

This is the scene as I picture it to myself when I am playing Mendelssohn's Caprice in E minor.

"How do you think of such things?" a young girl once asked me. "When I play I hear only notes," she added.

"And when you read a poem, do you think of only words?" I questioned in reply.

"Oh, no," she said, "I think of the idea, or the story, when there is one."

Now, my reader, why should a piece of music consist only of notes, if a poem means more than mere words?

The player who plays only notes is like the reciter who has learnt to say off a piece in a foreign language. Execution and pronunciation alike may be excellent, but neither tones nor words have any meaning.

The stories told in Mendelssohn's three Caprices were easy to translate into words, for he gave the clue to them himself: it seems a pity that in later editions of his works these allusions are almost invariably omitted, even to *The Rivulet* now rarely being given the name which the composer gave it, and which so well describes its flowing character.

A FEW WORDS TO THE WISE.

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



HAVE so much to say in this paper that I begrudge myself the pleasure of writing even the shortest introduction thereto. It is a paper in pars, as you may see at a glance, so that if one par doesn't seem to appeal to a reader, she may skip it and hop on to the next. Just let me say, however, that I have the great satisfaction of knowing that girls do not find my attempts to enlighten the pathways of health for them either dry or difficult reading, and that the more wise amongst them are willing to be taught. One other word prefatorially; although I cannot at any time promise to answer by post questions on health, still any

letter addressed to the care of the Editor will be duly forwarded to me, and may form the subject of a future paragraph, *i.e.*, if the answer is likely to be of general utility.

THE CONSUMPTIVE TENDENCY.

This par may be read with advantage by mothers, but I must beg of them that whatever they may think about any of their children it behoves them to say not one word in their presence which might frighten them. Children predisposed to the scourge of these islands are often very nervous, and fear does a deal of harm. Mind, if it were not possible to take time by the forelock, and by judicious treatment avert calamity, I would not be penning these lines. But incipient consumption can be cured with care, and the beautiful child that shows signs that she never can make old bones, as the saying is, may with care be tided over the bar, and her little barque safely and healthfully launched on the ocean of life.

There is a most expressive word used in the far north of Scotland to describe the appearance of any little lass that is likely to fall a victim to scrofula. People say of her, "Ay, she is bonnie and she is stout enough, but, dear me, she is *flozzen*." That is the word, and there is no English for it. The *flozzen* child is round in face, and her cheeks seem redolent of health, her large eyes are blue and wistful, and the pupil or dark centres large and liquid. She is fair in hair and fair to look upon, tender skinned, blue veined and bonnie. Indeed the only drawback to her beauty may be a biggish soft and tremulous upper lip. The limbs are well shaped, but there is no firmness—she is "flozzen" and soft.

Says a well-known authority, "The whole body is flaccid and loose, and there is softness and debility, even the hair, which may be crisp while she is fairly well, is straight and soft in illness."

ANOTHER EXAMPLE.

Scrofulous children may be long-necked and narrow-chested—this last formation is probably hereditary—but the eyes lack lustre, and the child is ill-tempered and difficult to deal with. The doctor finds the stomach tumid

or swollen, and finds, too, that the child is badly nutrified because the food is not properly assimilated. Bleeding at the nose is no certain precursor of consumption, nor is blood-spitting, though it is sufficiently alarming.

HOW TO MANAGE SICK CHILDREN.

I have but little faith in cod liver oil, nor in its substitute, shark oil. My experience tells me that children who need oil cannot digest it, while those who can, do not require it. Parrish's chemical food and virol do good, however, but it is to fresh air and moderate exercise with wholesome and nutritious diet that we are to look for the child's salvation. You will not save your darling, madam, if you do not get rid once and for all of the bugbear cold. If you coddle her, you will kill her. It is a disagreeable thing to have to say, but it is the truth. The diet cannot be too nourishing, but she must not be forced to eat; mind this, that the coats of the stomach are as weak and flozzed as any of the muscles in her body. She must sleep in a bedroom with the windows always open, and she must be out of doors all day long. So shall the microbes of consumption be killed. Further information on this subject may be obtained from a shilling brochure of mine published this season by Mr. Jarrold of Norwich. I have not the slightest financial interest in the sale of this useful work, else I would not recommend it. But I have been studying the subject, and this little book is the outcome. It is called *The Fresh Air Cure for Consumption and Nervous Ailments*. All medical men who are worth their salt have now come to recognise this system of treatment, and marvellous indeed are the results.

