

him; for as he had never doubted her love for him, so it was impossible for him to realise that he would ever lose the power to win her back if he wished.

But instead of glory came wounds—shot down in the ranks while another man passed over him and captured the enemy's flag. And then days and nights of delirious dreaming, and weeks of slow, agonising struggle back to some measure of health. It was during those dark months that the old selfishness and pride were gradually burnt out of him, and when he rose from his hospital bed, it was with a fixed determination to go back and humble himself in the dust before the woman he had wronged.

This was the substance of Hamilton's story, told with many a break and hesitation. He had not come empty-handed, for although he was not fit for his profession any longer, there was a place kept for him in the business which his mother was now too old to manage. There was enough for all. He could give his wife every comfort now; and she should learn that his was no mere idle repentance if, for the love which she once bore him, she would stoop to give him another chance?

He was still weak from his recent illness, and from the stress of emotion, and he was fain to hold by the nearest chair as he hurried through his defence. Suddenly he stopped abruptly. What was the use of it all? He was speaking to deaf ears, as far as his wife was concerned. Elizabeth had tears in her kind eyes, for much as she condemned the man, she could not doubt his sincerity now.

"Mara," she ventured to say at last, "he has sinned against you sorely, but he is your husband after all; and it's ill separating those whom God has joined."

Still the girl made no response, but her fingers closed round her friend's arm with a painful intensity.

Then Hamilton said humbly, "I have asked too much. I will not ask you to forgive me, but for the sake of the child come back to me, and let me at least work for you and it."

Mara started. A stormy light swept over her face.

"The child is at rest," she cried passionately, "you cannot hurt the child!"

Hamilton staggered and fell back against the wall. Somehow in all his speculations he had never thought of this. Unconsciously, and as the sense of fatherhood awoke in him, it was always on the thought of that living bond between them that he had built his best hope of peace. He was profoundly moved, and he stood with bowed head as Mara broke silence at last in a torrent of angry words.

"The boy was mine; you never claimed him," she said with a sob; "he is dead, and but for you my arms would not be empty to-day, and for his sake I will never forgive you, if you wait for a thousand years!"

The man gathered himself together. All the excitement died out of his face.

"You are right," he said, "nothing can atone to you for that. I may as well go, there's no place for me here any more."

Thus for a second time he left his lawful home. So swift was his departure that it was not until the sound of the closing door struck on her ear that Elizabeth realised he had really gone; then she hurried after him, and overtook him as he gained the street. The desperate look on his face frightened her. Where was he going in the utter shattering of his hopes?

"What will you do?" she cried impulsively as she reached his side.

The street was almost empty now in the moonless dusk. A passer-by looked at them curiously as Hamilton turned to her and answered with a bitter laugh, "I'm going home, the only home I shall ever have, and a million times better than I shall ever deserve. There they killed the fatted calf, and made a royal holiday when their prodigal returned—mothers are like that—it's only they will forgive a man till seventy times seven!"

His companion gave a sigh of relief, she hardly knew what she had feared. Then she said gravely—

"You came too suddenly, and you have wronged her very deeply. She was a mere child when you went away, but she is a woman

now, knowing and understanding all. You must give her time; she has a noble nature; she will come round at last."

The young man shook his head sadly. "No," he answered, "there is no hope. Can a woman forget her child? But for me and all that she endured because of me, it might have been living. There is nothing for me to do but to go away and never cross her path again."

Then he asked how they had managed to live through these years, and when he learnt that they had enough for all their simple wants, he added, "You see, I dare not even claim the right to work for her, and for you I suppose I can do nothing, although you have stood by her and filled my place?"

Elizabeth meditated. She felt years older than this haggard young soldier, and a touch of almost motherly compassion stirred within her. He was sick and he was sorry, two sure passports to her heart.

"Yes," she said, "there is one thing you can do. Do not go far away. Stay and do your duty as a son, and wait and trust to God for the rest."

It seemed to Dennis as she spoke as if she had divined the struggle going on in his mind, as to whether he could endure to take up the old life at home. A wild longing was upon him to put the breadth of the world again between himself and the woman who scorned him. Then came the thought of the dull little house and the two faithful hearts which still clung to him, much as he had sinned. Could he leave them to sorrow again?

"I will stay," he said abruptly; and Elizabeth was satisfied.

When she returned she found that Mara had set their simple meal and was moving to and fro, as if nothing had happened. But when after a while she tried in her quiet fashion to plead the young man's cause, the girl retorted with a mirthless laugh—

"He killed me, I tell you, that day he went away; 'tis my ghost that has lived with you ever since. Do the Dead forgive?"

(To be continued.)

PHYSICAL CULTURE FOR GIRLS.

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



TOUGHT to commence this paper with some sort of an apology for having seemed to neglect my fair readers for a month or two, or even longer. Girls, I was on the road. For three months and over I have been leading a Bohemian or gipsy life in my caravan. Many of you know this because hundreds of you visited me, and many an interesting conversation did we have together in the cosy saloon of the "Wanderer."

