

where I should have gathered, and I cut the garments in an odd and ill-shaped manner.

"If only," I would murmur sadly to myself, "I could give up this work which tires my eyes and heart and could go into the fields and paint the beautiful things which God has created! If only I could sometimes leave this room, which is so dark, and feel that I was free, I would wish for nothing more—unless it were a friend!" Even as I framed this last idea I trembled, and a tear rolled down my cheeks. The word "friend" was one to conjure with, because, though I was poor and ugly, I knew that I was capable of sympathy, and I knew that I could love. But a friend I had never possessed, neither had I ever heard kind words nor felt caresses. I was forgotten by the world; and up in my dusky garret I sat day in and day out, straining my eyes for twopence an hour, unwanted, unsought-for, and alone.

The great day which was to decide my fate arrived. The chosen design was to be placed on a pedestal in a chamber to be seen by all, and the name of the winner to be publicly proclaimed.

I remember that day.

I arrived at the great room, which was crowded with people. My head reeled, my eyes were blinded for a moment, and I almost fainted. Above the heads of the crowds the prize design hung aloft.

It was not mine! It was a rich and gaudy work—a cluster of brilliant peonies, twined with a ribbon round them, and a dancing-girl holding her hands up gleefully in the centre, a piece of colouring beside which my humble creeper and geranium would have faded into dullest insignificance.

My heart was sick, and I felt so feeble that I could scarcely totter homewards. The one hope which had brightened up my path was gone!

I left the building hastily, and in my bewilderment brushed by two men who were standing at the doorway. Dejected and down-trodden as I was, my senses were acute, and I looked up and tried to frame an apology for my brusqueness. But my tongue cleaved to my mouth, and I could not utter a syllable.

I think these men were two of the judges, for they looked like artists. One was young, with long blonde hair and a velvet jacket, the other was older and more simple in appearance.

"What a queer creature!" said the young one as I passed. "Whenever I see anything so dismal and ill-favoured my artistic susceptibilities are offended."

"Hush!" said the other softly. "She may hear, and it would hurt her."

I looked back and gave one glance of thanks to the man who had taken my part, then hurried swiftly onwards.

When I reached my garret the sun was set, and there was a clammy heat in the apartment which almost dazed my senses. My head ached. I was hungry; but there was only a crust of bread and a crook of water on the table. The floor was strewn with unfinished bits of needlework which would have to be completed ere I slept.

I took up the bread and began to eat it in an absent sort of way, when I perceived a note lying on my table. It was from Susan Holt, one of my fellow-workers.

"Look out"—it ran—"they have been running down your work up at the firm. They say the things that you have turned out lately are disgraceful, and you're going to get the sack. Don't lose heart though, for there's plenty of other work open besides turning out shirts at twopence an hour. They want a governess up at the Clownes' at Bloomsbury. Why don't you try for it?"

I did not sleep all that night. The bitter tears rolled down my cheeks unceasingly. I was a failure! Even the common needlework, in which other girls excelled, was to me irksome and difficult. Perhaps, after all, those unkind things which they had said of me were true, and I was dull and foolish.

The next morning I went out of the darksome purlieus where my home was situated in search of Mrs. Clowne's mansion. Mrs. Clowne was the wife of a rich merchant, but she had an evil reputation at the firm. She was a parvenu, and it was said that she treated all inferiors with harshness, if not cruelty.

Still this did not deter me. "Better," I said to myself, "to endure her rebuffs than die of starvation in a garret. Better to earn my bread by work which gives me activity than to sit for long hours, straining my eyes over that for which I have neither skill nor love."

I arrived at the Clownes' home tired and bewildered. The thought of failure no longer daunted me. I knew the sensation of disappointment too well to be ever again crushed by it; but still my heart misgave me as I gazed at the building stretched before me.

It was a vast stucco mansion which shone in the sun's rays with colours that almost blinded one. The flowers before the windows were enclosed in boxes of hideous hue and form, the very windows themselves were curiously ugly, many of the panes being

coloured or filled in with imitation stained glass. The garden was arranged in hearts and crosses on one side and squares on the other. I suppose it was what people call a landscape garden, making up in artificiality what it lacked in grace. Nothing was restful in the place, nothing harmonious, and this giant structure, with all its hideous glare, rejoiced in the truly ludicrous name of "Wee Nestie."

