

"I call it just horrid of you, Berrikins," she exclaimed, turning very red, "but it is much horrider of Aunt Faith. She is as bad as a common thief, for she has stolen you away from us," and then she marched off in high dudgeon to confide her grievances to her step-mother, for Mrs. Mostyn had quite won the little girl's heart, and they were firm friends now.

I was very busy during the next three weeks, so I was not much at Nutlands, but Hope seemed to spend hours there every day, and now and then she brought Miss Faith back with her.

I never saw such a change in anyone. Dr. Hoskin laughingly accused me of witchcraft when he saw her again, but he warmly commended my plan.

"It is a famous idea, Berrie," he said, rubbing his hands in a pleased manner. "Miss Mostyn will be a different woman

when she has your cheerful society, and we shall have no more nerves or fine lady's vapours; but I prophesy that you will spoil her. You spoil everybody, and she will tyrannise over you body and soul," and then he went off looking as pleased as Punch, and I knew then that he had been a bit bothered about Miss Faith.

It was about this time that I noticed that she treated Mrs. Mostyn in a more sisterly way, and left off carping at her when we were alone.

"I think she is a good creature," she would say to me as seriously as though she had just discovered this fact for herself, "and certainly Graham seems very happy," and soon after this she took to calling her Brenda quite naturally. I saw Mrs. Mostyn flush with pleasure when she first heard it.

By and by Miss Faith came pottering

about the house of her own accord, but she always landed first in the Brown parlour, and if she found me busy she would go in search of Hope.

I could see they had their secrets together, and that Mrs. Mostyn was in their confidence. One day they all went up to town together, and though Miss Faith was laid up with a headache the next day, she seemed quite proud of herself and not a little mysterious on the subject of their shopping.

"It nearly killed me, Berrie, but I enjoyed it all the same," she observed, "and we had such a nice luncheon at the restaurant. Graham met us there, and then we went to Ma—I mean," with an alarmed air as though she feared letting the cat out of the bag, "that he spent the rest of the afternoon with us, which was very nice for Brenda."

(To be continued.)



SPRING IS NIGH.

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

YES, spring is coming—spring is nigh. Look where you like, or in what direction you please, down here in the bracing cool country, and everything repeats the joyful tidings: spring is coming. The catkins are drooping from the hazels, and ere many days are past, the tiny crimson lady-flowers will ope their eyes and gaze wonderingly around them. The dusky green leaves of the honeysuckle are spreading all over the still leafless hedges, yet every branch and twiglet on those hedges is starred over with white buds. The grass is green at the hedge foot, and the ponds are snowed over with anemones. If you go into the woods you shall see many a curious wee wild thing that has slept soundly all the weary winter through. See yonder velvet-jacketed mole, how quickly he scurries away to hide himself. He has no faith in man. That is the mole, but yonder is a vole ignorantly called the water-rat. How funny he looks, sitting up on one end at the other side of the pond and squeezing the water out of his eyes with his wee, wee knuckles that he may get a better look at you. Look into the bottom of that pond and you shall see many a strange little denizen of the deep. Those little creatures with coats of sand are caddis-worms. They are mysteries. But there is no mystery about that huge water-beetle as big and black as a penny ink-bottle. He runs up to the caddis-worm, moves his mandibles, and glares. He would eat the worm if he did not wear a jacket of shingles. But now he hastily buries himself in the sand, and in a few seconds a whole shoal of beautiful fish make their

appearance. How happy they must be! How they leap, and dance, and gambol, and rub their cold noses together! They know that spring is coming, and verily, I would rather be a happy little trout than an unhappy human being.

You draw reluctantly away from the pond and have a glance at the trees. Bud and bourgeon everywhere. And on their boughs cheerily sings the thrush, and sadly melodious are the blackbird's notes.

A little farther down the wood and at the edge of a field you find a rookery. The nests are nearly all built and ready, but still they squabble, and caw, and scream, and fight as they steal each other's sticks, and the din is indescribable.

While you have been studying the rookery, somebody has been sitting on his haunches quietly washing his face. But you turn quickly round, and, with the fear of a nightmare at its little heart, it starts off and is seen no more. It was only a hare.

"I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
And justifies that ill opinion
Which makes these startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion
And fellow mortal."

And now, my girl readers having listened so patiently to my prattle about spring, it is time to inform them that if spring has its beauties it has its dangers too, and it is against some of these I wish to warn them. The most common of all, probably, is cold in the head.

