



I HAVE got a whole budget of good hints to give to my girl-readers to-day, something for almost everybody or every idiosyncrasy, so to speak, or, better still, for every diathesis and temperament.

Some young ladies are a trifle nervous. By this I do not mean over-fidgety, fretful, frivolous and dreamers of nightmare-y dreams, but with souls pitched in a higher key than most of those they meet. In every eight or ten girls there is one of this sort. She always wants to be on the move, always likes to be doing something; her nerves are a little above concert pitch, and won't be tuned down; she has such an abundance of life and spirits that they must be worked off with activity. Well, if this is what is the matter with you, miss, do not grumble or worry over it, for such as you are the salt of the earth and help to keep this old-fashioned world of ours on the jog-trot. I know that you have a soul, and that you feel most acutely for the sorrows and sufferings of those around you, even if they are but the lower animals. Well, such feelings are at times painful, but remember that you can enjoy life far more than many, and that if you are easily affected by the woes of others when you are really happy, your pleasure in even living is far greater than if you were of the dull, plethoric temperament.

#### ONE MAY BE OVER-NERVOUS.

This is true, and it is a disagreeable fact. But even girls who are so may regulate their lives in such a manner that this nervousness and super-activity may not cause the body to run to waste. Food for this class of people should be generous and contain plenty of fat. The appetite, however, must not, as a rule, be encouraged by medicines, such as tonics and bitters. An early breakfast is essential to a happy, quiet day. If you rise betimes and have a wash all over, and a nice cold tub (one minute is enough; just a few spongefuls, if the sponge is big enough, are amply sufficient), then a breath of fresh air before a good honest breakfast slowly eaten, you will be set up till 1.30 P.M., at all events, and that is the proper hour for dinner, and indeed one o'clock itself is better if you are hungry. Take no food between meals but a cup of cocoa, and a light biscuit will not hurt at noon if you feel a sinking at the pit of the stomach. Here is a hint that all should remember: never drink anything until you have finished your solid food. Tea in the afternoon is very refreshing. I myself am of the nervo-sanguineous temperament, and milk and coffee are my chief drinks, but without my two large cups of tea at five o'clock I should be a literary failure.

#### COFFEE.

There is probably nothing the people of these islands know less about than the making of a cup of nice coffee. Yet this is an accomplishment that all young ladies should possess. The making of coffee should never be entrusted to a servant. Do it yourself, girls, and how pleased your father will be! He won't be able to refuse you that little cheque you want so much if he is under the influence

of the benign berry. But good coffee cannot be made unless you pay a good price at a good shop for the real article. Moreover, it ought to be made pretty strong; if weak it is as nasty as gun-washings. A little chicory softens the flavour, but the so-called French coffee is nearly all chicory.

#### THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE BENIGN BERRY.

If human beings were always on a level keel, as we say at sea, neither tea nor coffee would ever be needed. But life is a struggle, life is a fight, and during the day people often get run down, and temporarily out of sorts. At such times even liquid food will hardly pick one up, and both the body and mind will suffer if we have not recourse to such a harmless stimulant as coffee. Depression is exceedingly bad for health, and there is nothing we can drink that will so soon and so safely remove it as an infusion of the powdered berry benign. It is partially a food too, or an auxiliary to food; it increases the pulse-beats and sets the lagging wheels of life into gentle motion; its effects on the nervous system of a healthy individual are far more lasting and less hurtful than wine of any sort; it banishes all sense of fatigue and sustains the frame. Under the influence of coffee, indeed, many a weary time may be tided over, and even many a grief. But we must not turn ourselves into coffee-drunkards, else we shall lose all the good effects the herb can produce and reap only the bad.

#### OUR BATH-ROOMS.

This is a paragraph the mater should read, but even the youngest girl in the family, if she be not quite a baby, ought to be able to appreciate the benefits that accrue to health and to happiness, to say nothing of beauty of eyes and complexion, from the daily matutinal cold bath. The skin is not meant merely for a covering, mind you, but is a great emunctory for carrying off poisons from the blood, thus rendering it pure and sweet, and taking off all extra strain from internal vital organs. Even, therefore, in houses that cannot boast of a bath-room proper there should be in each bedroom a sitz or flat bath; the water used therein should be soft—river, burn, or rain-water—and the soap the purest there is.

But happy may the mater of a family or mistress of a household be, if the building can boast of a proper bath-room.

#### THIS ROOM'S ARRANGEMENT.

If you are only planning to have a bath-room, do not be in too great a hurry and do not recklessly leave everything to the plumber. Here are the arrangements then for a perfect bath-room. (1) Its ceiling should be lofty, and the place itself of good dimensions. (2) One window that can be "carried" open but still be shaded with a muslin blind. (3) The walls of plaster and painted pink in preference to green, which is a saddening and depressing colour. (4) The bath itself at one side should be long enough for one to lie down in. (5) It should always

be kept most scrupulously clean. (6) Hot water and cold, but the hot water should not be used in the morning; the cold bath is a tonic, the warm one is relaxing and, therefore, dangerous. (7) The bath should be built and fitted in the most scientific manner, for the germs from soapy water-pipes rising into a room are a source of disease. (8) As regards the plumber, he is generally a plausible man, and may try to make you believe anything, so remember the words of the song of "The Gipsy's Warning"—

"Do not trust him, gentle lady,  
Though his voice be low and sweet."

