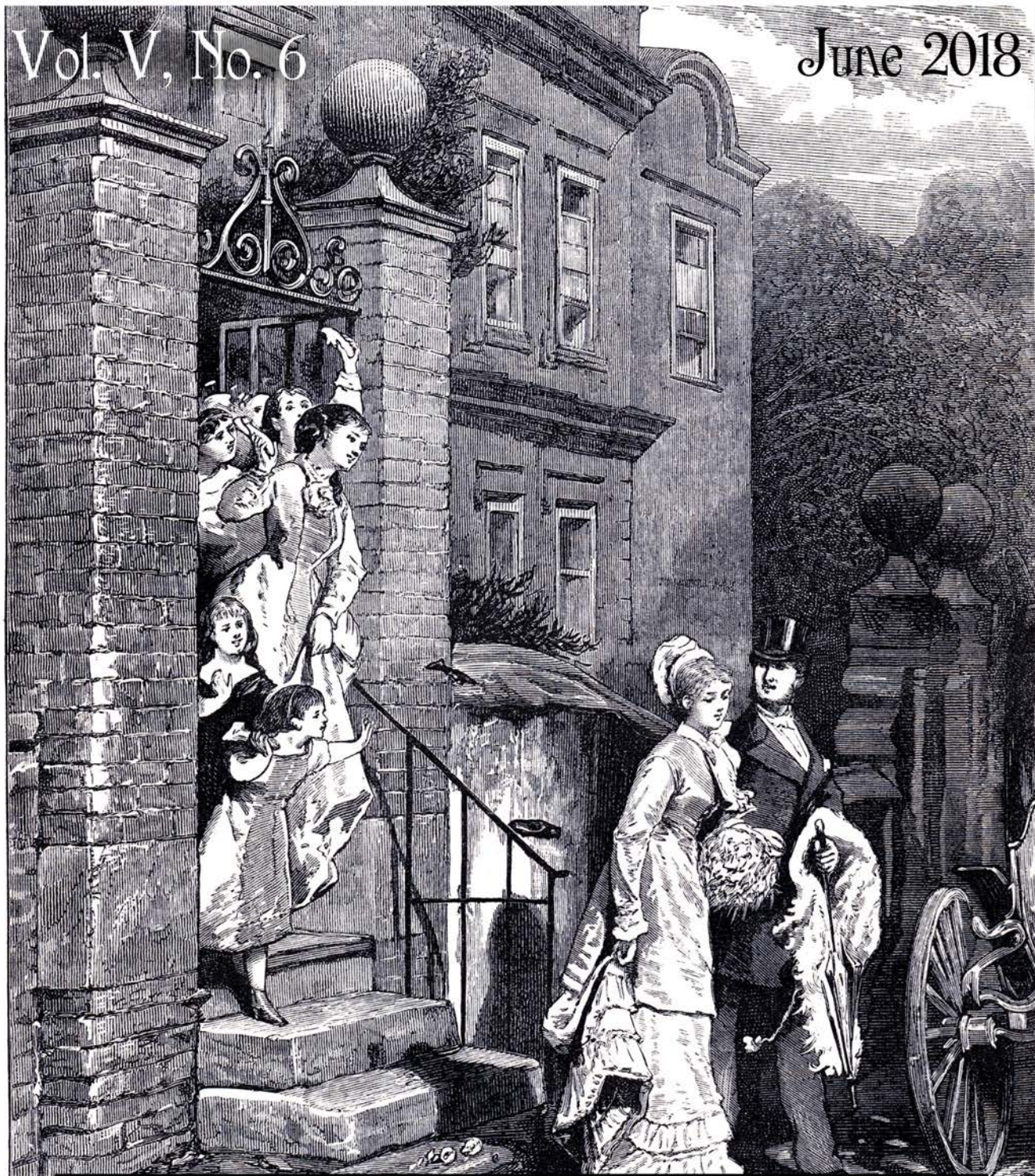


# Victorian Times

Vol. V, No. 6

June 2018



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Letter-Writing • Wedding Breakfasts • Wedding Flowers & Their Lore  
Aunt Mehitable's Letters from Washington • The Robin • Moorland Idylls  
Which Is Cheaper - London or New York? • School-Day Reminiscences*

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\**The Girl's Own Paper* \*\**Cassell's Family Magazine*

# Remember Letters?

Once upon a time, when someone wanted to communicate with a person who wasn't within, literally, shouting distance, they—stay with me here, millennials—they wrote down what they wanted to say on a piece of paper. They put that paper in an envelope, posted it... and waited. If this communication was traveling across town—from one side of London or New York to the other, for instance—they might wait days for a response. If it was traveling across an ocean, they waited for months. Imagine!

Actually, for most of us, this doesn't require any imagination at all. We don't have to be Victorians to remember keeping in touch by letter. Some, we wrote by hand. Others, we composed on a typewriter. And if, like me, you're old enough to remember "typing class," you may recall entire books on how to write letters.

What happened to letters? What brought their demise? I know the easy answers that might spring to mind: cell-phones, e-mail, texting, etc. But the real answer can be summed up in one word: Sprint.

That's right, Sprint. Letters serve a very specific purpose: They are a means of communicating over distance. They were the best means of doing so only when they were the most cost-effective way to get your words from Point A to Point B.

But what about the phone? Yes, the telephone made it possible, even 100 years ago, to speak to someone on the other side of New York, or London. But if you wanted to speak to someone in the next town, or county, or state, suddenly the phone wasn't so great. A little more than a decade ago, my husband's business trip to England resulted in \$300 in phone bills! Not so long ago, if you lived in Arkansas and wanted to chat with your sister in California, you waited until after 11 p.m. to get the lowest rates—and even then, a nice long chat could cost \$20 or more. So if you really had a lot to say, it was still more efficient (and lots cheaper) to write a letter, affix a stamp (35 cents?) and pop it in the mail.

Then Sprint came along, and introduced inexpensive long-distance calling. Suddenly, you could chat with an out-of-state relative for an hour or more without breaking the bank. And suddenly, the letter was doomed.

Today, the lack of "letters" isn't just because we can communicate by phone or e-mail or text. It's because distance is no longer a barrier to communication. That change didn't come about with the end of the Victorian era; it came about within the last 30 years. And as with any major shift in culture, we've gained and we've lost.

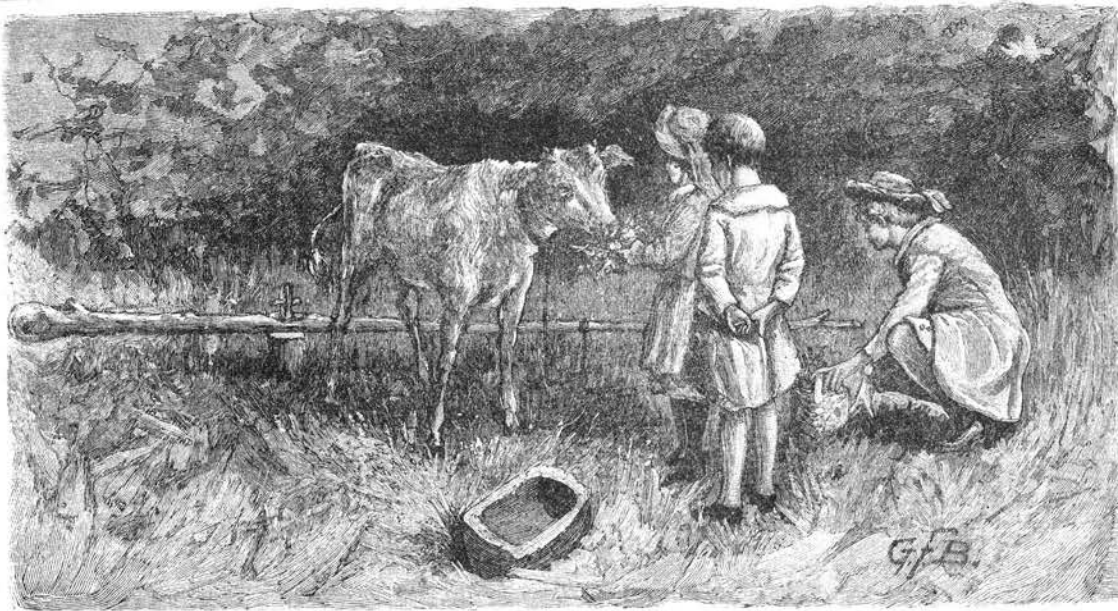
The advantage of immediate communication is obvious. The loss is perhaps less so—because the loss is *not* immediate. The loss is to history—the history to come, the history that we are creating here today, the history that someone else (our grandchildren, perhaps) will read about in the future, long after we are gone. In the past, one of the best ways to learn about a person—a leader, an author, a performer, an artist—was through his or her letters. Letters, as the most economical and efficient way to communicate to friends and loved ones, have traditionally been the means by which the *personal* side of a public figure is expressed. We've learned about forgotten soldiers of the Civil War from packets of letters found in old trunks. We've seen the human side of a lofty figure of history from the letters written to a child.

Today, of course, we have e-mails, but over the last decade I've seen quite a change in how people use e-mail to communicate. Initially, people tended to treat an e-mail like a letter, but as the "instant" nature of such messaging took hold, the tendency to turn e-mails into quick and often grammar-free notes has increased. Ironically, the volume of communication has increased since we gave up on letters; we write more but say less!

What's interesting about the articles in this issue about letter-writing, however, is that the advice given on how to write a letter is much the same as the advice we hear today on writing e-mails and sending texts. Think before you speak. Plan what you want to say. Don't write something in haste that you will repent at leisure. Be careful about saying something that might unintentionally insult the recipient. Be considerate of the reader by taking some care in your grammar and spelling. Remember that whatever you write will take on a life of its own once it leaves your hands—and all your tears and piety cannot call it back to cancel half a line.

The age of letter-writing endured for literally thousands of years. In terms of historic time, it vanished in the blink of an eye. But the need for courtesy, thought, and discretion in communication have not vanished with it. Whether we write lengthy letters or brief texts, future generations will judge us by those words—so like a wise Victorian, we would do well to think before we hit "send"!

—Moira Allen, Editor  
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## FOUR FRIENDS IN A PHAETON.



"H," said Major X—, with unrepressed contempt, "there's nothing to see in Nebraska!"

"But it will be a pleasant trip. We shall at least have a novelty and we can come back if we don't like it, you know."

"Yes"—expressively—"you can come back, and you *will* come back. How long do you plan to be gone? Three days. Well, then, I will give you just twenty-four hours of that time to return in."

We were all assembled for parade,—that pageant which we had faithfully gazed upon every night since earliest flush of summer; and, the men having gone through their manual in a manner as much resembling machinery as the strictest colonel could desire, the band having done its musical best to soothe our savage breasts, and the officers having advanced in line to bestow upon the major their simultaneous salutes, the former left the latter at his post, and came forward to join the ladies. Major X— had "gone on as officer of the day," and therefore had been at liberty to stay away from parade and criticise our simple projects.

It would have embarrassed us to calculate just how many times during the past weeks we had watched the companies march in review, comparing the manner in which each one "wheeled," and regarding with admiring awe every gesture of the magnificent Drum-major. But doubtless on this particular evening we would, from force of habit and conscientious scruples, have done the same, had not the thoughts of some of us been straying elsewhere, into "pastures new." Lulled by the monotony of garrison affairs and life in general at Fort O—, it was not often that aught so unexpected or exciting as an inspiration visited the brain of any in our coterie; but only a few days before, a decidedly brilliant one had ventured to whisper in a lady's ear, and she had passed on the whisper until a party of five were in the secret. The inspiration had said—"What a pleasant and novel way of spending a few days it would be for a *partie carrée* to take a certain roomy, comfortable carriage, and drive about through the country, discovering the beauties of the prophet who hath too little honor in his own land."

Acting on this gentle hint; the inspired one proceeded to expound the vision, which was received with flattering en-

thusiasm by the three chosen ones, and an organized plan was mapped out.

It was this plan that was touched upon in the presence of Major X—, who looked down upon it from a superior point of view, tore it apart, dissected it, and gazed at it through a sort of mental microscope.

"You won't find any 'quaint inns' or farm-houses that will accommodate you. You'll be starved, frozen, or roasted as the weather may be. You won't see anything interesting in the way of scenery or people. '*Types*,' indeed! There are no '*types*' in Nebraska. No doubt though a cyclone will come up while you are out, and give you excitement enough, if that is what you want, but otherwise you will only get disgusted with yourselves and each other, and come home ignominiously the day after you start—or the same day, if you don't get too far off to return."

All this he said to us, and much more. Yet—though inwardly a little disturbed and anxious—we remained outwardly unmoved, not only setting a day on which to start but deciding what we should wear, eat, and drink during our expedition.

As the day drew near, our spirits perceptibly rose. We even felt that, once started, they might prove too buoyant for control, and positively effervesce. Therefore, to guard against the stigma which might in such a case attach to us, if we confessed to our genuine "local habitations and names," we unanimously agreed to drop our own well-won appellations, as a locust sheds his shell, adopting brand-new ones for this occasion only. Positively (as we informed each other) our first, last, and only appearance on this or any stage in the characters of Lady Lilian Stafford, Sir Gilbert de Hamilton, Lord Archibald McEastoun, and Lady Muriel Livingston.

Now Lady Muriel when in private life rejoiced in the title of "Mrs.," and Sir Gilbert had the misfortune to be her husband, but Lady Lilian and Lord Archibald were respectively spinster and bachelor—free to flirt, quarrel, or otherwise amuse themselves in whatever way they pleased. Lady Lilian, however, had just returned from Boston, where she had been studying music, and at the same time learning how wrong and undignified a pastime flirtation really is. Her

eyes, which were large and bluish gray, had a far-away look under the black lashes, and hid no *arrière pensée* of how it would be possible for her to charm Lord Archibald's heart away with her siren singing, as we drove under the sunshine and moonlight, along smooth country roads.

The two "Servants of Government" had asked for "leave," and obtained it, with the full approval of their captains and the "C. O." before we started off, early one hazy yet promising morning in June.

It was nine o'clock—guard-mounting at the post—when we bade Fort O—a three days' farewell; so we had the band-music to speed us on our way, and the guard seemed to be turned out for our especial benefit, as it stood in martial array, drawn up beside the road.

Just beyond the limits of the post stands, tumbles, and sprawls a tiny settlement—scarce meriting the name of village—ambitiously entitled "Saratoga." Perhaps it would be difficult to find its like in any State east of Nebraska. So many tiny, box-like dwellings, suggesting an interior economy of two rooms containing nothing in plenty save poverty, yet displaying a certain neatness of appointment and surroundings, in spite of the invariable proximity of remarkably numerous (and odorous) drinking "saloons."

We were, however, too familiar with the characteristics of this mushroom "Saratoga" to bestow much attention on it in its morning dress, but without turning our faces to the right hand or the left (regardless of the flaring circus posters presenting high-colored allurements on every broad fence), we pursued our way through the verdant, peaceful country between Fort O—and the village of Florence.

Far off lay the Missouri River, to which distance lent enchantment by transforming its murky waters to a gleaming white that dazzled our eyes like diamonds under the sun. Beyond rose the undulating belt of hills, all their crude and rugged outlines softened into misty grays and blues, while between us and them one or two small, irregular-shaped lakes shone brightly in their frames of vivid green. Wild flowers grew along the road—such wild flowers as deck the soil only of Kansas or Nebraska. Deep red or pink roses, forming brilliant spots of color on the brown, rain-furrowed banks at the edge of the road, bluebells and larkspur lifting dainty heads above the grass, mustard covering the fields like Danæ's shower of gold, wild sweet-william growing so luxuriantly as to make a crimson carpet for butterflies to dance on, and snowy masses of elder-flower, standing out against a background of foliage intensely green.

Lord Archibald was called into the service of the ladies, and responded so often in such a gallant manner (undaunted by thorns or covetous honey-bees), that presently roses, sketch-books, clover-blossoms, and light literature tumbled about in inextricable confusion on carriage seat and floor. Even a huge earthen bowl of jelly, which had proved the "one thing too many" for the luncheon basket (and which, through much tribulation and divers vicissitudes, passed the trip reposing on Lady Lilian's knee), was wreathed with flowers, and doubtless furnished an unwonted treat to the numerous lively little promenaders on leaf and prickly branch.

On through Florence we went, past the marvellous windows of "the store," before which lounged a village beau and belle, the latter clad in short and puffy skirts of horribly brilliant blue, a broad hat with yellow ribbons, long red mitts upon her rounded arms, and stockings to match, upon her superfluously well-

developed nether limbs. Past the deserted, melancholy brick building yclept the "Bank of Florence," whose sashless windows and boarded doors gave it an air of dropping into a dotage which, from lack of patronage and small coin, had prematurely cast a blight upon it. Past the ancient adobe hut, and more pretentious brick and frame mansion, said to have been erected and occupied by the Mormons, during their stay in the country, so long ago as 1852, before their wanderings had carried them to their present haven. Past the tall cotton-wood tree, planted when a slip by Brigham Young, to mark the site of a future temple that never was erected except in Mormon dreams; and so on into the farther country which to us was delightfully unfamiliar and untried.

Everywhere were hills—gentle, undulating hills, like green billows, while the roads were outlined by tall, straight cotton-wood trees that circled the fields in lieu of fences, and cast the flickering shadows of leaf and branch into the tiny creeks that washed their roots. The air was full of floating particles of cotton that glistened in the sun, and looked like a snow-storm, all belated and out of season.

Such numbers of cattle as there were browsing in the fields we passed that day! We thought we never had seen so many Alderneys and Jerseys, and creatures of commoner sort, as that morning raised gentle eyes from contemplation of their pastures to gaze meditatively at us as we drove by. Each one was calmly chewing the cud of "sweet" (surely in no part "bitter!") "fancy," and we could almost have found it in our hearts to envy them such a never-failing, comforting resource. "So *much* better than the soldiers' tobacco!" Lady Lilian reflectively remarked.

As we would ascend to the brow of one hill higher than its fellows, we would see on every side a fair stretch of rolling country, whose square, plowed fields of brown, set among alternate squares of green and palest gold, gave an odd, yet an unpleasing "patchwork" effect to the entire landscape.

"This is what Major X—called 'tame, flat, and unprofitable, I suppose!" we said, all the more inclined to disagree with our friendly cynic, as our way led us through charming wood-roads, where the branches met above our heads, and dappled the ground with wondrous tracing of light and shadow.

Often we met queer country-folk journeying contentedly along, and sometimes they bowed to us, with as cordial a "Good-morning" as though we had been acquainted for years. The types were characteristic of Nebraska. Tall, lean men, with bare faces, shaded by broad, flapping felt hats, wearing loose trousers of some coarse material that looked as though they had been fashioned by the wife's patient but not over-skillful fingers. Large-featured women,



THE OLD HAUNTED HOUSE.



A MARINE INTERIOR.

with a facial expression either distinctly defiant or placidly resigned, showing from out the shadows of capacious sun-bonnets, and holding in their ungainly arms buxom babies, while startlingly large assortments of older children crouched in the bottom of the big lumbering wagons or odd, old-fashioned "chaises." Once in awhile we saw a pretty, giggling girl in pink or blue cambric, driving toward town with her lover; but this refreshing sight greeted us but seldom.

"Somewhere on the road between Florence and Calhoun," said Lord Archibald, looking about him, "stands a deserted house, which is said to possess the added charm of being haunted. Nobody will live in it, at any rate, and strange things are said to happen nightly within its walls."

"We might stop there to-night, and find out the truth of the story for ourselves," suggested Sir Gilbert, lightly. "We have come out in search of adventures and experiences, you know."

"What is it which proclaims the house is haunted?" cried Lady Lilian, who had been reading that from which she quoted.

"The ghost of a murdered wife," Lord Archibald replied. And then, pointing to a small one-and-a-half-story house, with paintless frame exterior, and windows innocent of glass, said "There's the place, now. Don't you think a ghost must be hard pushed, deliberately to choose such an abode as that?"

"Certainly, she could not have been a woman of æsthetic tastes," remarked Lady Muriel. "Perhaps that is the reason her husband put her out of existence, you know."

"He didn't stop to tell his motive. He fled from the wrath to come; but the ghost staid, and made herself very much at home. There is a hole in the front door, through which a bullet cut after it had tried unsuccessfully to be the fatal one; but another did the work it had failed in. And they say the sound of a pistol can be heard here at night, followed by a thrilling scream in a woman's voice. There is a stain of blood on the floor, too, and after a certain hour the ghost appears, points to it, moaning and shaking her head. Don't you ladies want to go over the place? The blood would be there, no doubt, though ghosts are said to economize their presence in the day-time, and—"

Here he was interrupted by a weird, mournful cry, which was faintly echoed by the feminine occupants of the carriage, while even Sir Gilbert and Lord Archibald stared a little and looked surprised.

"Only an owl," the former said, almost instantly, and everybody laughed, appearing a tiny bit conscious, for some reason or other. But the question of entering the haunted domicile was settled without words, and the carriage drove rapidly on.

It was nearly noon when we entered the village of Calhoun, sixteen miles or so from Omaha, and the promptings of a growing appetite suggested that we should pause at the village store and inquire what choice viands were there to be procured. To be sure, our basket was stocked with various canned

comestibles, which were to be prepared and eaten in the tin "mess-dishes" and plates we had borrowed from the "battery kitchen" with a view of enjoying camp life in a truly scientific way; but the sight of Calhoun in all its pastoral freshness called up within our minds visions of eggs, strawberries, and the like, which (*for a consideration*) the kindly villagers might be disposed to part with.

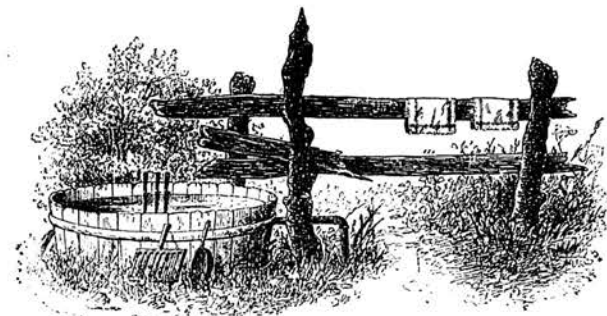
The "grocery store" was conspicuous on one side the way, the inn, ambitiously called the "Central House," upon the other, and before the latter our carriage stopped. There was a bar-room, and into the shadowy door-way of that mysterious apartment Sir Gilbert presently disappeared, while the three left outside sought amusement in speaking aloud the high-sounding titles that had usurped the place of more familiar names. Suddenly, to our dismay, our friend re-appeared in the door-way, holding forth triumphantly a mug of base, plebeian root-beer, and inviting us, by our discarded appellations, to unite with him in his libations.

It was too much, in the face of the assembled village magnates, who stood grouped about in reverent attitudes, admiring the strangers of high rank who had flashed, meteor-like, into their midst! We wilted visibly, and our voices in reply to Sir Gilbert's cruel invitation became both "still and small," and we were glad to turn our attention exclusively to the business of the hour. In the interval, however, Lady Muriel had seized the opportunity of sketching the grocery shop, with the three choice spirits enjoying their noonday "lounge" upon its hospitable porch.

Then on we went, intent upon the selection of a spot eligible for a picnic luncheon. It was some time before we found one which entirely pleased our fastidious taste, and then it happened that another deserted house formed a feature of the chosen bit of landscape. It was a queer little building, with impossible-looking doors and windows, some of the latter being filled with tiny panes of fancy, figured glass. Tall, rank grass grew all about, and waved against the paintless walls, while a high background of dark trees towered close behind, and drooped their lowest branches over the sunken roof. Altogether, the place presented far more of the conventional "haunted" aspect than its predecessor, but as we decided upon calm reflection it would scarcely be probable that the greed for murder had become so much of an epidemic in Nebraska that two houses on the same road had become ghost-ridden and deserted through its agency, it was thought feasible to enter the mysterious precincts.

On inspection we found that "queer" was a far more appropriate adjective than mysterious, and were proportionately disappointed by the discovery. The floors were of hard wood, rotten with age; the window and door frames were fancifully decorated, and the ambitious architect had evidently spent his best endeavors upon the partition between the two larger rooms. In one of the ceilings there was an aperture, and through that aperture could be seen, hanging from the roof of an attic above, a rope with some invisible weight dragging it down.

An agreeable shudder thrilled our nerves at this unex-



OUR RURAL KITCHEN.

pected sight, which immediately suggested to our imaginations a suicide with remnants in the shape of a skeleton. But, alas! our morbid anticipations received a crushing blow from the discovery of Lord Archibald that the hoped-for suicide was but a withered pumpkin left by the former eccentric occupants of the place in its present peculiar and precarious position. Over the inner door-way in one of the lower rooms a confiding wren had built her little home, in which several dainty eggs were visible, exciting in us an admiration that was not appreciated by the mistress of what we surveyed. We finally became moved to compassion by her frenzied flutterings and chirpings, and retired to a spot just across the road where we intended to prepare and eat our luncheon.

Under the shadow of an overhanging, wooded and fern-draped bluff, we laid our table-cloth on the grass, built our fire close at hand (Lord Archibald having chopped the wood in a dainty manner without removing his gloves), and procured water from a brook that received its birth from coldly bubbling springs near by. As we rested, we talked of the deserted house which stood just opposite, silently challenging us to guess at the history of its lonely and wasted life. Afterward we learned that it had been part of a steam-boat, caught by a snag and wrecked on the Missouri River many years before. The captain, sore at heart over the loss of his boat, had had it made into a land-dwelling for his old age, where he could look from a distance upon the water that had played him false. But he had died, and strangers had occupied the place, until it had so fallen into decay that no one cared to have it for a home. Thus it had been deserted



A STUDY IN TROUSERS.

by all save the wrens, who evidently viewed it in the light of "treasure trove." It was late when we finished the repast, so cleverly cooked by our *chef*, Sir Gilbert, and the dishes had been washed by Lord Archibald in the brook, and dried by his willing assistant, Lady Lillian. So we made haste upon our way to Blair, which was still distant some nine or ten miles from our impromptu camping-ground. As we drove, we found the country even more charming than we had seen it yet, and it was likened over and over again (not inappropriately) to the beautiful scenery of certain portions of the Hudson. There were the river, the highlands, a lesser edition of the Palisades, the peaceful farming lands, the clustering groves. And then, again, we would half fancy ourselves in the wooded lanes of fair New England. Could this actually be commonplace Nebraska? we questioned, or had we miraculously, in an "Aladdin's-castle"-like manner, been transported somewhere else? We almost fancied so, when finally we came upon a deep ravine, and skirted its edge in a way that strongly reminded us—view and all—of the famous "Horseshoe Bend!" of the Catskills.

As we drew near Blair, we began to meet some "odd types" in the shape of farms and villages, and our minds were filled with wondering admiration at the style of dress affected by the guileless country-folk. One small boy especially attracted us by the cut of his sun-bonnet, and the delightful way in which a couple of salt-bags had been utilized

for making him a pair of trousers—a bag for each leg, with "Salt," in conspicuous blue letters, labeling the sides! In these days when originality of costume is so desirable, why might not the salt-bag idea be found good in the eyes of fond mammas who would fain have their darling's garments different from those of everybody else?

It was with regret that we finally arrived at Blair, as the afternoon waned, and found it a village (or town, as its three thousand inhabitants ambitiously style it) dedicated apparently to the god of commonplace. The rigid, uncompromising lines of "the hotel" made our eyes water, as we reflected that probably we were destined to spend the night within its yellow brick walls. The shelter of a farmhouse, no matter how humble, would have been preferable, but that appeared to be unattainable, and we made up our minds to accept our fate at least gracefully.

First, however, before settling down into a state of resignation, we decided to delay the evil moment a little, by driving about the village streets. Somewhere within the town limits dwelt a young person who had once attended boarding-school in the East, and there had had the honor of knowing one of Lord Gilbert de Hamilton's brothers. Upon her we resolved



OTTO JAMES, THE BOY WHOSE SISTERS WERE NOT VERY PRETTY GIRLS.

to call, *en masse*, provided we could discover her place of residence which without much difficulty we presently succeeded in doing. She was at home, she was pretty, she was "stylish," she looked like a French fashion-plate—in fact, she was everything which her family were not. Could it be that this delightful creature was a product of Blair, and had lived all her life among such common and dull surroundings as these? We all admired her, which fact was patent to her observation, and we were welcomed by her, her paterfamilias and materfamilias, with open arms. Presently, with oppressive cordiality, we were invited to accept our new friends' hospitality for the night, Lady Lillian and Lady Muriel in vain protesting, with nods and becks and wreathed smiles when our hosts were looking, and with frowns and emphatic gestures when they were not. The two noble lords were inflexible in their determination to take advantage of the invitation. They had seen a pretty face—the pretty face had smiled upon them, and their conquest was complete. A field for analysis and mental study was here presented to the party, which two of its members at least



THE LANDLADY.

did not intend to pass by. So in the end, as usual, the weaker vessels were vanquished in argument, and— we stayed. We also displayed very healthy appetites at the bountiful and remarkable meal yclept “supper,” were made much of, shown about among the family relatives as captive beings of a rare and previously unattainable sort, and altogether made to feel as though we had escaped from a menagerie or “dime museum.” It was amusing, but it was tiresome, and we were glad when the next morning gave us an opportunity to thank with unfeigned gratitude our kind entertainers, and bid them—as we supposed—an eternal farewell.

On this second morning of our trip, our road led us through a less attractive portion of Nebraska. We saw plain, sad-looking little farm-houses, set on hill-sides, and each provided with a species of manufactured cave, close at hand, for the family to retire into during the frequently occurring emergency of a cyclone or tornado. The slopes below the houses were protected with the characteristic lattice-work of the “snow fences” used in that section of the country to prevent the massing of immense snow-banks during the tedious winter months, but these lay so near the railroads, that we could not rely on the steadiness of our horses long enough to undertake the making of a sketch. We had lost the river view, and felt shut in by the rolling hills which surrounded us as far as we could see. At several farm-houses we ventured to stop, and foraged successfully for our luncheon, at one place being particularly favored in the matter of spring chickens and sweet cream by the “mistress of the manse,” who came to us rake in hand, like an ancient Maud Muller, and who wore, as Lord Gilbert expressed it, “only two clothes, and one of those was a *hat*.” Cheered by our good luck, Lord Archibald and Lady Lilian assayed the storming of another fortress, when, having passed the perils of watch-dogs and aggressively disposed pigs, they were confronted at the portal by a relentless foe, whose eye flashed fire, and whose tongue was full of stings. “Fresh eggs?” she echoed ferociously, when the first question was put. “Havn’t got any. Wouldn’t sell ’em ef I had. Honey? H’m! I should *think* not! Strawberries? Hev got better business to ’tend to than to pick the likes of them

fur myself, let alone strange folks that come pryin’ around. You’d better go further on.”

And they accordingly went further on, nor did they “stand upon the order of going.” They did indeed smile full well in counterfeited glee, but inwardly they were much depressed, and Lord Archibald’s six-feet-two of goodly proportion was apparently reduced to less than the average size of man, as the guardian of farm rights gazed belligerently after him.

We did obtain the coveted dainties elsewhere, however, and as by early afternoon we came upon Elkhorn River—winding its narrow way peacefully among cultivated fields, and shaded by drooping willows—we decided to stop on its bank and feast upon those viands for which we had exerted ourselves so untiringly.