The symptoms are, I believe, too well known to call for elaborate description. The sneezing, the running of water from the nostrils, the stuffiness generally, the headache and slight fever, and probably the shivering, all these indicate the oncome of a severe cold, which, if not treated at once and well, may creep downwards to the lungs and induce a severe attack of bronchitis. In its first stages a cold may be broken by bathing the feet and legs in hot mustard and water, getting to bed as soon as possible, and having first a draught of ipecacuanha wine, with a little sweet nitre and solution of the acetate of ammonia. This in water, and half an hour after a good bowl of gruel. Aperient medicine should be taken next day, and confinement to the house for a day or two will set things about right. There is no need of a doctor unless there may be wheezing or a painful cough. But remember this: although the room may be kept warm with jolly old English fires, if we keep up the windows we keep out our very best friend, one who cometh to us with good health in one hand and real happiness in the other, and that is Friend Fresh Air. It will be noted that I am one of those men who do not make cold weather a bogey, and do we not take cold most often in mild weather, weather such as midges and microbes revel in? Here is a personal anecdote in point. When last in the Arctic regions I was shooting one day on the ice accompanied by my servant. We always go two and two on the ice. On this particular day the ice was loose, and the leaps we had to take from berg to berg were trying and

dangerous. I missed once and went plump down among the sharks—they are from fifteen to eighteen feet long, and fierce beyond conception. When I fell in I thought not of drowning, being a good swimmer, but I did think about those terrible tigers of the sea. My man quickly threw the rope, and I got to bank without even so trifling a loss as one of my legs. Of course I was soaked to the skin. There was no wind, but the temperature was far below zero. I speedily undressed, and my Shetlander wrung as much water as he could from my clothes, getting one finger badly frozen for his pains. By this time everything was as hard as corrugated iron. The nearest ship was a Dane about three miles off, and in my garments of mail I had to walk all the way. I certainly was well set up, but cracked all over at every step, and had a difficulty in making the leaps from berg to berg. But we got there all the same, and I was exceedingly well treated. He dressed me in a suit of his own, and I dined with him while my clothes thawed and dried at the galley fire. And now we come to the point: I caught not a vestige of cold.

And here, girls, I will give you further proof that it is neither cold nor damp that gives cold. Indeed, I maintain that though exposure to bad weather may and does weaken the body, it can no more give rise to what is called a cold or catarrh than it can account for a sprained ankle or a cut finger. The very word cold is misleading. Moreover, it does much mischief because it prevents young folks from enjoying life and laying up a store of hardiness that should enable them to defy the attacks of even the worst of ailments for years and years to come. They can walk in the midst of pestilence and be not afraid, for, mind you, it is always the weakly that disease or epidemics go for first. If a strong girl is attacked she need not fear, she will shake it off in a day or two.

Let us hear now what the *Spectator* says on this subject. It is very comforting for an author to have good authorities agree with him. The following is to be found in the pages of the *Family Doctor*, a paper that makes really good extracts from all others.

"Most of us know to our cost the unhappy effects that follow upon 'catching a cold.' How we caught one has long been wrapped in mystery, although the popular notion has

generally ascribed its cause to draughts or the wearing of damp clothing. Naturally the result has been to create an almost superstitious fear of anything remotely connected with a draught, while some people go so far as to deprive their houses of necessary ventilation in their anxiety to keep a 'cold' at bay. But we are beginning to learn that we have been very mistaken in our exclusion of these same draughts. We were, in fact, shutting the door in the face of our best friend. In proof of this the *Spectator* points to the curious fact that Nansen and his men did not once catch cold during their three years' stay amongst the Polar icefields. But as soon as they returned to civilisation and its comforts they took colds by the score. Certainly they had golden opportunities for doing so when further north. Nansen and Johansen, when wandering on foot over the ice, were nearly changed into icicles themselves. Their wet clothes were simply frozen on their bodies, and when they rolled themselves up at night in their sleeping bags it took them about an hour to thaw. Yet they did not take cold. Similarly the members of the Jackson-Harmsworth expedition wandered for three years in Franz-Josef Land, mostly in damp clothes, with wet feet and with the constant companionship of a bitter easterly wind, yet they did not take cold till they returned, when colds attacked them unmercifully. Other travellers in the Arctic regions have had a like experience, and it is well known that colds are unknown in the Observatory on the top of Ben Nevis. When a member of the staff pays a visit to the villages below, he usually takes back a good supply of colds with him.

"Clearly, then, colds are not due to draughts or damp, and the sooner we divest our minds of this popular superstition the better for us. We shall then begin to give our bodies the chance to become robust by the free admission of fresh air to our lungs by night as well as by day. Acting on this principle, the treatment of consumption has been entirely revolutionised during the last few years by scientific doctors. At Nordrach, in Germany, about 90 per cent. of consumptive patients are cured by the open-air system, combined with suitable exercise and food. It certainly sounds somewhat absurd to say that patients are

encouraged to sit in the rain till wet through, and then to allow their clothes to dry on their bodies. Nevertheless, it is a fact, and they may indulge in wet feet and draughty windows to their heart's content, knowing that the result will be beneficial. During a ten-months' stay among these damp and chilly surroundings, Mr. Lambert declares in the *Spectator* that he never once heard of a patient catching cold. He himself, he says, has escaped for three years by merely having the windows open day and night in all weathers and seasons. The explanation is that a cold is an infectious disease due to a microbe, which is killed by freezing, and coddled into greater vitality by warmth. We catch a cold sometimes because a chill has lowered the tone of the system and has given the microbe a chance, but there seems to be little doubt that it is not the cold that is caught but the microbe. Let us therefore fling our windows wide, and endeavour to make our bodies so robust as to be immune from the 'cold' scourge and the host of diseases that follow in its train."