I would not go so far as to say that some saints above may not have been plumbers on earth, but— (9) The floor may be of bath linoleum, with cork mats and a bath blanket. (10) A towel-rack. No hard towels. I do believe they sometimes starch them at laundries. (11) Good sponges and flesh-gloves, but these latter are almost needless. (12) A large basin on a good solid stand. (13) Proper ventilation. (14) A thermometer hung on the wall, and also a bath-thermometer. (15) Perfect and chemical cleanliness of the bath and all its accessories.

#### BATHING IN THE SEA.

Happy is the girl who, after being pent up in town or city all the weary winter and bleak spring, is able to get away to the seaside as early as June.

I want her to begin sea-bathing at once, but this should not interfere with her morning tub. Take this by all means every day before breakfast, and after it you may have a short time in the open air. If your appetite is bad, there is a probability that your liver is out of order, and some quassia solution with dilute nitro-muriatic acid taken every day before breakfast and dinner ought soon to put that to rights.

#### THE SAILOR'S POCKET-BOOK.

Perhaps you never heard of this book. It is not a pocket-book such as farmers wear, full of gold, silver, bank-notes and big cheques. But this blue-covered pocket-book lying on my desk before me tells our Jack Tars almost everything it is useful for them to know. Now for your benefit, reader, I will give you a page therefrom. We all love Jack, and here are the hints on bathing that the Royal Humane Society gives him. They are good, so good indeed, that were I the Royal Humane Society myself, I could not have written them very much better.

(1) Avoid bathing within two hours after a meal.

(2) Avoid bathing when exhausted by fatigue or any other cause.

(3) Or when the body is cooling after perspiration.

(4) Avoid bathing at all in the open air, if, after having been a short time in the water, there is a sense of chilliness with numbness of the hands and feet; but bathe when the body is warm, provided no time is lost in getting into the sea.

(5) Avoid remaining too long in the water;



leave the water immediately on experiencing the slightest feeling of chilliness.

(6) The vigorous and strong may bathe early in the morning on an empty stomach.

(7) The young, and those who are weak, had better bathe two or three hours after a meal—the best time for such is from two to three hours after breakfast.

(8) Those who are subject to attacks of giddiness or faintness, and those who suffer from palpitation and other senses of discomfort in the region of the heart, should not bathe without first consulting their medical adviser.

#### FRUIT AS PHYSIC.

I would like to remind my readers that in summer-time as well as in winter, fruit should form a portion of every diet. But in winter we are for the most part, compelled to use foreign fruits, while in June and onwards throughout the pleasant season of the year, we have our own English fruits, and there is certainly nothing better. But these must be ripe, and not over-ripe. There are differences of taste as regards fruit, so every girl can please herself, only those who have not a

liking for tomatoes should try to acquire one. They ought to be eaten raw with a little salt, before meals, with meals, and after meals, any time night or day. Strawberries and cream, I need not say, are very delicious, but I think that, as regards medicinal value, gooseberries take somewhat higher rank, and are excellent, gathered ripe off the bushes before breakfast.

#### NIGHT AIR.

Very old wives, male or female, will inform you seriously that night air is most prejudicial to the health. This is simply a fallacy. At night it is true that dews may rise and damp the clothes. This will not hurt, for they are not obnoxious. Obnoxious air and foul emanations rise by day and fall right to the ground at night. The night air is really healthful so long as one does not feel chilly. If one does, walking, not sitting, should banish all the discomfort. But even in summer the undergarments should be of wool.

#### THE SUN IN JUNE.

For dear health's sake, girls should seek the June sunshine wherever it is to be found, and

revel in its rays just as the flowers do. Do not be afraid of a little sun-tan. No one looks more beautiful, methinks, than a healthy girl of regular features and a good complexion slightly browned by the summer's heat. The real hot weather has not come yet, however; when it does it would, of course, be somewhat injudicious to be too much in the glare.

Some girls suffer a good deal from thirst in summer. Extra perspiration may account for this, so may debility, but eating too much meat, or too much food of any kind, is the principal cause. Weakly girls will find a cup of bovril at midday very refreshing. It will tend to allay the thirst fever. Virol—a mixture of red beef marrow with extract of malt—cannot be too highly extolled for anæmia. Home-made lemonade or lime-juice water is a good summer drink. Oatmeal-water with a little sugar and a squeeze of lemon or lime is even better. Whey and buttermilk are both excellent and help to keep the complexion clear. But alas! such drinks are hard to find even at farms. However, even when very thirsty, it is injudicious to drink too much.

