

THANK GOD FOR MAY.

By HELEN MARION BURNSIDE.

THE linnet in the hawthorn bush
Her last wee egg has not yet hatched,
Though it is May;
But see, the nesting mother thrush,
By loving mate so proudly watched,
Comes forth to-day!

A veil of fresh translucent green,
A-gleam with opal sparks of dew,
Is the array
Most meet for dainty Spring, I ween,
When all her pretty nymphs anew
Troop forth in May.

Immortal Spring! for ever fair,
Her dew and new-born buds among—
Her gardens gay—
Her callow birds in leafy lair,
And all the beauty, fresh and young,
She brings in May!

"Thank God for Spring—thank God for all
The stirring of new hope it brings,"
Each year I say—
When orchards bloom, and cuckoos call,
And all the land with rapture rings—
"Thank God for May."

A HAPPY HEALTHY GIRLHOOD.

(Dedicated to "The Mater.")

By "MEDICUS" (DR. GORDON-STABLES, R.N.).

"From work she wins her spirits light,
From busy day, the peaceful night;
Rich, from the very want of wealth,
In heaven's best treasures—peace and
health."—Gray.



"Wretched, unidea'd
girls."—Johnson.

THE last quoted line is, as you see, from Johnson—Sam Johnson the lexicographer, Sam the learned, and, if I chose to be ill-natured, I might add Sam the sot. A man of infinite jest and "a stolid kind of humour, but cuttingly sarcastic"; a man whom Scotland delighted to honour, and did honour, and treated with the greatest of kindness and hospitality, which he rewarded by trying to hold Scotland and the Scots up to ridicule ever after. A man whose memory therefore I cannot revere. But, giving him his due, when he says "Wretched, unidea'd girls," he does not mean to insult young womanhood. I think rather that, although his English was like himself, too heavy and elephantine, he meant to convey the impression that a girl who has no ideas, no mind, cannot be truly happy. And here I agree with Scotland's foe. I pity a poor lassie who has no mind of her own, or who is possessed of a soul that is not firmly anchored in herself, and ballasted with ideas and convictions which are independent of those of anyone else. A flighty soul like this carries with it a nervous, silly, unhappy brain, and a body that is too often feeble and far from healthy.

I have met young ladies who confused Sam Johnson with the rare Ben Jonson. Now Sam was too obese and fond of the pleasures of the table to understand and appreciate girlhood and innocent beauty. Ben was a man spiritual, not grossly corporeal. It was Ben who wrote the lovely lines to Celia—

"Drink to me only with thine eyes
And I will pledge with mine.
Or leave a kiss but in the cup
And I'll not look for wine."

The idea, however, was not original, but borrowed from the Greek. But listen, solid Sam never could have penned such lines as Ben wrote in his "Good Life, Long Life"—

"Give me a look, give me a face
That makes simplicity a grace;
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free;
Such sweet neglect more taketh me
Than all the adulteries of art—
That strike my eyes, but not my heart."

Well, I believe I could preach a long, useful and pleasant health sermon from the very lines I have quoted. This is not quite my intention, however. But nevertheless I like to see a volume of poetry in a girl's hand, and some of our older poets really teach us many a lesson, and these alas! are far too much neglected. Fashions, even in poetry, change as well as in music. Give me simplicity in both, and keep your Browning and your Wagner too. Many a lady in society pretends to love both, who knows nothing about either.

But, taking Gray as an example of a true and simple poet, whose lines you can read without racking your brain in wondering what the poet means, is there not, think you, a deal of truth in the verse that heads this paper?

From work many a girl wins light spirits. Work I mean, not the slavery which, alas! is far too often the lot of poor shop lassies and seamstresses, for whom my heart does bleed. Work *versus* sauntering idleness. This idleness means an open empty mind; and parents may rest assured that, as Nature abhors a vacuum, girls are not very old before they get such minds filled with thoughts and silly aspirations that tend neither to the development of a healthy body nor a wholesome mind. Young girls who have nothing to do build themselves castles in the air and people them with inmates that they themselves are heartily ashamed of.

Indeed, I do not know anything more likely to generate future unhappiness and crabbed ill-health than graduation in the school of idleness.

An idle body preys upon itself and eke an idle mind.

I may be told that it is fashionable to be idle. True, in certain ranks of life, but here is my answer to that. Nature not only hates a vacuum, but she is fond of evenness of surface both as regards the material world

and as regards the immaterial. Nature even levels the mountains, or is gradually doing so, and fashion is a tool of hers. Fashion levels down, education and honest work level up; and, in time, Nature will thus see to it that both shall meet.