I knocked at the door, and a man in bright red livery attended my summons. Having heard my mission, he scanned me from head to foot derisively, and motioned me with a splendid wave of his hand into the sitting-room.

Madame was sitting in a corner doing poker work. She was dressed in gossamer green, and her hair, which was the yellowest I have ever seen, was arranged in a high pyramid surmounted by a huge tortoise-shell dagger.

She looked up at me and distinctly shuddered as I approached. Then she asked me my business.

I told it to her humbly enough. I had come to offer myself for the vacant post of governess to her children, I said, and I trusted she would find me worthy.

"Oh, dear, no," she cried, in a shrill key. "It is quite impossible. Your appearance is so distinctly against you. You would frighten my pretty ones." And she laughed. It seemed to amuse her to wound me just as it amuses a cat to torture a mouse. And then the thought of my loneliness arose in my mind, and I spoke to her out of the sorrow of my heart. I think I spoke with eloquence. I told her of my life—my very thoughts. I told her that the pallor of my face was due to worry and starvation, and that it would pass away in time. I told her with all the fulness of my heart how much I loved children, and how firm an idea I had of duty and obedience. I begged her not to judge my mind by my face, and I added further that I was willing to work for her morning and night and ask nothing in return but board and lodging.

I suppose the woe in my words, or more probably the gratuitous offer of my services, made her change her mind towards me, for a moment later she said that "she didn't mind giving me a trial, and that I could begin work on the morrow. My services," she added, "though not altogether light, would be found on the whole most agreeable, for although the boy Jim was perhaps a little troublesome, the girls and the baby were simply angels."

Wherewith I took my leave.

(To be continued.)

## HEALTHY AND HAPPY IN JULY.

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

"Happiness depends, as nature shows,  
Less on exterior things than men suppose."

As I sit down to write, the old mill bell chimes the hour of six. Rather early to be up and at work is it not, some may say? I think not, and although townspeople will not be stirring yet for hours, we country folks like to catch the first freshness of the early morn. Besides, I have to give girls a word or two of good advice concerning health in July.

Really, if one has gone to bed at a reasonable time, and is refreshed by a good night's sleep, one cannot rise too early in the sweet summer-time, and the cold bath just sets one up for the day.

Last night—there is no harm in my telling you—a youngster of mine, two of them in

fact, made a strong, sturdy, good resolution to be out on the lawn this morning as early as the starlings, to wash their faces in the May dew. The farewell words of one were—

"You must wake and call me early,  
Call me early, daddy dear."

Well, so I have. They are not down yet, however. One may call spirits from the vasty deep, you know; but the bother is to get them to come when they are called. Yet really, on such a delightful morning as this, it is a pleasure to be awake and out among the birds, the tender leaves and the flowers. Yesterday was a wild and stormy day indeed, and I didn't thank the "howthering" wind for strewn my paths with bunches of my choicest apple bloom. But to-day there is hardly breeze enough to lift a leaf on the

sycamores, the sun has changed the laurels into silver, and every drop of dew on my orchard grass here, among which the dogs are gambolling so gaily, is a glittering diamond.

The pink and white blossom on the apple-trees, and the banks of snowy flowers on the cherry really does one good to look at, yes, and makes one better too, for they remind one that God is love.

So do the birds all around me. They positively seem almost hysterical with the joy they are trying to express in song.

Cock-robin—my special cock-robin—has alighted on my arm. He wants me to do a little gardening that he may have worms, for he has four gaping children to feed. "So have I," I tell him. Pussy has pulled the greater part of the dear bird's tail out.



"It might have been worse," he says, "and the tail will grow again."

I rake the flower-border for a little while, the bird picks up the early worms—a whole bill full of them—and off he flies as happy as happy can be.

Early morning is the best time for study, in summer, at all events. You may get through as much work then in one hour, as you can in two at any other time, and it is more easily retained by the memory.