INDIGESTION AND SOME OF ITS CAUSES.

I believe that at least three-fourths of our population of work-a-day girls suffer more or less from dyspepsia. A medical man if he had not lots of other things to think about could not drive slowly along the streets of any large town without noting how numerous are these cases. And mind you this: dyspepsia may usher in the most fatal disease of a chronic nature, including consumption or even cancer itself. It is not a cheering sight to watch those poor lassies as they hurry to or from their work morn, noon and night. It is worse in your southern English towns where girls think themselves starved if they do not get meat twice a day. In Aberdeen or Dundee it is different, because the diet is largely composed of oatmeal or pea-meal, and because the air is more bracing and there is less carbonic acid in the atmosphere. In these towns and in such English cities as Exeter, etc., you find the prettiest complexions and brightest eyes in the world. But, oh, the pinched and weary faces one sees in manufacturing districts, oh, the sallowness and wornness, and the languor! No mirth, no jollity, no real young womanhood, because the canker is at the bud of their young life, because the worm is at the core.

INDIGESTION AND FRESH AIR.

The fact that I cannot remedy matters need not prevent me from stating the plain truth. Tell a girl—an ordinary girl, I mean—that rain-water is good for the complexion

and she will catch it even as the drops fall from her bedroom window, she will fill a jar with it and keep it till it becomes offensive with the microbic life therein; but speak to her of fresh air, and she will hardly heed you. Yet fresh air purifies the blood, cures indigestion and clarifies the complexion. It is the want of it which causes five out of every ten cases of dyspepsia which a doctor may mark down on the street among the girls he meets. They work in beastly badly-ventilated shops, or in close and stuffy offices into which the breath of heaven is never permitted to enter. They sleep in stuffy bedrooms and do not think of taking a cold bath in the morning once in a blue moon. The appetite fails, therefore, and dyspepsia is the sad result.

Laziness and indolent habits bring on dyspepsia among girls that do not have to work for their living. So do imaginary ailments, sitting too much indoors, poring over books or day-dreams. All exciting passions do the same. Let a girl once begin to indulge in these, and I can assure her that her skin will look as kiln-cracked as the inside of any old vase before she is much over twenty, and that wrinkles will make her seem old at thirty. My cure is simple if it could only be carried out. Such girls ought to sleep in bedrooms that have hardly any furniture, walls and all plain, and no drapery that can collect deadly dust, and I should not trouble them to keep their windows down; no, I should have the upper sashes taken away entirely. If I caught them reading trashy, pappy, unreal novels, I'd pitch these vile books into the dust-bin. Oh, I should be quite rough and rude, I can assure you, and I should order them out—out into the fields where every wildling of nature is happy, healthful and joyful. Out into the pure air, God's greatest gift on earth to man. Yes, out into the rain, if need were. They might dress for the weather, of course, but out it should be, and they would live to thank me for my very roughness in treating them.

THINGS THAT DISAGREE WITH DYSPEPTICS.

Some girls are inclined to be stout. I like to see moderate rotundity, but not unwholesome fat, that is, you know, fatness that does not seem firm, that lies in tucks and hillocks about neck or cheeks and on arms. Wholesome adiposity does not tremble or shake like a badly-made blanc-mange, giving one the impression that it may go to pieces at any moment. Healthy adiposity moves with muscle and skin, and does not alter the shape of the human body. But those who are unhealthfully obese are, as a rule, dyspeptic. This, that and t'other don't agree with them. They may be dainty eaters, but, as a rule, they gourmandise. At night they snore and dream ugly dreams, and they are subject to ailments that the more supple and hardy are free from. Even young girls, when too stout, have a tendency to varicose veins, and many of what are called growing pains are caused by these. Certain foods disagree with such girls, and they suffer from headaches, often of a most distressing nature, with liver troubles as well, and at times their sleep is haunted with terrible nightmares.