It was, I think, Bulwer Lytton—one of the heroes of my boyhood—who proposed an "Aristocracy of Letters." The notion has not yet borne fruit, and the aristocracy we have is certainly not very dignified, it being constantly added to and adulterated by parvenus of the lowest type, namely, men who have made millions dishonestly, such as quacks and patent nostrum men. So, in the course of a few decades, we shall have little reason to be proud of our "upper ten." But a true and pure aristocracy may yet arise in this country from the ashes of the fading and effete present. Nothing but wisdom, knowledge and health can support this.

Well, every mater who wishes her girls to grow up happy and healthy, as they ought to be, has much to do and much to think about.

It cannot be too strongly impressed upon a mother's mind that the first portion of a child's education is begun in the nursery. Children are imitative to a degree, as much so as the monkeys from which, some say, we are evolved. One cannot be too careful then with the ethical management of the nursery.

Servants allowed to enter there, or maids who take a child out in its little carriage, should be morally and physically pure. Even baby may learn from a nurse things that will never be forgotten. When she gets a little older she may be corrected, and told that to say this or do that is rude or naughty, and she will refrain for fear of punishment—that is all. The seed is sown, and nothing can eradicate the mischief.

I look upon it as a crime for mothers to give up their children wholly to nursery training. The mother should be with her darlings pretty nearly all the time; and if she loves them, she will be. And a mother has far greater influence over them than the very best of nurses.

When babyhood merges into girlhood, one of the first things to be checked is the all-too-easily-learned habit of criticising—generally spitefully—other children she has seen out of doors. This is the first sign of that spirit of tittle-tattleism which blossoms

into verbosity, scandal, and all uncharitableness in many full-blown old maids.

If charity and love for all who suffer life cannot be taught by the mother or by a good nurse, then never in this world can a child or girl be truly happy or truly healthy. For a sour and uncharitable soul always goes hand in hand with a nervous or puny body.

Keep your girls busy. Be busy yourself, mother. There is a dignity and grace about household duties that put to the blush all drawing-room airs and frivolities.

But I note that a real genuine young lady is invariably natural and never ashamed to do work that a "wretched, undeveloped girl" would deem *infra dignitatem*. I think that this is lovely.

"*Pon honour*," as old military men used to say, I've had earls' or baronets' daughters in my caravan while gipsying, who have begged of me to permit them to do something for me, and they have hemmed my wind-ravelled curtains, stitched my blinds, filled my pin-cushions—ay, and some would have darned my socks for me, had I permitted them! Now, these were ladies, mind, in the truest sense of the word, good God-fearing girls with hearts full of sympathy and in perfect unison with all the world around them.

Again, as to what some call "menial work," or household, the girl who learns to cook and serve a dinner, or knows how a meal should be served, or who is not ashamed even to bare her bonnie white arms and help to wash up the delf, the girl who knows even a little medicine and surgery, the girl to whom the gardener will come with a cut and bleeding finger to be tenderly washed and dressed, the girl who can get up betimes in the morning—she is the girl who will make the best wife, and the only wife really worth having.

And she will be healthy in body too, because pure in thoughts and kind in nature.

THE GIRL OF COMMERCE.

You find her everywhere almost nowadays. She is not a natural production. She is got up. She is forced and artificial. She cannot be healthy, and has no more heart than a hen, no more stamina or staying power than a stalk of hemp. She is a resultant of the inflexible law of supply and demand. Made for the matrimonial market, grown to be sold, and if—like a choice standard rose—she is labelled with a title, she will go all the sooner. Money will purchase a wife like this, and, though marriage may change her and love may come after, the man who has her has speculated on the off-chance. And now that wax dolls can be manufactured that can both talk and walk, it seems to me that the man might have done better with his money.

But, thank goodness, the majority of men prefer the genuine, well-reared, healthy girl, and the girl that has a heart.

But love is still a great factor—nay, the very greatest—in this life, and, if that love be real, oh, there is nothing it cannot do!

I must, as a medical man, go a little farther, and tell the mater something that no scientist will venture to deny. It is this: a loveless or commercial marriage is not only followed by a senseless and dreary monotonous life, but children born in such wedlock are never truly healthy in body, and very often they are defective in mental qualifications, that is, in brain power. Many a case of epilepsy is congenital, and a child that is nerveless is liable to future degeneracy, and apt to fall into any kind of temptation. Doctors have proofs of this every day.