But now I must imagine it is the delightful month of July. The leaves may have lost their first tender tints, but they are still beautiful, and July is a month of flowers, so that it is really a pity not to be out-of-doors all day long.

Fresh air does one so much good. It is one of the steps of the ladder that leads to health. Staying in a room with the window open is not half sufficient for you; for the summer air should be all around you that your lungs may revel in it.

#### SOMETHING TO DO.

If you have a plot of garden ground which you do not plant with flowers or something useful, weeds will assuredly spring up there. It is precisely the same with girls' minds. If they have no useful fad or fancy, or no work in which they take an interest, nature, which abhors a vacuum, will speedily sow the seeds of frivolity and vanity therein, and these will grow apace to the utter exclusion of everything that is good and honourable. I hate to preach, but I keep my eyes open, and I cannot help seeing that as the world seems to wax more wealthy, young ladies seem to care for nothing saving external decoration, button-holes and the bike, so that the mind is a mere chaotic heap of weeds. Much as I love and recommend cycling, it cannot be said that it is at all times a blessing, and girls that are never happy save when gadding about on wheels, will never do much good in the world, for evil soon creeps into an empty mind. And we should not forget that evil thrives better than good in the human soul. Weeds grow anywhere and need no cultivation. Why? The answer is, because they are indigenous to the soil, while the flowers are only foreigners. In the same way sin is indigenous, and the virtues, like flowers, have to be cultivated. Now, although I hope for August to write a paper—up to date—upon healthful employments for growing girls, I shall say nothing to-day on the subject, except this: no fad or fancy is of any good for mind or body that one does not take a real and wholesome interest in.

#### IDLENESS AND HEALTH.

No girl can enjoy good health, bounding happy health, who is idle. Mind and body walk arm-in-arm through life, and don't you forget it. If anything ails either, the other has got to lag and limp also.

There is a very expressive word which we often hear in Scotland, namely, "dwinning." It is usually applied to girls in their teens, who are in a rather doubtful state of health, though not necessarily consumptive.

"I'm sadly concerned about my bit lassie," a farmer's wife told me one day.

"What is the matter?" I inquired.

"She's just dwinning, sir; an' we're gie'n her cod liver oil."

"Cod liver fiddlesticks!" I couldn't help exclaiming. "I'll have a look at the bit lassie."

She was pale, big-eyed and languid, and rather thin.

"Does she do any work?"

"Oh, no, sir—we're weel aff. We can afford to keep her idle at wir ain (our own) fireside. She does naething a' day but read, read, read."

"Well," I said, "I shall alter all that."

"And cure her, sir? Cure oor Shusie?"

"I'll cure Shusie most assuredly, if you'll do all I tell you!"

This happened over a year ago. I went home to Scotland not long since and saw Shusie. A healthier, happier-looking lassie you would not find in three parishes.

But Shusie is no longer idle. She has a cow of her own, besides a pony. She helps her mammy in making butter and cheese, and she is, moreover, a bee-farmer on a small scale.

Her mother said, "God bless *you*, sir. We did a' ye bade us. We flang the cod-liver oil into the midden, and just gied (gave) Shusie a stake in life, and look at her noo. The worst thing in a' the world—as ye said, sir—is idleness."

Well, I don't know that Shusie's mother's blessing weighs much, but I'd rather be blessed than banned any day. And really it would do one-half the idle dwinning lassies good to be drummed off to Klondyke.

#### WORK AND REST.

Work and rest should come alternately, for so Nature hath ordained that they should, but mind, if there be no work of a kind that interests beforehand, no actual rest can follow. Rest should be of a pleasant or recreative kind, such as cycling if the work done has exercised the brain, and entailed much thought and study; if it has been physical, then a rest on the sofa while you turn over the leaves of the good old "G. O. P.," or the pages of the Story Supplement is the right thing.

#### CHEERFULNESS.

Well, I was going to say a good deal about this, and argue the question as to whether it can be cultivated or not. But I have only space here to hint that, to a great extent, cheerfulness is a plant which is capable of cultivation.