Now we met a most delightful youth, who rejoiced in the name of Otto James Hitchcock, and who (for a consideration) was induced to bring us unlimited supplies of spring water, and finally, with feigned reluctance, to pose for Lady Muriel as a model. He had a guileless but intelligent countenance, and when asked if he had any pretty sisters to whom he would like to present a sketch of himself, replied, “H’m? *they* ain’t very pretty girls. But”—with sudden alertness—“I know some other fellers that hev got pretty sisters. I can give it to one o’ them, I guess.”

Then, when later he had been descanting upon his fears of certain cyclones which had occasioned his ignominious retirement to the “suller,” as he called it, he was advised to begin, even at the early age of eleven, to simulate courage for his sisters’ sakes. He appeared surprised but pleased at his novel view of the subject, and when asked why it was that boys were generally so much braver than girls, answered circumspectly, but with a proudly beaming countenance, “I don’t know, marm, but—but—it’s *so!*” We let him go at last, with the conviction that he would return to the bosom of his family much improved in mental and moral attributes, and went our own way rejoicing at the good that we had done. Our object was now to regain Calhoun by a new route, which would not carry us back by way of Blair. By inquiring we elicited the fact that such

a route existed, and was eligible in every way. Everybody, however, appeared to derive a truly fiendish delight from advising us to go in a totally different direction from that advocated by our last informant, until finally we decided to take our own way. Information as to distances also varied, always increasing in number of miles as we progressed; and at length we found ourselves in such waste places that the world to which we were accustomed seemed far away indeed. We had been told to “take the first turnin’ arter ye



THE FEMALE INFANT, RUBENSTEIN.





LEADING NOWHERE.

pass that the big old cotton-wood tree." We had confidently taken it, and had found ourselves upon a base apology for a road, leading blindly across a wilderness of deserted fields and abandoned plowed lands, where wagon tracks ran dimly and misleadingly before us, like a species of decoy. However, we had gone too far to retreat for trifles, and with hope as our sole guide, continued to progress in a seemingly aimless manner, up and down an interminable and extraordinary series of hills, in the way in which a mimic raft will toss madly from billow to billow upon a stage sea, yet never move from a set place in its hidden mechanism.

Several of these baffling protuberances on the face of nature were so precipitous that three of the party left the carriage, for the relief of the jaded horses, and walked, while Sir Gilbert remained alone to drive.

Finally, when we were on the verge of despair, we reached the summit of the highest mountain among all the mole-hills, and found a view which repaid us for all past tribulations. One could fancy that the whole State of Nebraska was visible from that spot, so large and fair a stretch of hill and dale could we see, checkered with water, rich fields, and somber woodland. The sky above us was pink and golden, and the country, beautiful at all times, was transfigured into radiant loveliness, under the magic charm of sunset. There was a sort of "unreal" glamour floating its intangible spell in the air, and it was long before we could resolve to descend the hill, and bar so fair a panorama from our sight.

After that, however, we passed from one charming vista to another so lovely that we could not choose between. The dainty pictures of golden landscape, framed by the rounding dark-green hills, were superseded by wooded roads even more romantic than those of yesterday, which now appeared on the camera of memory faded and dimmed in beauty in comparison with these. The branches met and intertwined above our heads in a graceful arch, forming a green, mysterious, and shadowy avenue, grass-grown, starred with

blossoms that gleamed silvery in the twilight, and perfumed by the exquisite undefinable fragrances that are born in the country with the falling night

We exchanged the hilarity which had been ours throughout the day for a quieter deportment under the influence of our poetical surroundings. Lady Lilian sang soft and tender little ballads, while Lord Archibald watched her with a growing content in his eyes. He was afterward heard to remark that if he ever married he would not be satisfied unless his wife knew how to sing.

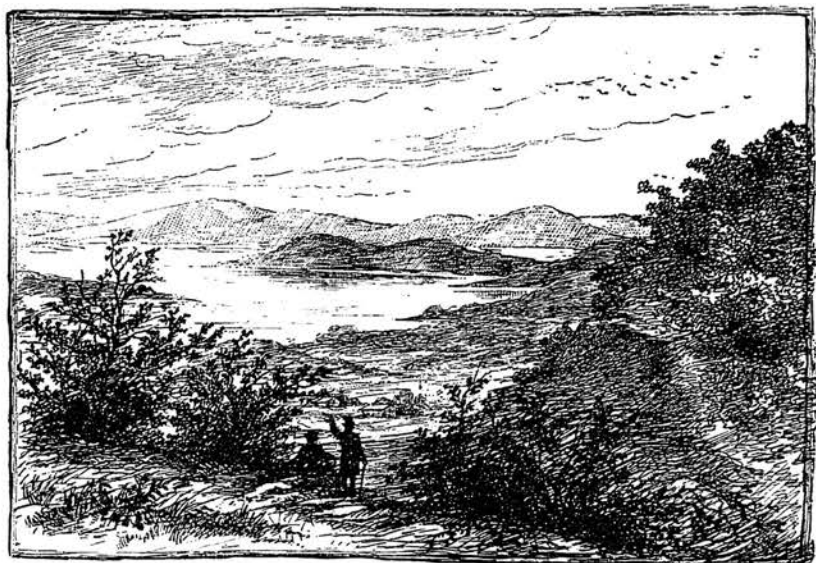
It was with regret that we finally left the faint silver of the young moonlight and the ashes-of-roses of the faded sunset for the sordid, kerosene-lit warmth of a small inn on the outskirts of a village not far from that which we had anticipated reaching much earlier in the evening. The inn was an odd looking structure, unique enough externally and internally, in a queer, German style, to please even our fastidious fancy, but even before we had "spied out the nakedness of the land" within, we decided that other attributes besides oddity were necessary, after all, to make a place attractive.

We fancied that our discovery might be a species of "half-way" house where farmers stopped on their road to the city, and where jolly sleighing parties of country girls and boys might go for supper (and perhaps be disappointed) on crisp wintry nights. To be sure, it looked rather shut up and deserted just now, but a few lights gleamed at back windows of the lower stories, so that we felt sure it must be inhabited by either "men, women, or ghosts." We took heart of grace, therefore, to inquire for a night's lodging, as it was after nine o'clock, and we feared that we should fare no better farther on. The horses were jaded, Lord Gilbert said, having traveled fully forty miles that day, and indeed one had but to look at them to see that he spoke truth.

"At least, let us see what can be had here," Lord Archibald said, descending from the carriage to knock at the tightly-closed front door.

Presently a woman, who for fatness was unequaled in our experience, opened the door just sufficiently to show a profile view of her vast face and vaster figure.

Yes, this was an inn, she informed us. Yes, there was plenty of room—good, fine room—but she must ask *him*. She could give no answer to our demand until she had spoken to *him*. Whereupon the door was summarily closed,



VIEW FROM THE HILL.

while the dutiful spouse went in search of the all-powerful him. The two eventually appeared together (he tiny as the celebrated husband "no bigger than my thumb"), and informed us that they could give us accommodation, but wilted so obviously when we also demanded supper, that our newly-born hopes changed to doubts of the gloomiest description.

"I shuppose dot you don't pe lookin' for nopody in bertickuler, pe you?" the landlord mysteriously inquired presently, as he ushered us through the dimly lighted hall. "No?" he echoed, after our surprised negative. "Dot ish all ride, den, already. Dere ish some volks here dot I tought vould shust as lief nopody looked after dem, dot ish all, und ven I heard your knock und pound, I tought you might pe dese beoples vat had coon after dem." He finished his sentence, with his hand upon the door of a room labeled "Ladies' Parlor," which he immediately flung open with a flourish, and we saw before us a most unexpected sight.

Two young people had been sitting very close together by a small table, and at our entrance had sprung hastily to their feet, with a conscious and uneasy expression upon their countenances. The young woman attempted to draw down a heavy blue veil that had been turned up over her hat, but her nervous fingers were unsuccessful, and before we had fairly crossed the threshold, we had recognized her, while she, no doubt, experienced less pleasure than difficulty in remembering us. It was the pretty girl whom we had left that morning, waving us a farewell as she stood among the rose-vines wreathing the parental porch, and *now*—here she was, after dark, at an obscure little tavern many miles from home, while her sole companion was a good-looking, though at present rather shamefaced, young man.

What did it all mean? Involuntarily we paused, and gazed at her in speechless expectation. She was crimson with blushes, but bore herself with more *aplomb* than might have been anticipated. When she realized that recognition and a meeting were inevitable, she came forward very nicely, murmured our names, saying with a nervous, spasmodic little laugh, "I suppose you are ever so much surprised at seeing me here. Well! I am surprised at seeing you!"

Nobody spoke in return save Lady Muriel, who responded as nonchalantly as possible: "Not more so surely than we are at finding ourselves where we are. But it is the unexpected which arrives always, you know, and probably that theory can also explain your being here."

"This is my—my friend, Mr. A—," announced the young lady, turning at bay. We— we came here—I suppose I may as well mention it now—to get married."

"Oh!" we all murmured helplessly, while "Mr. A—" bowed and looked sheepishly about him, sighing audibly, as though with relief at having his anomalous position at length explained.

Then, the ice being fairly broken, the flood of the gentle Blairite's eloquence was let loose. "You see," she said, addressing the entire group (the landlord having departed long since, on "hospitable thoughts intent")—"you see, pa and ma didn't want we should be married, though Jim—I mean Mr. A—, and I have been going together for the last two years. He's a traveling man—he takes orders for a big Chicago house—and pa and ma had it all settled in their minds that when I married it must be to some one who would want to stay right at home in Blair, like sister Jenny did. I couldn't have liked that anyhow, and besides I wanted Jim, and no one else; so as they were not going to let us have each other, we decided we'd just take the matter into our own hands, seeing I was of age—I had my birthday yesterday. And we have taken it in our own hands. We chose this place because it was out of the way, and we happened to know about it because we stopped here on a sleigh-

ing party once a year or so ago. We'd made all our plans, and I had a note from Jim about it last night, and I just wondered what you all would think of me if you should be told that I was going to run off and get married like a girl out of a book."

"And did you really *run away*? Don't your father and mother know where you are?" cried Lady Lilian, with a certain incredulous horror, mingled with the liveliest sympathy and interest.

"No, indeed, they don't know where we are, or" (facetiously) "I guess they would be pretty apt to be here, too. Oh, I know it's horrid of me, but it couldn't be helped, and they'll be all right when they know there is no use in making a fuss over spilt milk. They really like Jim—Mr. A—, if only they weren't afraid to let it come out."

"The minister is late," suddenly remarked Mr. A—, consulting a florid gold watch. He was, as to his clothes, a very modest looking young person, with a light colored business suit of a striking tint and cut, and a bright blue neck-tie that had a diamond pin stuck conspicuously in the center. "Won't you folks be our witnesses, now you're here?" he ventured to add, with an air of condescending courtesy, assumed to hide the agony of embarrassment he so manfully endured.

"Oh, I hardly think, thanks, that we," began Lady Lilian, with virtuous scrupulousness, when she was summarily interrupted by Lady Muriel. "Yes, we will be, of course, as many of us as you require—bridesmaids and groomsmen, too, if you like, for if there is anything that appeals to my soul, it is a *wedding*. Sir Gilbert will give you away, won't you? and then, after the ceremony, we will all have supper together, drinking the bride's health in coffee, if nothing more appropriate can be obtained."

"Thank you—thank you!" ejaculated the groom elect, quite cheering up, and looking so delightfully guileless in spite of his peculiar taste in dress and jewelry and the aroma of his unattractive profession which was perceptible in both, that we all wondered how the hard-hearted parents could possibly have refused their consent. Evidently they had not been well versed students of physiognomy!

While we were still waiting for supper, and disturbing the *tête-à-tête* of the bridal pair, the minister arrived, apologized for being late, and gazed about him, beamingly.

"Does all this company here present desire to be joined in the bonds of holy wedlock?" he unctuously inquired, smiling so as to show two rows of remarkably prominent blue teeth, and evidently congratulating himself on an "embarrassment of riches" by way of marriage fees. He was little and lean, and he evidently intended asking no embarrassing questions as to consent of parents or guardians of the contracting parties.

Our little band reluctantly disclaimed any such intention as that he had mentioned, though Lord Archibald glanced wistfully at Lady Lilian in a way which suggested that so far as he was concerned, there would be no opposition to such an arrangement—and presently, with no unnecessary delay or formality, the ceremony began.

How glibly the words rolled from between the blue, ministerial teeth, how speedily the extemporaneous service was concluded, and the triumphant runaways were pronounced to be man and wife! How little, seemingly, it took to weld their fetters; how much it would require now to sever them!—except, perhaps, in Illinois or an adjacent State!

An adequate fee was slipped into Mr. Simon's extended hand, and after bowing, shaking hands, and beaming in an azure manner upon the party generally, he joyfully melted into the depths of that obscurity from which he had temporarily emerged.

Then supper was announced, and, fired by the spirit of the occasion, we dauntlessly (albeit shuddering) partook of viands whose like we had never met with on land or sea. And it may as well be added, that it would not to us be a matter of poignant regret, if we never either looked upon, smelled, or tasted their like again. However, we had rounded up our trip delightfully by assisting in a genuine adventure, and the aroma of a love affair was about us. We had not exactly *been* the rose but we had been *near* the rose, and the whole affair had been charmingly *under* the rose, so our souls were satisfied, even if our physical requirements were not. There was a tinkling, old-fashioned piano in the ladies' parlor, which looked as though it might have ornamented the cabin of the ark, and on this the landlady's little daughter played for us during the progress of our "Barmecidian" repast. Later, we amused ourselves by testing the excellence of its ancient keys, and managed to be pleased in spite of the knowledge that the entire family and the family's retainers were collected *en masse* at the cracks of the doors, drinking in our conversation, our garments, and in fact, all our "points."

It was late—*very* late—before our Teutonic hostess, with smiling mien, offered to show us our rooms! Therefore we accepted her advances with the more alacrity, going to the unknown with a childlike faith in her integrity, which, viewed by the light of future events, seemed to us pathetic in the extreme. But over those rooms, and what remained of that baneful night, we will draw a merciful veil.

\* \* \* \* \*

It would scarcely be correct to state that we *awaked* at dawn, for the process of awakening was wholly unnecessary, but we descended from our rooms and attempted to partake of breakfast, in a sadder and wiser frame of mind than that we had carried up-stairs with us some hours before. The bride and groom were not visible, and we imagined that already they had departed; but at any rate, we saw them not again.

The remainder of the day was spent in anathemas, resolutions to keep our night's resting-place a secret from our friends at the garrison, and in enjoying what still remained of our trip to be enjoyed.

We traversed various discouraging bits of boggy land for the sake of seeing the ruins of old Fort Calhoun, which unfortunately were "conspicuous by their absence," when by dint of much exertion we arrived upon their site. We encountered still more treacherous sloughs of despond rather than forego the sight of Stillwater, Horseshoe, and Moore's lakes (pretty bits of shady, pond-lily embroidered water, which, however, were scarcely rare enough to repay us for our pains)—had one more jolly picnic luncheon, and returned home in the afternoon. We were rather earlier than we meant to be, but happily were just in time to escape a tremendous thunder-storm, which, if it had descended while we were still "*en voyage*," would certainly have afforded Mr. X—a delightful opportunity, after all, for saying "I told you so!"



## FIFTEEN RULES FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HEALTH.

1. PURE atmospheric air is composed of nitrogen, oxygen, and a very small proportion of carbonic acid gas. Air once breathed has lost the chief part of its oxygen, and acquired a proportionate increase of carbonic acid gas; therefore, health requires that we breathe the same air only once.

2. The solid parts of our bodies are continually wasting, and require to be repaired by fresh substances; therefore, food, which is to repair the loss, should be taken with due regard to the exercise and waste of the body.

3. The fluid part of our bodies also wastes constantly; there is but one fluid in animals, which is water; therefore, water only is necessary, and no artifice can produce a better drink.

4. The fluid of our bodies is to the solid in proportion as nine to one; therefore, a like proportion should prevail in the total amount of food taken.

5. Light exercises an important influence upon the growth and vigor of animals and plants; therefore, our dwellings should freely admit the solar rays.

6. Decomposing animal and vegetable substances yield various noxious gases, which enter the lungs and corrupt the blood; therefore, all impurities should be kept away from our abodes, and every precaution observed to secure a pure atmosphere.

7. Warmth is essential to all the bodily functions; therefore, an equal bodily temperature should be maintained by exercise, by clothing, or by fire.

8. Exercise warms, invigorates, and purifies the body; clothing preserves the warmth the body generates; fire imparts warmth externally; therefore, to obtain and preserve warmth, exercise and clothing are preferable to fire.

9. Fire consumes the oxygen of the air, and produces noxious gases; therefore, the air is less pure in the presence of candles, gas, or coal-fire than otherwise; and the deterioration should be repaired by increased ventilation.

10. The skin is a highly-organized membrane, full of minute pores, cells, bloodvessels, and nerves; it imbibes moisture, or throws it off, according to the state of the atmosphere and the temperature of the body. It also "breathes," as do the lungs (though less actively). All the internal organs sympathize with the skin; therefore, it should be repeatedly cleansed.

11. Late hours and anxious pursuits exhaust the nervous system, and produce disease and premature death; therefore, the hours of labor and study should be short.

12. Mental and bodily exercise are equally essential to the general health and happiness; therefore, recreation and study should succeed each other.

13. Man will live most healthily upon simple solids and fluids, of which a sufficient but temperate quantity should be taken; therefore, strong drinks, tobacco, snuff, and opium, and all mere indulgences, should be avoided.

14. Sudden alternations of heat and cold are dangerous, especially to the young and the aged; therefore, clothing in quantity and quality should be adapted to the alternations of night and day, and of the seasons. Drinking cold water when the body is hot, and hot tea and soups when cold, are productive of many evils.

15. Moderation in eating and drinking, short hours of labor and study, regularity in exercise, recreation and rest, cleanliness, equanimity of temper, and equality of temperature, are the great essentials to that which surpasses all wealth—health of mind and body.

## WEDDING BREAKFASTS.



**I**T cannot be denied that births, deaths, and marriages form no unimportant epochs in life's history. It cannot be denied, also, that on each of these occasions those interested too often commit absurdities quite as great as our old friend Artemus Ward, who celebrated the birth of his

twins by mounting the roof and blazing away with his double-barrelled gun. It would indeed be well if the waste that almost invariably occurs over each of these occasions was confined to a little powder. Funerals are not subjects for jest, and we use the word "absurdity" in no jesting sense when we call attention to that common one of wasting a large sum of money out of respect, as it is falsely called, to the dead. The truest form of respect to the dead is care for the living. Many a poor widow and orphans have absolutely suffered want, owing to the mistaken feeling that has caused them to part with nearly their little all in funeral expenses. Indeed, among quite the lower classes the same feeling is often shown, and the departed is often paid more honour in death than he was ever known to receive in life; and the feeling of pride amongst some of the mourners in riding in a coach with two horses quite swallows up the lesser feeling of grief.

Next let us turn to the beginning of life. Why should such a sum of money be absolutely wasted in buying a baby a christening robe quite out of proportion to its position in society at the time, or probably ever after? A foolish mother, to gratify a silly pride, and to be admired by her neighbours, will often waste in lace, &c., for the robe in question a sum of money which, if put in the savings bank, and allowed to accumulate for fourteen years, would probably keep the youngster in the far more suitable and appropriate "corduroys" for the remainder of his days. Why, too, should a baby be presented with a silver mug, or a coral and bells?—things that cost a lot of money, and are really practically worthless. It does not require any great intellect to choose a present practically useful for a child of six weeks old.

We next come to weddings; and before commencing the subject of our article—the wedding breakfast—let us have a few words of preface about wedding presents. Why should a newly-married couple have nothing presented to them, as a rule, but nic-nacks? Who ever heard of a gridiron for a wedding present? but I will be bound to say there are many persons who would gladly change one of their dozen ornamental inkstands—far too ornamental for anything so vulgar as ink—for a good circular gridiron, that would cook a chop or steak as it ought to be done. I have been thinking over what is best to give to a newly-married couple, and have just decided on a dripping-pan. If they send it back in disgust, I will let you know in my next article of my failure at being practical.

Of course these remarks only apply to those couples whose means are, comparatively speaking, limited, and whose first start in life—including, as it generally does, furnishing—is not always so smooth as it might be.

How often is it found that an amount of money is wasted in furnishing that least-used room in a little house, the drawing-room, at the expense of all the rest, especially the bed-rooms! I recollect some years ago staying at a small house in the country, where the tiny drawing-room was so stocked with what had evidently been wedding presents that it resembled a stall at a fancy fair—costly inkstands innumerable, Parian marble statuettes, china vases, &c.; and yet, when I went to bed, on attempting to open a lower drawer, I sat down on the ground without intending to, with a knob in each hand. Now this is not real comfort. But with regard to the breakfast, I would ask any young couple at the end of the first year of their married life to make a tour of inspection round their new home—which probably looks none the worse for having had the outside gloss worn off—and I would ask the wife the following question:—What would you not give now for the money your father paid for your wedding breakfast, if you might lay it out judiciously upon useful things? What a different house it would be for comfort!

My article on wedding breakfasts must not consist in saying, Don't have one; though I must in the name of common sense enter my protest against the vulgarity—for it is nothing else—of giving one out of proportion to the means of the giver. Where money is no object, of course the simplest plan is to go to some first-rate confectioners, and let them supply the breakfast at so much a head. Where, however, economy is a necessity, much can be done with a little good management to avoid waste. I will give an instance of a wedding breakfast that took place during the last six months, and the cost. For it often happens that during the last week before the wedding there is so much to be done at home in the trousseau line, that any elaborate cooking in the house is almost impossible. The following bill of fare is one supplied for



(Drawn by M. E. EDWARDS.)

A WEDDING BREAKFAST.

over sixty persons, at 14s. a head, in February last:—

POTAGES.  
Printanier.  
Purée d'Artichauts à la Palestine.

ENTRÉES CHAUDES.  
Chartreuse de Homard à la Cardinal.  
Petites Timbales à la Grande Duchesse.  
Quenelle de Volaille à la Sefton.  
Côtelettes de Tortue.

Saumon à la Mayonnaise.  
Dindon aux Truffes.  
Gelantine de Veau à la Jardinière.  
Langues de Bœuf.  
Pâtés de Faisans à la Française.  
Jambon braisé. Poulets rôtis.  
Faisans rôtis.  
Anguilles en Gelée à l'Aspic.  
Petits Pâtés aux Huitres.  
Pâté de Foie-gras en Aspic.  
Mayonnaise de Filets de Soles.  
Salades de Homard.

Gâteaux de Fruit à la Richelieu.  
Fanchonnettes à la Prince de Galle.  
Macédoine d'Abricots.  
Gelées de Citron. Gelées de Marasquin.  
Crèmes d'Ananas.  
Petits Choux à la Madère.  
Chartreuse d'Orange à la Tangier.  
Gelée à la Dauphine.  
Meringue à la Suisse.  
Petites Pâtisseries à la Bonne-bouche.  
Meringues à Crème à la Curaçao.  
Fruit, &c. &c.  
Glacés.  
Boudins à la Princesse Alice Maude.

Now a breakfast like this, including as it does two soups and four hot entrées, cannot as a rule be done in a private house. This of course does not include wine; and when the breakfast is ordered from a pastrycook's, I would always recommend the wine to be supplied from the home cellar. A first-class cold breakfast from a good pastrycook's, with soup and ices, will cost about 12s. 6d. a head; and unless the weather be really very hot, soup is always desirable. Without soup and ices, a saving of about 1s. a head can be made.

There are many persons, however, who cannot afford even so much as 10s. a head for a breakfast from the pastrycook's. When, therefore, the breakfast is made at home, it had better be all cold except the soup; and the great secret of success will be found to be in the old adage—"Never put off till the morrow what can be done to-day." Have plenty of flowers, and if summer time, have plenty of ice. Were I to go through a set of dishes, I should simply be repeating what I have already said under the heading of "How to give a Nice Little Supper." Fruit, flowers, and ice make the greatest and best show possible for the money. Then, too, a few dishes can be bought which are not easily made at home. Some of those Italian shops where they sell ices have excellent Meringues very cheap.

Perhaps the greatest sacrifice of all to that monster, Custom, is the wedding cake. I suppose there never will be a case of a couple sufficiently strong-minded to forego themselves this luxury, on the ground of "what *would* people say?" Unless the cake required be

very large, it is by no means a difficult thing to make at home, and it can be sent to be baked at the baker's, who will probably know it only requires a moderate heat, and that the oven should be kept an even temperature all through the baking process.

Take first of all some candied peel, orange, lemon, and citron,  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of each, and cut them into small, thin shreds;  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of flour;  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of butter; 1 lb. of dried cherries, which should be cut up, but not too fine;  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of currants, which must be thoroughly washed, picked, and afterwards dried; 8 oz. of almonds, well pounded; eight eggs; the rind of four oranges rubbed on to sugar;  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of spices, consisting of ground cinnamon, nutmegs, and cloves in equal proportions; about a tea-spoonful of salt, and half a pint of good brandy. The butter should be well worked with a wooden spoon in a large, strong basin, till it has a sort of creamy appearance. The flour, eggs, and sugar should be added slowly, while the spoon must be kept working the whole time. After this has been thoroughly well mixed, the rest of the ingredients mentioned may be added, only a little at a time, to insure the whole quantity being properly mixed up. When this is done, it should be poured into a tin hoop, placed on a metal baking-sheet. Two sheets of well-buttered paper must be placed on the baking-sheet underneath, and the hoop itself must be lined with a double band of well-buttered paper, or else the cake will be sure to burn round the edges.

The cake may now be taken off to the baker's oven, and as it will keep good for a long time, and in fact improve in flavour by keeping, it should be made some time beforehand. The icing of the cake should not be done till a short time beforehand, as it of course has a tendency to get dirty.

First the almond part—which is the only part of a wedding cake, to my mind, worth eating. Take  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of almonds, and having skinned them by throwing them into boiling water, rubbing off the skins, and then throwing them into cold water in order that they may not lose their colour, pound them very thoroughly in a mortar with 1 lb. of the finest white sugar, add a very little orange-water, and sufficient white of eggs to make it all into a soft paste; but take care not to fall into the common fault of making the paste too soft. This paste may now be spread over the *top* of the cake, taking care to avoid its getting over the edge as much as possible, and the cake must be put in a dry place. When the paste is sufficiently hard, the whole may then be iced over with sugar as follows:—Take six whites of eggs, and add to them about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of very finely sifted, powdered white sugar. The whitest sugar must be chosen for the purpose. This must be worked well together with a wooden spoon, and a very little lemon-juice now and then dropped in while it is being worked. The mixture should properly have a shiny appearance, and if not thick enough it only requires a little more powdered sugar. This must now be put all over the cake to about a quarter of an inch in thickness. Some little skill will be necessary in order to avoid unseemly ridges in the icing on the top of the cake, which when

covered must be put in a warm place in order to allow the icing to dry; only be sure to put a piece of paper as soon as possible lightly over the top, as should the dust settle while it is drying, the cake will not have that snow-white appearance it should have.

Little knobs of icing may be arranged round the edge to make the cake more ornamental, and on the day of the wedding a simple wreath of white flowers and green leaves will be found quite sufficient an ornament: in fact, a plain wreath of orange-blossom, when it can be obtained, looks far better than any more elaborate attempt at ornament.

A wedding cake is an expensive thing to make at home, but a far more expensive thing to buy. For a highly-ornamented wedding cake almost fabulous prices are asked; and there is something very satisfactory in having it made at home. A little ingenuity will easily enable any one whose fingers are gifted to make a small round centre ornament with glazed white cardboard, a little silver paper, and orange-blossom. When the cake is large, something raised in the centre is a great set-off to its appearance.

I trust what I have written may be the means of enabling some young couples to start in the world with some extra £20 or £30 in pocket; but it is not so much to them that I would speak as to the conscience of the bride's father. You know you are really a little proud of what you think is getting your daughter off your hands respectably. You know, too, that you have never opened so many bottles of champagne in your life before. You know, too, that many members of your son-in-law's family will visit your house on this

occasion, who will probably never visit it again. Now has that fact anything to do with all this outlay, which you know you can't afford? Very likely: but then it is really very snobbish. No, paterfamilias, don't show off, and no one will think a whit the worse of you for it. Pocket your £50, give quite a plain breakfast—no champagne at all—brave the world, and then furnish a room in the new house with the money, and instead of calling it "the breakfast room," call it "the wedding breakfast room."

Yes, you will feel more really happy; your voice may tremble while you make the dreaded speech at breakfast, while your pretty daughter hangs her modest head, far more nervous than yourself lest you should "break down," and while her husband whispers in her ear a few words quite as much intended to relieve his own feelings as hers—for who does not know the relief felt in saying something at those critical moments when we dread those dear to us possibly making an exhibition of themselves?—the room may be small, and the table not particularly showy; but you will feel you have manfully done your duty, and your grey head will go down to the grave the more honoured, inasmuch as you have not on the very threshold of your daughter's life set a bad example of extravagance.

One word in conclusion. If you *will* give champagne, give it good, or they will all laugh at you—they will indeed, they will laugh. Young men, bachelor friends of your son-in-law, will say, "Did you taste that champagne? Wasn't it awful?" Therefore, whatever you do, give good champagne or none.

A. G. PAYNE.



## WEDDING FLOWERS.

FROM the earliest times flowers have always held a prominent place in the religious and social ceremonies of most countries. Apart from their emblematical use, they seem to have been specially designed by their graceful beauty and varied character to represent the sympathy of nature in the sorrows and joys of human life. Referring to their festive associations, there are few events in life in

which their presence has been more conspicuous than at weddings. Indeed, it would be no easy task to exhaust the list of flowers which have, at different times, entered into the marriage customs of our own and other countries, not to mention the many pretty bridal emblems of which they

have been made symbolical. As far back as the time of Juno's nuptials we find, according to Homer's graphic account, how in honour of the occasion—

"Glad Earth perceives, and from her bosom pours  
Unbidden herbs and voluntary flowers:  
Thick new-born violets a soft carpet spread  
And clust'ring swell'd the rising bed;  
And sudden hyacinths the turf bestow,  
And flamy crocus made the mountain glow."

Among some of the chief uses to which flowers were applied at weddings, was the nuptial garland with which the bride and bridegroom were crowned. It was generally composed of sweet-scented flowers arranged in the most artistic manner. Due prominence was given to the myrtle because, as Dryden says, "Sacred to Venus is the myrtle shade."

This plant is still worn by brides on the Continent, and with us it is in high repute, for, according to a Somersetshire saying, "The myrtle is the luckiest plant to have in your window. Water it every morning and be proud of it." Another flower to which a foremost place was often allotted in the wedding crown was

the rosemary, perhaps for no better reason than that assigned in an old ballad :—

“ Rosemary is for remembrance  
Between us day and night,  
Wishing that I may always have  
You present in my sight.”

Dr. Roger Hacket, in a quaint sermon, entitled “ A Marriage Present ” (1607), speaking of the rosemary says, “ It overtoppeth all the flowers in the garden, boasting man’s rule ; it helpeth the brain, strengtheneth the memory, and is very medicinal for the head. Another property is, it affects the heart.”

The rosemary, too, used at weddings was previously dipped, it would seem, in scented water, an allusion to which we find in Beaumont and Fletcher’s “ Scornful Lady,” where it is asked, “ Were the rosemary branches dipped ? ” A writer in the sixteenth century tells us how “ in some countries the bride is crowned with a garland of prickles, that he (the bridegroom) might know he hath tied himself to a thorny pleasure.” Of the many other flowers which were entwined in the bridal garland was the lily—emblematical of the purity and simplicity which should ever characterise marriage. Ben Jonson, it may be remembered, on the marriage of his friend Mr. Weston with the Lady Frances Stewart, wrote :—

“ See how with roses and with lilies shine,  
Lilies and roses (flowers of either sex),  
The bright bride’s paths.”