But though ambitious parents may try to alter Nature's law, she herself is inexorable and tells us sternly that the fittest shall survive.

* * * *

But, harking back to our poet's lines—

"From work she wins her spirits light,
From busy day, the peaceful night,"

I must give my medical testimony to the truth herein conveyed. Work does give exhilaration of spirits and enables a girl truly to enjoy recreation and outdoor exercise, and, moreover, the busy day results in calm refreshing sleep at night.

Without sleep, without perfect exercise, ventilation of rooms and fresh air everywhere, no girl can grow up happy and healthful.

Coddling children and keeping them too warm causes them to become fragile and delicate, with no nerves worth mentioning, except when they give rise to the tortures of toothache and neuralgia, and no lungs good enough to last.

There is, mother, but a sad future for that girl who is ashamed to soil her fingers by doing honest work, or ashamed to wear a thimble and wield woman's real weapon—the needle.

But it is not natural for girls to hate work. Do they not make the best of nurses, for instance, and the most gentle-handed? It is Scott who says—

"Oh, woman, in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light and quivering aspen made,
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!"

And after many more years than I care to recall—for fear of making me feel old—of camp life and sea life, I can testify that girls

make the best of all gipsy folks. Amateur, of course, I mean. But even in the management of a picnic their abilities shine forth; and in camp or on board ship, if one only gives them credit for common sense, they can do wonders.

The young lady who would not demean herself—there is really no demeanment about it—by doing cookery or kitchen work in her own house often comes out strong in wayside camp or caravan. She gets up to things as if guided by instinct, can light fires, cook plain nutritious meals, lay them out prettily, and clear up afterwards with most amiable and sweet-tempered dexterity, and, when all is over, will take guitar or mandoline and accompany your violin as if to the gipsy-manner born.

However, I have no doubt that a good deal of a girl's willingness to work in this way, depends upon the novelty and romance of her surroundings, and very much also on the fact that she is breathing the purest air that can blow through dell or den, or balmy forest of pine, or from the mountains themselves that God built long before he made the poor puny microbe man.

THE VALUE OF HEALTH.

The value of health to any of us, whether old or young, cannot well be over-estimated. It is not, mind you, mater, that a deviation from its paths may lead to death. Indeed, many times and oft it would be far better if it did so directly. Instead of that, however, it may be, in girlhood, but the prelude to a long life of untold misery and wretchedness. Indeed, an ailing girl can never be anything save an object of pity. It is spring-time with her, but alas! it is a sad one—a spring that brings not with it the promise of a glad some happy summer. The sun may shine, but it shines not for her. She is unable thoroughly to enjoy anything. There are times when her very soul seems darkened, and when even spiritual comfort brings no season of relief or even forgetfulness. And at such moments is it any wonder that she finds herself envying her more happy sisters, and thinking that the world is not only dark but cruel? Her companions have health and happiness; they may go anywhere and enjoy anything, and perhaps they forget her entirely until their return.

What comfort shall I pen in these papers for girls such as these? I think I can give a little hope, and, with our Editor's kind permission, I shall continue this subject in my next paper, and have something to say about ailments and departures from the normal standard of health, and hints for regaining Heaven's greatest blessing, that may prove invaluable to many.

"THAT LUNCHEON!"

A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER'S DILEMMA.

"NELLIE dear," said Mr. Vernon, the principal solicitor in Riversmouth, to his nineteen year old daughter and housekeeper, "I have just run across to tell you that young Squire Laurence is riding over to consult me this morning, and I should like to bring him in to lunch at half-past one. Can you manage it?"

For a moment dismay ran riot in pretty Nellie's heart. Nearly ten o'clock already, nothing to speak of in the house, and a smart luncheon to provide, as well as the schoolboys' early dinner! However, she must do her best, and answered cheerfully to that effect.

"It need not be grand, you know," added her father encouragingly, "so long as every-

thing is nice and tasteful, as you so well understand how to make it."

Nellie had been on her way to practise, but she now returned to the kitchen, and, resuming her big apron, surveyed the larder for the second time that morning. Ten minutes earlier, yesterday's underdone leg of mutton re-roasted, with some vegetables, and the remains of yesterday's pudding, with the addition of a homely roly-poly, had been deemed sufficient for the one o'clock meal, and as Mr. Vernon was dining out that evening, the butcher had been dismissed without orders. Economy was a stern necessity to Nellie, whose house-keeping allowance was not unlimited.

