter was rather a dull one; but having always plenty of interesting work to occupy my time the winter months pass very happily by. I go for a brisk walk every afternoon, after which the remainder of my day is spent indoors, unless I attend a Public meeting or concert in the evening. The long winter evenings when spent at home were employed in practising my music and singing, sewing, or reading my books from the Home Reading Union by whose guidance I followed an instructive and interesting course of reading in History, Literature, and Science. Any spare time in the afternoons was given to painting, and working for a bazaar in which we had a stall.

Sunday in our home is always a quiet peaceful day. In the morning and evening I go to chapel to a Welsh service, and in the afternoon to the Sunday School, where I teach a class of little girls. As I sit there trying to teach the little ones around me to read and understand God's word, my thoughts often carry me back to that time in my own childhood, when a dear one whose voice is now silent used to talk to me of Jesus and heaven and a great desire fills my heart to lead a better and more Christ-like life.

I declare the statements in this paper to be true.

"ANEMONE."

Cardiganshire.

CHIEFLY ABOUT RHEUMATISM.

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N. ("MEDICUS").

ONE should never boast about one's health and strength. Though, like Mark Twain, I cannot say that I have suffered from every ailment under the sun "except house-maid's knee," still I have during my wanderings here and there in many lands, and at home too, had numerous illnesses. Also I do not think that I could write so well on troubles I had not experienced the *pains* of. Experience gives an atmosphere of reality to whatsoever an author writes. For example, in writing serial novels, or stories, I never depend altogether on my imagination for any scenes, and

seldom for any human character. I have never gone through any part of my life with my eyes and ears shut. I have never travelled anywhere by sea or land, in America, India, Europe, Africa, or even in the Arctic Regions, without two friends—a note-book and a drawing pencil. And whatever of interest has appeared before me is at once transmitted to paper. I do not profess to be an artist, I only just possess the knack of catching salient points and lines. But a sunrise, a sunset, a wild romantic scene, or storm of any kind if sketched by pen and

pencil on the spot, comes in wonderful handy when writing fiction. So too do droll faces, and while travelling in my caravan "The Wanderer" I meet many, many curious-faced folks on tramp and by the wayside.

Here is a hint anyhow to girls who would become writers. Unless you are acquainted with human life and nature, you can no more write a good story than you could paint a decent picture *minus* a model. I know many young ladies who write short stories, or rather try to, which no editor outside Hanwell would look at. These stories are destitute of reality

and as a rule made up of school-girl gush, sentiment and twaddle. So their ultimate destination is the Balaam basket.

Nevertheless, although a man some years over fifty may be as hardy though not so strong as a fellow in his twenties, I, for one, do not wish to have illnesses, for the pleasure of describing them with a greater degree of minuteness to my girl-readers.

But here is a morsel of my own experience that may be welcome to some. After ten years' service in the Royal Navy constantly abroad, I was invalidated on half-pay and became a *litterateur*. I was invalidated for chronic rheumatism. I had some years before caught jungle fever on the East Coast of Africa. We soon after ran on shore, and knocked an ugly hole in our saucy gun-boat and ripped away our keel. We got off on a very high tide and proceeded to Bombay docks. It was pump, pump, pump, three hours every watch for nearly three weeks. Then we reached the docks.

But all our pumping could not have saved us had not Providence been kind. You have heard I suppose about—

"The sweet little cherub who sits up aloft,
To look after the life of poor Jack."

Well, that cherub, during our hazardous voyage to Bombay must have been aloft with us. For strange to say, the ship sucked into the leak a quantity of floating sea-weed, partially filling it up and thus saving our lives.

But though I got easily over the jungle fever, I found myself getting stiff and ill. The appetite failed, I felt constantly tired, when I sat down it pained me much to get up again. Before reaching Bombay—remember I was the only medical man in charge—I was obliged to keep to my hammock, and my patients—and they were very many—just came or hobbled to the quarter-deck where I lay, and there were treated by me—whom my messmates thought a dying man, because a huge shark day after day kept following the ship, in spite of the fact that whenever a fin of his appeared above water, it was played upon by a fountain of revolver bullets.

I was pretty ill when I reached Bombay, red and swollen joints, and sickness all over.

Captain G—, a dear, kind little fellow, said I must go on shore to the Military Hospital. There was no Navy one.

"What!" I cried peevishly, "and leave all my poor patients! No, sir, unless they go too, I remain."

So I was humoured. And a pretty procession we made, filing through the streets and along the esplanade borne in hammocks, by red marines and blue-jackets. Fifteen suffering men and a pale-faced young doctor. Arrived at Dr. Dimmock's he told me he could take the men but had no officers' wards disengaged. But seeing me look so sad and ill, his heart melted in pity for me. There was one outlying building, he said, that I might have, however. I jumped at the proposal, that is as far as any man in acute rheumatism could jump.

It was indeed a lonesome ward, but very large—three huge open windows at each side, and my bed in the corner. I had an Indian servant, however, as faithful as a dog, who

slept on a mat on the floor and never left me five minutes night or day.