Equally too in demand was the rose, whose unrivalled beauty and lovely fragrance mingled with the other flowers shed a rich perfume around the bride’s presence. What floral ornament could be more suitable for a place in the bridal wreath, considering that from time immemorial the rose-bud has been considered typical of youthful beauty?—a sentiment thus expressed by the Poet Laureate :—

“ Rosebud set with little wilful thorns,  
And sweet as English air could make her.”

The rose, moreover, as sacred to love—having been extensively used by the Greeks in the composition of their love-philtres—has deservedly occupied an important position in the marriage ceremony, in reference to which we find a pretty allusion in Dibden’s “ Lord of the Manor ” :—

“ Young Love flew to the Paphian bower,  
And gather’d sweets from many a flower :  
From roses and sweet jesamine,  
The lily and the eglantine,  
The Graces there were culling posies  
And found young Love among the roses.”

It was also customary to plant a rose-bush at the head of the grave of a deceased lover, should either of them die before the wedding. Again, sprigs of bay were often introduced into the bridal wreath ; the reason being that the plant was supposed to possess certain magical qualities, “ protecting,” according to Sir Thomas Browne, “ from the mischief of thunder and lightning.” It was also employed in love divinations, its leaves when crushed in the hollow of the hand telling the constancy of the lover by making a crackling sound. Once more, ears of corn were also

inserted, symbolical of the plenty which might always crown the married couple—a custom which has its survival in the bride-cake. Moffet, in his “ Health’s Improvement,” informs us that the friends, “ when the bride comes from church, are wont to cast wheat upon her head ; and when the bride and bridegroom return home, one presents them with a pot of butter, as presaging plenty and abundance of all good things.”

Leaving our own country, it appears that the Roman bridal wreath was of verberna, plucked by the bride herself. Holly-wreaths were sent as tokens of congratulations, and wreaths of parsley and rue were given under a belief that they were effectual preservatives against evil spirits. The hawthorn was the flower which formed the wreath of Athenian brides. At the present day, in our own country, the bridal wreath is almost entirely composed of orange-blossoms, on a background of maiden-hair fern, a sprig here and there of stephanotis blending its exquisite fragrance. Much uncertainty exists as to why this blossom has been so much worn by brides, but the general opinion seems to be that it was adopted as an emblem of fruitfulness. According to a correspondent of “ Notes and Queries,” the practice has been derived from the Saracens, amongst whom the orange-blossom was regarded as a symbol of a prosperous marriage, a circumstance which is partly to be accounted for by the fact that, in the East, the orange-tree bears ripe fruit and blossom at the same time. It has also been suggested that this flower was introduced into our wedding customs by French milliners, having been selected for its beauty rather than for any symbolical reason.

Another important use to which flowers have been devoted in our marriage ceremonies is the bridal bouquet ; which, however, is now a very different thing from what it was in days gone by. Instead of being composed, as now-a-days, of costly flowers, and arranged in the most elaborate manner by means of moss and wire, it was a simple nosegay of sweet country flowers, some of the favourite ones, says Herrick, being pansy, rose, ladysmock, prickmadam, gentle-heart, and maiden’s blush. Of course, these varied according to the season of the year, those in summer time being far more varied and numerous than at other seasons. In spring, we are told, violets and primroses were much in request, but these flowers were probably selected not so much from choice as necessity, since the violet and primrose have generally been associated with early death.

A spray of gorse was formerly put into the bridal nosegay, in allusion probably to the old adage, “ When the furze is out of bloom, kissing is out of fashion.” The bridal “ nosegay,” too, as it was commonly called, was termed by many of our country folk a “ posy.”

Another floral custom, which was once observed with far more enthusiasm than in modern times, consisted in strewing flowers before the bride and bridegroom on their way to church. In Browne’s “ British Pastorals ” we are told how—




" Full many maids, clad in their  
best array,  
In honour of the bride come with  
their flaskets  
Fill'd full with flowers; others, in  
wicker baskets  
Bring from the marsh rushes to  
overspread  
The ground whereon to church  
the lovers tread."

Shakespeare, too, in  
"Romeo and Juliet,"  
makes Capulet say, re-  
ferring to Juliet's supposed  
untimely death—

"Our bridal flowers serve for a  
buried corse."

Indeed, most of our old  
poets and dramatists have



introduced this custom,  
giving special promi-  
nence to it.

In these bridal strewings, it was  
customary to use such flowers as  
had an emblematical meaning suit-  
able to the occasion; and should  
the bride, as occasionally happened,  
be not popular, she often encoun-  
tered on her way to the church  
flowers of a not very complimen-  
tary meaning. The practice was  
not confined to this country, and we  
are told how in Holland the thresh-  
old of the newly-married couple was  
strewn with flowers, the laurel being  
generally most conspicuous among  
the festoons, denoting that the wed-  
ding-day is one of triumph. A  
survival of this custom is still kept  
up at Knutsford, in Cheshire. As  
soon as the bride has set out for  
the church, a relative spreads on  
the pavement before her house a  
quantity of silver-sand, called  
"greet," in the form of wreaths

of flowers, and writes with the same material wishes for her happiness. This is soon copied by others, and if the bride and bridegroom be favourites, there may be seen before most of the houses numerous flowers in sand.

In some country villages it is customary on the occasion of a wedding for the young people to make a floral rope, which they fix across the road, demanding a toll from every one of the bridal party who passes over it.

Lastly, among the wedding flowers which have been associated with a strong symbolical meaning may be noticed the willow, worn in days of old by those who were forsaken in love. There is a touching allusion to this practice in "Othello," where Desdemona, anticipating her death, says—

"My mother had a maid called Barbara;  
She was in love, and he she loved proved mad,  
And did forsake her. She had a song of willow,  
An old thing 'twas, but it express'd her fortune,  
And she died singing it: that song to-night  
Will not go from my mind."

"This tree," says Douce in his "Illustrations of Shakspeare," "might have been chosen as the symbol of sadness from the 137th Psalm, 'we hanged our harps upon the willows,' or else from a coincidence between the weeping willow and falling tears." Lavender, on the other hand, was sent by lovers as a special sign of affection, and was, too, occasionally

worn to denote their engagement. Thus Drayton, in one of his "Eclogues," tells us how—

"He for his lass him lavender hath sent,  
Showing his love, and doth requital crave."

Then, of course, there is the forget-me-not with its many romantic associations, which, as Goethe wrote, is

"— still the loveliest flower,  
The fairest of the fair,  
Of all that deck my lady's bower,  
Or bind her floating hair."

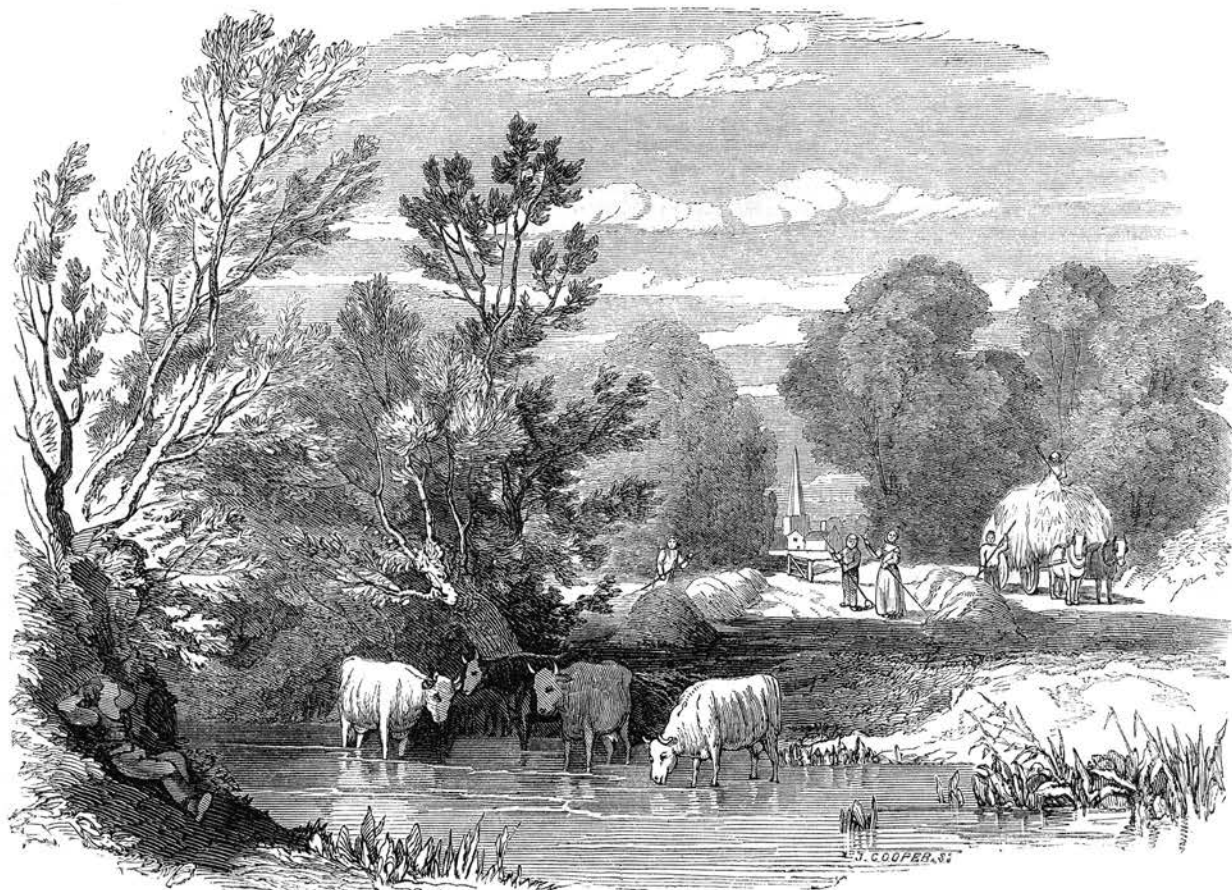
The lime has generally been regarded as the symbol of wedded love, and the peach-blossom is the popular emblem of a bride with the Chinese, while with the Swiss maiden the beautiful edelweiss is much prized as a mark of her lover's devotion, because, as it often grows in dangerous and almost inaccessible places, it is considered an act of courage to gather it. The sunflower is in many parts of this country valued by lovers as a mark of constancy, in allusion to its always turning to the sun, for as Moore says—

"The sunflower turns on her god when he sets  
The same look that she turned when he rose."

Without multiplying further illustrations, we have quoted sufficient to show how richly indebted our bridal lore is to the floral world, these lovely productions lending a grace and charm to that momentous event in life, which should ever be adorned by the beauty and purity which they possess.

T. F. THISELTON DYER.

## JUNE.



Illustrated London Almanack, 1851

#### A BOOMOPOLIS WEDDING.

THERE was joy in Boomopolis. That thriving city of a year's growth had experienced all the delights of life but one. Progressive shooting bees there had been; donkey parties in the temporary canvas residences of the fashionable boomers had been held, and successfully; there had been four military funerals and two divorces—but no weddings. And now on Christmas Day came the glad tidings that Miss Penelope Hicks, the principal of the Boomopolis Academy of Learning, had plighted her troth to Coyote Bill, *né* Wilkins, formerly of the Cherokee Strip.

It was a great relief to every one, including the happy man, when Miss Hicks gave Mr. Wilkins the measure of the third finger of her left hand, and named January 1st as the happy day, the lady being opposed to long engagements, particularly in a country where no man knoweth when an error of judgment on his part may enable the other man to shoot first.

The reason for the town's relief over the announcement of the approaching nuptials was this: Miss Hicks had been the undisputed belle of Boomopolis ever since her arrival in that Eden of sand and corner lots. She had been for some time the most cherished object of the affections of six gentlemanly cow-boys simultaneously, and Boomopolis was anxious. There were fears that the half-dozen suitors might resolve themselves into executive session and diminish the population of Boomopolis by at least five of her leading citizens, which operation would result in a considerable loss of prestige for the town, particularly in a census year. But, happily for all concerned, Miss Hicks was a woman of much tact, and ready for any emergency. She had been proposed to by each of her several admirers, and for some wholly feminine reason had given each much reason to hope. She did not realize the situation until a few days before Christmas, when a bullet whistling through her parlor window and grazing the hat of the admirer who was at that moment calling upon her showed plainly that something must be done, and quickly.

To realize with Penelope was to act, and the next evening the six heart-stricken cow-boys were gathered together in her parlor, in response to her invitation, upon which she had written R. S. V. P., and in accordance with which they were one and all unarmed, R. S. V. P. in Boomopolis being the abbreviated form of *Rendez-vous sans pistols*.

After all had partaken of a light supper of sandwiches and sarsaparilla, Miss Hicks, in a short address, informed her guests that she loved them all dearly, not to say passionately, and had no doubt whatsoever that if given time she would marry them all, life being fleeting, and in that section particularly uncertain for men; that, as a patriotic citizen of Boomopolis, however, she wanted the question

of priority settled amicably, and without undue loss of population, and she added that, as Christmas was approaching, she could think of no better means of settling the difficulty than that of giving a Christmas tree to her admirers, placing upon that tree six packages, all of a size, and one for each. In one package she would place, she said, a pair of silver-plated Mexican spurs; in another would be the best bridle to be found on that side of the Mississippi; in a third would be a lasso that would make its possessor the envy of the Territory; the fourth would contain a nickel-plated six-shooter, self-cocking, with an ivory handle; in the fifth would be found an order for the finest saddle in the universe; and in the sixth would be a photograph of herself, with which would go a life lease of her heart and hand. The would-be husbands could select each his own package, precedence being decided by numbers drawn from a hat.

The proposition was received with enthusiasm. The six gentlemanly cow-boys vowed eternal friendship for each other, and swore that whoever should prove to be the lucky man, the others would ush for him at the ceremony.

And so it was settled. The tree was had, the packages were distributed, and to Coyote Bill fell the prize of the hand, heart, and photograph of Miss Penelope Hicks.

The week between Christmas and New-Year's passed rapidly away, and on the afternoon of January 1st the youth, beauty, and fashion of Boomopolis assembled in the little portable cathedral on West End Avenue to witness the ceremony. As the melodeon pealed forth an adaptation of Mendelssohn's Wedding March, rendered by the leader of the Boomopolis brass band, the bride, leaning upon the arm of the Mayor, walked up the middle and only aisle of the edifice to the altar, where stood Coyote Bill and his best man, Nevada Pete. As the bride mounted the platform the groom stepped forward to meet her, but started back suddenly as he heard an ominous click in the coat pocket of Nevada Pete. Then Nevada Pete advanced and offered his hand to the bride. She, astonished at this somewhat remarkable proceeding, withdrew her extended hand, and looked inquiringly at the apparently presumptuous Pete.

"It's all right, Miss Hicks," said he. "Coyote Bill will explain."

"Yes, Penelope," said Bill, "it's all right. That six-shooter you gave Pete was such a pretty gun I couldn't resist when Pete offered to swap."

The bride blushed. Coyote Bill withdrew to the best man's place, and Nevada Pete once more offered his hand to Miss Penelope Hicks.

"All right," said she, taking the proffered hand. "I'm satisfied. Let her go, Mr. Parson."

And the marriage was solemnized amid general rejoicing.

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

## THE BRIDE'S FIRST DINNER PARTY.

By PHILLIS BROWNE, Author of "The Girl's Own Cookery Book."

A CERTAIN young lady, a member of The Girl's Own Cookery Class (in other words, an individual who has educated herself in cookery, with the assistance of articles published in this journal), was married a few weeks ago. Her husband is an exceedingly good fellow, and holds a salaried position in a mercantile establishment. He has plenty of common sense and energy, and, if all goes well, he will make his way; but at the present moment he is not very well off. He has, however, managed to save enough to furnish the small home very prettily and very well, while his wife has received from her father a handsome trousseau, a good supply of house linen of every sort and kind, and a good many odds and ends of things. Besides this, the young couple, having a large circle of friends, have been presented with a considerable number of wedding presents.

Young beginners in these days are really very fortunate; for they get so much friendly help in starting life. It very much simplifies matters if, just as one has arrived at the conclusion that a dinner service is imperatively required, but that the money for purchasing the same is not immediately forthcoming, a knock is heard at the door, and a box is brought in containing a handsome dinner service of the newest pattern and latest fashion, as a small proof of the affection of a friend. The young people now referred to have been most lucky in this way. They must have received scores of presents, all useful, all judiciously chosen, and with only two duplicates, which were speedily exchanged for something else. That delightful Parcel Post has been a messenger of good fortune to them. Pretty things for the table have arrived in profusion; ornaments, pictures, silver, glass, china, cutlery have appeared upon the scene as if by magic; and the result of it all is that the home of this newly-wedded pair is as thoroughly well appointed all the way through as anyone need wish a home to be.

The routine of married life in these days is first the wedding day, then the honeymoon, and then any amount of visiting—dinner parties and supper parties without limit. Old-fashioned individuals may disapprove of this, and say that it would be better for the newly-wedded to settle down quietly, look at life from a serious standpoint, read improving books aloud to each other in the evenings, and save up every available halfpenny for a future rainy day. Without doubt, the old-fashioned individuals are right; but, unfortunately, few young married people see as they do. Experience is the great teacher, and its lessons can never be learnt by proxy. These young people have not yet been to that school. They have their charming home, their many friends, their limited income, and their pretty table appliances; and the question has now arisen—How shall they entertain their friends? They plume themselves on being prudent; they have no wish to run into extravagance, and they have no thought of entertaining everyone whom they know; but they are hospitably inclined, and they have deliberately arrived at the conclusion that there are one or two special friends whom they must invite, and whom they must make a little fuss over. The result of it all has been the bride's first dinner party.

When first the subject of an entertainment was mooted, the young bride, whom we will call Mabel, was much exercised as to whether it would be wiser to have high tea or dinner. There was much to be said in favour of both.

With high tea it was possible to have everything cold, and put on the table all at once, and this would enable the mistress to see the table laid, and be sure that everything was right before the guests arrived, a consideration not to be disregarded where there was only one little maid, and that one only eighteen, though clever for her age. The bride thought of the anxiety which she would have to go through if there were to be an awful pause between the courses, and then Emma went to come to her side and say, "Please, mum, the pudding won't turn out!" What should she do? Then, too, high tea was quieter, and less pretentious, and the young housekeeper had no desire to make a display beyond her means. On the other hand, dinner would be pleasanter; and, best of all, it would furnish an occasion for bringing out all the pretty presents, the bright silver, the exquisite glass, the artistic table ornaments, the elegant dinner and dessert services. Where was the good of being possessed of all these treasures if they were always to be kept locked up in a cupboard? With these presents a dinner-table could be laid out so effectively that the food would be quite a minor detail. Besides, "the master" preferred dinner. In his bachelor days he had been accustomed to dine on leaving business, and had learnt to regard high tea as a nondescript sort of meal, only to be accepted as a painful discipline when it could not well be avoided. Of course, the master's likes and dislikes counted for a good deal with the mistress, and dinner was almost decided upon. But then came the question, "Which meal would be the more expensive of the two?" Expense was the chief consideration after all. Everything had to be paid for with ready money, and a committee of two of ways and means had decided that a sovereign must cover all expenses apart from beverages. There were to be six guests, eight in all with master and mistress; could the thing be done for £1 sterling? The young lady was doubtful.

At this stage of the cogitation, a double knock was heard, and in a minute or two the maid, young but clever for her age, came up and announced that Mrs. Jones had called to see Mrs. Smith. Amy Jones! exactly the person to consult. Amy was an old school-mate of the bride's, had been married a couple of years ago, enjoyed almost the same yearly income, and deserved the reputation of having arrived at Dora Greenwell's idea of perfection; that is, she had, up to this point, not merely made both ends meet, but made them tie over in a handsome bow. Yet she had been hospitable, too. A person of such abundant experience would be sure to know what was best.

"Amy, if you were in my place, which should you decide upon, a high tea or a small dinner?"

"You have begun to consider the claims of hospitality, have you, Mabel! What is your maid like?"

"She is a very good little girl, and she does her best, but she is very slow. If all goes on quietly, she manages excellently, but if she were to be flurried, I do not know what would happen."

"That's bad," remarked experienced Amy Jones.

"Yet she means well, and really does her best," continued the young mistress, anxiously eager to defend her first domestic. "She can cook plain dishes fairly, and is interested in her work. If I tell her a thing, she never forgets."

"That's good; almost good enough to make up for the slowness. Can she wait?"

"Not properly. She can bring dishes and plates into the room and take them out again quickly, but that is almost the extent of her power; she could not hand round dishes or remain in the room during a dinner to be a credit or help. If we were to decide on dinner, don't you think you would hire a waitress if you were me?"

"If you want my advice, dear, I should say, decidedly, do nothing of the kind. It would be an exhibition of effort which would involve pretence, and the slightest pretence would be a mistake. Whatever you do, don't go beyond the resources of your own modest establishment. At present, all your friends know exactly what your position is; they will respect you if you make the best of it, but if you seem to wish to go beyond it they will begin to criticise, while the people you care for most will blame you."

"Then you would give up all thought of dinner?"

"I don't say so. Why should you not have a small dinner? Prepare everything yourself, altogether dispense with regular waiting, show Emma exactly what she has to do, and let her do her best. Supposing there should be a little *contretemps*, never mind; laugh at it, and your friends will laugh with you. They will only say that you are inexperienced. If all should go well, how pleased your husband will be! You are sure you don't mind the trouble?"

"Mind the trouble! I like it. I think it is fun. I am only uneasy about the expense."

"Well, dear, I should say that high tea, though less troublesome, is quite as expensive as dinner. We can easily ascertain the truth, however. Let us take paper and pencil, and draw up a statement of the cost of both. We will begin with the high tea. I suppose we are to take it for granted that you must have something extra? It would not do to have a thoroughly simple meal."

"Oh, no. If we ask six people on such an occasion, we must make a sort of feast. Let me think. You put the items down as I decide on them. We might have a lobster salad, a couple of boiled fowls with egg sauce, a beefsteak and oyster pie, a strawberry cream, a jelly of some sort, a few tarts and cheesecakes, some fruit and fancy biscuits. Then, of course, tea and coffee and thin bread and butter, brown and white. That would do well enough. We could not well have less."

"A very excellent menu, indeed," said Amy, while a rather amused look passed over her face. "What do you suppose it will cost?"

"I don't know," said Mabel. "You cast it out and see. You understand prices better than I do."

For a while there was silence, and nothing was heard but the scratching of a pencil. Then Amy read aloud:—"Lobster salad, 3s. 3d.; boiled fowls and egg sauce, 7s. 11d."

"Oh, dear!" said Mabel.

"Well, you see, it is spring, and fowls are dear in the spring. I do not suppose you could get a fine pair for less than 3s. 6d. each. Beefsteak and oyster pie, 5s.; strawberry cream (made with your own jam), 1s. 8d.; orange jelly, 1s. 4d.; tarts and cheesecakes we will calculate roughly at 1s. 4d.; a little fruit, 2s.; tea and coffee (say 2d. per person), 1s. 4d.; bread and butter, 2s. Altogether say £1 5s. 10d."

"That will never do," said Mabel. "We must take something away."

"For one thing, you might take the tarts and cheesecakes. Surely they are not necessary."

"One wants a little trifle of the sort to conclude the meal," said Mabel.

"Then make jam sandwich. I can give you a simple recipe, by following which you can produce a dishful for less than sixpence."

"Thanks. But that will not make matters right. We must reduce much more than that."

"Suppose that before doing so we draw up a dinner, and see what we can make of that. I will furnish the menu this time."

"Very good. Only remember to take into consideration Emma's limited capacity," said Mabel.

Again there was silence. After a few minutes Amy read aloud once more:—

MENU.

Potato Soup.

Tomatoes Farcies.

Rolled Loins of Mutton and Sour Plums.

Mashed Potatoes, with Brown Potatoes round. Stewed Celery.

Ready-made Pudding. Orange Jelly.

Macaroni Cheese.

Dessert.

Coffee.

ESTIMATE.

Potato soup, 11d.; tomatoes farcies, 1s.; mutton, forcemeat, gravy, &c., 6s. 9d.; potatoes and celery, 6d.; orange jelly, 1s. 4d.; ready-made pudding, 1s. 3d.; macaroni cheese, 9d.; dessert, 3s.; coffee, 10d. Altogether, 16s. 4d.

Mabel was silent for a moment from amazement. Then she said—

"That is very extraordinary. I would not have believed it."

"Yes, dear. But you must take into account that you drew up rather a luxurious tea; and my dinner is a very simple and homely one. Therefore you were scarcely fair to yourself."

"I only described the sort of high tea we should have had at home before I was married."

"And you forgot that your mother did not need to make a sovereign cover all expenses."

"And yet your dinner sounds more satisfactory than my tea, and I am sure it would look more. I wonder if Emma could manage a dinner like that; she is not entirely ignorant. She can roast a joint, and boil potatoes very well, and she can bake a pudding—"

"Then I am sure she could manage, for everything else you could yourself prepare beforehand. Of course, if she were more of a cook, you might have a little fish, or perhaps a trifle of game after the mutton, and still keep within the sovereign."

"I feel that I should be wiser to experiment first in a small way," said Mabel.

"Very well. The potato soup you know well. It is good, and cheap; you can get it ready beforehand, so that Emma will only have to make it hot. The mutton you can get the butcher to bone, and then stuff it with veal forcemeat, and roll it early in the day, leaving Emma to roast it. The gravy, also, you can make ready, and put, nicely seasoned and free from fat, in a cup, so that Emma will need only to put it in a saucepan to get hot when she begins to dish the meat. The tomatoes you can prepare. The celery and potatoes you may leave with her, I should think."

"Decidedly; she boils vegetables very well, and she can mash potatoes, and put browned potatoes round quite easily. I had better make the sauce for the celery, though."

"You might make it, and put it in a gallipot in a saucepan with boiling water round, to

keep hot. Then surely if you make the soup, if you prepare the meat, and make the gravy, make the sauce, get the tomatoes ready, make the jelly, mix the pudding, three parts cook the macaroni, dish the dessert, and altogether make the coffee, there can be no danger."

"I shall be rather tired by the time our friends arrive," said Amy, looking a little grave as she realised the responsibilities which she was proposing to take upon herself.

"Oh, yes; you will have to be very quick, and to do all the head-work. But you said you did not mind the trouble. And besides, remember this, if once you can succeed in your attempt you will find that you are not at all more tired with providing dinner than you are with providing high tea. But there are just two things you would do well to try for, in my opinion."

"What are they?"

"One is to make Emma well acquainted with every dish beforehand. Let her understand how things ought to be and to look when properly cooked; on no account let the final touches be the product of her imagination as exercised in carrying out your descriptive order."

"No, that would scarcely do," said Mabel, laughing.

"Well, the only way to prevent it is to make the most of the time between now and the important day. Have potato soup one day, rolled mutton another, tomatoes farcies, and ready-made pudding a third, and macaroni cheese a fourth, and so make her familiar with what is coming."

"And the second point?"

"I was going to suggest that if you have anything served in a style superior to your ordinary mode, you should try to keep Emma up to the better way as a regular thing. This will really be a great kindness to her. It will make her more skilful, and fit her for taking a better situation afterwards, and, strange to say, she will be all the happier for it. Right-minded girls (and I should quite think Emma is one) are glad to be shown refined ways, and they respect a mistress who understands and insists upon the best modes of doing things far more than they respect a mistress who lets things go, and puts up with slipshod fashions just for the sake of peace and quiet. And really you will find that when Emma knows what ought to be, all you will need to impress upon her is the time required for the various dishes."

"That is it precisely," said Mabel, who had been listening very quietly to her friend's remarks, but who was evidently giving all her thoughts to the subject in hand. "I can see now exactly what I shall have to do. I shall make out a list of every ingredient, and have everything where it will be close to my hand, the day but one before the dinner. The day before I shall make the jelly and, with Emma's help, brighten all the glass and silver, and look out any pretty ornaments and services. Then quite early on the eventful morning I shall make the soup, and put it ready for making hot; yes, I shall even fry and dish the sippets and chop the parsley, which will have to be sprinkled in at the last moment. I shall stuff and roll the mutton, dish the sour plums (those delightful sour plums! they were there without needing to be in the estimate; how good it was of Frau Bergmann to give them to me). I shall stuff the tomatoes, turn out the jelly, dish the dessert, arrange the coffee cups and saucers—but, oh, the coffee, what shall I do for that? Emma never makes it properly."

"Few servants do; and if I were you I should look after it yourself in this case. The coffee is so very important. Really good coffee, served at the close even of an unsuccessful dinner, almost atones for disaster, while inferior coffee spoils the most *recherché* repast. Why should you not steal away for a minute or two when your friends leave the

dining-room, make the coffee, and send Emma in with it. Then all is sure to be right."

"Yes, that will be best. Well, as I was saying, I must be as busy as possible before luncheon. Then, after luncheon—"

"After luncheon I should lie down for an hour," said Amy.

"Oh!" said Mabel, dubiously.

"Yes. It would be unfortunate if the dinner were a success, and the hostess laid up next day through fatigue."

"May be. Yes, I will certainly rest awhile after luncheon. Then, while Emma prepares her vegetables, tidies the kitchen, and attends to the roast, I will lay the table; and I know I can make it beautiful."

"What shall you do for flowers? We did not allow for them in our estimate."

"I planted some corn a week ago in a large fancy bowl, and it will be lovely. Have you never done that? You get a few ears of corn, pack them in a bowl full of water, so that the ears are close together and are partially covered with the water. Put the bowl in a warm room, and in about a fortnight the delicate blades will peep out and grow to be very pretty. There could not be anything more effective for the middle of the table, and the grass lasts five or six weeks, and it is a most convenient decoration when flowers are scarce. We always used to provide ourselves with corn in harvest time for this purpose."

"I will remember to do the same," said Amy. "I never heard of growing corn in a bowl."

"I can give you a little meanwhile to experiment with. Then, when the table is laid, I will dress, and when I come down will present Emma first with a written menu, giving a list of what is to go in with each course, and a few notes of reminder—something of this sort:—

"REMEMBER—

"To put the pudding and tomatoes in the oven, also to pour the sauce over the macaroni and set it to brown, as soon as the last guest arrives.

"To put the plates for soup, meat, tomatoes, ready-made pudding, and cheese to heat half an hour before the dinner hour.

"To make the milk boil before stirring it into the boiling soup, and to sprinkle in the chopped parsley at the last moment.

"To shut the dining-room door after taking in or removing dishes, &c., and to move about as quietly as possible.

"To begin to dish the meat and vegetables and make the gravy hot the moment soup is in, so that everything may be quite ready when the bell rings.

"To put the coffee (left ready ground on the dresser) into the oven, to get hot, as soon as dessert is in, and at the same time to set a jug of milk in a saucepan of boiling water."

"What is that for?" said Amy.

"It is to scald the milk. Coffee tastes so much more delicious when the milk is scalded, not boiled. There, I think that is all. I will write the notes early, and then, if anything else occurs to me, I can put it down. But, Amy, for safety's sake would you mind giving me the recipes for the dishes in your menu. I have one or two, but they may be mislaid, and I should not like there to be a mistake."

"There is not much fear of a mistake, if you take all that trouble. But I will give you the recipes with pleasure. In return, will you give me the recipe for the sour plums? I should like to have it, for I intend to make some when plums are in season."