Accustomed to making "something out or

nothing," the cold remnants did not look as hopeless to her as they might to some young housekeepers. A cold whiting, the badly-roasted mutton, and a bowl containing about half a pint of tomato sauce, represented absolute riches to Nellie's mind at that moment, and she quickly collected her materials and set to work in the kitchen.

The menu she drew up was as follows:—

Fish Scallops.
Cold Salt Beef. Cannelon and Tomato Sauce.
Potato Chips. Salad.
Hot Apple Tart. Lemon Creams.
Custards.
Cheese. Biscuits.

The maid was despatched with orders for

the Willesden plumber, should be communicated with. Mr. Somerset charged himself with the transmission of the telegram, and worded it with much tact and policy.

Before evening, just as the shadows were deepening, the cousin's wife arrived.

She expressed great disgust at "Jessie's" lapse. But she did not need it to be explained. She evidently knew what was to be expected. All that she could say was that she had really hoped "Jessie" had learned more wisdom at last. They had done all they could for her. They had thought her cured. She had "kept straight" for so many weeks. They had never let her go out without one of their children with her, and they had kept all her money from her. She had called on Jessie, poor body, on the day she thought she would get her wages, and had taken them away, and was keeping them for her. Jessie was quite willing for one to do that, if one took her at the right time. She could not think what "Jessie" had done to get money, for she had said she gave up all.

"I paid her a month's wages a few days in advance," explained Mrs. Challoner; "and, when I did so, she told me that you had called to borrow money from her, and how gladly she had spared it."

The cousin looked up at Mrs. Challoner, hesitated for a moment, and said—

"She didn't say that till she knew you were going to pay her in advance, did she?"

"No, she did not," Mrs. Challoner admitted. "Nor did she ask me for the advance. I offered it."

"That's it," said the cousin. "The craving was on her, and the moment she saw a way to satisfy it, she began to tell lies. She's as true as daylight at any other time, and as honest."

"I'm so sorry I gave her that money," sighed Lucy, forgetting for the moment

that if such a revelation was to come, then the sooner it came the better.

"Oh, it wasn't having the money that did it!" answered the other reassuringly. "As she told a lie the fit had come, and if she hadn't got drunk one way, why, she would another! Once she actually pawned my little girl's boots. And she so fond of the child! 'Tisn't her fault, poor dear! We mustn't judge her. It's just like a disease."

"But how could you think of allowing her to use you as a reference, and yet of not warning me of her terrible weakness?" said Mrs. Challoner.

The woman's eyes wandered a little.

"Well, we didn't want her to mention us!" she answered. "I'll engage she didn't till after you'd seen the Edinburgh letters. Jessie came home so full of you and the little gentleman that I thought, 'Here's a place where she'll be happy and will keep right if ever she will.' And when the lady came to inquire, my husband he kep' out of the way. He said he wasn't going to mix himself in it; but I said to him, 'It's our Christian duty to do the best we can for our own. Ain't we told we've got to bear each other's burdens?' says I."

Lucy drew her breath hard. How was one to meet this perverted sentiment, this putting of "charity," as it were, upside down?

"But don't you see you were wrong to further her coming into my house without telling me the truth about her?" she urged. "She might have burned my house, she might have killed my boy! Could you not see that you were not dealing justly by me?"

"I don't know about 'justly,'" said the woman tartly, with a sneer on the last word. "It's our Christian duty to have charity and cover a multitude of sins. If I'd told about Jessie's weakness, nobody would have taken her; and, as she's spent her bit of money already, there's nothing and nobody between her and the workhouse but just

ourselves, and my husband doesn't like to have his flesh and blood made a pauper. Yet it's rather hard he should have to take from me and his own children to keep her."

Lucy's heart fainted within her at this strange mixture of warped exegesis, perverted family pride, and private self-interest. Yet she made another attempt to get the matter set in a right light.

"It is very kind of you and your husband to wish to help Jessie," she said; "but then, if you are willing to sacrifice yourselves in this direction, it must really be yourselves whom you do sacrifice, and not other people, whom you mislead into being sacrificed blindfold. Our sacrifices must be costly to ourselves and not to others. If poor Jessie is really, as you seem to say, the irresponsible victim of her vice, just as if it was a disease, it would be truer kindness on your part to sacrifice your pride for her real good. You are only giving her freedom to do some great harm to other people, even if you feel it right to endure such an example as hers among your own children. But I do not think you need let her go to the workhouse. I believe there are people willing and able to undertake the care and cure of such cases. If you like, I will write to some of these. But meantime, as you helped Jessie to get into my house, I must really ask you to take her away with you at once."