THE SOONER THE BETTER.

The sooner such girls are taken in hand the better. If they don't get cured of this slight inclination to *embonpoint* and that, too, speedily, and if they do not live and eat according to rule for months or years after they are cured, they will have short lives and these will not be merry ones either. Oh, the cure is simple enough, but they need rules laid down for them and to these they must adhere. Here are my fundamental directions for the cure of obesity. Avoid even looking at the quack advertisements you see in the newspapers. All such so-called cures are dangerous to the heart. Fresh air and exercise therein; the cold morning tub; early rising; sleeping on a hard mattress with very

little bed-clothing. The Turkish bath once or twice a week, and the most careful avoidance of sugar, starchy foods, bread, puddings, pastry and fat in any shape. Only lean meat, no pork, nor plaice, nor herring, nor salmon. No butter. The diet to be mostly of lean meat and green vegetables, with a little toast instead of bread. Tea and coffee. The tea should have a squeeze of lemon in it but no cream. The food on the whole to be very much restricted in quantity. Too much water should not be taken.

BEAUTY MAY BE CULTIVATED.

The more the mind of a girl is cultivated and the more attention she pays to the laws that govern health, the greater chance is there that she will grow up a beautiful woman. Want of education and refinement, especially if combined with want of health, are directly opposed to beauty of form or face. Intellect and cultivation have a direct effect on the eyes and on the complexion itself, and hardly will a man notice little defects of facial development or aberrations from the so-called lines of beauty if the lady herself be gentle, brilliant, *saue* and good. Some children will never learn to be lovely in manners and temper; either there is a hereditary black drop in them or the health is much below par, but nevertheless this may—in the very young—be gently and firmly taken in hand by someone who loves them, and it is surprising what tuition may accomplish. But addressing girls who are not altogether children, I do most earnestly beseech them to carefully distinguish between the beauty that is real and that which is false—physically I mean. Here, for example, are two girls of sweet seventeen, or "Sweet and twenty" as Mortimer Collins would have said. Now both are lacking at present in beauty of complexion, though their features are regular and pretty. Their minds are not of the same calibre, however. Neena is somewhat nervous and hurried in manner. She wants to be beautiful at once. Just to please her I have to prescribe facial applications of a cooling description, not glycerine and cucumber or any other of the advertised rot which girls plaster themselves with. I must even allow her to use a little carmine and tinted lip-salve. She is wilful and spoiled. I have not the same interest in her that I have in Erica here. She is calm, refined, with a soul. I want to see that soul shining out from her blue eyes, and it will ere six months are over. But she will have the transparent complexion Neena the dull outside beauty. Nothing more. Erica takes advice. She admits the possession of a liver. Neena thinks such a possession altogether unromantic. I fear I must dismiss Neena with a few kindly words—and the applications. I have to restrain myself, however, to a certain extent, for although I admit that a girl may legitimately use applications—of a not dangerous kind—to make the best of herself, a painted woman is a living lie, and if she has a conscience she can neither be happy nor comfortable.

Erica is going to go to the root of the evil. She is somewhat dyspeptic. She is going to live according to the laws of health. Strictly, determinedly. She will need but little medicine. The bath alone almost and fresh air will clear her blood and render her complexion transparent, while her eyes will be as clear and innocent-looking as a baby's. Because Erica will have nothing to conceal. And Erica is wise enough to put no faith in quack pills and blood mixtures. Nature is going to befriend her, and if she is not well and happily married in less than two years, then I'm no judge of human nature.

Try, then, my dear readers, so to shape your lives that you may possess the *mens sana in corpore sano* (the pure mind in the healthful body). But don't forget that if the body is not in form, the mind can neither be easy nor altogether white.