The arrangements thus laid down were implicitly carried out, and the "Bride's First Dinner Party" was a great success—so much so that every guest remarked, when the evening was over, "What a clever little woman Mrs. Smith is! How fortunate her husband is to have a wife thus domesticated." Then,

in a moment, "What lovely wedding presents!"

For the benefit of those who may care to have them, I subjoin a copy of the recipes which were exchanged between Amy and Mabel.

**Potato Soup.**—Melt a piece of butter the size of an egg in a stewpan. Throw in two pounds of potatoes, weighed after they have been peeled, the white parts of two leeks, and a stick of celery, all cut up. Sweat for a few minutes without browning. Pour on a quart of cold stock or water; boil gently till the vegetables are tender, and pass through a sieve. When wanted, make hot in a clean stewpan, and add salt and pepper. Boil separately half a pint of milk; stir this into the boiling soup. At the last moment sprinkle on the top of the soup a dessertspoonful of chopped parsley. If cream is allowed, the soup will be greatly improved.

**Tomatoes Farcies.**—Take eight smooth red tomatoes; cut the stalks off evenly, and slice off the part that adheres to them; scoop out the seeds from the centre without breaking the sides. Melt an ounce of butter in a stewpan. Put in two tablespoonfuls of cooked ham chopped, two tablespoonfuls of chopped mushrooms, two shallots, two teaspoonfuls of chopped parsley, pepper and salt, and two ounces of grated Parmesan. Mix thoroughly over the fire, fill the tomatoes with the mixture, and bake on a greased baking tin in a moderate oven for ten or fifteen minutes. The tomatoes should be tender, but not broken. If the ingredients for this forcemeat are not at hand, a little ordinary veal forcemeat may be used, but the taste will be inferior.

**Rolled Loin of Mutton.**—Get the butcher from whom the meat is bought to bone the loin; spread veal stuffing inside, roll it up,

bind it with tape, and bake in the usual way. Thick, smooth gravy should be served with it. This may be made of the bones.

**Mashed and Browned Potatoes.**—Mash potatoes in the usual way. Prepare beforehand six or eight good sized potatoes of uniform size. Parboil them, then put them into the dripping-tin round the meat for about three-quarters of an hour—less, if small—and baste them every now and then till brown. Pile the mashed potatoes in the middle of the tureen, put browned potatoes round, and sprinkle chopped parsley on the white centre.

**Stewed Celery.**—Wash the celery carefully, and boil it till tender in milk and water, to which salt and a little butter have been added. The time required will depend on the quality. Young, tender portions will be ready in half an hour or less; the coarse outer stalks will need to boil a long time. Drain thoroughly, dish on toast, and pour white sauce over.

**Sour Plums** (a substitute for red currant jelly served with meat; to be made in the autumn).—Take three pounds of the long, blue autumn plums, almost the last to come into the market, called in Germany zwetschen. Rub off the bloom and prick each one with a needle. Boil a pint of vinegar for a quarter of an hour with a pound and a-half of sugar, a teaspoonful of cloves, three blades of mace, and half an ounce of cinnamon. Pour the vinegar through a strainer over the plums, and let them stand for twenty-four hours. Next day boil the vinegar, and again pour it over the fruit. Put all over the fire together to simmer for a few minutes until the plums are tender and cracked without falling to pieces. Tie down while hot.

**Ready-Made Pudding.**—Mix two table-spoonfuls of flour, an ounce of sugar, and a

very little grated nutmeg, with a spoonful of cold milk to make a smooth paste, then add boiling milk to make a pint. When cold, beat two eggs with a glass of sherry, mix and bake in a buttered dish for half an hour.

**Orange Jelly.**—Soak an ounce of gelatine in water to cover it for an hour, and put with the gelatine the very thin rind of three oranges. Squeeze the juice from some sweet oranges to make half a pint, then add the juice of two lemons, and strain to get out all pips, etc. Take as much water as there is fruit juice, put this into a stewpan with the gelatine, and a quarter of a pound of loaf sugar, and simmer for a few minutes till the gelatine is entirely dissolved. Remove any scum that may rise, then add the juice; boil up once, and strain into a damp mould. This jelly has a delicious taste, and is not supposed to be clear.

**Macaroni Cheese.**—Wash half a pound of Naples macaroni, break it up and throw it into boiling water with a lump of butter in it, and boil it for about half an hour, till the macaroni is tender. Drain it well. Melt an ounce of butter in a stewpan, stir in one ounce of flour, and, when smooth, half a pint of cold milk. Stir the sauce till it boils, add salt and pepper, an ounce of grated Parmesan, and the macaroni drained dry. Pour all upon a dish, sprinkle an ounce of macaroni over, and brown in the oven or before the fire.

**Simple Jam Sandwich.**—Beat three eggs, and add a breakfastcupful of flour, to which has been added a teaspoonful of cream of tartar. Beat the mixture till it bubbles. Add a scant breakfastcupful of sifted sugar. Beat again, and add half a teaspoonful of carbonate of soda. Turn into a shallow baking tin, greased, and bake for a few minutes in a quick oven. With the oven ready, this cake can be made and baked in half an hour.

## HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

To make pancakes in the French fashion, prepare the batter in the usual way; do not be stingy with the eggs. Put a piece of butter in a saucepan, and melt it. Get a piece of stick and tie a nice clean piece of rag round the end of it, and leave it in the melted butter. Take the pan in which you are going to make your pancakes, and put it on the fire dry. When quite hot take the stick from the melted butter and thoroughly paint the dry pan with it, then pour in the batter. This plan will make the pancakes lighter than the ordinary way, and is more economical. The pan must be freshly painted with butter before each pancake is made.

To remove ink-stains from table-linen pour fresh milk upon it till the stain is quite out, but if no milk is at hand and the ink has got dry, boil some milk in a saucepan, dip the stained linen into the milk, and keep dabbing it till it comes out. Another plan is to cover the stain with salt and place a slice of lemon on it, and leave it for a few hours. This will not destroy the fibre of the linen, as salt-of-lemon does.

WHEN a large quantity of tea-cake or toast has to be served buttered, melt sufficient butter in a flat tin over the stove, and when hot and melted dip each piece of cake or toast on a fork into the butter lightly. The work of buttering is done in this way in about half the time usually spent when spreading it with a knife.

If a fire is wanted to burn up quickly, place the blocks of coal with the grain upwards towards the chimney, but if wanted to burn slowly place the coal with the grain across the fire.

GREAT care should be taken in warm weather that the milkman or the cook do not put boracic acid in the milk that is used by children or even grown-up people. It is a well-known preservative, but unless used very sparingly it is highly injurious to health.

BROOMS put into boiling water once a week and then plunged into cold water will become tough and durable, lasting twice as long as those not treated thus, will sweep better, and will not cut the carpet.

ONE of the best things for cleaning patent leather is the French harness-polish, to be got from any saddler. Rub it on lightly, then rub it up with a piece of black cloth. Patent leather so treated never cracks.

ESSENCE of penny-royal effectually keeps away mosquitoes and gnats, the odour is a powerful one, and they will not come near it.

USE soapy water in making starch, the clothes will look more glossy, and the iron will be less likely to stick.

TUMBLERS that have contained milk should not be washed in hot water, as it clouds the glass permanently.

A TIN cup filled with vinegar and placed on the back of the stove will prevent the smell of cooking over the house.

ALL clothes worn out of doors should be carefully brushed before being put away, and black materials are improved by being occasionally sponged with a weak solution of ammonia in water. Face-veils also after being worn some time are the better for this treatment.

AN effectual way of getting rid of cockroaches is to place cut slices of cucumber over the floor they frequent at night. They devour this greedily, and it destroys them.

A WATCH should be wound in the morning and not, as it is usually done, at night. The mainspring is relaxed at night, but if wound in the morning remains close and tight all day.

EGG-SHELLS are porous and absorb unpleasant odours; they should be kept in a clean cool place, and not near cheese or any strong smelling thing.

RAW POTATO with a little bathbrick will remove stains from steel knives and forks, and stains can also be taken out of tinware and brass in the same way.

If stung by a bee or other insect, and no other remedy is near, a plaster of wetted earth or even a piece of damp turf laid on the place has been known to effect a complete cure.

To peel ripe tomatoes, put them into a frying basket and plunge into boiling water for a second or two, to loosen the skins; this is a better way than to pour boiling water over them.

PAPER BAGS are made of a compound of rags, lime and glue mixed with chemicals and acids. When dry these do no harm; but articles of food should not be left in them if damp.

WHEN removing a cake from the oven where it has been baked, place the tin on a damp towel for a moment and the cake will come readily out.

## THE BALD-HEADED TYRANT.



Oh! the quietest home on earth had I,  
No thought of trouble, no hint of care;  
Like a dream of pleasure the days fled by,  
And Peace had folded her pinions there.  
But one day there joined in our household band  
A bald-headed tyrant from No-man's-land.

Oh, the despot came in the dead of night,  
And no one ventured to ask him why;  
Like slaves we trembled before his might,  
Our hearts stood still when we heard him cry:  
For never a soul could his power withstand,  
That bald-headed tyrant from No-man's-land.

He ordered us here and he sent us there—  
Though never a word could his small lips speak—  
With his toothless gums and his vacant stare,  
And his helpless limbs so frail and weak,  
Till I cried, in a voice of stern command,  
“Go up, thou baldhead from No-man's-land!”

But his abject slaves they turned on me;  
Like the bears in Scripture, they'd rend me there,  
The while they worshiped with bended knee  
This ruthless wretch with the missing hair;  
For he rules them all with relentless hand,  
This bald-headed tyrant from No-man's-land.

Then I searched for help in every clime,  
 For peace had fled from my dwelling now,  
 Till I finally thought of old Father Time,  
 And low before him I made my bow.  
 "Wilt thou deliver me out of his hand,  
 This bald-headed tyrant from No-man's-land?"

Old Time he looked with a puzzled stare,  
 And a smile came over his features grim.  
 "I'll take the tyrant under my care:  
 Watch what my hour-glass does to him.  
 The veriest humbug that ever was planned  
 Is this same baldhead from No-man's-land."

Old Time is doing his work full well—  
 Much less of might does the tyrant wield;  
 But, ah! with sorrow my heart will swell  
 And sad tears fall as I see him yield.  
 Could I stay the touch of that shriveled hand,  
 I would keep the baldhead from No-man's-land.

For the loss of Peace I have ceased to care;  
 Like other vassals, I've learned, forsooth,  
 To love the wretch who forgot his hair  
 And hurried along without a tooth,  
 And he rules me too with his tiny hand,  
 This bald-headed tyrant from No-man's-land.



### SOME HINTS ON LETTER-WRITING.

THERE are few things which give a greater insight into character than letter-writing. Seraphina's gold-edged, scented *billets-doux* and Mr. Brummigan Brown's stiff soldierly notes are exactly symbolical of their different tastes and ideas; romantic, soul-stirring tendencies are apparent in the former, stern, business-like qualities in the latter.

Letter-writing should form an important branch of education; its power is immense, its solace considerable, and it can form one of the most delightful or one of the most irksome occupations in the world, both to the writer and to the recipient.

Very often have I asked and heard asked: "What rules should one carry out in order to write a good letter?" The same answer has been invariably given: "Write as you speak." Now though this is an excellent piece of advice (in so far as one should write simply and easily), practically it is not perfect, for one should write better than one speaks. Inaccuracies, obscurities, useless repetitions and all those negligences which one easily forgives in conversation are unpardonable in a letter, because the writer has had time to reflect, to choose her ideas and expressions, to give them a more agreeable turn, and to re-read what she has written. Imprudences are above all things inexcusable in a letter, for what one says can be lived down, what one writes remains.

Two excesses to be guarded against in letter-writing are:—Firstly, the writing with too much art, that is to say with the idea of showing-off one's knowledge and style. Ultra-refined thoughts, big sonorous words, pompous descriptions, sparkling figures and, in fact anything that savours of affectation or self-importance should be avoided, as also should the negligent or careless style which is little better. Secondly, the language in one's letter should be plain and simple, but one should never descend to mere triviality or vulgarity.

Grammatical errors are unpardonable. They proclaim profound ignorance, a neglected education, and give a decidedly unfavourable impression of the writer.

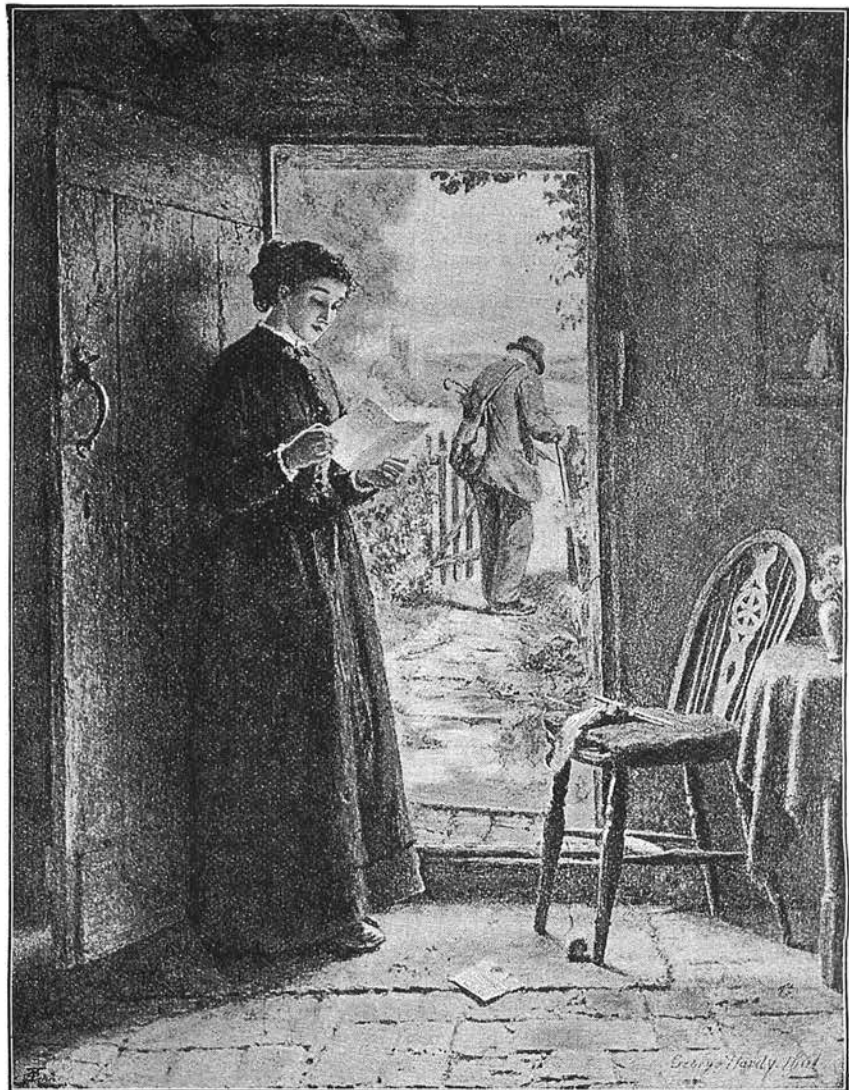
When writing a letter never forget who you are and to whom you address yourself. Let the pen talk freely but discreetly. To write a good letter demands tact, sentiment, facility, and above all unselfishness. One should never lose from view the age, the sex and the rank of the person to whom one writes. Like Racine, one should always have the talent not to show people how clever you are but to make them feel how clever and interesting they themselves are.

In letters there are certain rules which politeness and good breeding demand:—

- Never cross letters.
- Never abbreviate words (except in business correspondence).

Never send letters covered with scratches-outs, or blots.

- Never leave letters undated.
- Never be rude.
- Never say what is not true.



A WELCOME LETTER.



Never relate episodes which are not worth knowing.

Spell correctly.

Write legibly.

Never use slang.

Never use long or uncommon words when shorter ones do as well.

Make it a rule never to destroy the letters written to you until answered, then, however interesting the news you may have to impart about yourself leave it to the end. Fill at least the first page of your letter with answering questions which may have been asked you, touching on points of interest in the letter written to you, and remarking on the news imparted. Then, and not till then, say what you have to say about yourself. Letters like this always please because they show an interest in one's correspondent, and the sender is always flattered to know that news imparted has been noticed and commented upon by the recipient.

Always, then, guard against egotism. The crying fault of most letters is the overflowing in them of one's self, one's own thoughts, sayings and doings and the utter unmindfulness of those topics which interest the person whom one is addressing. How often one meets people who, never for a moment, think or speak of anyone or anything but themselves! They are so full of themselves, so interested and so fond of themselves, that they never for a moment dream how annoying they are to others. They doubtless imagine in their artless simplicity that everyone else finds them as entrancing and fascinating as they do themselves!

Never be long-winded in your letters. Say what you have to say as shortly and precisely as possible. Never charge your letter with useless details. Remember that "brevity is the soul of wit," and, consequently, things said too lengthily lose all piquancy and become insipid and insupportable.

"He who doesn't know how to limit himself, doesn't know how to write;" says a well-known author, and there is certainly a great amount of truth in the remark.

Well-written letters are always full of happy turns and natural expressions, and above all a general feeling of urbanity and refinement. Madame de Sévigné, whose letters are so justly famous, might serve as a model of simplicity. In one of her letters to the Count de Bussy she begins thus—

"You ask me where I am, how I am, and how I amuse myself. I am in Paris, I am well and amuse myself with trifles."\*

Of course she immediately afterwards enlarges upon this rather laconic style, and I think this prompt way of answering questions asked, and elaborating upon them afterwards, is an excellent plan.

Dr. Blair in his remarks on letter-writing says—

"Its first and fundamental requisite is to be

\* "Vous me demandez où je suis, comment je me porte, et à quoi je m'amuse. Je suis à Paris, je me porte bien, et je m'amuse à des bagatelles."

natural and simple; for a stiff and laboured manner is as bad in a letter as it is in conversation. This does not banish sprightliness and wit. These are graceful in letters just as they are in conversation when they flow easily and without being studied, when employed so as to season, not to cloy. One who either in conversation or in letters affects to shine and to sparkle always will not please long. The style of letters should not be too highly polished. It ought to be neat and correct, but no more. The best letters are commonly such as the authors have written with the most facility. What the heart or the imagination dictates, always flows readily; but where there is no subject to warm or interest these, constraint appears."

There are many different classes of letters. There are the letters of thanks, of reproach, of condolence, of excuse, of counsel, of demand, and of felicitation, each of which requires a special style of writing. The more usual divisions of letters, however, are under the heads of friendly, formal, and love-letters.

How delightful are the first-named. Those charming epistles written between friends or the members of one's family. Letters which are sure to be understood, sure to receive a warm welcome, and sure to be favourably criticised no matter whether they are well or badly written; no matter whether they are gems of literature or full of grammatical errors and orthographical mistakes. Writing a letter of this description is almost as good as calling on a dear friend and having a cosy chat. A chat in which conventionalities are dropped and feelings given full vent without fear of criticism or misunderstanding. What a contrast between these and those formal notes which one is called upon to write every now and then. Notes which politeness demands often at the cost of a vast amount of mental labour.

Is there any misery worse than that of having to set one's self to compose a well-worded, correctly phrased, polite epistle? I remember once reading in a magazine a most amusing account of the agony and aberration of intellect that these elegant little epistles occasion, and an appeal by the writer to Mr. Brunel to set to work at once and invent a sort of mute barrel-organ capable of inditing over and over again (like the tunes on that instrument) a catalogue of polite epistles calculated for all the ceremonious observances of good breeding.

"What an unspeakable relief," continues the writer, "to be able to grind out an answer to one's dear five hundred friends."

Well, the idea is not a bad one, and I'm sure if Mr. Brunel could achieve the task he would be voted a general benefactor. Formal invitations, acceptances, etc., are generally written in the third person. The date is usually placed at the end.

On the subject of love-letters I have only to quote the well-known words that, "To write a good love-letter one ought to begin without knowing what one means to say, and to finish without knowing what one has written. Perhaps one of the most charming love-letters

ever written is that of John Keats to Fanny Brawne. The following is an extract:—

"Sweetest Fanny,—You fear sometimes I do not love you as much as you wish! My dear girl, I love you ever and ever, and without reserve. The more I have known you the more have I loved. In every way. Even my jealousies have been agonies of love, in the hottest fit I ever had I would have died for you. You are always new. The last of your kisses was ever the sweetest, the last smile the brightest, the last movement the gracefulest... My mind has been the most discontented and restless one that was ever put into a body too small for it. I never felt my mind repose upon anything with complete and undistracted enjoyment—upon no person but you."

The reading and study of good letters is very useful and instructive besides helping to make one's style agreeable. Many people are of opinion that the secret of the epistolary style belongs to women alone; but, though this may be true as far as tact, sentiment, and facility go, one cannot read the letters which remain of Cæsar, the correspondence of Cicero, besides the more recent epistles of Fenelon, Gray, and Cowper, without seeing that for knowledge of human nature, depth of learning and profound study men hold the palm, women's letters, charming as they are, being generally surface work.

A great writer speaking about letters advises one to intercourse freely and with abandonment, but "to permit the night to carry counsel. To re-read the next day what one has written over-night, and to let the fire do prompt justice to that of which the reason disapproves. An imprudent word can be forgotten, or at any rate excused, an imprudent letter is seldom effaced and seldom forgiven. One has had time to reflect, therefore is one doubly culpable. *Verba volant. Scripta manent* (Words fly. Writing remains)." The same writer speaking about women's letters says that "However long may be her letter, she never puts her dearest thought until the end." A quite natural and charming idea it is, too, keeping the best for last. Women are also credited with possessing a weakness for postscripts.

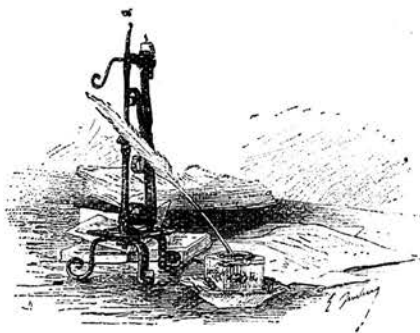
Before concluding I do not think it is out of place to quote Boileau's celebrated advice to would-be writers—

"Avant donc que d'écrire, apprenez à penser; Selon que votre idée, est plus ou moins obscure, L'expression la suit, ou moins nette ou plus pure.

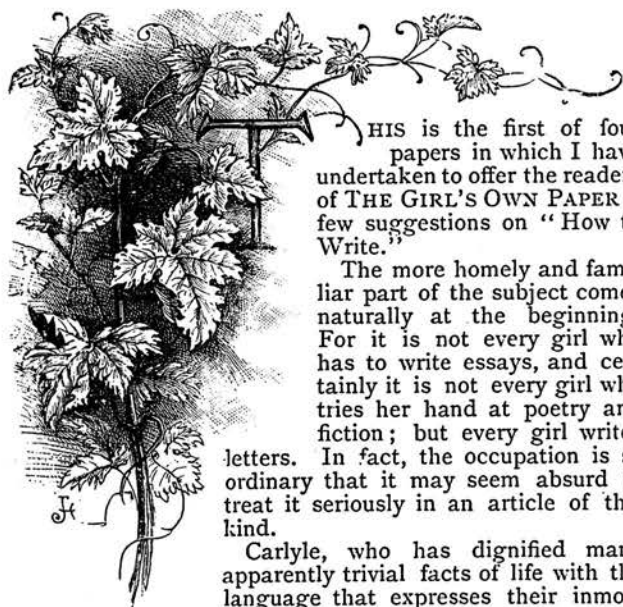
Ce que l'on conçoit bien s'énonce clairement Et les mots pour le dire arrivent aisément."\*

And indeed thought, which is at basis of all arts and sciences, is the most important factor in writing of all descriptions, be it epistolary, lyric, epic, or dramatic.

\* Before writing learn to think, then, according to your ideas being more or less obscure, will your expression of them be more or less pure. That which one conceives well announces itself clearly, and the words arrive easily.



## HOW TO WRITE LETTERS.



THIS is the first of four papers in which I have undertaken to offer the readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER a few suggestions on "How to Write."

The more homely and familiar part of the subject comes naturally at the beginning. For it is not every girl who has to write essays, and certainly it is not every girl who tries her hand at poetry and fiction; but every girl writes letters. In fact, the occupation is so ordinary that it may seem absurd to treat it seriously in an article of this kind.

Carlyle, who has dignified many apparently trivial facts of life with the language that expresses their inmost meaning, said—

"It is the greatest invention man has ever made; this of marking down the unseen thought that is in him by written characters."

Have my readers ever thought of this when they scribble their long letters to their friends, or write "duty letters," as short as possible, to those who have the right to expect them?

To me, there is always something grave and significant about the posting of a letter. One moment, the written sheet in its envelope is your own; the frailest thing that can be; most easily crushed and destroyed; a nothing, without power for good or ill. You slip it into an orifice, and what was mute and powerless has become vocal and strong; your word has gone from you, and not all the wealth, the energy, the prayers at your command, can recall it. It is a solemn symbol of the eternal consequence of human actions.

"Nor all your Piety nor Wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,  
Nor all your tears wash out a word of It."

I have known a girl plead with passionate tears for the restoration of a letter she had just cast out of her own control. All she had in the world she would cheerfully have given to get it back, but the humiliating scene was of no avail: it was gone beyond the possibility of recall.

Is not this rather a grim way of treating a subject so light, so commonplace? Yet it does no harm to remember that in the slightest of everyday actions there may dwell a hidden significance.

Letter-writing, then, has a serious side. Tremendous issues may depend on pen and paper. A whole life's happiness, and the happiness of other lives as well, may be ruined by one letter! And, even apart from these gravest considerations, repentance is not rare for hurried lines scribbled in a passion and posted before the writer has had time to cool down. Words spoken in anger, wrong though they may be, carry with them half their own excuse; the speaker is seen to be over-excited, and her apology, when it comes, is readily received and understood. But an angry or unkind letter! It is read, with no obvious heat on the author's part visibly to explain it. It comes probably at the uncomfortable hour of breakfast, and strikes with cold rage; the bitter words on paper look far more bitter than they sound if spoken. The Latin proverb is significant:

*Litera scripta manet, verbum ut inane perit.*

"The written word remains, the spoken word passes away."

And there the written word does remain, at every hour of the day reiterating its harshness and unkindness with unqualified severity! Probably the writer has long since recovered from her irritation, and regrets having expressed it, but she has given it an existence separate from herself; it goes on proclaiming itself in her absence, and never ceases to wound.

The late Anthony Trollope, whose stories deserve to be remembered, once advised anyone who felt himself justly provoked to write an angry letter and place it in his desk for twenty-four hours. Let any exasperated girl-reader follow this advice, and at the end of the time prescribed she will feel thankful that her angry letter is safely in her own control, and powerless to hurt.

Girls, recollect—and not only with regard to angry letters—that your unspoken word is your servant, your written word is your master!

This exordium may seem to be turning into an article on how *not* to write letters! and it is time to look at another aspect of the subject.

It is an invaluable accomplishment to be able to write a good letter. It may be a precious weapon in forcing one's way through some difficult passage in life; and in any case it will add to the pleasure of all those who are connected with the writer. But "a good letter" is not by any means a stiff and polished production.

Times have changed. When postage was a consideration and letters were rare, they were composed with great care, and were, as a general rule—though not always—less spontaneous than they now are. Guides to the composition of letters, "The Polite Letter-Writer," and so forth, did not seem as ridiculous as they would seem at the present day. Since modern letters are thrown off so readily, people are perhaps apt to rush to the other extreme and forget that, now as ever, it is possible that "*litera scripta manet.*"

What, then, are the characteristics of a "good letter"? It is perhaps not unnecessary to say a word as to the actual form and mechanism of "the letter." The numerous requests for criticism of handwriting sent to "Study and Studio" seem to show that girls are alive to the importance of this.

A good hand should always be founded upon an exquisite "copper-plate" acquired in childhood, with the turns and capital letters properly formed. Upon this stiffness of perfection comes the light and careless touch that marks the individuality; but alas for the writer who attempts this careless freedom before the mechanical perfection of the copy-book is won! To illustrate the less by the greater, the same thing may be observed in drawing. The broken imperfect line of the child, as Ruskin points out, becomes gradually firm, severe, decided; but, "before he becomes a perfect artist, this severity and decision will again be exchanged for a light and careless stroke," differing from the imperfect line of childhood only by the consummate effect wrought out by apparently inadequate means.

A good hand, therefore, must be founded upon stiff correctness of form, though it will stray far away from that when once the correctness is won.

To my mind, the large scrawl which is, or was, fashionable for women "in society" is fatal to the production of an interesting letter; it is obviously not meant for lengthy communication; there is nothing intimate or flexible about it; it is an unwieldy instrument.

A beautiful hand is worth cultivating, and as youth is the time to cultivate it, I commend my readers to the task. I cannot bear to see a letter written on mean paper, with poor ink and evidently a wretched pen. These "trifles" are not unimportant: they offend good taste and self-respect, even as disorderly, slovenly dress offends it.

Nothing by which I am expressing my personality should be degraded in form. Few people are so poor that they cannot afford decent writing-materials in these days of cheap stationery.

And the pleasure of writing a free graceful hand, with the mechanical accessories of the best, goes far towards the composition of a good letter.

People who ought to know better sometimes spell incorrectly in letters; they omit the first personal pronoun; they write "Your's sincerely" instead of "Yours"; they use ugly abbreviations such as "Dr." and "Yours, etc."; they scent their paper with patchouli; they leave a margin at the end instead of at the beginning of their lines; they cross their pages; they put grey letters into white envelopes, and *vice versa*; they fold their sheets inaccurately. Girls who aspire to be good letter-writers, beware of doing any of these things!

I think that the average French and German girl compares favourably with the average English girl as regards the external neatness of her correspondence.

Granted, then, that the outward form, or body, of the letter is satisfactory, what about the soul that informs it?

It is rather difficult to say what constitutes a good letter writer. Some of the ablest people fail to represent their powers adequately in their letters. For instance, George Eliot's letters appear often heavy and commonplace. Biographers are occasionally led away by admiration for their hero or heroine to publish a succession of letters that are worthless, both as indications of character and as literary compositions.

And yet, laboured composition in a letter is entirely out of place. "In letters, if anywhere, we look for the man, not for the author."

We smile at recalling the "Holiday Letters" that used to be written at the end of each term in private schools:

"MY DEAR PARENTS,—The approaching holiday season brings with it the agreeable duty of reporting to you my progress in the pleasant plains of knowledge,"

or words to that effect, heralded this document. Little children usually begin their early letters, "I hope you are quite well." I have often smiled at the words painfully traced in enormous round-hand, and wished the dear writer would husband all his energy in writing of himself; for by the time the end of that sentence was reached, little power or space was left to say anything else! Children of a larger growth should avoid commonplaces or "writing to order." The chief characteristic of a really good letter of the intimate kind is spontaneity. And yet the spontaneity must be tempered; it must not degenerate into slovenliness or foolishness.

The first thing to think about in correspondence is, what you have to tell your friend; the second thing is, how to tell it in the most interesting way.

There are two methods of telling or describing anything: one in bare outlines; the other in graphic touches which make the statement vivid. Take, for example, this sentence from a letter of the poet Cowper to Lady Hesketh, written in May: "We have blooming scenes under wintry skies, with icy blasts to fan them." A picture is immediately conjured up by this touch. The effect of the ordinary statement, "We are having cold weather for the time of year," would be meagre in comparison.