"Oh, yes, that's the way burdens are always thrown back on poor folk!" muttered the woman.

"I am throwing no burden on you," said Lucy, with a firmness which surprised herself. "I am simply handing back a great risk which you deceitfully imposed upon me. I think we have nothing more to discuss," and thereupon she rang the kitchen bell, and summoned Jessie into the presence of her mistress and her cousin.

(To be continued.)

A HAPPY HEALTHY GIRLHOOD.

By "MEDICUS" (DR. GORDON-STABLES, R.N.).

PART II.

"'Tis now the summer of your youth;
Time has not cropt the roses from your
cheek,
Though sorrow may have washed them."
Moore.



HE rose is a sweetly beautiful flower, and no matter where it grows it somehow always charms the human eye, always appeals to the human heart. Lovely it is in the garden, especially perhaps at early morning when

gemmed by dew, the crystalline tears left by the dying night, or at eventide, when the

colour in a rose-garden seems to reflect the tints of the sunset clouds. Roses of all classes and kinds are lovely, grow they where they may, on castle lawn or draping the walls of the humblest cottage. And just as sweet and tender are those lovely buds and blossoms of the crimson *rosa canina* that bedeck and mantle our hedges in the month of June.

Children are oftentimes comparable to roses—girl-children I mean—mere opening buds, and they ought to be none the less beautiful and innocent-looking when older, but still in their teens. Ah, those "teens," would we not all prefer to remain that age and never to grow older! I suppose angels are all and always in their teens, and the saints in Heaven too!

But descending from romance, with which a medical man ought to have nothing to do, the stern reality, life, to a girl in her teens is often a trying time. This, for many reasons which I shall now briefly consider and advise upon.

Every mother, if not her children, has often heard the word "heredity" mentioned. The offspring is part and parcel of the parents, and inherits, somewhat changed or modified perhaps, not only their good qualities, their strength of body, brain, and constitution, but their diseases also, if they have any. There is no mystery about that, as some medical men tell us. It would be a mystery if it were the reverse. If you take a cutting off a pure red rose, you could scarcely expect it when grown into a bush to develop yellow roses. It is part and parcel of the parent, and so is the child. But separate life and the mode or manner of living may alter even inherited complaints, or prevent their showing forth at all. It does not follow as a constant rule that the children of, say, scrofulous parents shall be consumptive, or that those of parents addicted to drink and dishonesty shall follow the parental lead. It is this fact that gives one such hope in treating

the ailments and guiding the young lives of those who may be supposed to be born with a taint of impure blood.

Note, mother, please, that I have said "young lives" in my last sentence, because it is when young, and only then, that much good can be done to combat the evils of heredity.

We are sometimes told that the particular ailment handed down may skip one generation and appear in the next. This should only give us additional certainty that the trouble may be eradicated entirely. For Nature does not skip generations in the manner some scientists would have us believe. If an ailment, say phthisis or consumption, is the trouble in one family and the children thereof escape, while the grandchildren are attacked, one of two things may have happened; the first generation of the afflicted ones had been reared in circumstances inimical to the dispersing of the disorder, it lay latent in their blood and revived under circumstances favourable to it, in the grandchildren, or—this is just as likely—the seed of the disease died in the first generation, and the second were infected by ordinary means. Phthisis is infectious: this should always be born in mind, and a consumptive person should invariably sleep alone in the airiest and best ventilated room in the house.

When I say that consumption is hereditary, I am of course showing you that I am a believer in the microbe doctrine. So is every sensible man. The microbes of phthisis may be carried in the breath from the sick to the sound; or dried sputa—ever so little—may form dust and be breathed, thus inoculating, as it were, the person who inhales it. Not of a certainty, however, for there are many chances against those microbes, even if breathed, finding their way into the blood. Healthy blood is in itself a protection, for the white corpuscles thereof are veritable tigers in miniature, and fall upon and destroy organisms that are dangerous to the life or health of the individual. Moreover a disease germ or seed of consumption cannot, in every case, even reach the mucous membrane of the lungs, owing to the secretions therein which sweep it away, if they do not actually destroy it. On the other hand a weakly subject is far more likely to fall a victim to infection of any kind than a strong. A consumptive mother may have several children, all of which, bar one, are safe enough, though all must have inherited the evil microbe or bacillus. And this is chiefly because one is more delicate than the others.