My cruise this summer did not take me from Land's End to John o' Groats. I had no wish to make so hackneyed a record. But, nevertheless, I journeyed from southern Berks to the far-off highlands of Braemar, and back to bonnie Aberdeen, by the banks of the roaring Dee, crossed England from sea to sea, and Scotland from the Solway Frith to the German Ocean, the rocky shores

of which I hugged all the way from Dundee to the Granite City. My log-book which I kept day after day, gives me this record of 922 miles, which, it must be admitted, was a long drive. Yes, and so delightful! But if I were to begin to tell you about it I should become so expansive that there would be no room for a single word or line upon physical culture in the whole of this paper. I cannot, however, refrain from thanking the many readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER for kindnesses experienced on the road. Through them I got many a nice pitch or camping-ground that I might not otherwise have obtained. Moreover, the saloon of the "Wanderer" was gay with flowers throughout my whole journey, and these, with many a basket of luscious fruit, were brought me by you girls, or your mothers, or fathers. I have only to add that the "Wanderer" caravan is now snug in dock in Aberdeen, though I am back in Berks and hard at work, and that when the next spring bedecks the fields and hedgerows with tender green leaves and wild flowers, I am going through to the city of my Alma Mater to resume my wandering life and bring back my caravan to England. On this tour, as during my last, I need not say I shall be delighted to meet

any of you who care to honour me with a visit while at anchor in the evening, or by the roadside as we stop for the mid-day halt.

* * * *

Well, now I wish to tell you what I propose doing in this and some of my papers to follow. I want then to give you some really practical hints on physical culture and training. Mind you, this is a far more important subject than many of us imagine, and demands all the attention that the parents, or guardians, of young people can give it.

Once upon a time, as fairy stories begin, it was believed that regulated exercise, or athleticism, was not required by girls; that it was sufficient for them to stand by, or sit if they chose, and see their brothers or friends show off their prowess on the field, or in gymnasium. But those days have gone by, never to return, because we know now that there can be neither health nor perfect happiness in a feeble or badly developed body or frame.

Perfect training of the body should strengthen not one group of muscles, or two, or even half a dozen, but in reality every muscular fibre in the body, including, of course, that great central power, the heart itself. The training should be gradual but regular. Nature will

retaliate if rushed or hurried, because hurry means worry, and when we try to do anything too quickly we only half do it.

Nor should extra diet be forced upon the system, because, in this case, the great life machine becomes clogged as it were, and one of two things is sure to happen. Either the surplus food is stored up in the shape of useless fat, or the blood becomes impure through the inability of the glands of excretion to get rid of the effete matter. In a case of this sort no real health or happiness is possible, the body, including the brain, being in a state of torpor half the time.

On the other hand, the well-trained and well-exercised body is that to which just enough sustenance, solid and liquid, is supplied to make up for the waste that is constantly going on, and in which every muscle is brought to a state of perfection. To a girl of this sort every motion or movement is a pleasure, or, at least, is not fatiguing, and every movement, too, is graceful. No fear of such a one running to grossness, nor, on the other hand, having a waist like a wasp.

But before going any farther, I wish to remind you that I am not advocating the physical culture of girls with a view to their making records in any shape or fashion whatever, but for the purpose of securing for each and all who care to carry out my instructions, comfort and ease of body, health and consequent happiness, and last, though, perhaps, not least, beauty, so far as bright complexions, clear eyes and purity of blood can secure that desideratum.

If strength of the muscles of the limbs, neck, and chest alone was wished for, so as to enable a young lady to vault or lift weights or walk, this training would not in my opinion be complete, because in all probability the external body would be developed at the expense of the internal, and the pupil would be deficient not only in staying power, but in strength of digestion, and I will tell you why: apart from the fact that the heart itself is, or ought to be, nearly all muscle of the strongest kind, there is muscular tissue all throughout the lungs; if, therefore, you have neither strength of heart nor lungs, you can have no staying power, no ability of sustaining exertion for any length of time, you could not enjoy a day's walking in the woods or wilds, you could neither climb hills with comfort, nor wander long by lake- or river-side. Then again there is a muscular coat to the whole of the digestive canal, and it is of the utmost importance to the healthful maintenance of the body that this be kept up to the mark in strength. The process of digestion really commences in the mouth, as I have often explained to you, but after perfect mastication and deglutition it is carried on for a time in the stomach, the muscles of which, without any effort of our will, mix

and move the food about till it is reduced to pulp and thoroughly mingled with the gastric juices. Some time after this the principal portion of the nutritive principles of the food is taken up by a special set of vessels and carried directly into the blood.