## A LARK'S SONG.



It was on a sultry August afternoon two years ago that I stopped on my way to school to watch a caged lark which was hung up on the wall outside a birdseller's shop. Rough lad as I was, a wave of pity and indignation

swelled up within me. What right had this man, or any man for the matter of that, to impose lifelong imprisonment on God's free creatures? The little bird was crouching on the floor of its tiny, cramped abode with upturned head and wide, wistful eyes. Presently it burst forth into exquisite song, but I turned away sore hearted.

Throughout the long school-hours thoughts of that poor prisoner haunted me, and in the evening I trudged home a long way round to avoid the birdseller's shop.

Aunt Addie was waiting for me as usual by our garden gate, and it was a relief to pour my indignant feelings into her always ready and sympathetic ear.

"And, oh, Aunt Addie," I burst out, as she did not speak at first, "how bitterly, bitterly unjust it seems! Why should that little harmless thing be made to suffer so? Its poor life can be nothing but one long misery." Then glancing at her gentle, old face, I added gruffly, "I must say I don't see what you find to smile at."

"Not in what you have told me, Bertie," Aunt Addie said slowly. "But it has reminded me of a dream I had long ago, and had almost forgotten. If you like I will tell it to you now. It was wonderfully distinct and connected."

And this is why I have been writing about the lark, because I want other people besides myself to hear Aunt Addie's dream.

"I thought I was in a large, flowery field on a hilltop," she began, speaking in her quiet, deliberate way. "It was a lovely day, bright and sunny with just enough breeze to stir the long grass. Overhead the larks were singing joyfully, and close by my feet I saw one of their nests, a snug-looking little abode with three young ones nestling inside. They

looked nearly old enough to desert their home shelter, I thought; another day or so and they would be flown. Presently, sinking slowly down and singing all the way, came the mother-bird. As she reached her nest the young larks pressed up to her, and I heard them speak and understood their language.

"When may we rise up into that great blue sky and sing the beautiful song?" they asked. "We do so long to fly above the world as you do."

"And she answered them very sweetly—

"Dear ones, you will not have to wait much longer. But now that your time has so nearly come I will tell you the message which we are all bidden to give to our children. You see me fly up, my darlings, and you hear me sing, but that song is not mine. When this world, with all its many sounds, is left behind, then you will hear the song that we all so strive to imitate. For it comes faint and dim, yet beautiful, ah, so beautiful, my darlings, from heaven's distant gates. We never hear the words nor can we catch each note, but all that comes within our reach we try to keep, and as we sink to earth again we strive to sing it truly. This is the message, then—that you must rise up higher, higher, until you hear the song, and then bring it down to earth with you, that other living things may hear it too, and may understand something of the unspeakable joy which inspires it."

"And the young larks listened eagerly to their mother's words.

"Oh, let us begin to-morrow," they cried; "our wings are strong, so strong, mother. We will rise up very high, we shall not be afraid, and we will learn the song quite truly."

"Then I heard the mother-bird make answer lovingly.

"It shall be as you wish, my dear ones. Next time the great sun rises you may go."

"The evening shadows crept up fast, but still I stayed, and soon I saw a boy coming across the flowers and grass. He crept along quietly, and I noticed he held in his hand a small, wire cage, but he stooped very low so that the little birds should not see him. And as I gazed in sorrow and indignation, yet unable to move or speak, he suddenly bent down and put both hands over the nest.

"When he stood up again a moment later he still held the cage, on the floor of which, panting with terror, lay crouched the brightest and prettiest of the three young larks. I followed the boy noiselessly, as he walked away, longing to know my poor little friend's fate.

"Night was coming on fast, and it was nearly dark when the lad reached his home.

"Going into the house, he fetched some food and water, which he pushed into the cage, and then, hanging it up on a nail beside the door, he left the terrified little prisoner alone.

"After a while the moon rose clear and bright, and I was then able to see the form of the young lark, as he stood pressing his little heaving breast against the wire bars. There was a look of unutterable desolation and despair in the clear widely-opened eyes.

"During the hour or so of darkness I had heard him struggling to escape, but he had found out now that it was useless, and had given up hope. My heart quite ached with pity, and I turned away my head. When I looked again it seemed to me that many days had passed.

"It was once more evening, and the boy was standing beside the lark's cage feeding his prisoner in the twilight.

"You don't deserve any food at all," he was saying. "Why can't you sing like other larks, instead of moping there all day?" And he shut the cage-door roughly and went away.

"But after he was gone I still waited, and presently heard the poor bird say sadly—

"How can I sing—I, who have never heard the song!" And a look of unutterable longing dimmed his eyes, as he raised them to the darkening sky overhead.

"All day long he heard the free happy songsters singing joyfully. Only he was, and ever must be, dumb.

"Suddenly, through the gathering darkness, there shone a soft, yet exceedingly beautiful light. Then, with a gentle, rustling sound, an angel floated down and stood beside the little wire cage.

"Shrinking back into the shadow of the house I waited breathlessly, and heard the angel speak.

"Little one, the Father knows how your life has been spoiled, your happiness taken