But I deem it my duty to say here at once that a consumptive person should never marry.

All mothers know, or ought to know, that consumption is caused by a particular sort of matter called tubercle which, by way of getting rid of it perhaps, Nature deposits in, say, the lungs of the young person. This acts like a foreign body; that is, it may lie quiescent for a long time, and as the child gets stronger, it may even be absorbed, but if she catches cold, that wicked little lump of deposit is sought out and, becoming inflamed, sets up mischief all around. It is coughed up, but leaves an ulcer, and this forms a cavity, after which the end is not far distant. But consumption in children, or the young either, is more often caused by the deposit of tubercle in other parts of the body, especially in the glands.

Now, the probability being that I shall devote a whole article to a consideration of consumption, I need not do more here than generalise and give a few words of good advice. I think, mater, that if this advice proves of service to you and gives you hope, this health sermon shall not have been written in vain.

"I'm afraid that my lassie is dwining," said

a Scottish mother to me once. "What think you, doctor?"

I was only a very young fellow then, but had inherited a modicum of common sense from most intelligent parents, so I took Mary in hand.

Mary was then sixteen, I but twenty, and although a medical student, I could not have known a deal. The mother and daughter were country cottagers, and being poor, the family doctor did not, probably could not, devote overmuch time to the case. One thing, however, I objected to: he kept pouring cod-liver oil into his patient, completely deranging the stomach and rendering the digestion of the food a complete impossibility.

From the very first week that Mary stopped the oil her appetite improved, and—the old doctor stopped away. The case was mine therefore, and I took no small pains with it. I thought that if there was any chance of getting the girl over her trouble at all, it was by making her strong. We live by food and not by physic, I argued—food and fresh air.

Mary's bedroom was a small one and downstairs; but there happened to be a large attic or garret above, and the father being a handy man—and Mary the only girl-child—he did as I told him, and made a large window on the south side of the attic. Then it was completely cleared out and cleaned out, the walls whitewashed and the floor well scrubbed. When mats were put down here and there, and a nice bed at one side on which the morning light could fall, the room was so far ready for occupation.

The mother wanted bed curtains and window curtains. I would hear of neither. I shook my young head with an air of awe-inspiring profundity as I tabooed the curtains. But I permitted any amount of artistic though rural decoration. Mary had much taste, and the hours she spent in making that attic into a boudoir were the best investment of time possible, because they occupied her mind, and I would not let her believe she was ill, or had the seeds of consumption in her system. All she wanted, I said, was strength. And I really was not far wrong. I gave her Hope instead of cod-liver oil. But I insisted upon her being out of doors nearly all day long, wearing clothing to accord with the state of the weather, but never fearing the cold. She was to sleep, not in a draught, but with her window open. Her mother said, "My conscience, doctor laddie!" at first, but I insisted.

All the medicine Mary had for the next twelve months could have been placed inside a walnut shell. Her mental medicine was not neglected, and this consisted of books to read—I gave her these—and light work to do, chiefly out of doors, also pleasant quiet companionship.

Fresh air was the most important weapon I used to fight the trouble. Next came food. Cream, butter, good milk, nice bacon, and suet dumplings were ten thousand times better than expensive and fulsome cod-liver oil. She had meat too, as much as she could take, with vegetables—potatoes and greens—and bread.

Hygienic rules were most strictly carried out. The cottage, luckily, was surrounded by bonnie country gardens, in which Mary spent much of her time, not even fearing rain, because she wore a cloak—not an india-rubber mackintosh, be assured—and strong boots, without disease-producing goloshes. From top to bottom, from one end to another, the house was kept spotlessly clean, free from dust, and dry.

Mary was no worse at the end of a month! Mary was better at the end of three months!! Mary was well, and the blush of health was on her cheeks, at the end of eighteen months!!!

The old-fashioned doctor never spoke to me after I put my foot on his cod-liver oil. He used to pass me on the road like a speck of March dust, and he told a friend of mine I was an insolent young dog. No doubt he was right. I had all the faith and arrogance of youth, but—I cured Mary.

It was at the end of the eighteen months I went to sea, and seven long years elapsed before I saw her again. She was married, and had two bonnie healthy children. She is living still, and her family too.