The correspondence of the power of expression with fact—swift and true as the flash of the electric needle—is what makes a ready writer.

The power of describing fact and incident dramatically, so that others shall see with your eyes, hear with your ears, is worth cultivating.

In those periods of painful separation, which enter into most lives, this power of letter-writing comes as an unspeakable solace.

I had once to part from a dear friend who went to Australia, soon, it was hoped, to return. She married, and remained there, to my loss, but ever since her departure twenty years ago—through the time of her happy, brief married life, her desolate widowhood—her letters have regularly come. Our lives have already been set far apart for twice as long a space of time as that in which they were near together, but our friendship grows and flourishes: we are dearer to each other than of yore. For she writes wonderful letters, not only affording a graphic description

of her immediate surroundings, but admitting me into her closest intimacy. I know how the march of events affects her; what books she reads and enjoys; how her thought grows; how she sympathises in my joy and sorrow; and how her heart regards the solemn mysteries that lie beyond our ken. Each letter, in fact, gives me herself.

Another friend—a school companion of my early youth whom I dearly loved—married and went abroad. We parted with acute suffering on both sides; I knew at the time that I should lose her, for our correspondence never flourished. The news of her death a few years later came with added sorrow because we had missed so much of one another.

Life, at best, is short; it is worth while carefully to tend and preserve all that links us together; to keep "in touch" though we are out of sight.

Some people feel a difficulty in expressing themselves freely in a letter. This should not be, when friendship, close and warm, exists, and probably only a little practice, and the endeavour to put into words what is felt, will remove the constraint. At any rate, when absence renders personal communion impossible, it is important to cultivate this faculty, for one's own sake as well as the sake of others. It is, indeed, remarkable how the pen will sometimes become a magic talisman, an "Open, Sesame!" to unlock the writer's nature and reveal powers of thought, of criticism, of emotion, hitherto only half suspected; these grow in writing them down, until the "best self" in every sense lies revealed. I have known an apparently stupid person become intelligent and eloquent in her letters, and the intelligent woman excel herself, when writing freely to one who cares and understands.

I always feel half ashamed to read intimate letters that are published after the death of the writers; but the Browning letters are certainly most exquisite examples of correspondence that reveals the inmost nature. Cowper's letters, in a lighter style, are charming. Here is another extract from one to Lady Hesketh. As an expression of welcome, natural, easy, and cordial, it is delightful—

"Olney, February 9, 1786.

"MY DEAREST COUSIN,—I have been impatient to tell you that I am impatient to see you again. I shall hear your voice! We shall take walks together! I will show you my prospects, the hovel, the alcove, the Ouse and its banks, everything that I have described. I anticipate the pleasure of those days not very far distant, and feel a part of it at this moment. Talk not of an inn! Mention it not for your life! My dear, I will not let you come till the end of May or beginning of June, because before that time my greenhouse will not be ready to receive us. I line it with mats and spread the floor with mats; and there you shall sit, with a bed of mignonette at your side and a hedge of honeysuckle, roses, and jasmine; and I will make you a bouquet of myrtle every day."

Daughters who are from any cause—school life or marriage—severed from their parents, little know how dear their letters are; they should never grudge them to the home people. And when the family breaks up, as families will, it is important still to live, as far as possible, abreast of each other's lives. It is a thousand pities to let indolence, or other occupations, or slackness, or the thought "I cannot be always scribbling," prevent the keeping up of this intercourse, which mainly falls to the lot of women.

Of course the charm of family correspondence depends on the power to write pleasantly. Some people excel in the art of saying the most irritating things they can find; they rush to tell you bad news, or gossip, or give you disagreeable advice, and you dislike the very look of their hand-writing. Any delicate crisis in life is hopelessly marred if they blunder into it with pen and ink.

Much of the courtesy of life depends upon the power to use the pen with grace and appropriateness. There are certain forms to be observed in social intercourse which it is perhaps scarcely within my province to insist upon, such as the speedy answering of invitations, the writing to a hostess immediately after a visit, and so forth: no girl should neglect these laws of behaviour.

Never allow indolence or a habit of procrastination to

interfere with the payment of such social debts; and do not—O do not—use post-cards for anything save the briefest and most informal of messages! I have known real offence given by a message of thanks for a present, sent on a post-card. Do not grudge time spent in writing kind and gracious words; put them inside an envelope, and do not send them forth for all the world to see.

“Nobody reads post-cards!” Is that true?

A member of my family sent a post-card to an intimate friend one summer Friday, saying, “Come and spend a long day in the garden to-morrow.”

When the card arrived—delayed in the post—there was written across it in a strange hand—

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.”

Somebody had read the message—and read it wrong. But the incident contains a lesson.

It is not a sufficient excuse for delinquencies in correspondence just to say, “Oh, I hate letter-writing!” or “I am a wretched correspondent.” “*On aime à faire ce qu'on fait bien,*” says the French proverb; and a “good letter-writer” generally enjoys the exercise of her power.

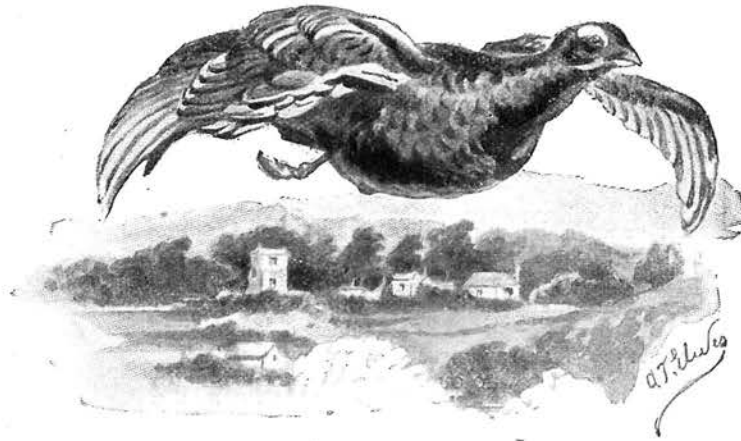
Who can estimate the influence of a wise letter, sent at the right moment, to aid and cheer?

If any of my readers, in their way through life, see trouble or perplexity they think they could help by a written word, let them not resist the prompting to set pen to paper; to write their very best, and they may find they have done more good than they can estimate. Those who are lonely, bewildered or perplexed, will owe them gratitude. And those in sorrow, whatever they may think at first, do feel their load lightened by the sympathy of friends.

The writing of letters of condolence is not merely a social duty; it is a friendly office that comes to every one in turn. The best way to do it is to seek for a few words only, that will set forth one's own grief and sympathy; not to suggest reasons for the mystery of loss and bereavement; to write, in fact, from the heart.

Tact, unselfishness, and the power of living in the lives of others—these help to make a good letter-writer, even as they help to build up a character of womanly grace and charm.

LILY WATSON.



## M I K E .



MIKE.

(From a photograph.)

SWEET peace was  
ours, my Micky,  
Until the day you  
came,  
But neither home nor  
garden  
Can ever seem the  
same!  
O'er couch and chair  
and carpet  
We trace your sport-  
ive feet;  
The lawn with holes  
you garnish,  
The flowers that  
bloom you eat.

Wrath fills your heart,  
my Micky,  
And growlings swell  
your breast,  
When in your path  
comes straying  
Some uninvited  
guest;

But rolling, rolling over,  
“*Wot larks!*” you seem to say,  
As both of you together  
Rush headlong down the way.

What are your thoughts, my Micky,  
The joys that fill your mind,  
When o'er the waves victorious  
You sniff the salt sea-wind?  
Or Tabby's tail pursuing  
Across the wall you fly,  
Then pause to watch her slumber  
With puzzled, doubtful eye?

Oh! bold and black-nosed Micky!  
Life is not wholly free  
At times from dews of trouble,  
My doggie! e'en for thee.  
Yet Love doth make thy sunlight,  
And long may years renew  
The heart-links that unite us,  
My comrade tried and true!

M. S. HAYCRAFT.

## AUNT MEHITABLE'S WINTER IN WASHINGTON.

BY MRS. HARRIET HAZELTON.

### SIXTH PAPER.

WHILE your cousin Jacob Hyder staid with us, we went around the city a good deal, as the weather was still too cold to take trips on the river, or any place in the suburbs. He'd been a readin' Don Piatt's *Capital*, an' was mighty anxious to hear the chimes o' the Metropolitan church, an' go there to meetin'. So one Sunday mornin' we went early, an' I tell you Jacob opened his eyes when we got inside an' set down. He whispered to me, "An' this is a Methodis' church?" "Yes," I answered. "Well, I swan!" says he. Just then the chimes begun, for we'd gone right in after Sunday-school, an' there was nobody there yet. "By jingo!" he says, "if they don't play a chune, sure enough."

He set quiet enough all the time the folks was gatherin' in, an' after the preacher come, until they give out the first hymn. He opened the book an' found it. Then the organ commenced, an' then the choir, an' Jacob thought everybody was goin' to sing. He commenced in the good old way, an' pretty loud like, but was balked immejately; for the air branched off, an' then went upwards, a good deal like the opera pieces the girls play at the hotel, an' he was obleeged to quit; an' I must say I was glad of it, for his style would 'a sounded funny there.

Then the preacher took up the psalm-book, an' the people took up *their* psalm-books, an' he read a verse, an' they read a verse, just like they do in the 'Piscopal church. When we all set down Jacob whispered, "Aunt Hittie, you made a mistake. This is a 'Piscopal church."

"Where's the gown?" says I.

This puzzled him. Then Dr. Tiffany give out the appointments, an' then took his text an' preached a very fine sermon. I seen that Jacob was pleased, an' when they come round to collect he give 'em a dollar. When we'd got fairly outside, he says, "Well, Aunt Hittie, live an' larn. That *was* a first-rate sermon, but such style! I do wonder what old Daddy Harmon would say to it. Why, the church is like the grand churches we read about in Europe; an' then to hear the Methodists readin' aloud from the Psalms just like the 'Piscopals; an' to see 'em take up their hymn-books an' look at the hymns, an' keep their mouths shet, like they was afraid to sing. An' the dressin' o' them ladies, too—it's stunnin'! Why down our way you know they'd think it wicked to come into the house o' God with all them ruffles, an' furbelows, an' humps on their backs that God never made there!"

"Yes, Jacob," I says to him, "it does look

quare like to us at first, though I don't think much about it now. Things is so wonderfully changed since I was a girl. Then, if a woman put a flower, or even a bow on her bunnit, the preacher felt called upon to speak o' the vanity before the whole meetin'. I know that mother, one o' the prettiest women I ever seen, used to wear a plain ribbon across the top o' her straw bunnit, an' a plain Swiss (they called it book-muslin then) handkerchief folded across her bosom. No jewelry, no bows, ruffles, or furbelows, of any kind. But then, Jacob, people didn't raise flowers either, in them days, an' didn't seem to think anything worth while that didn't do some real service. I think, sometimes, that in the early settlin' of a country, the actual need of what is useful, an' the necessity o' thinkin' o' these things continually, brings folks to this plain way o' looking at things, as much as their religion does. An' now that people have got rich, an' there's no need o' the everyday struggle for the necessities o' life, they can have time to think o' beautiful things. They can build fine houses an' churches, an' buy silks an' laces, an' picturs an' statues, an' spend money even on flowers, the most beautiful creations o' God, an' which, in the old times, would 'a been considered one o' the greatest vanities. I mind very well o' hearin' father speak in the most slightin' way about a young girl, who was really a nice girl, just because she put red flowers in her hair every evenin' when she dressed. It was long ago, an' in the country, where women didn't study style or effect, an' when if you'd 'a asked 'em what the difference was between a blonde an' brunette they couldn't 'a told you. Yet Nature told this girl what was becomin' to her. She had the very taste that our fashionable ladies have now. Her hair an' eyes was dark, an' she always picked a scarlet honeysuckle or touch-me-not, or sturtium, or meadow lily for her hair.

So much for the times we live in. I believe that all women naturally love flowers, an' I don't believe it's any harm for bright, young girls to wear 'em. I mind very well how I used to cry every spring when grandfather *would* turn the calves into the yard just when my roses was almost ready to bloom, an' they'd eat off the last bud! I believe many a man would keep his wife's love all his life if he'd indulge her love o' flowers an' help her a little about takin' care of 'em; when he loses it altogether after sneerin' an' laughin' at her foolish fancy for the useless things. I hope you'll think o' that, Jacob, when you git married. An' here in the city where there's no wild flowers a growin', I don't wonder at their buyin' the beautiful imitations and wearin' 'em, too. An' I don't think country folks can judge city people by their dress or ways, any more than they can judge us. At any rate, I've seen enough this winter to know that there's

plenty o' good people among 'em all. An' as to gossip, they can't touch us! We gossip more in Petersburg in a month than they do here in a whole year."

"Well, Aunt Hittie," says Jacob, "I reckon you're right, but it's all new to me, you see. An' I just felt kind o' dumbfounded in that grand church, though I do think the chimes mighty nice, an' I can't see why the *Capital* is always pitchin' into 'em."

In the afternoon we went to St. Aloysius Church to vespers, to hear the music. Jacob had never been to a Catholic church before. An' then, when the little boys come out with their lace-curtain jackets, and tinkled the bells, an' swung the incense around, an' the priest went over the service, his surprise at the Methodists' church wasn't a patchin' to what he showed here. But the music was very fine, an' he's so fond of music! Hundreds o' Protestants go to this church every Sunday to vespers just for the sake o' the music. While Jacob staid we went to several other churches, he bein' a great church-goer at home. But it ain't worth while to tell you of the others.

Miss Rankin an' me had called on Miss Cooke (that's the Governor's wife) in Georgetown, an' Nat an' us was invited to their grand ball. All the papers give out that it was goin' to be the finest thing o' the season. So we all got quite excited a-gittin' ready for it. I thought I had everything nice enough to visit Queen Victory in; but Nat said I must have new gloves of the fashionable kind, with four buttons, an' a lace handkerchief to match my collar and sleeves. So of course he got 'em, an' a pale pink feather for my hair, an' the most elegant fan! Yes, girls, your Aunt Hittie really come to wearin' a feather in her hair. An' the hairdresser come ag'in, an' fussed me all up, an' pulled my hair all on the top o' my head, an' rolled it, an' puffed it, till it looked as if I had a heap o' dead folkses hair on, but it was every bit my own. They'd never git me to wear their false hair! When I got dressed an' come down stairs, Jacob Hyder just held up his hands. "Jerusha! can this be my very own Aunt Hittie? I swan if she looks more'n twenty-five." Of course he was laughin' at me. But my nice lavender silk an' p'int lace, an' long white kids, and pale pink feather, *did* change your old country auntie, to be sure.

Miss Rankin, bein' in mournin', couldn't wear any colors, so she dressed in white silk, with square neck, trimmed with p'int lace, and with a long train an' white lace overdress. Her necklace an' ear-rings was of pearls, an' her fan an' gloves was white. The only bit of black about her was a few black crape flowers mixed with the white ones in her hair. I had no idea before how handsome she was, an' Nat seemed to think so too.

Did Uncle 'Ziah an' Cousin Jacob go? Bless you, no! Catch either o' them goin' to a ball

or reception! They'd a thousand times rather go to a funeral. No, they staid at home, an' read the papers, an' then went to bed at reg'lar country hours, while we didn't get home till half-past one o'clock.

But, oh, girls, that ball! You never dreamed of anything so grand. The Prince's ball in Cinderella was nothin' to it. It was more like Paradise than anything I ever seen. We went up a grand stairway to the dressin' room, an' the bannisters was trimmed with flowers an' evergreens the whole way up. A great cord of green hung above the stairs from the ceilin' and held up a great ball that looked like a solid mass o' flowers. There was flowers over every door-way an' in every winder, an' when we went back to look at the supper tables we found in all four o' the rooms, flowers, flowers, everywhere; on the tables, doors, mantles.—Then we went down an' was received by the Gov'nor an' his wife an' daughter. An' here too was the most elegant flowers. There was a table covered with 'em, with the word "welcome" in red flowers on a white ground. There was vases, an' baskets, an' bouquets. All the mantles was hid by the blessed things—all the door-ways arched over with 'em, an' the way to the ball-room lined on both sides with pots o' the richest bloomin' flowers. The great wonder was where they all came from, an' how they ever could git 'em all fixed up before they withered. One lady we talked to thought that the flowers alone cost five thousand dollars. Then there was a ball-room built o' purpose for the ball, with waxed floor, an' gallery for the music, an' all lined with flags of all countries, an' trimmed with pink an' white cambric an' gilt cords, an' dozen o' cages o' canary birds hung from the ceilin'.

After we stopped a while in the ball-room we walked through all the lower rooms, an' still found flowers everywhere. Every room a'most had a pianner, an' on each of em' was crosses or arches o' flowers.

How was Miss Cooke dressed? Why, she wore a satin dress o' the palest green, with overdress all of p'int lace. Her arms an' neck was bare, with necklace an' bracelets o' diamonds, an' she had diamonds an' a white feather in her hair. Is she pretty? No, not at all, I thought the first time I seen her, I mean in the face, though her figger is pretty an' nice, an' her manners very pleasant an' friendly. The next time I met Miss Cooke I thought she was real good lookin', an' the last time thought she was even pretty. So you may know there's somethin' very takin' in her ways to improve her so on acquaintance.

Her daughter, Miss Kitty, is very pretty an' sweet lookin', an' they do say, is as good as she is pretty. She is often seen in Georgetown goin' around among the sick, with her basket o' good things. She wore a white dress, of a silky, crapy lookin' goods, an' a pearl necklace

an' ear-rings. The Gov'nor's a real pleasant person, an' don't look a bit too dignified for any body to talk to. The President was there, an' Miss Grant, an' Miss Nellie, an' Chief-Justice Chase, an' his daughter, Miss Senator Sprague, an' Miss Attorney-General Williams, an' Dr. Newman an' his wife, an' Don Piatt, of the *Capital*, an' Gail Hamilton, an' Miss Southworth, that writes the *Ledger* stories, an' Speaker Blaine an' his wife, and lords, an' counts, an' marquises, an' hundreds more. Miss Grant wore a pale blue silk, with p'int lace an' diamonds. Miss Williams, pale green with diamonds an' lace. Miss Nellie Grant, corn-colored silk with flowers an' pearls. Miss Sprague, pale blue silk, with embroidered daisies. Mrs. Dr. Newman black velvet dress, an' white lace shawl. But it's no use to tell of any more dresses. Every body a'most wore low-necked an' short-sleeved dresses. But they wasn't any of 'em very low. Some o' the foreign ladies wore the lowest. An' speakin' o' bare necks an' arms a day or two before the ball, Nat got a book from the library to show that they used to wear 'em lower than they do now. It was "Our Republican Court," an' I must say that this did beat us all to pieces. There 's Mrs. Madison, Mrs. Winthrop, Mrs. Izard, Mrs. Randolph, Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis, Mrs. Robert Morris, Madame Genet, an' one or two others wore their dresses, what would be called in these times, shamefully low. An' they put on lots o' style, too, for a young republic. It wouldn't do nowadays, I tell you!

An' speakin' o' balls, I'll tell you of one more, the only one I went to in Washin'ton, besides Miss Cooke's: and that's the Inauguration ball. The tickets, girls, was—guess how much! Five dollars? Just four times that much. Did I give twenty dollars to go to a ball? Of course not, but Nat, being a Congressman, got one, an' that would take in two ladies besides, so he took Miss Rankin an' me. But oh! what a day that was, to be sure. Freezin' bitter, bitin' cold. I'd been up to the Capitol in the mornin' an' seen the Inauguration, an' a fine sight it was from the comfortable room where I was,—some kind of committee-room. But how I did pity the thousands o' people out o' doors, standin' a waitin' an' freezin'. It 's the truth. Plenty o' folks got real sick from the cold, an' some o' the soldiers had their hands an' feet froze. Well, I seen the old chair brought out that General Washington set on when *he* was inaugurated, an' the President an' Vice-President an' the old Chief-Justice (he 's dead now, girls) come out, an' they stood up an' took off their hats, an' then they took the oath, an' the crowd shouted, an' it was over. But you read all about this, and I was goin' to tell of the ball. Nat insisted on our goin' an' told us to take plenty o' shawls, an' we needn't stay long if

we was uncomfortable. So we went, an' I must say it paid just to see the ball-room. Three hundred feet long—one hundred yards—as far as from here to the big barn. Just think o' that, girls! An' it was all hung with colored muslins an' all sorts o' trimmin's, an' lit up with thousands o' gas-lights. You've read the Arabian Nights, but there's nothin' in *that* to compare with it. Then there was the finest table an' the largest I ever seen; but gracious me! everybody an' everything was a-freezin'. I reckon there was thousands o' dollars spent on dresses for that ball; an' then everybody had to keep on all the shawls an' cloaks they could find. An' a few that was too proud for this, an' *would* go with bare shoulders, lost their lives from it. The sight was a funny one, I tell you. Some o' the ladies just wore old woollen shawls, an' was glad to put 'em around their fine dresses, an' the contrast was too ridiculous. The President an' his wife an' daughter an' son, an' the Vice-President, an' all the officers of the government with their ladies, an' all the great folks, was there. But the little Japanese lady, dressed in the dress of her country, was noticed most of all. An' there was a few of the upper ten of the colored folk there; an' one o' these, a pretty mulatto girl, was beaueed around by a real white man. Well, well! it did look quare, like, to a Virginny woman!

Well, we was well wrapped up, an' so we staid an' watched the dancin', an' then took our supper with our teeth a-chatterin' all the time. We shook hands with the President an' Miss Grant, an' with Miss Fish, and Miss Cooke, an' Miss Blaine, an' Miss Williams, an' Gail Hamilton, an' a great many more. Nat danced one set with Miss Kitty Cooke, but as Miss Rankin didn't dance, he danced no more. She looked mighty pretty that night, an' I begun to think that Nat was about half in love with her. An' I don't know as I'd have any objection to it; for if she never did live in the country, she's got real good sense; an' they could come to the Valley every summer, an' pass the winters in Washington. But I won't go to buildin' air-castles. Nat 's old enough to choose for himself and whoever he loves, I'm certain I 'll love if she 'll let me; for a better son never lived on this earth than my Nat.



## THE BIRD OF THE MORNING.

IF every bird has his vocation, as a poetical French writer suggests, that of the American robin must be to inspire cheerfulness and contentment in men. His joyous "Cheer up! cheer up! Cheery! Be cheery! Be cheery!" poured out in the early morning from the top branch of the highest tree in the neighborhood, is one of the most stimulating sounds of spring. He must be unfeeling indeed who can help deserting his bed and peering through blinds till he discovers the charming philosopher, with head erect and breast glowing in the dawning light, forgetting the cares of life in the ecstasy of song.

Besides admonishing others to cheerfulness, the robin sets the example. Not only is his cheering voice the first in the morning and the last at night, — of the day birds, — but no rain is wet enough to dampen his spirits. In a drizzly, uncomfortable day, when all other birds go about their necessary tasks of food-hunting in dismal silence, the robin is not a whit less happy than when the sun shines; and his cheery voice rings out to comfort not only the inmates of the damp little home in the maple, but the owners of waterproofs and umbrellas who mope in the house.

The most delightful study of one summer, not long ago, was the daily life, the joys and sorrows, of a family of robins, whose pretty castle in the air rested on a stout fork of a maple-tree branch near my window. Day by day I watched their ways till I learned to know them well.

The seat chosen for observations was under a tree on the lawn, which happened to be the robin's hunting-ground; and here I sat for hours at a time, quietly looking on at his work, and listening to the robin talk around me: the low, confidential chat in the tree

where the little wife was busy, the lively gossip across the street with neighbors in another tree, the warning "Tut! tut!" when a stranger appeared, the war cry when an intruding bird was to be driven away, and the joyous "Pe-e-p! tut, tut, tut," when he alighted on the fence and surveyed the lawn before him, flapping his wings and jerking his tail with every note.

In truth, the sounds one hears in a robin neighborhood are almost as various as those that salute his ear among people: the laugh, the cry, the scold, the gentle word, the warning, the alarm, and many others.

When I first took my seat I felt like an intruder, which the robin plainly considered me to be. He eyed me with the greatest suspicion, alighting on the ground in a terrible flutter, resolved to brave the ogre, yet on the alert, and ready for instant flight should anything threaten. The moment he touched the ground, he would lower his head and run with breathless haste five or six feet; then stop, raise his head as pert as a daisy, and look at the monster to see if it had moved. After convincing himself that all was safe, he would turn his eyes downward, and in an instant thrust his bill into the soil where the sod was thin, throwing up a little shower of earth, and doing this again and again, so vehemently that sometimes he was taken off his feet by the jerk. Then he would drag out a worm, run a few feet farther in a panic-stricken way, as though "taking his life in his hands," again look on the ground, and again pull out a worm; all the time in an inconsequent manner, as though he had nothing particular on his mind, and merely collected worms by way of passing the time.

So he would go on, never eating a



morsel, but gathering worms till he had three or four of the wriggling creatures hanging from his firm little beak. Then he would fly to a low branch, run up a little way, take another short flight, and thus having, as he plainly intended by this zigzag course, completely deceived the observer as to his destination, he would slip quietly to the nest and quickly dispose of his load. In half a minute he was back again, running and watching, and digging as before. And this work he kept up nearly all day. In silence, too, for noisy and talkative as the bird is, he keeps his mouth shut when on the ground. In all my watching of robins for years in several places, I scarcely ever heard one make a sound when on the ground, near a human dwelling.

Once I was looking through blinds, and the bird did not see me. He had, after much labor, secured an unusually large worm, and it lay a few inches away where it fell as he gave it the final "yank." This was an extraordinary case; the robin was too full to hold in, and there bubbled out of his closed bill a soft "Cheery! cheery! be cheery!" hardly above a whisper and half frightened withal. Then snatching the trophy he flew away, doubtless to show his luck, and tell his tale at home.

The robin has been accused of being quarrelsome; and to be sure he does defend his home with vigor, driving away any bird which ventures to alight on his special maple-tree, sometimes with a loud cry of defiance, and again without a sound, but fairly flinging himself after the intruder so furiously that not even the king-bird — noted as a tyrant over much larger birds — can withstand him. But jealous as he is of his own, he is equally ready to assist a neighbor in trouble. One day while I was studying him a great uproar arose in the orchard. Robin voices were heard in loud cries, and instantly those near the house took wing for the scene of distress. With

my glass I could see many robins flying about one spot, and diving one after another into the grass, where there was a great commotion and cries of some other creature, — I thought a hen. The robins were furious, and the fight grew very warm, while every now and then a small object was tossed into the air

Hurrying down to the scene of the warfare, I found that the creature in the grass was a hen-turkey with one chick. She was wild with rage, shaking and tossing up what looked like another young turkey, and the robins, evidently taking the side of the victim, were delivering sharp pecks and scolding vigorously. Securing with some difficulty the object of her fury, I found it to be a young robin, which had fallen from a nest, and which no doubt the usually meek turkey thought threatened danger to her own infant.

The poor little fellow was too badly hurt to live, and although the turkey was removed, some time passed before calmness was restored to the neighborhood. It seemed to me that the chatter in the trees that evening was kept up longer than usual, and I fancied that every little youngster still living in the nest heard the direful tale, and received a solemn warning.

I was surprised to discover, in my close attention to them, that although early to rise robins are by no means early to bed. Long after every feather was supposed to be at rest for the night, I would sit out and listen to the gossip, the last words, the scraps of song, — different in every individual robin, yet all variations on the theme "Be cheery," — and often the sharp "He he he he!" so like a girl's laugh, out of the shadowy depths of the maple.

Once I saw a performance that looked as if the robin wanted to play a joke "with intent to deceive." Hearing a strange bird note, as usual I hastened to my post. From the depths of a thick chestnut-tree came every moment a

long-drawn-out, mournful "S-e-e-e-p!" as though some bird was calling its mate. It was not very loud, but it was urgent, and I looked the tree over very carefully with my opera-glass before I caught sight of the culprit, and was amazed to see the robin. The tone was so entirely unlike any I ever heard from him that I should not have suspected him even then, but I saw him in the very act. No sooner did he notice that he was observed than he gave a loud mocking "He he he!" and flew across the lawn to his own tree.

One morning he was not to be seen at his usual work, but a furious calling came from the other side of the lawn. It was anxious and urgent, and it was incessant. I resolved to see what was the trouble. Stealing quietly along, I came in sight of the bird, loudly calling, fluttering his wings, and in evident trouble, though I could not imagine the cause, until looking closely I saw perched on a branch of a cedar-tree a fat, stupid-looking bird, fully as big as the robin, and covered with feathers, but with a speckled breast, and no tail worth mentioning.

There he sat, like a lump of dough, head down in his shoulders and bill sticking almost straight up, and neither the tenderest coaxing nor the loudest scolding moved him in the least. In fact, I thought he was dead, till the opera-glass showed that he winked. But stupid and ugly as he looked, he was the darling of the heart in that little red breast, and the parent fluttered wildly about while I found a stick, and jarred the branch slightly as a gentle hint that he should obey his papa. That started the youngster, and away he flew, as well as anybody, to the other side of the walk.

Wondering why the mother did not take part in this training, I peeped into the nest, where I found her sitting, and I concluded she must be raising a second family. It was indeed time for that grown-up baby to learn to care for himself,

before there was another family to feed. While I was looking at the nest and its frightened yet brave little owner, the young robin came back and alighted on the ground, and so proud and happy yet so anxious a parent is rarely seen. It was soon evident that this was Master Robin's first lesson in the worm business; he was now to be taught the base of supplies, and I kept very quiet while the scene went on. The father would hop ahead a few feet and call persuasively, "Come on!" The awkward youngling answered loudly, "Wait! wait!" Then he would hop a few steps, and papa would dig up a worm to show him how, and tenderly offer it as a slight lunch after his exertion. So they went on, that clumsy and greedy youngster induced by his desire for worms, while the patient teacher encouraged, and worked for him. As for making an effort for himself, the notion never entered his head.

Not long after I saw one of the same brood seated on a twig and asking to be fed. I was quite near, and the robin papa hesitated to come. Master Robin called more and more sharply, drawing up his wings without opening them, exactly like a shrug of the shoulders, and jerking his body in such a way that it looked like stamping his foot. It was a funny exhibition of youthful imperiousness, and resembled what in a child we call "spunkiness."

One of the most interesting entertainments of the later days was to hear the young bird's music lesson. In the early morning the father would place himself in the thickest part of the tree, not as usual on the top, in plain sight, and with his pupil near him would begin, "Cheery! cheery! be cheery!" in a loud, clear voice; and then would follow a feeble, wavering, uncertain attempt to copy the song. Again papa would chant the first strain, and baby would pipe out his funny notes. This was kept up, till in a surprisingly short

time, after much daily practice both with the copy and without, I could hardly tell father from son.

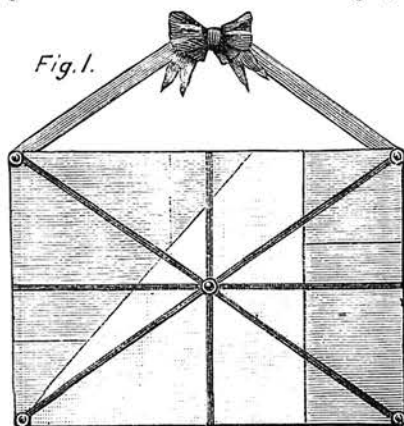
When the maple leaves turned, in the fall, and the little home in the tree was left empty and desolate, I had it brought down to examine. It was a curious and remarkably well-made nest, being a perfect cup of clay, a little thicker around

the top, well moulded, and covered inside and out with dry grass. This snug cottage of clay has been the scene of some of the sweetest experiences of all lives, great as well as small. For the happiness it has held I will preserve it: and thus moralizing I placed it on a bracket in memory of a delightful study of the Bird of the Morning.