EARLY RISING AND THE BATH.

I am no betting man, never wagering anything more than a postage stamp that has only been used once. Well, I would not mind wagering half a dozen of these that there are more sweetly pretty and intellectual girls among our readers than there are among the readers of any other half dozen ladies' journals in the tiny wee town of London. And I give some of the credit of this to myself, for I give the best of advice in a simple-hearted kind of way and they take it. I love all girls—my own mother was once a girl—but I love less those who get up too much, and who bleach their hair, and paint and powder. I feel real sorry for these, because I know so well that powder utterly spoils the complexion and draws the skin together, and that when they get to be about forty, they will be as wrinkled as a Malaga raisin.

If you wish to retain your beauty, rise and take a cold bath. This stimulates the heart and gives a real natural and beautiful complexion. It strengthens the nerves, too; gives one an erect carriage, and makes one as happy all day long as a little nigger boy in a newly-emptied sugar-cask.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

TWILIGHT CIRCLE.

I MUST pass on to all the dear members of our Circle some of the cheering messages which came to me from far-away lands during the Christmas season. The first was "A greeting from South India, Malabar Coast." It was on a picture post-card, and I know you will all like to read the message it carried. "From a grateful Parsee girl-reader, from far-off India, who has derived untold solace and comfort from your 'talks.' May the Most High preserve you for many a year to come. A joyous season to you and yours. Your ever grateful—." Do you wonder that my heart was full of thankfulness, and my eyes with glad tears, as I read the precious words? The good wish "for you and yours" must be shared by all my girls. So I bid you rejoice with me and accept a share of this greeting from one of our Circle. Then another picture card from Budapest brought loving wishes for the New Year from "OLGA, ONE OF YOUR GIRLS," which I warmly reciprocate. Next, a long letter from SHEILA, a dear New Zealand lassie, who says, "THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER is my favourite magazine. I have read it and loved it for many years"—but she adds, "It is a great sorrow to me that the 'Twilight Talks' are ended, which have been such a delight to me. I look up back numbers, and often, when I have been discouraged and sad, they have been the means of reviving hope and restoring courage." SHEILA is longing and striving to lead a higher, nobler life, but is sadly dissatisfied with the results of her best efforts, and almost ready to despair of ever doing any good in the world at all. "Tell me," she writes, "how to make my life nobler and

better. I long so fervently for this, and cry in my heart, 'O for a closer walk with God!'" You are much too young at twenty to give way to despairing thoughts, dear SHEILA, and if you were old instead of young, I should still say the same. For the love of God in Christ is eternal. I, who am far away from you, long to serve you. He Who said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you," is always near, always within hearing, always ready to fulfil His promises. Perhaps these long years of weakness and inability to share in the pleasures and pursuits befitting early girlhood have depressed you, and inclined you to look too persistently at the dark side. Ill health, a lonely country life, no girls of similar age near you of whom you could make friends, and bodily weakness which tied you to one spot and prevented you from going about and meeting such at a distance—all these things have been no light trials during nine out of your twenty years of life. Yet your next picture is such a beautiful one, that it steals like the brightness of the noonday sun over the sombre one which preceded it and floods it with light. You are to be envied, dear SHEILA, since you can write "No one could be kinder or so unselfish as my mother. She is my dearest friend and my chief companion. None of my interests have ever been too trivial for her interest, and I need hardly say I love her devotedly. We work together, read together, go out together, and I often feel I would rather have her for my friend than any girl of my own age." So, after all, you are very rich in companionship, and you have drawn for me a lovely picture of the perfect friendship which is possible, and which,

indeed, ought to subsist between mothers and daughters. I have reproduced it that others may be led to admire and imitate it. You ask, "Will you accept me as one of your girls?" Surely you have been one ever since we first sat together. Is not our "Twilight Circle" already a far-reaching club, though we wear no badge and our meetings are, in a sense, imaginary? We meet heart to heart, soul to soul, though we may never see each other's faces in the flesh. It is an ever-widening Circle, as my girls' letters prove. "In His Name" would be a perfect motto for us to adopt. In His Name let me cheer you on to renewed effort, to hope first, then assurance. "In due time you shall reap if you faint not."

I HAVE many other dear correspondents to thank for cards with kind words and wishes, and oft-repeated prayers, "May God spare you many years and still prosper you in your work." This sweet message comes from many of my girls, and my response is another prayer that God will bless them abundantly, each and all, and make them true daughters of the Lord Almighty.

B. W.—When I received your letter, it caused me quite a pang of regret. There were several applicants for an introduction to "Une de vos Filles" before yours arrived. She kindly undertook to write to two of these instead of the one promised, but owing to her extremely delicate health could not do more. I hope that a forthcoming "Twilight Talk" may help you and others who seem to be harassed with similar doubts and difficulties. I have not forgotten you, dear, and if I possibly can, I will send you a few lines myself, as I have your address. I do so want to cheer and help you.