For a whole month I was utterly helpless, unable so much as to lift a hand to my aching brow, or move a foot. I think I lived on medicine, soda-water and *sujee* (a kind of flour porridge). Moreover when Pandoo left the room for a few minutes in flew at least a score of impudent Indian crows. There was no species of mischief they were not versed in. The remains of my *sujee* (N.B. They were too wise to tackle the physic) was eaten up, so was my fruit, and they hopped all over the ward with my spoons.

Seeing my helplessness, one or two would sometimes hop on to my chest and glance at me most roguishly. "You've got blue eyes," one seemed to say, "We've often picked out dark ones, but never blue. Give us a bit."

The wonder is they didn't blind me. But when bare-legged, linen-dressed Pandoo re-entered, the rout was soon completed, though the din of it was a perfect pandemonium.

Now here is a strange thing, some years after this I contracted chronic rheumatism, and was sent to Haslar Hospital. When I was discharged on half-pay, I soon took to cycling, and have been a wheel-man ever since. But although I take but little care of myself, sleeping with open windows, bathing all the year round, letting my clothes when wet dry on my back for example, and doing much that I ought not to do, the wheel has entirely cured me, and I have never had a twinge of rheumatism, and very seldom a cold since I took to it.

The rationale of this is probably as follows. My skin is always beautifully open, that is the pores are, and one would scarcely believe what an amount of effete matter is daily discharged from the skin. My liver seldom troubles me. Sitting so much as I do, I suffer in other ways, however. Well, the best cure for this is prevention—if that is not an Irish bull. But plenty of ripe fruit before breakfast, oatmeal, the cycle and early rising keeps one well and happy. Frequent change of underclothing and socks or stockings is a *sine qua non*.

Keep on the road, I say, winter and summer. I'd rather pedal through mud than run the risk of having obstructed pores. On the other hand if you spurt much, it will stretch or weaken the heart, so that if you are at all inclined to have chronic rheumatism, you will be far more likely to take it.

At what age may one commence cycling? It is best, of course, to begin young. But a gentleman of my acquaintance, who lives in a very hilly country, took to the safety some years ago. He was then sixty-three, I believe, but thin, active, and wiry.

He was being threatened with chronic rheumatism, but that is entirely gone.

I would not, however, advise an elderly, stout lady or gentleman to adopt the cycle. In these cases, the heart is nearly always more or less flabby, and not only surrounded with bands of fat, but as pale as a spring chicken's.

Again, it does not follow that cycling will reduce corpulence, although it will gradually bring up the muscular strength. A patient of mine, a very free liver, had the courage to give up stimulants entirely. Well, he began to grow fat, and I recommended a good tricycle—he was not very young—but, strangely

enough, the more he rode, the rounder he grew. So he had to abandon this fascinating exercise.

So those who are beginning to suffer from rheumatism, either about the joints or muscles, should at once diet themselves, not eating too much and being careful to take nothing that creates acidity of the stomach. If the stomach is soured so will the blood be and deposits will take place in ligaments. Hence the pain.

Walking and plenty of it is *the* exercise for stout folks.

The cold bath every morning, a warm bath every third evening, and a Turkish bath once a week have often made a man or woman young and active again in six months' time.

Let me caution the reader against the quack blood-purifying medicines so freely advertised in the press. Even sarsaparilla, though at one time so much extolled, is now found out to be a fraud. I heard a very eminent professor say, not long ago, that, as far as blood-purification was concerned, sarsaparilla was about as useless as a decoction of hay would be.

Too much sugar should not be taken by those inclined to either corpulence or rheumatism. But it is strength and energy for the wiry man, and even for the nervous.

Saccharin may be taken for a few weeks, but remember that in the end it does much harm—is almost a poison in fact.

Well, although compared to the people who possess that unhappy slight inclination to *embonpoint*, we hardy, somewhat nervine individuals are the salt of the earth and keep the world agog, there is one thing which we should remember. We must never overdo it. I confess I do not always practice what I preach, but then I'm like a finger-post at cross-roads. Sufficient if it tells you the road. You must not expect it to come down and walk all the way alongside you. But there is a verse in the Corinthians which I think we should all remember:

"Let him who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

I sometimes experience the truth of this. It is just while I am feeling fittest, that I catch a nasty little cold, the toothache, or tic, or a week of partial insomnia—this last caused by writing too long without sufficient exercise in the fresh air. And I always say I'll be wiser—but I never am. Sitting with damp or wet feet often encourages an attack of rheumatism. So does sitting in a draught with damp clothing on. But otherwise, speaking from my own experience, I never catch cold or anything else though writing all day close beside the widely-opened windows of my wigwam winter and summer. If in a train, the windows should be let down, and so long as you feel no chill there is no danger even should you be riding against the wind.

Waterproof clothing and those feet-rotting contrivances called goloshes speedily open the door for rheumatism to enter.

Well, for the cure of chronic rheumatism, I believe far more in the regulation of diet, regular exercise daily, avoidance of exposure to inclement weather, the baths as stated above, and all-wool clothing night and day (no linen sheets), than I do in medicine. The latter may be needed, but can only be prescribed for individual cases, according to symptoms and constitution.