*Olive Thorne Miller.*

## ORNAMENTAL AND USEFUL KNICK-KNACKS.

HINTS for what is ornamental and useful, and for what can be easily and inexpensively made, seldom come amiss. Bazaars are perennial, and birthdays, as well as the Christmas and Easter seasons, often make those whose purses are short long to know how to make what will cost little and yet be pretty and useful. I lately saw a very pretty contrivance, a good illustration of which is seen in Fig. 1, for



holding invitation-cards, etc., etc., and which, hung against a wall, is certainly a more decorative form of disposing of them than the usual plan of sticking them into the looking glass.

A large piece of millboard is first of all had; about 24 by 36 inches is a good size, but you can, of course, please yourself as to how large or how small you make it. On this board nail down the lighter part, as seen in the illustration. This may be of plush or any material you like. Next stretch over it, as seen in the picture, plush, etc., of a different colour. This sketch is of a board done simply in two kinds of plush of two colours; but, as you can see at a glance, you can improve upon the idea to any extent. You can embroider sprays of flowers, work an initial, or decorate the foundation in any way you like. Across it, as you will see by the lines, are straps of elastic, stretched sufficiently tightly to allow of their holding the letters, cards, etc., which are passed under them. Although I have said that any material can be used, yet plush or velvet specially recommend themselves as likely to hold the cards, etc., better than silk or satin, from which they would more easily slip. Fancy nails secure the elastic in the middle and corners, and the whole is suspended by ribbon to match.

A charming work-bag can be made from a

small ordinary camp-stool, from which you have taken the piece of carpet usually nailed across it. In Fig. 2 you have an excellent

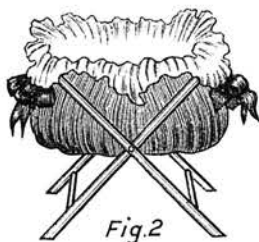


illustration by which you can easily see how the thing is done. It would be useless my giving you measurements of the silk or whatever you use for the bag, as the quantity will depend on the width of the material and the size of the wooden framework, which, by the way, you can enamel any colour you like, either to contrast or harmonise with the bag.

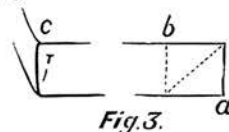
The bag, as you will see, is lined, and you can adjust it in two ways. If you always wish it to lie open, exactly as you see it in the illustration, you should make a runner in the bag, and stretching the tape or cord you place in it tightly across, secure it with nails to the woodwork. If you, on the other hand, wish the bag to close up, and this to be done without folding the stool, you must make the bag much deeper, and placing a second runner within about 5 inches of the top, be able to draw it up easily. A green stool, with green plush bag, lined with pale pink or heliotrope lining, would be very pretty. Of course, sateen or some cheap material could be used, and when finished off with bows at the corners be still very pretty. These bags, I may say, sell very well indeed at a bazaar.

Cases for the *Graphic*, *Illustrated London News*, or any large paper, can be easily made. Two pieces of millboard, about half an inch larger than the paper it is intended for, are covered with any material selected, the word *Graphic*, etc., being embroidered in large letters across the upper cover. The two sides are then sewn together to a narrow piece of the same material, so as to allow for the thickness of the paper. A stout elastic is placed inside, and the paper can thus be slipped in and out easily. *Postal Guide* and *Bradshaw* covers can be very easily made in the same way.

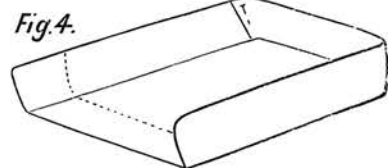
People who live in the country often like to give or send out flowers to their friends, and the difficulty about baskets often presents itself. It is not seldom very inconvenient to lend them, and if the borrower lives at a

distance he often does not know how he is to get the basket back to its owner. Much as he appreciates the contents, he would often rather not have the flowers than the trouble involved in returning the receptacle to its owner; on the other hand, the giver of flowers often lends her baskets with small hope of ever seeing them again, for they are often forgotten if not kept for a very long time. Now a very good arrangement is to make a basket out of common brown paper. This is done very quickly, and as it is almost costless it is, of course, not intended to be returned.

Take a piece of brown paper longer than it is broad, and fold the border down all round. In Fig. 3 you will see how the corners are



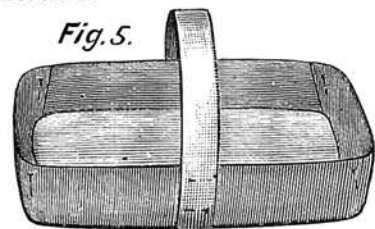
done, *a* being folded up to *b*, and then pinned as you see in *c*. In Fig. 4 you see how the basket looks with one side pinned down.



When all the corners are finished, take a band of brown paper doubled or folded four times, and pass it under the basket, pinning it there as well as at the sides. An examination of the illustration will best show how this is done. This basket is quite strong enough to hold a large number of flowers.

It is useful to make baskets like this at bazaars, and sell them at a small price for people to carry away the flowers they buy in.

Baskets of this kind can be ornamented with crinkled paper, and if tastefully arranged are pretty for holding cakes, fruit, etc., at school treats.





# THE CHEAPER CITY

By  
Elizabeth L. Banks



**L**T is a common saying that, in purchasing power, a shilling in England is equivalent to a dollar in the United States. On this side of the water the opinion is quite prevalent that in America the cost of living is much greater than here, while among Americans, who have only a hearsay knowledge of English prices, the idea is very general that one can live for almost nothing in London. Many Americans make a short or long visit to England with the express purpose of saving money. They have heard and read so much concerning cheap house-rents, cheap lodging and boarding-houses, cheap food and cheap clothing, that not a few have been known to come here to reside for a time in order to tide over financial difficulties. In the end they are disillusioned, and they return home to their own country sadder, though wiser, people.

In order to make some comparisons between the cost of American and English living, I will take for example the two cities with which I am best acquainted in both countries—New York and London. First, there is the question of house-rent. It has often been stated that on account of the very high rentals charged in New York, only the rich man can afford to hire a house. Before coming to England I heard much concerning the cheapness of London living and the low rates at which one might hire a house. I was led to believe that "all the comforts of a home" might be secured much cheaper in

London than in New York. There were tales of "beautiful bijou residences to be had for £60, £80, and £100 rental per year," but nothing was said concerning taxes of several varieties, which the tenant of a New York house has not to pay. Taking these additional expenses into consideration, there is very little, if any, difference in the prices of New York and London houses situated in the same class of neighbourhood. Of course, it will not do to compare the rental of a house in West Kensington or Fulham with that of a palatial mansion in Madison or Fifth Avenue, but let Park Lane be classed with Fifth Avenue and West Kensington with Harlem, and it will be found that one can hire a house for less money in New York than in London. Then, we must also consider the matter of repairs and "fixtures," which are a frequent cause for contention between the London landlord and his tenant. In New York everything is put in perfect repair by the owner of the house, and nobody hears anything about "fixtures;" they are a part of the establishment. In London a tenant, on giving up a house, carries away with him almost everything that is movable. Gas fittings always, sometimes bell handles, and even door knobs and locks and keys go with him. He can only be induced to leave them behind for the use of the successor by the payment of a "premium," which "premium" he evidently thinks should be sufficient to support him in comfort for the rest of his days.

Now, in moving into a New York house, one has nothing to do except to place the furniture. Gas fittings, globes, keys, locks, bell handles, and door knobs are all there,

and not charged extra. There is even a messenger-box in the hall in readiness for calling a telegraph boy, and the telegraph companies, by the way, do not charge for putting in these boxes. Frequently householders are overrun with applications from several companies, all begging the privilege of inserting a call-box, each warranted to bring a boy in quicker time than the others. In London this luxury—or rather, I should say, necessity—must be paid for in advance.

The Londoner who resides in a flat instead of a house escapes the unpleasant visits of the tax-gatherer, but the rental charged for flats in London is notoriously high, and it is almost as cheap to live in a house as a flat. In New York, flats consisting of from five to eight rooms, including bath, handsome decorations and all "fixtures," may be had for 40 dols. and 50 dols. per month, or £96 and £120 per year. Such flats are in the most central and convenient parts of the city. In some parts of Harlem the rentals are not half that amount. What are called "tenement flats," such as are occupied by many of the labouring classes, may be rented in Harlem for from 5 dols. to 10 dols. per month. These places are fitted with gas, bath, and other conveniences, and are situated near the elevated railway stations. In London the working man often pays more than the price I have quoted for the privilege of living in two or three filthy and badly-ventilated rooms.

On the other hand, there are elegant flats in New York that rent for from 500 dols. to 1,000 dols. per month, but they are situated in aristocratic neighbourhoods, and are occupied by our millionaires.

By a careful investigation of the prices charged in London lodging and boarding houses, I have found that they are higher than the New York rates. There are, certainly, places in London where one may secure a room for 6s. per week and full board for 15s., but the same may be said of New York; and in cases where convenience, cleanliness, and a moderate degree of comfort are desired, the New York prices are far below those of London.

In the former city one may secure a nicely furnished small room, lighted with gas and furnace-heated, with full board, excellently and conveniently situated, for 7 dols. per week, or less than 30s. To obtain similar accommodation in the same class neighbourhood in London the charge would be at least £2 2s., with an extra charge for fuel and gas. In lodging-houses, the same difference in rates is always to be noted. American students who come to London to pursue their studies, always suffer a shock when brought face to face with boarding and lodging-house prices. To live in such neighbourhoods as those to which they have been accustomed at home, would cost them a third more than they had been given reason to expect, and they are



"FREQUENTLY HOUSEHOLDERS ARE OVERRUN WITH APPLICATIONS FROM SEVERAL COMPANIES."

usually obliged to take refuge in Bloomsbury or Brixton.

In the matter of the cost of food, there is very little difference between London and New York prices, with the exception of certain vegetables, which are cheaper in New York. Meats average about the same, groceries also. Bread is slightly dearer in London. Wines,

chases over here, and on returning run all sorts of risks at the Customs house, in order to carry home a good supply of these wonderful bargains. Dresses, that in feminine language may be described as "perfect dreams," are to be bought in Regent Street at a third of the price a Broadway drygoods merchant would ask for them, while elegant millinery is so cheap in London that there would seem to be no excuse for middle-class people wearing aught but beautiful head-gear. Fine laces, ten-button kid gloves, hand-painted fans, and many other things in which the feminine heart most delights, are displayed in the windows at such ridiculously low prices as to make American women turn freetraders and smugglers with a clear conscience.

But all these things are not for the very poor, or even the moderately poor. An article may be cheap of its kind, yet not be within the reach of all. Therefore, the woman who wears cotton hosiery and underwear, takes no pleasure in the cheapness of silken goods, and she pays much more for her requirements in London than she would pay for the same things in New York. The inferior felt hat which she buys costs her more than it would cost her similarly situated New York cousin. The servant girl who wears a half-dozen light

print dresses in a week, could save money by having them sent to her from New York. Muslins, or "calicoes," as they are called here, are much more expensive in London than in New York. I have often noticed this inconsistency in the prices of fine and common goods, and have never been able to understand why it is so often stated that a labouring man and his family can live cheaper in England than in America. It is true that the labouring classes do not spend so much money in England as do the labouring classes in America, but it is because they have not so much money to spend. They are also more improvident than the Americans.

In the matter of the wages received by domestic servants in the two cities, there exists also a great misunderstanding, especially among the servants themselves. Although in New York a really competent servant receives a slightly higher wage than she would in London, it must be remembered that there is no additional allowance of beer money or wash money. In New York, a good chamber-



"AMERICAN STUDENTS ALWAYS SUFFER A SHOCK"

as everybody knows, are very expensive in New York, and comparatively cheap in London. In regard to coal, there is such a difference in the quality that it is difficult to compare the prices. Soft coal, such as is used in London, is not burnt in New York, although in the West it is greatly in demand, and may sometimes be bought as low as 3 dols. per ton. The price of anthracite coal used in New York is a little lower than that of soft coal in London, though, of course, the prices vary at times.

In my shopping expeditions I have been struck with the fact that luxuries and goods manufactured expressly for the well-to-do, are very cheap, while the more common and ordinary class of materials purchased by the poor are not proportionately cheap. Silks, satins, velvets, beautiful furs, handsome ready-made gowns, and stylish millinery cost about half as much in London as they do in New York. Fine hand-made and embroidered underwear, silk vests and silk hosiery, are remarkably reasonable, and it is scarcely to be wondered at that my countrypeople make large pur-

maid who will divide the work of a house may be secured for about 12 dols. a month, or £29 a year. Taking into consideration the work that is required of her, I hardly think the English housemaid, who is one of two or three, with £20 a year and "all found," which "all" is from £5 to £7 extra, would be willing to change places, nor would the American mistress consider that she was saving money by making such an exchange. A very good cook, above the standard of the professed cooks employed in London, may be engaged for from 16 dols. to 20 dols. a month, or less than £40 a year. A professed cook is paid as much in London, besides beer and wash money. The annual expenditure of an ordinary London family for servants, charwomen, and brigade boys, is such as would shock a thrifty New York housekeeper. It would be safe to say that of two families occupying about the same position socially and living otherwise equally well, the expenditure for domestic help would be less than half the amount in New York than it would be in London. The fact that most American ladies keep a personal supervision over their kitchens, doing their own marketing or ordering, instead of leaving this part of household management to their cooks, as is so frequently done in London, also tends greatly to reduce household expenses by preventing wastefulness and extravagance. Then, too, the subject of servants' "perquisites" is not nearly so troublesome in New York as in London, where the cook, the parlourmaid, the housemaid, and the scullerymaid all seem to have an idea that they must carry on a little private money-making scheme of their own in connection with domestic service. Let a London mistress try as she may to convince her cook that "drippings" are much better for frying than lard or butter, she cannot prevent the weekly ravages of the bone man, who, by paying to the cook a few pence weekly, causes the mistress to expend several shillings she might otherwise save.

With the exception of this matter of domestic service, there can be no doubt that the average London household is managed on a more economical basis than is the same class household in New York. It is not that the Londoner has more successfully solved the problem of how to get the most good out of the least money, but that he has mastered the art of "doing without," and this will go far towards explaining why it is so generally supposed that one may live more cheaply in London than in New York. Take, for instance, the matter of fuel. Although in the two cities there is but little difference in the price of coal per ton, there is a large

difference between the two coal bills at the end of a winter season.

While every hall and every room of a modern New York house is uniformly heated by the immense furnace in the cellar, the majority of the rooms of a London house are not heated, and, of course, not nearly so much coal is used. In the houses of many prosperous Londoners it is the usual thing to keep but three fires going during the day, and none whatever at night. There is the range fire in the kitchen and a grate fire in the dining-room and the drawing-room. In some cases even the drawing-room fire is dispensed with, except on "At home" days, the whole family using the dining-room for a common sitting-room. Except in times of illness, bedroom fires are seldom thought of. Now it is possible that an English family may be, or imagine themselves to be, comfortable under such circumstances, but to Americans such an existence would be almost unbearable. Americans occupying a London house would consider it necessary to keep grate fires going in all the rooms, besides having gas-stoves in the halls and landings. Hence, the fuel bill would be a large item among the household expenses.

The same may be said in regard to food. English people do not, as a rule, spend as much money on their tables as do the Americans. It is not because bread or meat, or the same kinds of vegetables are cheaper here than in New York, nor because they buy food of an inferior quality. It is a question of variety and not quality. Englishmen do not care for



THE BONE MAN.

the many little side dishes which an American considers necessary to a proper meal. They demand substantial things, like roast beef, potatoes either boiled or mashed, sprouts, cauliflower, vegetable marrow, and a pudding. The American spends his money in procuring variety. He wants a different kind of hot meat every day, a different kind of soup, a different kind of vegetable, and a different kind of rich pastry, and he further demands that his potatoes shall not be prepared in the same way oftener than once a fortnight. This variety costs more money than sameness—hence the cost of filling the New York larder is greater than that of supplying the London larder. But if, on the other hand, two families, one in New York and the other in London, should agree to live precisely the same for one month as regards fire and food and then compare their accounts, it would be found that in New York the smaller amount of money had been expended.

Some time ago a rather interesting discussion on "How to Save" was started in one of the London dailies by a lady who wanted to know how to procure all the comforts and some of the luxuries of life for her family of seven on her husband's income of £400 per year. Numerous would-be helpers started out to tell her how to do this; but it turned out that not one properly answered her. Instead of telling the distracted matron how to *procure* what she wanted, each adviser told her how to do without the things she desired. She must deny herself theatres, she must not buy books and magazines, she must have cold meat three times a week for dinner, and many and various were the other things she must deny herself. In the end, the lady wrote a reply to her critics, in which she wittily stated that she had not asked to be taught how to do without things, but how to get them.

Now, this is the secret of cheap living in London, the knowing how to "do without." There are great possibilities in practising the art of "doing without." My attention was recently called to an article by an English-woman, who attempted to tell young ladies how to live on fifty pounds a year. Certainly the writer proved her point—that it was possible for girls to exist on that amount—but we all knew that before. Some time ago I made the acquaintance of a London woman journalist, who informed me that off her salary of two guineas a week she was able to board and clothe herself, keep a bedroom and sitting-room, and save 10s. each week, and

demanded to know whether a New York journalist could do the same. I thought it quite doubtful; but on visiting her, I decided that she might live in the same style in New York quite as cheaply as she was doing in London. In one of the worst streets of Pimlico the young lady hired a bedroom and sitting-room with cooking and "attendance," for 12s. per week. Her food, which she bought herself and had cooked by her landlady cost her 8s. 6d. per week, her laundry another shilling. For clothes, 'bus fare, newspapers, library subscriptions, etc., she spent 8s. 6d. and the remainder of the two guineas she put in the savings bank. Let it be remembered that the house she lived in was filthy and necessarily unhealthy, that a slatternly "general" never cleaned her apartments properly, that she stinted herself as regarded food, slept on a hard bed, lived in a cold room, walked herself almost to a shadow to save 'bus fare, and it is a question as to whether, after all, she was so happily situated.

Many Americans have heard wonderful tales of English clerks, book-keepers, and men of similar occupations, who are "passing rich" on salaries of £100 or £150 a year, and are able to bring up and educate their large families in comfort and even luxury. Having investigated a few of these cases, I have found that the lives of such people are not nearly so bright as they have been painted. It is only by the strictest economy that they keep up their appearance of comfort. In a word, the secret of their existence is that they "do without."

Americans, as a nation, are an extravagant people. They spend their money quite as freely as they spend their energy. When away from the hustle and bustle of business, they like to be comfortable, and are willing to spend a large amount of money in making themselves so. The New Yorker's idea of comfort is different from that of the Londoner, and it may perhaps cost him more to gratify his ambitions in that direction; but this fact does not prove that the cost of living is less in London than in New York.

An English family making their home in New York would find no difficulty in living according to their accustomed style on the same amount of money that they expended in London. While they would be obliged to spend a larger amount for clothing, the smaller outlays in other directions would quite make up for this difference, and in the end they could prove to their own satisfaction that money goes quite as far in New York as in London.



PLEASANT PINE PLAINS, Jan., 1873.

MR. GODEY: I did not think to trouble you again with my epistles, but really I cannot resist the temptation of telling you about Miss Polly Ann Peachblossom's wedding, which took place a few weeks since. The girls wanted me to write you beforehand to ask your advice and opinion about their dresses for the occasion, and various other matters, for they said they wanted the wedding conducted very stylishly, now that Pleasant Pine Plains was becoming such a fashionable place. But I told them very bluntly I would not, for I did not think it was right to annoy Mr. Godey with so many useless questions; we would just discuss the matter among ourselves, and do the best we could. They took my advice, so we met in conclave and arranged it all ourselves.

Miss Araminta Jones, before leaving for the city, told the bride she must dress in pure white, with a wreath of orange flowers and a veil; and that according to her taste, the bridesmaids ought to wear dresses of "ashes of roses," trimmed with silver stars and white lace. We did not know where to get the silver stars, and were greatly puzzled to know what color ashes of roses was, and we were ashamed to write to Miss Araminta and expose our ignorance by asking her. Miss Araminta takes great pride in dictating about bridal dresses and wedding fixing; it is to her the most delightful thing next to being led to the altar herself.

Sally Sapiens said if it was the rosy time of the year she would burn some roses and let us see the ashes, so we would know what color they were. I told them I thought to come as near it as guesswork could; they had better trim their dresses with flounces, a pink one and an ash-colored one alternate.

"Yes," says Sally Sapiens, "that will look a little more lively, and do you not think, Mrs. Worthy, that something *green* mixed with it will be appropriate?"

I wish that girl would stay at home, she is so pert. She told them that faded flowers were worn by stylish people, and that her grandmother had a trunk full of old artificials that she had kept as a memento of her girlhood, and she guessed they were faded enough to suit the taste of the most fastidious, and perhaps she would let us have them. The girls sent for them immediately, and obtained them. We would have to send to Mobile for the orange wreath, and did not know whether it ought to look fresh or mashed up.

Miss Cally Salerhorn said, "I think if people will be so foolish as to git married, they need not make so much fuss and folderol about it; but if you can't git orange flowers, I've got some yaller flowers at my house, if they was open, would do 'bout as well, cooris they call 'em." We laughed, and asked her if she thought orange flowers were yellow. "Why, yes," says she, "ain't oranges yaller?"

Old Mrs. Peachblossom said she did not have a wedding at her house every day, and she wanted Polly Ann to have a mighty fine supper, and begged us to try our best to make nice cake; but the cake would not rise, neither would the light-bread, and we had all sorts of mishaps, though we managed to make a pretty good supper at last.

Squire Fant said it was the wrong time of the moon, if the moon had have been on the increase we would have no trouble with the cake nor anything else.

"I expect that is the very reason," replied Miss Cally Salerhorn, "and the wedd'n' ought to be put off on account of it. I have knowd my mother to try to make soap on the wane of the moon, but it wouldn't make, and she stirred it with a crooked sassafras stick, too, and throwd away the pothooks for good luck. Don't tell me! I know it's bad luck to undertake any kind of a job on the wane of the moon."

But Polly Ann could not be persuaded to put it off; she said she would not disappoint her intended if the cake was all dough.

Squire Fant is the oracle of the neighborhood. When any of us want to know the state of the weather beforehand, we consult him, and he can tell us to a minute, by the changes of the moon. I suppose the late Commodore Maury would have called Squire Fant and all the rest of us "moon worshippers," for I do not think he believes in that kind of moonology. But you may depend upon it, Mr. Godey, there is something in it, science or no science, seeing is believing. When the Squire predicts rain on the change of the moon, it is almost certain to rain, if not exactly at the specified time, either a few days before or a few days after, except in a dry spell. The Squire's the best gardener in the neighborhood, all the seed he does not plant on the fourteenth of February, he plants on the increase of the moon.

The wedding went off with great a claw (Sally Sapiens says I did not spell that right, it ought to be *éclat*, but I don't believe it, that looks like I meant to say the wedding went off with a great clatter).

Miss Ella Fant, the Squire's daughter, was the finest looking lady there; she is quite a large young lady, and with all her flounces and furbelows, like Mr. Dickens's Mrs. Pardigle, when she walked on one side of the room she would knock down chairs on the other side. The young men call her Miss Ellie, and when they put the whole name together it sounds like they were speaking of that huge animal with the snout that we see sometimes with the circus.

Really, I have forgotten all this time to say anything about the bridegroom; well, he is not of much importance any way, only it is necessary to have a bridegroom in order to have a wedding. He looked as if he had just jumped out of a band-box, he was so starchy, and stared around with his pop-eyes as if he were astonished to find himself in the world again. His name is Jenkins Jones, and he is a cousin of Miss Araminta's. As soon as the ceremony was over he settled down in a corner, shook out his handkerchief, which wafted the odor of cinnamon to our noses, and there he sat like patience on a monument, not smiling at grief, but staring at space, until aroused from his stupor to conduct the bride to supper.

Respectfully, MARY ANN WORTHY.

ANCIENT DWARFS.—History has preserved the name of Conopas who belonged to Julia, the daughter of Augustus; he was two feet nine inches high. She had also a freed maid, called Andromeda, of the same diminutive proportions. Marc Antony had a dwarf below two feet whom, by way of irony, he called Sisyphus. Augustus exhibited in his plays a certain Lucius, who, as Suetonius relates, was born of honest parents, was less than two feet in height, weighed seventeen pounds, and had a very strong voice. Augustus caused his statue to be made, and so little did he consider expense that the apples of the eyes were represented by precious stones. This statue, formerly in the cabinet of the kings of France, represented an ill-proportioned, rickety abortion, with nothing of the air of a little adolescent, as natural dwarfs usually have. He might be supposed to be about thirty years old. Tiberius admitted a dwarf to his table, and allowed him to ask the boldest questions, which he, taking advantage of, hastened the punishment of more than one State criminal. Domitian assembled such a number of these little creatures that he formed them into a troop of miniature gladiators. Pliny says, "Marcus Varus reported that Marius Maximus and Marcus Tullius were but two cubits, or two feet eleven inches high, and yet were they both gentlemen and knights of Rome; and, in truth, we ourselves have seen their bodies, as they lie embalmed, which testify the same thing." The taste for dwarfs continued to the reign of Alexander Severus; but that prince expelled the whole race, male and female, from his court, upon which the fashion for rearing them for traffic soon ceased throughout the empire.

## SCHOOL-DAY REMINISCENCES.



**I**n my interest some of the school-girls, who form a large majority of the readers of the GIRL'S OWN PAPER, to hear something of the experiences of one who has just brought to a close a school life of perhaps more than ordinary length and variety.

I commenced my educational career at the age of twelve in one of the best private schools in Toronto, Canada. Probably my mother would demur at this statement, as previous to that time I had been for several years under her tuition, and she had done her best to impart to me knowledge in a variety of subjects, and also I had had a daily governess; but the attractions of a small English sea-side town, and the enjoyment of much liberty and the companionship of congenial spirits, effectually ousted all thirst for knowledge, and hindered my progress in that direction. This I found to my woe, when once my education seriously began. At my first school I was put into a large class, of which I was about the youngest, partly that I might be with my elder sister, and partly to rouse my dormant energies by the spirit of emulation, and the necessity of having all my wits about me if my head was to be kept above water.

My new associates appeared to me on first acquaintance to be perfect prodigies of learning, with their Grecian history, astronomy, irregular French verbs, and many other subjects which to me had heretofore been merely mythical; and many and bitter were the tears I shed on realising for the first time my own ignorance, the cause of which I knew only too well, and hopelessly convinced was I of the impossibility of my ever scaling the heights of learning attained by these marvellous Canadians.

However, a few short days sufficed to raise my spirits from these depressing convictions, and give a ray of hope for the future. Once having sounded my depth, and found my feet, things began to go more smoothly and look less formidable. The Grecian history, astronomy, and other high-sounding branches of study to the uninitiated, proved rather alluring than otherwise, and the verbs that had inspired such despair in my young heart by their infinite and subtle irregularities, soon arranged themselves comfortably in my brain when once I took heart and boldly tackled them. After experiencing the sweet taste of success in some little detail, "Nil desperandum" became my motto, and with its help I soon rose to an honourable position in the class.

My sister and I were the only English girls in the school, and at first were subject to a course of ridicule and petty tyranny on this account.

A single glance suffices a transatlantic eye

to detect an Old Country bird, and the first question asked, without preamble or apology, even by shopmen or tram conductor, on meeting one, is: "How long are you out?" as though one were a newly-hatched chicken of peculiar breed.

I well remember our first morning at school—how the eyes of all were fixed upon us, and the ears of all hung upon our every word. At last curiosity could be restrained no longer, and the mistress's back being turned, a three-cornered note was skilfully fired on to our desk by the leading spirit in the room. The contents ran much as follows—

How long have you been out?

Where do you live?

What are your names?

How old are you? etc.

My sister obediently filled in the answers as required, and returned the document as it had come, though less dexterously than the other experienced hand.

Our English voices caused great amusement and diversion to these colonial young ladies, who are all more or less infected with the twang of their neighbours across the border. For some few days, in school and out, our every word was mimicked; but as we were able to render the compliment in return with good interest, the fun of the thing soon died away.

An inexhaustible subject of argument, in which neither party ever grew weary, was the relative merits of our respective fatherlands.

In vain did we deny the assertion that the sun's rays never penetrated the thick veil of fog enveloping London, and that any other than artificial light was inconceivable to a town-bred child. Scornfully did we endeavour to enlighten the ignorance which questioned whether one could take half an hour's walk in our island in any given direction without falling into the sea, or being run over by half a dozen railway trains at the outset. Great was the indignation called forth on our opponents' side on being assured with contempt that Toronto, the Queen City of the Dominion, would in England be lost among the multitude of small towns without name or fame outside their own walls. But in spite of these trifling grounds of dispute, we soon became very good friends with the girls, in school at least, and enjoyed our time there very much. I say in school hours we were intimate enough; but farther than this our acquaintance did not go—out of doors a passing nod was all that we ever exchanged. The reason was an all-sufficing one, viz., that we lived in an unfashionable street, and in other ways showed the cloven foot of poverty. During this time my brother was attending the Upper Canada College, the best public school in the Dominion, and there his constant companions and most intimate friends were the brothers of the very girls who could scarcely bring themselves to honour my sister and me with a passing smile in the street.

It is a curious and happy circumstance that men and boys do not seem to be afflicted with that instinctive shrinking from people with narrow means, which seems innate in woman-kind.

Doubtless from an educational point of view at least this scarcity of friends was advantageous to us, for it left nothing to deter us from our preparation work, while the other day girls of the school were spending all their free hours in each other's company, seeking amusement—sleighting, tobogganing, rinking, carnivals, concerts, and parties, being the principal attractions in winter, and boating and picnics in summer; or, if nothing better offered, sauntering up and down the principal

streets of the town. For this last recreation the school hours were particularly well adapted, for we assembled at nine o'clock in the morning and were not released till two; but then there was nothing more to be done but home work, which was on the whole very ill prepared.

For the principal and mistress of the house alone was anything like awe felt; but for her lessons a pretence at preparation was made, even by the idlest, out of fear. For the daily masters, however, most of the girls did no work, and even in class continued to trifle and play with one another half the time. Of course there were exceptions, as there are everywhere, and those who wished to learn had splendid opportunities, and got on well.

The patient though misdirected endurance of one master will long remain in my memory. Among other subjects he started a Latin class, to which my sister and I belonged. Being an optional subject very few cared to take it up, and those who did thought they were doing all that was necessary if they sat in the room while the lesson was in progress, with their attention directed out of the window, or to whispered conversations among themselves; the master, who was a most competent man, meanwhile explaining and construing to deaf ears, and politely entreating that the new lesson might be somewhat more carefully prepared. Such requests had to be conveyed in the most delicate terms, for these Latin scholars were for the most part grown up girls, who would have resented anything like reproof.

The great feature of the school year at this establishment was what was known as the "Close," i.e., the breaking-up of school before the summer holidays. This took place the last week in June, being necessarily early on account of the heat in summer, which drives all the well-to-do people out of town to seek cool and repose in the country, on the shores of lake or river, a very small minority ever getting so far as the sea-side.