It must be clear and patent therefore to the youngest of my readers that Nature shaped and formed us, and meant us to make use of the muscles in our bodies, not one of which is useless or superfluous. Nor is it difficult to understand why a muscle or any group or set of muscles becomes feeble and attenuated, if never exercised. For the very movements of muscular tissue draw the blood towards it and enable it to feed itself and grow big and strong. Even the exercise of walking, therefore, is most beneficial, because the food that we have eaten, and that has been digested and turned into blood, is used up in the muscles, and Nature reminds us that more is needed; we return, therefore, from a long walk in the pure, fresh air with increased appetite and a healthful flow of animal spirits, which makes us on good terms with ourselves and the world at large. Even the brain has been relieved of semi-stagnant blood and is once more bright and clear and capable of increased thought and action.

In the body are voluntary muscles and involuntary. The former we dominate as I do at this moment in moving my pen rapidly across the paper before me, or in stretching out my hand to replenish it with ink. The latter or involuntary muscles we have but little direct power over. These are they that govern the movements of the heart and digestive canal, etc. But even these can be forced to do their duty in a healthful and natural way, by taking regular exercise and a plentiful supply of fresh air.

Regular and systematic, or I might call it scientifically-contrived, exercise has a very great effect for good over those involuntary muscles that carry on the duties of life by night or by day, even when we are soundly sleeping, for upon exercise, in a great measure, depends the return of the dark blood that flows towards the heart by the venous system. This is almost mechanical, but that dark blood is received into the heart and quickly pumped away into the lungs to be re-vivified and rendered pure and red, for the re-nutrition of the body and maintenance of the animal heat. I hate, in my health sermons, to be too physiological, but it is necessary that girls should know something about the nutrition of the body and the healthful effect of exercise thereon.

By proper exercise, then, the muscles, both voluntary and involuntary, are increased in size, and thus enabled to do their several duties with greater ease and completeness. By proper exercise the circulation of the blood is quickened, and not only this, but the re-

spiratory powers are increased, breathing is rendered more complete, and the blood on this very account is more perfectly purified. Does it not, I ask you, follow, therefore, that greater clearness of skin or complexion is the result, with rosier lips and brighter eyes? And complexion is a marvellous thing. Without a good complexion the most regular features cannot be said to give beauty; *with it the most homely face will lure the eye.* But there is something else that exercise does in the way of adding to the beauty of the female countenance: it gives clearness of brain perception and a greater ability to think and talk well; the face therefore becomes more mobile and infinitely more expressive, because every thought or feeling is portrayed in the countenance. A healthful girl needs not to wear a stereotyped smile nor a "company face," which is all too often a false one, for her brain may be trusted to give the correct expression to her countenance, and this cannot fail to be beautiful because it is natural. I have no hesitation in saying that it is this very brain-guided naturalness of expression that gives to the faces of children their great attraction and beauty. Whenever a girl begins to study the make-up of her face instead of leaving it to the control of Nature and a healthy, happy brain and mind, she commences to lose beauty because she becomes artificial.

Before going any farther I should like to say a word or two to parents of children, especially those who enjoy the great privilege of living in the country. Why do you not then, while your children are still young, get up on your premises a handy and pretty little, well-arranged gymnasium? It would cost too much, you say? Well, I grant you that it would run into a few pounds at first, but I am perfectly sure that it would be found in the long run the best investment of money ever you made for the benefit of your family.

I would suggest that this gymnasium be a kind of verandah bungalow, out in the open air of garden or field. That it be simply fitted up, that it be perfectly dry and scientifically ventilated, and not only this, but capable of being heated in winter. It might be a most beautiful little exercise-room too, and gay with flowers, both outside and in.

I hope to be able to continue the subject next month, and tell you much more about systematic exercise and training. Meanwhile, girls, I feel most happy to be with you once again, in health and strength, and what your brothers would call "fit," and I trust we shall all continue to be fit, and thus able to do our duty in the long dark winter that will be coming now so soon. May you all enjoy, as I do, the greatest blessing vouchsafed to human beings here below, and that is honest WORK.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

HABITS of order, cleanliness and punctuality are worth more than many so-called accomplishments.

SOME unslaked lime in a shallow pan will absorb damp in a cupboard.

BE very careful to return books that have been lent. They should be returned at once when read.

WATER-COLOUR drawings should not be hung on a wall in strong sunlight or the colours will fade. Oil paintings are not affected in the same way, and bear the light.

A TABLESPOONFUL of Jeyes' Disinfectant Fluid (a preparation of coal tar) in a bath will greatly allay the irritation of nettle-rash.

THE French fire-proof china saucepans are by far the most wholesome utensils for cooking food. They ensure absolute cleanliness and security against anything deleterious getting into the food.

GLASS vases should be carefully wiped with a soft cloth every time the water is changed, or they become hopelessly stained. The water in which flowers are placed should be changed every day.

ON entering a house that has been closed for a time, the water in the taps should be set running for awhile, to run off the water that has been stagnant in the pipes.

CANDLE ends and wax should never be thrown on the kitchen fire, but scraped into a tin box kept for the purpose. This can then be periodically turned out for the dustman.

BOXES of matches and firewheels should not under any circumstances be kept in a kitchen cupboard or anywhere near a fire or hot pipes. The matches should be kept in a tin box.