But it depends very much on the state of the system. If the liver or digestive organs are out of order a girl cannot be cheerful though she may pretend to be. Neither can she, if weariness and languor point to a heart that is temporarily feeble. Nor if the nerves are unstrung, or below par. But as cheerfulness has a wonderful effect for good upon the general health we ought to make a strong point of never nursing worries, especially wee ones. These, like mosquitoes, are blood-suckers, and whenever they come buzzing round one's thoughts, the plan is to read or play or work, or do anything in reason that shall give the mind a better colour.

#### SLEEP, IN SUMMER-TIME.

You do not need so much as in winter, and you will be better and healthier, by far and away, if you adopt this plan: rise early, dine only in the middle of the day, say 1.30, and have a rest immediately after for a whole hour. Sleep then if you can, at all events, lie prone, and if you can't doze, read. Take two cups of good tea at four or five, not later, and do not eat much supper, though it is not good to go to bed with an empty stomach.

There is no excuse for not keeping the windows open in July. One hour's sleep in fresh air is better than two in a room laden with the poison, of that which has been breathed over and over again.

No heavy bed-clothing in July, please; no feather-beds, but a feather-pillow with the head rather high but easy. An hour before midnight is better than two in early morning, because if you go to bed when just dreamily tired, your slumbers will refresh you. Moreover they will be sounder because you have greater silence around you. No really good sleep is obtained where there are intermittent noises.

#### THE SECRET OF FRUIT-EATING.

For health's sake, I mean. And the secret is a simple one. I should premise that preserved fruits and jams are good if put up by respectable firms and not adulterated with gelatine. A too thick and clammy jam denotes the presence of this vile addition. Girls cannot learn too young the fact that government does not make any attempt to prevent the poisoning of babies by soothing powders or children by noxious jams and sweets. I should send the directors of dishonest firms, and quacks generally, to a penal settlement or some group of cannibal islands. But the sole object of those in authority is to make up a heavy Privy Purse. They are as bad as I. Lettsom the quack.

"When patients come to I,  
I physic, bleeds and sweats 'em,  
And if they choose to die  
What's that to I—  
I lets 'em."

Well, but about the secret; eat then only the fruits that are in season; eat only fresh fruit; eat only ripe fruit, and eat fruits that are grown at home in preference to foreign. But many of the latter are fairly good. I could write a very long par for instance, on the banana, the lemon or the orange.

#### COOLING DRINKS.

Fruit syrups are really so much adulterated as a rule that I do not care to recommend them. Plain, non-effervescent fruit drinks, made at home are far better. Expensive lemonades or soda waters are seldom worth the price we pay for them. They are often mawkish and unwholesome, and if one happens to be tired and thirsty with the summer's heat, the juice of a lemon in sweetened water is far better. And better still is a cup of good tea *iced* but acidulated with lemon. Sugar to taste. But it must be sipped slowly to be of much value.

A handful of fine, fresh, medium oatmeal in a jugful of sweetened water with the juice of lemon is beyond all praise as a summer beverage. For it cools and strengthens at the same time.

#### THE SUMMER'S SUN.

If you want to be well in July, you must not look upon old Sol as your enemy. He is your greatest friend, and the more of his rays you absorb the stronger will you be. Never mind if you are a bit brown. I like to see sun-browning with health's pinky show shining through it on the cheeks. So do most men. But such girls are really more cheerful and happier. And more sensible too I think, that is if I may judge from those who visit my caravan in summer, anywhere 'twixt Bourne-mouth and Inverness. By "sensible" I do not mean grave, but witty and brilliant without flippancy. Therefore I say court the sunshine when it is not really blazing hot.

#### FAINTNESS.

This is a trouble not at all uncommon in summer after much fatigue. It is caused by temporary debility of the heart, and the treatment is simple but should be adopted at once. Rest in the cool and on the prone, the application of cold water to the top of the head, and smelling salts to the nostrils. Fainting is but a more severe form of faintness. It is too well known to need description. The person should be laid flat on a sofa or anywhere for that matter, with the head on a level with the body. All tightness about neck or waist should be removed, plenty of air given, and, after a minute or two, a little cold water sprinkled on the face. The smelling-salts bottle is useful of course, but should not be held too long nor too close to the nose. Burnt feathers I have no faith in.