To this school-closing function all parents, friends, and relations of the girls were invited, making a goodly number of guests. The entertainment was afforded by the girls, who one and all performed upon the piano; but, happily for the audience, solos were only given by advanced pupils. Quartettes were the order of the day, and if the music produced in many cases was not brilliant, it was at least a pretty sight to see the little bands of four, in their pretty white frocks and ribbons, tripping on to the platform, and with perfect time and harmony, and apparent enjoyment to themselves, rendering some simple little piece.

When each pupil had thus distinguished herself in the eyes of her parents, the distribution of prizes and certificates of merit followed, of which, to the satisfaction of all, there was a generous supply, as is usual in private schools. This ceremony being over, the girls were at liberty to enjoy themselves as they liked, while the guests conversed and had supper. In a moment the garden would be alive with white-robed figures fitting with fun and laughter hither and thither among the flowers and bushes. On a beautiful moonlight night, with Chinese lanterns gleaming from every tree, and a fountain of sparkling water playing on the lawn, the familiar old garden seemed quite transformed. With the delights of long summer holidays just dawning, and all school work and care a thing of the past, what wonder that the still air echoed with the sound of mirth, especially when I add that large jars of ice cream were placed outside for the benefit of us girls, to be consumed *ad lib.*?

Such a nocturnal festivity as this brought

to a close this happy period of my school life.

Although attending this private school, I had ample opportunity of observing the manners and customs in those free schools, of which Canada is so justly proud, for our house stood directly opposite to one of the most popular in Toronto. Children of all classes attended—boys occupying one half of the building, girls the other. Little black negroes, small tradesmen's sons, and children of professional men sat side by side on the same benches, and romped in the same small playground; but outside the gates this spirit of common brotherhood was not observed.

Of course most of our friends and relations benevolently interested in the welfare of our family would have decreed that this school was the right and proper one for my brother, sister, and self; and so it undoubtedly was from a pecuniary point of view; but my mother thought the money well spent which saved our manners, voices, etc., from the roughening influences of such mixed companions.

One interesting scene of frequent occurrence which we witnessed from our windows was the fire-alarm drill. Of a sudden the bell in the little tower of the school would begin to toll; almost simultaneously the school doors were thrown open, and boys and girls rapidly filed out at the word of command, perfect order and silence being observed till every soul had quitted the building, and not till then did the children know whether or not the alarm was false. In a country where fires are so frequent and of so serious a nature, these precautions against anything like panic are very necessary.

After leaving Canada my sister and I commenced the following term at one of the best High Schools belonging to the Girls' Public Day School Company, where new branches of study were opened to us, and we learned to know what real study and steady school work meant. But any description of these experiences would be quite superfluous, seeing that these schools are now flourishing in almost every part of England, and there is scarcely a family in the middle classes that has not at least one member benefiting by the excellent education afforded by them. Suffice it to say that my four years of High School life were happy ones, and that I passed the usual course of examinations, finishing in the sixth form with the London matriculation.

After this I became an inmate of a German *pensionnat* in one of the most delightful watering-places near the Rhine.

Here, after I had lived down the inevitable *Heimweh* which attacked me rather seriously, never having been out of the home nest before, I spent a very comfortable and

instructive eight months. It was a small private school of about eighteen girls, I being the only representative of my nation during my first six months there.

Although I had learnt German previously, my knowledge of it for speaking and understanding those around me was *nil* for the first few weeks; but my new companions were not at all shy at airing their English, whether good, bad, or indifferent, so we got on very well together, and I found them most warm-hearted and friendly. Indeed, the affection of some few proved rather overpowering for a time—to use their own expression, which has no adequate equivalent in our prosaic language, they *schwärmten* for me night and day. But in a few weeks the current of their affections was somewhat less impetuous, and continued calm but constant throughout our acquaintance, only reviving to its early strength as the time for my departure approached. This seems to be the disposition of German girlhood in general—warm-hearted, impetuous, sentimental, always lavishing untold admiration and fondness on some individual, real or ideal, and weeping copiously at the mention of the word “home” or “parent” during their *pensionnat* days; for, however happy and comfortable these may be, the girls always at the time consider them a period of exile and bondage. They present a great contrast to English schoolgirls of the present day. One general routine of education is observed in Germany for the daughters of the middle classes. After attending the day school near home till the age of fourteen or fifteen, they are sent to boarding-school for a year to finish. In the *pensionnats* the chief branches of study are conversational French and English, music, painting, and needlework, with a little literature and general information thrown in. But mathematics and classics are all but unknown to them, and at the age when English girls are studying their hardest and preparing for examinations, their German sisters are returning home as finished young ladies, to embark upon a life of amusement and comparative idleness.

Of course some few go in for teaching, but they are not met with in *pensionnats*. Of fancy needlework they are never tired, but prefer it to every other occupation.

As early as the summer holidays, Christmas presents for parents, relations, and friends are begun, and during the succeeding four months every spare moment is devoted to the manufacture of useful and ornamental articles. As the festive day approaches lessons are suspended, walks cut short, and evenings prolonged in order to get the array of shawls, sofa-cushions, antimacassars, etc., despatched

in time to arrive at their destinations by Christmas eve—the day on which all presents are received and opened. In return for their needlework the girls receive from home large hampers of presents, clothes, and every sort of delicacy and sweetmeat, which are tastefully arrayed round the brilliantly illuminated and decorated tree, the indispensable accompaniment of Christmas in every German household, whether high or low, rich or poor.

In winter the principal diversion for the girls, apart from skating, is an occasional concert, which usually takes place on Sunday. The music is invariably good, and much enjoyed and appreciated by the audience.

In summer, especially during the holidays, excursions and coffee walks are very frequent, the latter being mild modifications of the former. Some pretty or interesting spot in the neighbourhood is selected, where the ubiquitous coffee garden is to be found, and thither the party go on foot towards the afternoon. After doing justice to the repast invitingly spread under the trees, rambles and out-door games follow.

These little outings, so common in Germany, have the recommendation of being inexpensive, healthy, and instructive, for one thus has pleasant opportunities of seeing the beauties of nature, and becoming acquainted with the many sites of romantic and historic interest with which all parts of Germany abound. When a long excursion is undertaken by the school, it is the custom for everyone to be up and dressed by about three o'clock in the morning, and to take the first train or steam-boat available for any town some three or four hours' journey distant, where friends or relations of pupils may be living. There the day is spent in exploring the neighbourhood, the said friends keeping open house for the party until their departure. Sometimes the excursionists return home by the last evening train; but more often the journey is postponed till the following day, and the girls are housed for the night at hotels and friends' houses, or wherever an available bed can be found.

I have never been to an English boarding-school, but from what I know of them I should say that life in them is not so bright and free from monotony as in a German *pensionnat*.

When my time for returning home arrived, I was sincerely sorry to bid farewell to my many warm-hearted friends, and I often think with pleasure of the happy days spent among them.

And now, at the age of nineteen, my school life is over, and on looking back upon its varied scenes, I can say with gratitude that I wish every girl might have as happy a one.

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## RECIPES FOR JUNE.

*Green Pea Soup.*—Fresh peas will be at hand shortly, and our soup will be very excellent when made from them. Put a few sprigs of fresh herbs, some young carrots, several young onions, and a small piece of unsmoked bacon with the peas, and sufficient water to make the requisite quantity of soup. When thoroughly cooked (in about two hours' time), rub all through a strainer except the bacon, which can be removed to a plate for other use. Season well, and stir in a large teaspoonful of cornflour wetted with milk. Return to the pan and boil again. A tablespoonful of cream will be an addition just before serving.

*Stuffing for Roasted Duck.*—The usual potato or sage and onions stuffing is scarcely

available or suitable in the summer-time; instead, we may substitute a well-seasoned forcemeat made by mincing finely a quarter of a pound of lean ham or bacon (cooked), and adding to that its equal quantity of bread-crumbs, with a tablespoonful of parsley, minced onions, herbs of different kinds, and plenty of seasoning. Bind all together with two beaten eggs and stuff the body of the bird with this. Green peas, French beans, or boiled vegetable marrows, are the correct accompaniments to roasted duck.

*Green Gooseberry Jelly.*—The small hairy gooseberries are the best for jelly-making purposes. Put them into the preserving-pan with a little water to prevent burning at the

bottom. The berries need not be picked. Boil them until they are almost a pulp, when pour into a coarse strainer first and afterwards through a flannel bag. Weigh the juice and return it to the preserving pan, allowing one pound of sugar to every pound or pint of liquid. While the juice is heating place the sugar on trays in the oven to become hot also; if it melts a little it will do no harm. As soon as the juice boils drop the sugar into it, and continue boiling for exactly twenty minutes, stirring occasionally. Pour off into glass jars which have been made quite hot also, then set aside to cool. If carefully followed these directions will be found to produce a jelly that will “jell” before it is cold.



BY S. BARING-GOULD, AUTHOR OF "MEHALAH," ETC.



**H**OW little one knows of one's own country! For the last four years I have been engaged in exploring the rock castles and cave dwellings of the South and West of France, where to this day whole colonies of people live contentedly in habitations scooped out of the chalk and limestone and sandstone cliffs—just as thousands of years ago the first settlers on the Gallic soil sought themselves caverns, which they contested with the bear and the hyæna, and in which they lived, ate and drank, wept, laughed and died. But that we had similar—identical dwellings in England, and people living in them as happily as do those in France—that never entered my head till the other day, when, on visiting a friend in Staffordshire, on the confines of Worcestershire, he said to me after breakfast—

"What shall we do to-day? Whither shall we go? The weather is fine, will you come and see our Troglodites?"

"Troglodites!" I echoed.

"Well, yes—cave-dwellers. There are a

good number of families, hereabouts, live in the rocks."

"Live in the rocks!" I repeated.

"Yes, they have houses, if I may so call them, scooped out in the New-Red-Sandstone cliffs. You see, this long ridge of hill, Kinver Edge it is called, was a sea-cliff to the great Severn Strait at that time when, somewhere between the second and third glacial epoch, the Principality was an island, and the waves rolled from the Mersey to the Bristol Channel one long strip of twinkling blue sea, beyond which the Welsh mountains stood up and 'Took the morning.' Well, here are the cliffs, old sea-cliffs; here are sandstone rocks once reefs and islets in the Severn Strait. Sandstone, mind you, is comparatively soft and workable: what wonder, if from time immemorial, the rocks have been utilised as habitations for man? First, doubtless, there were the sea-worn and sea-scooped caverns in which the first men of the rude stone-weapon age lived; but these have long ago disappeared or been widened; and now we have very worthy, respectable nineteenth-century people living in these burrows in the rock."

"Let us go at once," said I.

Kinver Edge, a ridge of new red sandstone, terminates abruptly above the River Stour, above Sturton Castle, once a royal dwelling much affected by King John. The extreme

headland, 542 feet above the sea, steep on all sides but one, was fortified by King Wulphere, who reigned in Mercia from 657 to 675, and the church of Kinver was dedicated to two of his sons, who were accounted Saints. The mighty embankment thrown up by Wulphere remains, and the place was, no doubt, a stronghold against the incursions of the Welsh. This point of rock has between it and the old seabed a remarkable mass of isolated crag, that goes by the name of Holy Austin Rock, and this is literally honeycombed with habitations in three storeys or stages, with families still occupying the rock at each level, though all the dwellings are not now tenanted. The topmost has a bench and table before the door, and the inhabitants of the cave keep by them a store of ginger-beer and lemonade, wherewith to refresh visitors from Stourbridge or Kidderminster.

In far-away distance of time, so runs the tale, a giant occupied this rock, and he had a

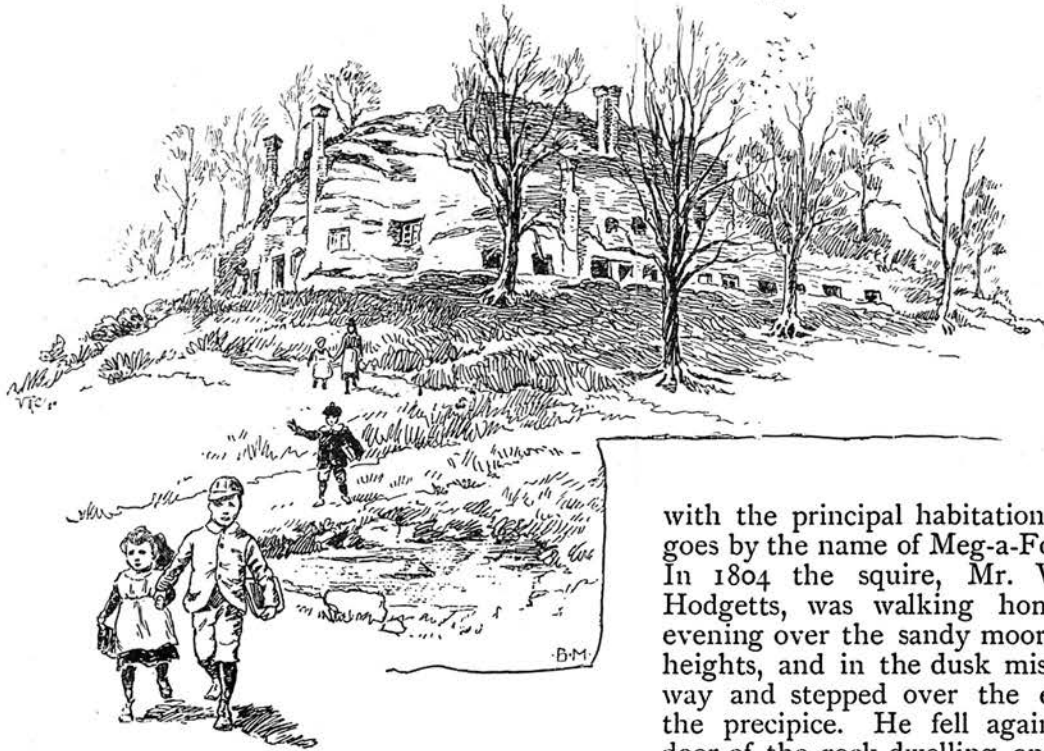
across country, put his head in at one of the windows of Holy Austin Rock, and kissed the wife of his neighbour. One day the latter, returning with his water-jar, saw this, and saw the Enville giant racing away as hard as his seven-leagued boots would take him. So he put down the jar, caught up a great and long stone, and hurled it through the air after the other. The stone fell and planted itself upright in the ground, and was called the Bolt or Bass Stone. It was doubtless a fine prehistoric menhir. Unhappily, within man's memory, it has been broken up. The Giant's Spring has also been diverted, and the trough now lies by the wayside much overgrown by nettles. Near by, the red sandstone is of a deep blood-red dye, and this is due, so folk say, to the blood of a woman here slain by the Danes, when making an incursion up the Stour. The natives had fled to the old camp on the edge, but suffered from thirst. Then one woman volunteered to fetch them water. The Danes fell on her and murdered her; ever since, the rock has been dyed blood-red.



HOLY AUSTIN ROCK.

comely wife. There lived another giant at Enville, in another rock dwelling. Now it happened that water was scarce at Holy Austin, and the giant had to stride away to a slope round the shoulder of Kinver Edge to a trickling stream, the drops of which were collected in a stone trough, still extant, called The Giants' Water Trough. When the Holy Austin giant was collecting water from the dribbling spring, the Enville giant strode

The cave-dwellings are either entirely scooped out in the heart of the rock, windows and doors being cut in the stone, and the front being a mere screen of living rock, or else, as is the case with the topmost storey of dwellings, a brick front has been erected before the caves, and this has been done on account of the original face of rock having been so cut about that it has given way. Usually the only brick structure connected with the cave-



ROCK COTTAGES AT DRAKE'S LOWE.

dwelling is the chimney. One house on the middle stage has this feature in very extraordinary fashion, curled like a worm to avoid the projections of rock.

One of the inhabitants of Holy Austin Rock, not content with scooping out for himself many chambers in the rock, has dug his way through it, and can look out on the face of the precipice on the further side.

These cave-dwellings are warm in winter, and cool in summer; they are very dry, indeed, as one of the inmates assured me—drier in winter than in summer—as in the hot weather the coolness of the stone has an effect of condensing on it any moisture there may be in the air.

Other rock houses are not, however, so salubrious, and some have been condemned by the sanitary inspector, and the occupants, to their great indignation, forced to leave, though they have never suffered inconvenience from lodging in the caves.

Why the rock is called after Holy Austin, neither history nor tradition can tell. Possibly there may have been a recluse of that name who lived in one of the caves in ancient days, possibly the cliff may have belonged to the Augustinian Friars.

About a mile further along the cliff is another group of rock dwellings, now no longer tenanted; the occupants were ejected a few years ago. A melancholy event is connected

with the principal habitation, which goes by the name of Meg-a-Fox-hole. In 1804 the squire, Mr. William Hodgetts, was walking home one evening over the sandy moor on the heights, and in the dusk missed his way and stepped over the edge of the precipice. He fell against the door of the rock dwelling, and when

the man who lived in Meg-a-Fox-hole came to open his door next morning, he had much difficulty in doing so, because it was blocked by the corpse of his landlord.

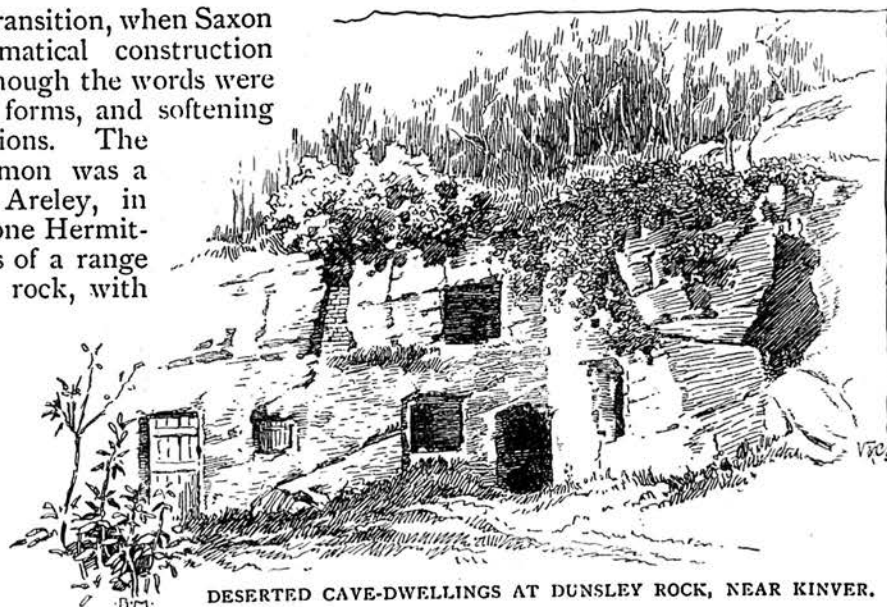
In the rock here are numerous names cut. The earliest is that of H. Kindar, Scriptor, Londini, 1700; the next in antiquity is that of R. Knight, 1749; ancestor of the present Sir F. Knight, of Wolverley.

Another mile takes one to Drake's Lowe, where is a cove or *cirque* in the old sea-cliff, and here are numerous dwellings dug out of the rock, all provided with brand-new chimneys of glazed black bricks.

A smart Board school occupies the bottom of the cove, and an extraordinary spectacle may be witnessed when the school bell rings. From the rock holes issue the children like rabbits from their burrows, and descend the steep and in some places precipitous sides by zigzag paths.

In Worcestershire at Areley Kings is a rock-hewn hermitage in a bluff, called the Red Stone. It was in this parish, and, if tradition may be trusted, in this hermitage that Layamon wrote his poem, the *Brut*, one of the earliest monuments of the English language that we possess. It is a metrical history of Britain, based on the fabulous work of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and he wrote either at the end of the reign of Henry II., or not long after his death. Layamon tells us that he was a priest, and that he was a native of Ernley on the Severn, and his language

belongs to the period of transition, when Saxon phraseology and grammatical construction were still preserved, although the words were rapidly changing their forms, and softening down their terminations. The Ernley of which Layamon was a native is the modern Areley, in which parish the Red Stone Hermitage exists. This consists of a range of chambers cut in the rock, with doorways and windows, and do not at all belong to a single habitation. When the church was rebuilt in 1885-86 the early font was discovered, broken up, but bearing on it an inscription commemorative of the poet-priest Layamon.



DESERTED CAVE-DWELLINGS AT DUNSLEY ROCK, NEAR KINVER.

Another very odd rock dwelling is in "The Devil's Spittleful." This is a conical mass of sandstone, some forty feet high, that rises abruptly out of the surrounding heath, between Kidderminster and Bewdley. A thick-set grove of firs covers the steep sides, but in the rock may be seen an opening leading into a hewn chamber, furnished with hearth and chimney. There are traces of other dwellings in the same rock.

"The Devil's Spittleful" takes its name from an odd legend told about it.

A cobbler who had been to Bewdley to fetch some boots to mend, found himself belated among the hills a mile or so from Wribbenhall. He encountered the Evil One with a mighty spade in his hand—termed locally a spittle, charged with sand.

"How far to Bewdley?" asked the spirit.

The cobbler shook his head. "A long way," he answered. "But why do you ask?"

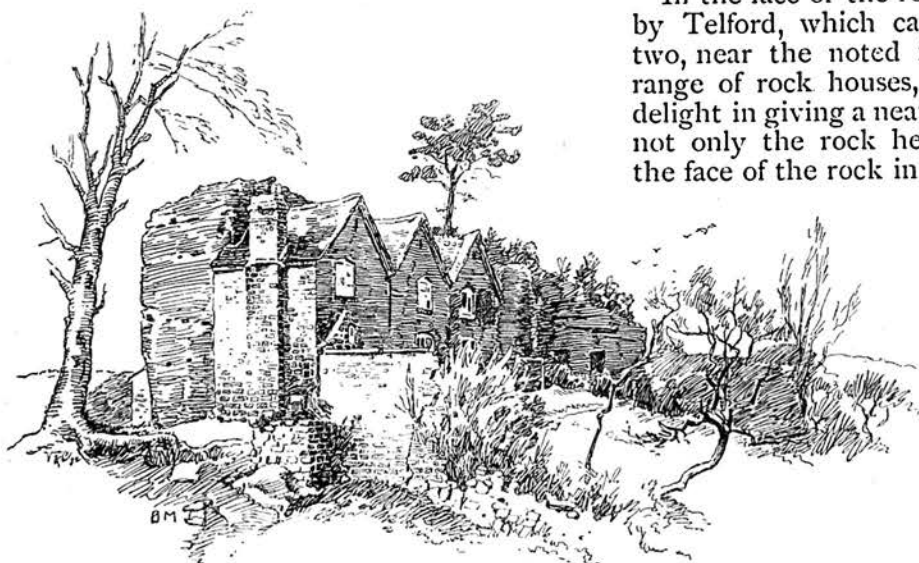
"Because," said the Evil One, "those Bewdley folk are so pious and good, that I am going to block the Severn with this spittleful of earth, so as to turn it, that the river may wash them clean away."

"Ah, master!" said the crafty cobbler, and emptied his sack of old shoes. "Look at all these—I have worn them out walking from Bewdley. You won't get there to-night, nor for a week after."

With an oath the Prince of Darkness cast down his spadeful of soil, and returned on his way—and that is why this conical mass of sandstone bears the name of "The Devil's Spittleful."

In the face of the rock above the canal cut by Telford, which canal cuts England into two, near the noted inn "Stewponey," is a range of rock houses, which the inhabitants delight in giving a neat look by whitewashing, not only the rock hewn chambers, but also the face of the rock in which they are cut.

Near Stourton Castle is an old cottage of brick, with dormer windows, overhung by stately sycamore trees, and with a pleasant sloping garden in front, nothing more innocent in appearance; no indication whatever of subterranean chambers. Yet this cottage is



TOP OF HOLY AUSTIN ROCK,

the somewhat notorious tavern of Lydia Norris, and at the end of last century and the beginning of the present was a rendezvous of highwaymen. These highwaymen were no vulgar footpads, they were gentlemen of the district, and for long no suspicion attached to them. Like Dick Turpin and Robin Hood before, they were credited with only plundering the rich, and with being generous to the poor. For this reason the peasantry were loth to give evidence against them, and to betray their place of concealment.

After a successful robbery they rode to the cottage of Lydia Norris, sent their horses in at the door, whereupon the beasts disappeared, for the back of the cottage was built against a face of rock, and it was dug out into stables for the accommodation of the horses, and into stores for the concealment of the stolen goods. As the cottage exactly covered the portion of rock that was exposed, no one from without could entertain a suspicion that it contained rock chambers and was extensive in the accommodation it afforded "to man and beast."

The highwaymen in question were received

into the best society around. It is related that when one of them named Poulter, *alias* Baxter, was apprehended and hung, the rest, dining that same evening at the Hyde, a stately house in Kinver, were asked by the hostess where their friend was, who usually presented himself at her table with them.

"Alas! madam," was the ready reply; "he has died recently of a quinsy of the throat."

When speaking of highwaymen, we must not omit mention of one at an earlier age, who has left the recollection of his misdeeds stamped in the memory of the people. This was Humphrey Kynaston, of Middle Castle. He was the son of Sir Roger Kynaston, Knight, and he was constituted Constable of Middle, but so neglected his duties that the castle fell into ruins. He maintained himself by depredations on travellers, and for his misdeeds was outlawed in 1490, but he was pardoned by King Henry VII. two years later.

During the period of his outlawry he lived in a cave dug out of the face of a cliff at Great Ness, in Shropshire, some 16 feet above the foot of the precipice, which is 70 feet high. His cave was reached by a narrow flight of steps hewn out of the rock, and it is said that his horse was wont to pasture in a field below, but that when danger approached, Humphrey from his eyrie saw it and whistled to his horse, whereupon the beast ran like a cat up the steps and took refuge in his master's cave. This is double—one portion is the stable, the other, furnished with a window and a rock-hewn fireplace and chimney, was occupied by the outlaw. In the pillar of rock between the two chambers are cut the initials H. K., and a date, 1564; but this cannot have been cut by "Wild Humphrey," as he died in 1534. He was a second son, but on the death of his brother, without lawful issue, the inheritance fell to him and his descendant by a Welsh girl of low birth, whom he carried off and married. Whilst in hiding in his cave "Wild Humphrey" is said to have been furnished with food by his mother. The neighbourhood is full of traditions of this great outlaw.



COTTAGE IN HOLY AUSTIN ROCK.



## SAVOURY DISHES WITHOUT MEAT.

### CURRIED EGGS.

*Ingredients.*—Two onions, one apple, one ounce and a half of butter, one tablespoonful of curry powder, one dessertspoonful of grated cocoanut, one teaspoonful of chutney, one teaspoonful of red currant jelly, half a pint of milk, five hard-boiled eggs, one teacupful of rice, a teacupful of water, a dessertspoonful of cornflour.

*Method.*—Wash the rice and boil it for twelve minutes in boiling water. Drain it off and dry it on a sieve in front of the fire. Chop the onions, mix the curry powder with a teacupful of water and put it in a saucepan with the butter, chopped onions and the apple cut very small. Cook all together until the water has boiled away, and the onion is frying in the butter. Add the milk, put on the lid and let all simmer gently half an hour. Chop the chutney and add it to the sauce, mix the cornflour smoothly with a little water, stir it in and let the sauce boil; add salt to season and the red currant jelly. Cut one of the hard-boiled eggs into eight pieces to garnish the dish with; cut the other four into small pieces and warm them in the sauce. Arrange the rice round a hot dish, pour the eggs in the middle and arrange the pieces round.



### MACARONI CHEESE.

*Ingredients.*—Quarter of a pound of macaroni, quarter of a pound of stale yellow cheese, half a pint of milk, one ounce of butter, one ounce of flour, one teaspoonful of made mustard, pepper and salt.

*Method.*—Boil the macaroni until tender in fast-boiling water with the lid off for twenty minutes, drain well; grate the cheese. Mix the flour smoothly with a little of the milk; boil the rest and then stir in the mixed flour and the butter. Stir and cook well, add pepper, salt, mustard and two-thirds of the cheese; stir in the macaroni and pour all in a greased pie-dish; sprinkle the rest of the cheese on the top and brown in front of the fire.



### POTATOES AND CHEESE.

*Ingredients.*—Eight large potatoes, three ounces of cheese, half an ounce of dripping, pepper and salt, one tablespoonful of chopped parsley, brown crumbs.

*Method.*—Boil the potatoes and mash them with the dripping; grate the cheese and stir it into the potatoes; add pepper and salt and the parsley, and put all in a greased pie-dish; sprinkle brown crumbs over the top and bake in a moderate oven twenty minutes.



### MACARONI AND TOMATOES.

*Ingredients.*—Half a pound of well-cooked macaroni, one pound of tomatoes, quarter of a pound of grated cheese, bread-crumbs, pepper and salt.

*Method.*—Boil the macaroni as for macaroni cheese; cut the tomatoes in slices; arrange the macaroni, tomatoes and cheese in layers in a greased pie-dish, season with pepper and salt, and sprinkle bread-crumbs on the top; put little bits of dripping on the top and bake in a moderate oven half an hour.

### BUTTERED EGGS AND TOMATOES.

*Ingredients.*—Four eggs, one pound of tomatoes, one ounce of butter, a little chopped parsley, pepper and salt.

*Method.*—Pick the tomatoes, wipe them and stand them on a greased tin with a little bit of dripping on each. Bake till tender in a moderate oven. Melt the butter in a saucepan, stir in the eggs (well beaten), pepper and salt: stir until the eggs set, which will be in a minute or two. Arrange the tomatoes round a hot dish and pile the egg mixture on a square of toast in the middle.



### CAULIFLOWER AND CHEESE.

*Ingredients.*—A cauliflower, half a pint of milk, one ounce of flour, three ounces of ground cheese, pepper and salt.

*Method.*—Boil the cauliflower till tender and then drain it. Make a sauce of the flour, milk, pepper and salt and two ounces of the cheese in the same way as for macaroni cheese; lay the cauliflower on a hot dish and pour the sauce over the flower; sprinkle the rest of the cheese over and brown in front of the fire.



### FRICASSEED EGGS.

*Ingredients.*—Six soft-boiled eggs, three-quarters of a pint of milk, a blade of mace, a bay leaf, a small piece of onion, pepper and salt, one ounce of flour, one ounce of butter.

*Method.*—Simmer the milk with the onion, mace, bay leaf, pepper and salt for half an hour. Add the butter and the flour mixed with a little cold milk; stir and boil well. Strain the sauce, shell the eggs and warm them unbroken in it. Serve in a rather deep dish.



### CHEESE TOAST.

*Ingredients.*—Quarter of a pound of grated cheese, four eggs, two ounces of butter, a little cayenne, salt, and toast.

*Method.*—Melt two ounces of butter in a saucepan, stir in the eggs (well beaten) and the grated cheese, cayenne and salt. Stir for two or three minutes until the mixture sets. Pour quickly on to squares of hot toast, and serve at once.



### SALSIFY FRITTERS.

*Ingredients.*—One pound of salsify, quarter of a pound of flour, one tablespoonful of olive oil, the white of an egg, not quite a gill of tepid water, a pinch of salt, deep fat for frying.

*Method.*—Wash the salsify, cut off the green tops and scrape it white, putting it as you do so into cold water containing lemon juice; boil it until tender. Put the flour in a basin with the salt, mix it smoothly with the oil and the tepid water; lastly add the white of the egg very stiffly beaten. Cut the salsify into three-inch lengths and dry them in a cloth; sift flour over them. Have ready some deep fat for frying, heat it until a faint smoke rises from it, dip the salsify in the batter, coat it well, and with a skewer dip the pieces of salsify into the batter and fry a golden brown. Drain well on soft paper and serve dished in a pile. Hand tomato sauce with the fritters.