Now, mother, this is a true story, and I have only told it as a proof of the benefits derivable from fatty and flesh-forming foods, perfect hygiene, and fresh air indoors and out in cases of incipient consumption; and not in these alone are such health-giving and curative agents beneficial, but in all cases of chronic ill-health in young girls.

In relating my little story of Mary, I may have seemed to disparage cod-liver oil. I merely wish, however, to imply that it is only in cases where it can be easily digested that it can do any good, and that in all others it is positively injurious.

Mind this, mater, that the days have long gone past when people pinned their faith on medicine alone in the cure of diseases. Indeed, mostly every ailment of a chronic nature, if curable at all, has a better chance if physic is left severely alone and a thorough system of hygiene and dietetics adopted; for if medicine is taken, people as a rule think that this is of greater consequence than good food and a life spent in the fresh and open air.

What are called "peptonised foods" are often beneficial where there is want of proper digestive power, or pepsin in the form of tablets may be used. These are to be had at most respectable chemists, and the dose is marked on the bottle.

The new food-medicines called *vivon* and *marol*, so highly spoken of in medical journals, should in many cases supersede the use of cod-liver oil, or even shark-liver oil, in the case of a girl who does not seem to be thriving.

The Scotch word "dwining" is very expressive. It was usually applied to girls just entered on their teens, who do not appear to be healthy, and are but little likely to make old bones. They are rather poor in flesh, growing rather rapidly, *perhaps, but not* "building as they go," as the farmers say about rick-making. They have but little appetite, are pale in face, flabby in substance, have little real life about them, and are very thick-headed of a morning. They feel the cold much, and therefore seldom have their bedrooms properly ventilated. Moreover, they do not make bone. It is as if Nature said to herself, "I need not bone in the case of this girl, for it will never be wanted."

Well, in all cases of "dwining," the fresh air and food treatment works wonders.

I must call the attention of mothers of delicate girls to the fact that there are in the market, and very largely advertised, pills containing iron which kill thousands yearly. Iron, in the hands of a skilful physician, who knows how and when to prescribe it, is often a valuable tonic, but taken without precaution, as people do who see things advertised and shored up with lies and so-called cures, it is a most dangerous and poisonous drug.

What is called *anæmia* or bloodlessness in girls sometimes gets the name of "chlorosis" or "green sickness" from the peculiar appearance of the skin. It is an exceedingly common complaint, and really the number of white faces one sees in the streets of great cities, as girls hurry to and from their work, is saddening. When one notices a face of this kind in a beautiful carriage, the girl who owns it being perhaps wrapped up in furs, one may put it down as a bad case. There is either

some real disease to account for it, or the girl is over-coddled, the laws of hygiene and dietetics ruthlessly broken, and faith pinned on medicine alone—a broken reed.

When the working girl is anæmic, her mother or whoever owns her must see that *she gets good food*, that the system is kept regular in every way, and that her room is clean, tidy and well-ventilated, with no curtains on bed or windows.

All the weariness, all the heaviness, tiredness in the morning, the low spirits, and even the neuralgic pains from which she suffers, will vanish before a better diet if it is well regulated. But in such a case, the daily bath—cold before breakfast—will often be the very first thing to set her to rights.

If she can get down into the country and keep out of doors nearly all day, so much the better, only hard exercise should be avoided.

Red meat does good in these cases. If this is too expensive to be had in any quantity, plenty of milk should be used. Oatmeal is a cure in itself in many cases. Bacon is good, especially the fat, and a teaspoonful of Bovril should supplement this.

Peas meal, if it can be got in bulk and fresh, makes an excellent staple of diet for many hard-working girls. It can be made into porridge (thick), and eaten with butter and milk it is most nourishing and delicious. The Aberdeen girls (factory hands, etc.) use a deal of this, and no more wholesome, blooming and bonnie lassies are to be found anywhere.

Indeed, I have never yet seen any to match them. The fresh and bracing sea air may account to some extent for their "caller" looks, but, believe me, the diet has a deal to do with their health.

Nervousness is another hereditary complaint. Now although there are a great many medicines that have an effect for good on the nervous system, they need to be used with caution, and only in conjunction with a well-regulated diet.

Rheumatism is still another heirloom that descends in families.

On both these subjects and others I shall speak at length in early numbers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER, so those interested should look out for my papers.

"OUR HERO."

A TALE OF THE FRANCO-ENGLISH WAR NINETY YEARS AGO.