### SPINACH AND EGGS.

*Ingredients.*—Two pounds of spinach, six eggs, one ounce of butter, pepper and salt.

*Method.*—Pick the stalks off the spinach and wash it very thoroughly, letting the tap run on it and turning it over and over. Rinse out a saucepan and put in the spinach; no water is needed. When tender press and drain well, melt the butter in the saucepan, put back the spinach and toss in it, adding pepper and salt. Arrange the spinach in a neat block on a hot dish and keep it hot while you poach the eggs. Have ready a small frying-pan with enough water in it to cover the eggs, let the water simmer and slip each egg carefully in from a teacup; when the white sets pick them up on a fish-slice and arrange them neatly on the spinach.



### VEGETABLE SALAD.

*Ingredients.*—A lettuce, cold cooked potatoes, carrots, turnips, peas, beans and beetroot, one gill of olive oil, one yolk, one gill of milk, one teaspoonful of cornflour, pepper, salt, one tablespoonful of chopped parsley, one small shalot, a pinch of castor sugar, vinegar.

*Method.*—Cut all the cooked vegetables, except the beetroot, into dice; cut the beetroot into star shapes. Mix the cornflour smoothly with the milk, boil it and let it get cold; put the yolk in a little basin, and with a wooden spoon work in the oil drop by drop; now mix it with the cold cornflour and milk, add pepper, salt, mustard, parsley, castor sugar, one tablespoonful of vinegar and the shalot chopped; mix well with the cold cooked vegetables, saving the beetroot. Wash the lettuce and arrange it in the middle of a dish with the sauce and vegetables around. Decorate with the beetroot.



### SAVOURY OMELET.

*Ingredients.*—Two eggs, one teaspoonful of chopped parsley, a tiny piece of chopped onion, three-quarters of an ounce of butter, pepper and salt, one teaspoonful of cold water.

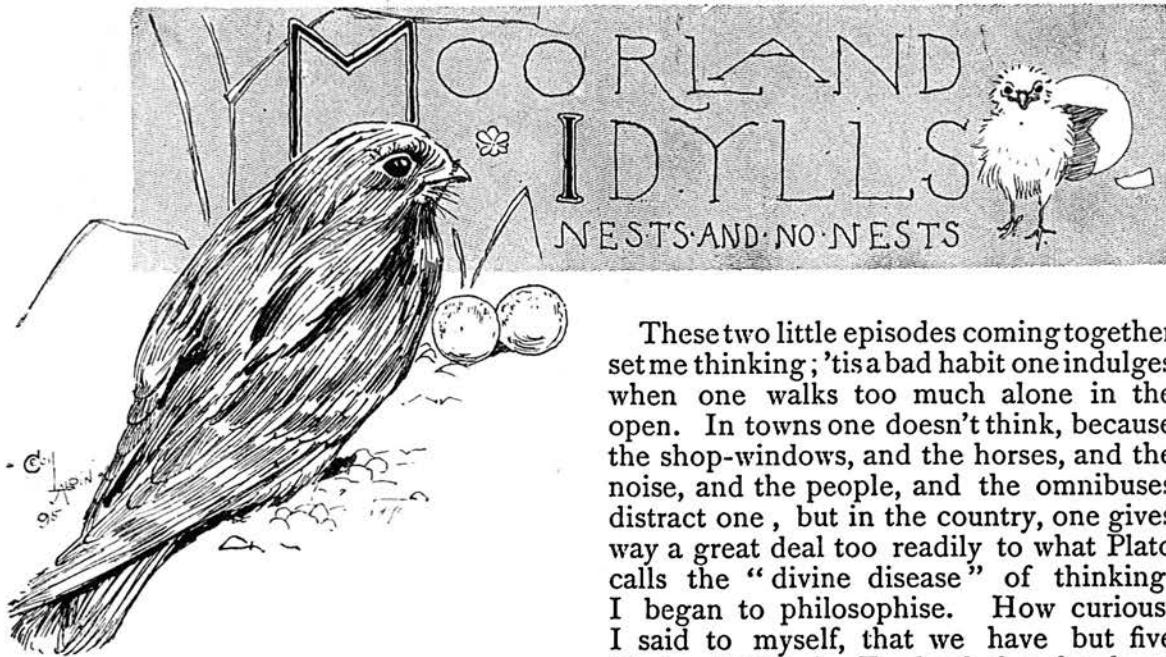
*Method.*—Melt half an ounce of butter in an omelet pan and take away the scum; beat the eggs with the water, pepper and salt, stir in the parsley, onion and the rest of the butter broken in little bits; pour the eggs into the pan, shaking it all the time, while with a fork quickly lift up the egg as it sets and let the butter run underneath. When golden brown underneath and rather soft on the top fold carefully over and slide on to a hot plate. A clear fire is necessary to make an omelet properly.



### FOX IN THE BAG.

*Ingredients.*—One pound of flour, one pound of potatoes, six ounces of suet, one teaspoonful of salt, one teaspoonful of baking powder.

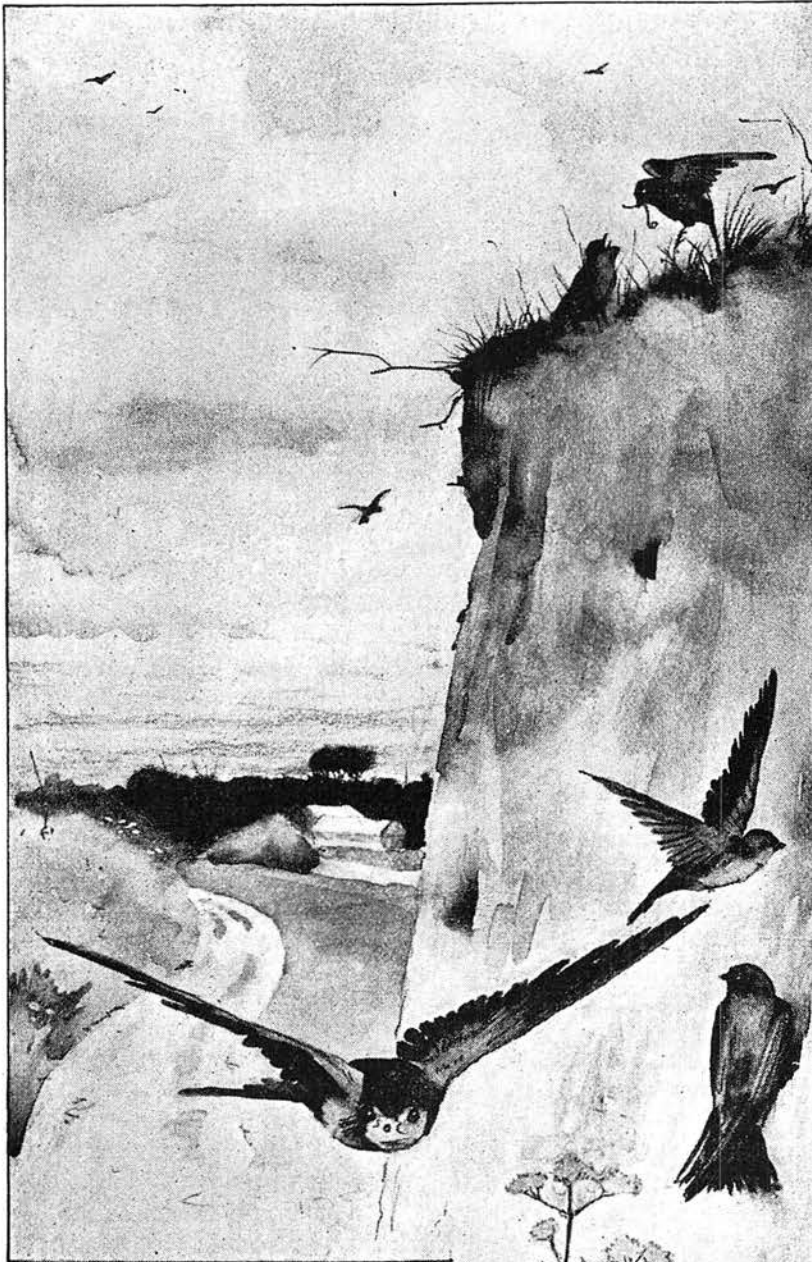
*Method.*—Boil the potatoes, drain them and mash them; mix the flour with the salt and baking powder, add the suet (chopped) and the potatoes, mix well, tie in a scalded and floured cloth and boil two hours. Serve with good brown gravy.



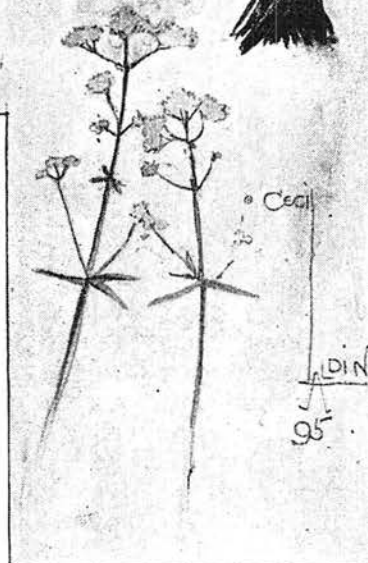
**S**TROLLING across the moor in the sunshine to-day, past the lonely pine where the night-jar sits crooning to his lady-love in the twilight, I came suddenly across his grey mate herself, and saw her flutter up sleepily in dazed surprise from the bare ground where she was sitting. As she flapped her mottled wings and sailed slowly away, like a blinking owl disturbed in the daytime, I noticed that I had lighted unawares upon her nest, or, rather, her eggs, for she lays them on the open, without bed of any sort. I left them untouched, for I am no collector. A few minutes later, I came abreast of the low cliff where the sand-martins have established their twittering colony. The soft yellow sandstone that forms the cutting is honeycombed with their tunnels; and as I leaned on my stick and looked, I saw the busy brown birds gliding in and out, with their long curved flight, and carrying back mouthfuls of gnats and mayflies to their fledglings in the burrows. It was beautiful to watch them swooping in great arcs over the gorse and bracken, and then darting straight with unerring accuracy to the mouth of their tunnels. They alight at the very door with all the skill of born pilots, never missing or overshooting the mark by one inch, but steering upon it so truly that they look as though failure or miscalculation were impossible.

These two little episodes coming together set me thinking; 'tis a bad habit one indulges when one walks too much alone in the open. In towns one doesn't think, because the shop-windows, and the horses, and the noise, and the people, and the omnibuses distract one, but in the country, one gives way a great deal too readily to what Plato calls the "divine disease" of thinking. I began to philosophise. How curious, I said to myself, that we have but five kinds of bird in England that hawk on the wing after insects in the open; and of all those five, not one builds a proper respectable nest, woven of twigs and straws, like a sparrow or a robin! Every one of them has some peculiar little fancy of his own—goes in for some individual freak of originality. The night-jar, which is the simplest and earliest in type of the group, lays its eggs on the bare ground, and rises superior in its Spartan simplicity to such petty luxuries as beds and bedding. The swift, that ecclesiologically minded bird, which loves the chief seats in the synagogue, the highest pinnacles of tower or steeple, gums together a soft nest of floating thistledown and feathers, by means of a sticky secretion from its own mouth, distilled in the last resort from the juices of insects. The swallow and the house-martin, again, make domed mud huts, and line them inside with soft floating materials. Finally, the sand-martin excavates with its bill the soft sandstone of cliffs or roadside cuttings, and strews a bed within for its callow young of cotton-grass and dandelion parachutes.

Why this curious variety among themselves, and this equally curious divergence from the common practice of bird-kind in general? Clearly, thought I, it must bear some definite relation to the habits and manners of the birds which exhibit it. Let me think what it means. Aha, aha,



eureka! I have found it! The insect-hawking birds are not a natural group; by descent they have nothing at all to do with one another. Closely as the swift resembles the swallow in form, in flight, in shape of bill, in habits and manners, we now know that the swift is a specialised woodpecker, while the swallow and the martins are specialised sparrows. (I use both words, *bien entendu*, in quite their widest and most Pickwickian evolutionary acceptance.) The swift and the night-jar belong to one great family of birds; the swallow, the house-martin, and the sand-martin, to another.



The likeness in form and in mode of flight has been brought about by similarity in their style of living. Two different birds of two different types both took, ages since, to hawking after flies and midges in the open air. Each group was thus compelled to acquire long and powerful wings, a light and airy body, a good steering tail, a wide gape of mouth, and a rapid curved flight, so as to swoop down upon and catch its petty prey unsuspected. So, in the long run, the two types which hawk most in the open, the swifts and the swallows, have grown so like that only by minute anatomical differences can we refer the remoter ancestry of one species to the woodpeckers and humming-birds, and the remoter ancestry of the other to the tits and sparrows.

How does their manner of life affect their mode of nesting, however? Indirectly, in this way. Birds that live largely off seeds and fruits and hard-shelled beetles have hard short beaks to grind their food with, and sit much in thickets, scrub, or hedgerows. But birds that hawk on the wing after small soft flies must have wide soft bills, and a gaping mouth; they can hardly perch at all on trees or bushes, and their feet are too weak to be of much use for walking. Indeed, if a swift once alights on the ground, he can scarcely get up again, so difficult is it for the long wings to work in a

narrow space, and so slight a power of jumping have the feeble little legs. Hence it follows that birds of the hedge-row type can readily build nests of twigs and straws, which they gather as they perch, or seek on the ground; and they are enabled to weave them with their hard bills and active feet; while birds of the hawking type cannot pick up sticks or gather straws on the ground, and have beaks quite unadapted for dealing with such intractable materials. The consequence is they have been compelled to find out each some new plan for itself, and to build their nest out of such stray material as their habits permit them.

The night-jar, a stranded nocturnal bird of early type, with very few modern improvements and additions, solves the problem in the easiest and rudest way by simply going without a nest at all, and laying her eggs unprotected on the open. Nocturnal creatures, indeed, are to a great extent the losers in the struggle for existence: they always retain many early and uncivilised ways, if I may speak metaphorically. They are the analogues of the street arabs who sleep in Trafalgar Square under shelter of a newspaper. The sand-martin, an earlier type than the swallow or the house-martin, burrows in sandstone cliffs, which are pre-human features, though man's roads and railways have largely extended his field of enterprise. But the house-martin and the swallow, later and far more civilised developments, have learned to take advantage of our barns and houses; they nest under the eaves; and being largely water-haunters, skimming lightly over the surface of ponds and lakes, they have naturally taken advantage of the mud at the edges as a convenient building material. Last of all, the soaring swift, the most absolutely aerial type of the entire group, unable to alight on the ground at all, has acquired the habit of catching cottony seeds, and thistledown, and floating feathers in his mouth as he flies, and gumming them together into a mucilaginous nest with his own saliva. The Oriental sea-swifts have no chance of finding even such flying materials among their caves and cliffs, and they have consequently been driven into erecting nests entirely of their own inspissated saliva without any basis of down or feathers. These are the famous edible birds'-nests of the Chinese; they look like gelatine, and they make excellent soup, somewhat thick and gummy.

#### A SPOTTED ORCHIS.

Like Mr. Chamberlain, I too am an orchid-grower. I own three acres (without a cow) on a heather-clad hilltop, and no small proportion of that landed estate is "down under orchids." Not that I mean to say the species I cultivate, or rather allow to grow wild, on my wild little plot would excite the envy of the magnate of Highbury. They are nothing more than common English spotted orchids, springing free and spontaneous among the gorse and heather; but, oh! how beautiful they are! how much more beautiful than the dendrobiums and cattleyas, the flowering spiders and blossoming lizards of the rich man's hothouse! How proudly they raise their tall spikes of pale bloom, true sultanas of the moorland! how daintily they woo the big burly bumble bees! how gracefully they bend their nodding heads before the bold south-west that careers across the country! They seem to me always such great regal flowers, yet simple with the simplicity of the untrodden upland.

Take a spike and look at it close; or, better still, grub it up by the roots with the point of your umbrella, and examine it all through from its foundation upward. It springs from two tubers, not unlike a pair of new potatoes to look at, but deeply divided below into finger-like processes. Those divisions it was that gave the plant its quaint old English title of "dead men's fingers"—for, indeed, there is something clammy and corpse-like about the feel of the tubers; while that "coarser name" to which Shakspeare alludes in passing is due to their general shape, and is still enshrined in the Greek word "orchid" which everybody now applies to them without thinking for a moment of its unsavoury meaning. But the two tubers are not of the same age. One is old and wilted; the other is young and fresh and, as the advertisements say, "still growing." The first is last year's reserve fund for this year's flowering stem; the second is this year's storehouse of food for next year's blossom. Thus each season depends for its flowers upon the previous year's income; the leaves, which are the mouths and stomachs of the plants, lay by material in due season; and the spike of bells proceeds from the tubers or consolidated reserve fund as soon as the summer is sufficiently advanced for the process of flowering. Few plants with handsome heads or trusses of bloom, indeed, can afford to produce them upon the current season's income; therefore you will find that most large-flowered forms, like lilies,

tulips, hyacinths, and daffodils, if they wish to blossom early in the year, depend for their food-supply upon a bulb or tuber of last season's making. Only in the orchids, however, do you find this curious device of a pair of tubers at once side by side,



one being filled and fed, while the other is being slowly devoured and depleted. By the end of the season the new tuber is rich and full to bursting, while the old one is withered, flaccid, and empty.

From the tuber, in early spring, start the pretty lance-shaped leaves—green, dappled with leopard spots of some deep brown pigment. The use and meaning of these beautiful spots on the glossy green foliage no one has yet deciphered;

it remains as one of the ten thousand insoluble mysteries of plant existence. That is always so in life. We tell what we know; but what we know not, who shall count it or number it? Yet the flowers, after all, are the true centre of interest in the English orchid. Thirty of them in a spike, pale lilac or white, all starred and brocaded with strange flecks of purple, they rank among the most marvellous of our native flowers in shape and structure. The long spur at the back is the factory and reservoir for the abundant honey; the face of the blossom consists of a broad and showy lip, the flaunting advertisement to bee or butterfly of the sweets within; it is flanked by two slender spreading wings, above which a third sepal arches over the helmet-like petals. Beneath this hood or dome, in the centre of the column, the club-shaped pollen-masses lie half concealed in two pockets, or pouches—dainty little purses, as it were, like fairy wallets, slit open in front for the bee's convenience. The base of the pollen-masses is sticky or gummy; and they are so arranged, of set purpose, in their pouches that the moment the bee's head touches them, they cling to it automatically, by their gummy end, and are carried off without his knowledge or consent to the next flower he visits. But if you want to see exactly how this pretty little drama of plant life is enacted, you need not wait, as I have often done, silent on the heath for half an hour together, till some blustering bumble bee bustles in, all importance. It suffices for demonstration just to pick a spike and insert into the mouth of the honey-spur a stem of grass, which does duty for the bee's head and proboscis, when straightway "the figures will act," as they say on the penny-in-the-slot machines, and the pollen-masses will gum themselves by automatic action to the imaginary insect.

The reason for this curious and highly advanced device is that orchids are among the plants most absolutely specialised for insect-fertilisation. Most species of orchid, in fact, can never set their seeds at all without the intervention of these flying "marriage priests," as Darwin quaintly called them. If left to themselves the flowers must wither on their virgin thorn unwed and no seed be set in the twisted ovary. But when the bee goes to them in search of honey, the pollen-masses gum themselves to the front of his head, though just at first they point upward and inward. Then, after a short time, as he flies through the air, they contract in drying, and so

point forward, in the direction in which he will enter the next flower he visits. This brings the pollen directly into contact with the sensitive cushion or pad of the ovary in the flower so visited, and thus results in the desired cross-fertilisation. For the ovary, too, is gummy, to make the pollen stick to it.

A roundabout way, you think, to arrive after all at so simple a conclusion? Well, that is the habit of Nature. And again, bethink you, good, easy-going human being, how great are the difficulties she has to contend with, especially in the case of the plant creation. Put yourself in the orchid's place, and you will see the reason. For remember how absolutely fixed and limited are plants, each rooted to the soil in a single small spot, each tied by strict conditions of rock, and water-supply, and air, and wind, and sun, and climate, from which none can escape, try they all their hardest. The opposite sides of a road are to them as the two poles, one with a sunny and southward-looking bank, the other with a cold and forbidding northern aspect; so that what flourishes apace on the first would shiver and die of chill winds on the second. Remember, too, that save in the mildest degree, plants have no power of spontaneous or independent movement: they cannot stir from their birthplace, were it but for a single inch, nor move their own limbs save as the wind may sway them. Creatures thus narrowly and inevitably bound down must needs take advantage of the power of movement in all other kinds, wherever it will benefit them. Hence the use plants make of insects as common carriers of pollen, the use they make of birds as dispersers of seeds, the use they make of natural agencies, such as wind or stream, to waft winged thistle-down, to carry the parachutes of the dandelion and the willow, or to float the male blossoms of such water-weeds as *vallisneria*. Behold! I show you a mystery. The secret of the whole thing is that plants, being fixed themselves, must needs employ birds and insects as their Pickford vans—must rely on wind or stream for such casual services as wind or stream can easily afford them. Only in a few species can they effect anything like active movement for themselves, as one sees in the rooting runners of strawberries, or the wandering tubers of certain vagrant orchids, which spread far afield from last season's nesting-place. These are clever devices for securing fresh virgin soil—"rotation of crops," as the farmers put it.

#### THE DEVIL'S PUNCHBOWL.

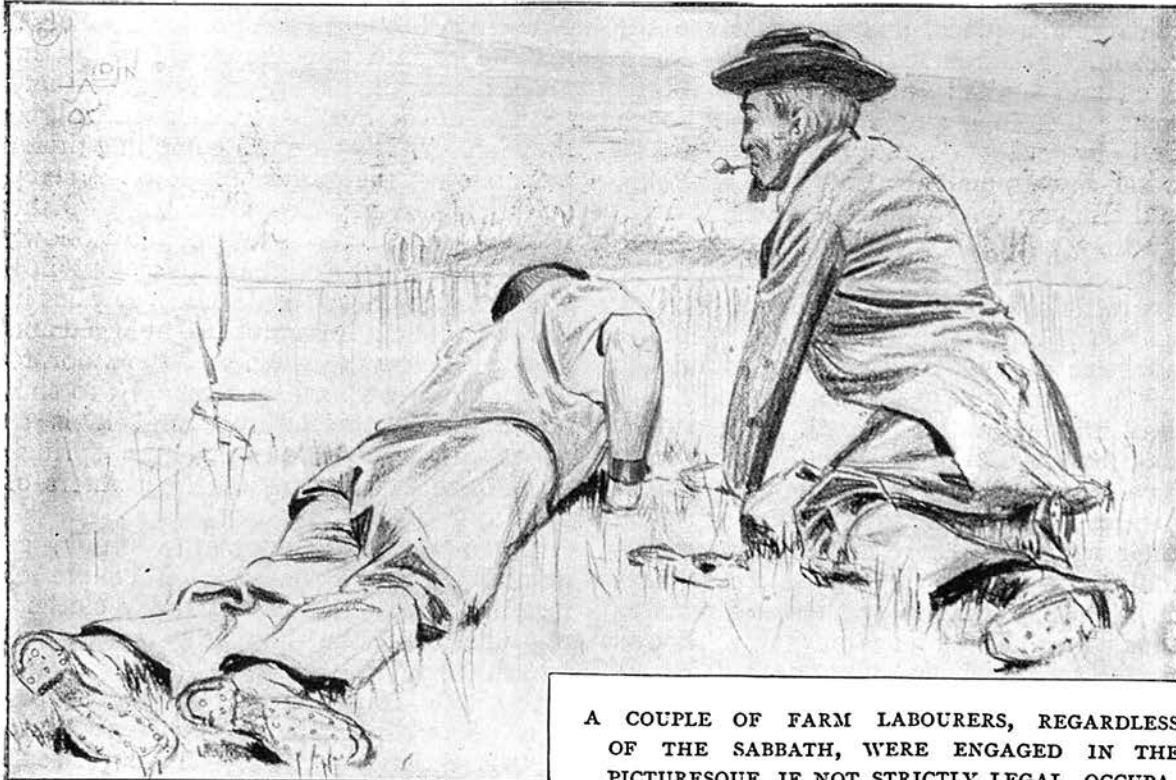
On Sunday the boys came home for their half-term holiday, so we strolled in the morning into the Devil's Punchbowl. That is the name of the basin-shaped valley that lies behind the house—a deep circular glen scooped out in a softer portion of the sandstone mass that forms the moor, by rain and denudation. Thor owned it, I doubt not, long before it was claimed by its present possessor, for the parish is Thursley; and some Celtic god, whose name is only known to Professor Rhys, may have used it as his drinking-cup long before the Norseman brought his Thor, or the Saxon his Thunor, into the Surrey uplands. But the Devil is now the heir-general and residuary legatee of all heathen gods deceased, be they late or early: he has come into titular ownership of their entire property. A steep path leads zigzag down the side of the escarpment into the bowl-shaped hollow; at its bottom a tiny stream oozes out in a spring as limpid as *Bandusia*. Water lies in the rock, indeed, at about two hundred and fifty feet below the surface of the moor, to which depth we have, accordingly, to sink our wells on the hilltop; and it is at about the same level that the springs gush forth which form the headwaters of our local rivers.

When we came upon the brook, as good luck would have it, a couple of farm labourers in their workaday clothes, regardless of the Sabbath, lay at full length upon the bank, engaged in the picturesque, if not strictly legal, occupation of tickling trout. The boys were of course delighted; they had never seen the operation performed before, and were charmed at its almost mesmeric magic. At first the men, seeing gentlefolk approach, regarded us with disfavour as their natural enemies, no doubt in league with the preserving landlord; but as soon as they discovered we were "the right sort," in full sympathy with the fine old poaching proclivities of the upland population, they returned forthwith to their tickling with a zest, and landed a couple of trout, not to mention a crayfish, before the very eyes of the delighted schoolboys.

Tickling trout is an ancient and honourable form of sport, which admits of much skill and address in the tickler. The fish lurk quietly under overhanging banks where an undermined green sod impends the tiny stream; and the operator passes his hand gently over their sides once or twice till he has established confidence; then, taking advantage of the friendship

thus formed, he suddenly closes his hand and whips the astonished victim unawares out of the water. It has been urged by anglers (who are interested parties) that such conduct contains an element of treachery; but all is fair in love and war, of which last our contest with the wild creatures of nature is but a minor variety; and I cannot see that it matters much, ethically, whether you land your trout on the bank under pretence of titillating his sense of touch or treacherously hook him

isolated colony of its own, composed of many dozen kinds of fish, insects, and crustaceans, who know no more of other members of their race than the people on a small Pacific island knew of the human family before Captain Cook burst upon them from the blue, with the blessings of Christianity, rum, and extermination. These trout, for example, are a group apart; they are always small, even when adult, because there is little food for them; and the stream is little. In big rivers,



A COUPLE OF FARM LABOURERS, REGARDLESS OF THE SABBATH, WERE ENGAGED IN THE PICTURESQUE, IF NOT STRICTLY LEGAL, OCCUPATION OF TICKLING TROUT.

by false show of supplying him with a dainty dinner. Indeed, all the trout I have interviewed on the subject are unanimously of opinion that, if you must be caught and eaten at all, they had rather be caught by a gentle pressure of the naked hand than have their mouths and feelings cruelly lacerated by a barbed hook disguised as a mayfly. Which reminds me of the charming French apologue of the farmer who called his turkeys together in order to ask them with what sauce they would prefer to be eaten. "Please your Excellency," said the turkeys, "we don't want to be eaten at all." "My friends," said the farmer, "you wander from the question."

It is curious, though, to see how this mere thread of water supports a whole

where there is space to turn, and provisions are plentiful, a successful trout of the selfsame species runs to five or six pounds, while the very near variety which frequents great lakes not infrequently grows to forty-five or fifty. But here, in this upland rill, an ounce or two is the limit. They live mostly in pairs, like well-conducted fish, one couple to each pool or overhung basin; yet, strange to say, if one is tickled or otherwise enticed away, the widowed survivor seems always to have found a mate before three hours are over. I know most of them personally, and love to watch their habits and manners. They are brilliantly speckled here, because the water is clear and the bottom pebbly; for the spots on trout depend on the bed, and come out brighter

and more ornamental by far during the breeding season. This is still more conspicuously the case with the æsthetic stickleback, the dandy of the fresh waters; he puts on the most exquisite iridescent hues when he goes a-courting, and exhibits himself to his mate more gorgeously clad than Solomon in all his glory. Unfortunately, the colours are very fugacious, for they die away at once when he is taken from the water; but while they last they outshine in brilliancy the humming-bird or the butterfly. Both species are great and determined fighters, as always happens with brilliantly decorated birds, fishes, reptiles, and insects. None but the brave deserve the fair; and bravery and æsthetic taste seem to go together. Indeed, the courageous little trout will face and drive away a murderous pike who menaces his home, while stickleback will engage one another in such sanguinary fights for the possession of their mates that only the Kilkenny cats can be named in the same day with them.

The other inhabitants of the tiny brook are far more numerous than you would imagine. Miller's thumbs poke their big black heads out of holes in the clay bank at every quiet corner. Crayfish hide

among the weeds or dart between the sedges. Stone-loach flit down stream like rapid shadows when you lift the bigger pebbles under which they lie skulking. As for caddis-worms and water-spiders and the larvæ of dragon-flies, they are there by the hundred; while the full-blown insects, living flashes of light, as Tennyson calls them, poise their metallic blue bodies for a second over the ragged-robins that grow in the boggy hollows, and then dart away like lightning to the willow-herb in the distance. It is a world apart, this wee world of the streamlet; it has its own joys, its own fears, its own tragedies. The big solemn cows, with their placid great eyes, come down to drink at it unheeding, and blunder over the bank, and slide their cloven hoofs to the bottom through the clay, unaware that they have crushed a dozen maimed lives and spread terror like an earthquake over fifty small fishes. But the trout and the loaches stand with tremulous fins beating the water meanwhile ten yards below, and aghast at the cataclysm that has altered for ever their native reach. Not for fully twenty minutes do they recover heart enough to sneak up stream once more to their ruined bank and survey with strange eyes the havoc in their homesteads.





The labours of THE XII MONTHS  
set out in NEW PICTURES & OLD PROVERBS

WISE SHEPHERDS say that the age of man is LXXII years and that we liken but to one hole yeare for evermore we take six yeares to every month as JANUARY or FEBRUARY and so forth, for as the yeare changeth by the



twelve months, into twelve sundry manners so doth a man change himself twelve times in his life by twelve ages and every age lasteth six yeare if so be that he live to LXXII. For three times six maketh eighteen & six times six maketh xxxvi And then is man at the best and also at the highest and twelve times six maketh LXXII & that is the age of a man.



## JUNE

Then cometh JUNE: and then is the sun highest in his meridionall he may ascend no higher in his station, his glimmering golden beames ripens the corne, and when man is xxxvi yeare, he may ascend no more, for then hath nature given him beauty & and strength at the full, and ripeneth the seed of perfect understanding.



- Mist in MAY & heat in JUNE  
Makes the harvest come right soon.
- A dripping JUNE brings all things in tune.
- No one so surely pays his debt,  
As wet to dry, & dry to wet.
- Ash before oak, there'll be a smoke,  
Oak before ash, there'll be a splash.
- Another version. Oak - soak - ash - splash.