By AGNES GIBERNE, Author of "Sun, Moon and Stars," "The Girl at the Dower House," etc.

CHAPTER XXXIV.



As a heavy stone falling into a pond sends waves circling outward to a distance, so the death of Sir John Moore at Coruña sent many a wave of sorrow to the hearts of men, north and south, east and west. One such wave found its way to the distant town of Verdun, where still languished the détenus, taken captive in 1803, together with many later Prisoners of War on parole, sent thither.

News in those days travelled slowly, and prisoners travelled more slowly still. But a day arrived, though not till very many weeks after the Battle of Coruña, when Jack Keene found himself within the ramparts of Verdun.

It was spring; and he carried his right arm in a sling, and when he moved a distinct limp might be seen. He had just been to report himself at the citadel, and he now stood outside, meditating on his next move.

A rather young man, with a keen clever face, passed him quickly, then pulled up, turning in his direction.

"I beg your pardon. Have you just arrived here?"

"Yes. You're English. That's right," said Jack heartily. "I'm a prisoner."

"Can I be of service to you? Have you friends in the place?"

"Could you direct me to Colonel Baron's house or lodgings?"

"Certainly. I know them all. My name is Curtis."

"Ah! I have heard that name from Roy Baron."

"Roy and I were great friends, when

he was here. Anything you can tell me about him will be welcome."

Curtis looked questioningly, and Jack answered the look.

"My name is Keene. Roy and I have been through the Campaign in Spain together, and on the retreat I was wounded and taken prisoner."

Curtis held out his hand, to be grasped by Jack's left.

"You have travelled all the way from Spain."

"With a convoy of prisoners. Yes. Been a good while about it, too. First part of the way in a waggon, after that on horseback. Tell me how they all are here. I have heard nothing for ages."

"I'll come and show you the way. The Colonel keeps all right. Looks older than he used, that's all. Mrs. Baron is well. One fancied at the time that Roy's being sent to Bitche would kill her outright; but it didn't. Having to devote herself to Ivor was a mercy in disguise, I don't doubt. Kept her from dwelling on her own trouble. It was a vast relief to them all, when the kind fellow, who got Roy away, came and told them he'd seen the boy safe on board a vessel for England. He was well rewarded by the Colonel, as you may suppose—not that he did it for reward! But, of course, we don't breathe a word about it in Verdun, for the fellow's own sake. Only, as I know them well, and as I know you belong to them—"

Jack made a gesture of assent.

"Ivor was ill, was he not?"

"I daresay he would have been so anyhow, after the march from Valenciennes; but the arrest of Roy was a finishing stroke. You won't find him looking good for much now. I suppose hardly anything could have knocked him down like the death of Sir John Moore. It is a fearful loss to the country. No man living could have been worse spared."

Curtis paused, cast a glance at Jack, and changed the subject.

Presently they reached the house, where still the Barons lived, as ever since their first arrival in Verdun.

"By-the-by, I'm not sure whether you'll find them in," he said. "The Colonel at *appel* said he was going to take Ivor with his wife for a drive in the country, hoping it might do him good. It was worth trying. But I think they may have returned before now."

"You're allowed to go where you will?"

"Why, no! *Douceurs* are efficacious, however. Will you let me show you the way upstairs?"

Jack hesitated.

"No, I understand. Of course, you'd rather see them first alone; and I didn't mean to go in. But you can't mistake the room. First landing, first door to the right."

Curtis vanished, and Jack, obeying the directions, came to a door slightly ajar. He pushed it wider, and went softly through.

It was a good-sized salon; empty, except for the presence of one man, writing at a side table. By build and bearing, Jack recognised Ivor instantly; but, finding himself unnoticed, he had a fancy not at once to make his presence known. He drew a few steps nearer, and then stood motionless. He had a good side-view of the other.

Jack studied him gravely, recalling the splendid physique and health of the young Guardsman six years earlier. The physique was in a sense the same; and the fine bearing of head and shoulders remained unaltered; but the sharpened delicacy and pallor of the face impressed Jack painfully, as did a streak of grey hair above the temple, a stamp of habitual lassitude upon the brow, and the thinness of the strongly-made right hand, which moved the pen. Jack began dimly to understand what the long waiting and patience of these years had been.

Ivor seemed to become conscious of Jack's gaze. He laid down his pen, glanced round, and started up.

"Jack! Is it possible?"

"Just arrived," remarked Jack, with an *insouciance* which he was far from feeling. "Come across Spain and