

How soon the summer days have fled!
 Awhile ago the sky-lark's song
 Rung out amidst the feathered choir,
 In joyous trillings loud and long;
 But now there's silence in the woods,
 Save that the wind with sullen tone
 Sighs like a requiem through the boughs,
 Of music hushed, and beauty flown.

How soon the summer days have fled!
 Awhile ago o'er sunny seas
 I sailed along in glad content,
 Fanned by soft airs and southern breeze;
 But now the dark waves rear their crests,
 The billows rage—the loud winds wail,
 And great ships totter as they brave
 The gathering fury of the gale.

How soon the summer days have fled!
 So moan I in my wild unrest;
 But He who guides the seasons round
 Knows their appointed course is best.
 E'en in the darkest wintry hour,
 When days are dull and joys decline,
 The dawning of fresh Spring is near,
 And I can hope, and wait His time.

M. M. POLLARD.

"PROVIDE THINGS HONEST"; OR, THOSE TWO YOUNG HILLS.

By GRACE STEBBING, Author of "Wild Kathleen," "That Aggravating School Girl," &c.

CHAPTER III.

TO THE LAST MOMENT.



WHILE the owner of the wool-work and fancy shop in Beeton-street, Islington, sat glowering in solitude over her plateful of cold Irish stew, and seventeen-year-old Margaret Hill walked home, feeling overwhelmed with shy shame and miserable disappointment, a girl about a year younger than herself lay on a luxurious sofa in a small bright room, replete with every comfort.

Everything in the room was pleasant to the eyes, with the exception of her own young face. Weary discontent and ill-humour were so plainly written on the pretty features that, as she listlessly turned

her head and caught sight of her reflection in the looking-glass on the opposite wall, she muttered, with a grim sort of out-of-humour satisfaction, and half aloud—

"Dear me! how ugly I am!"

A peal of musical laughter from a lady busily writing at a Davenport greeted this declaration, and dropping her pen, she said, with an amused smile—

"My dear child, I congratulate you on your humility. Have you been studying Burns lately—'Oh wad some power the giftie gie us to see ourselves as others see us'?"

"No, mamma," was the answer, with just a ghost of an echo of her mother's laugh; "I've only been studying the looking-glass. And it has not taken much study either to learn that fact of my ugliness."

A disconsolate sigh followed this little speech, and Mrs. Deacon rose and came up to the sofa on which her young daughter lay. As she stood for some moments silently smoothing back some little stray tendrils of wavy, glistening hair, she exhibited small token of sharing her child's modest estimate of her appearance, but when at length she

spoke again there was nothing in her words or voice to feed vanity; on the contrary, the girl looked still more abashed when her mother said, in a low, grave tone—

"Whatever our faces may be like, wrongdoing is always ugly. If you had been employing yourself during the past hour and a half, my dear, instead of lounging on the sofa, you would have seen a much pleasanter sight in the looking-glass than you do now."

For a few moments there was no reply, but the nerves of the young damsel were in too irritable a state to take reproof quite patiently. The slight pause was followed by a hasty remonstrance.

"Mamma," she exclaimed, springing up and raising her eyes, filled with indignant tears, "how can you speak like that, when you know I am not able to employ myself? It is cruel of you!"

"It certainly would be," said Mrs. Deacon, "if you really were reduced to such a sad condition. But how even badly cut fingers and a bandaged hand can prevent your doing anything more profitable than spend the best hours of the afternoon lying on a sofa, I confess I do not understand. You began to read the 'History of France' last week, but I much doubt if you have got beyond the first fifty pages; and I have seen very little preparation for Signora Crevelli since your last lesson. Are you ready for her to-morrow?"

"Not quite," came the low answer, with the long eyelashes once more lowered. "But you know, mamma—"

"Well, Ida dear, tell me what is it that I know?"

"Why, mamma," a little more bravely, "you know you don't make enough allowance for one sometimes. You are scolding me for being idle just at the very time when I am feeling so horribly disappointed at having to be idle in one way. It is dreadfully difficult to keep my mind on books while I am so vexed at not being able to do the work for the fancy fair. I meant to be so tremendously busy all this week."

"I know you did, dear," answered Mrs. Deacon, more tenderly. "And you must not think that I am not sorry both for your hurt fingers and your vexation. But the matter cannot be helped now, and so it only remains to make the best of it. After all, I daresay your offering will be as large as most. Run and fetch your things, and let me see them."

A burning blush overspread Miss Ida's cheeks and mounted into her forehead as she muttered, "I haven't any things; I haven't done any of them yet."

A second time there was a long pause. Ida's white eyelids quivered, but she did not raise them. Her red lips quivered, too, but no more words came from between them until Mrs. Deacon asked—

"Do you really mean, Ida, that with all your outspoken zeal on the subject, and all your promises to Miss Broad, you have let six months go by without attempting to fulfil them—that you have left all to the uncertainties of this last week?"

"But I meant to work very hard all this week," came the scarcely audible answer; and then, before any more could be said, a servant entered with a letter for Miss Deacon, which the young lady was only too glad to carry off to her own room, to escape further discussion of a very painful topic.

CHAPTER IV.

MISS BROAD'S LETTER.

For some time after her young daughter left her Mrs. Deacon sat grieving over the girl's indolence of disposition, and praying that she might learn to see her fault and have strength given her to cure it; then she went back to her desk, finished her letters, and in her turn went upstairs. Stopping at her child's room on the way to her own, she tapped lightly and entered.

Mrs. Deacon thought at first that she had come to an empty nest, and she was about to leave it again when a sound of sobbing from someone hidden behind the bed-curtains fell upon her ears, and in another minute she stood with her arms folded around poor Ida, who was weeping as if her heart would break.

"What is the matter, my darling? Is there some fresh trouble grieving you now?" asked the mother, anxiously.

But the young girl shook her head disconsolately. "No, mamma," she sobbed. "No, there is no other trouble. One of this sort is enough, I'm sure, but it's this one got ever so much bigger. Re—read—that."

And putting the letter she had received an hour ago into her mother's hands she broke down afresh and cried as bitterly as she had done before, whilst Mrs. Deacon read the note from Miss Broad, begging her friend to send the contributions of needlework, paintings, etc., she had promised at once, that she might

know what she had to depend upon for filling her stall. The note went on:—

"If I did not feel sure, dearest Ida, that the fulfilment of your generous promises is certain to be so amply satisfactory, I should be reduced at the present moment to the greatest state of despair. Next to your own dear little self, Miss de Mattos was my most active helper. Such a heap of things she had made for me; I saw them in her room last Wednesday. I only wish that I had taken them away with me then, as she offered to let me do!

"Late last night her maid came round to say her mistress had fallen ill with scarlet fever—a light form, the doctor says—but of course none of the things can be brought away for the fancy fair, for fear of spreading infection, and I had so counted on them.

"Now all my hope is in what you may have prepared for me, and the trust that, under the circumstances, you will spend all this week likewise in working like a Trojan for the benefit of my stall.

"Hoping to see you this afternoon, or to hear from you this evening,

"I remain yours,

"Overwhelmed with business,

"ALICE BROAD."

As Mrs. Deacon folded up the letter she sighed, and Ida, lifting her tear-stained face, sobbed, "You too think it a bad business, mamma?"

"I think it a very bad business indeed," replied Mrs. Deacon, very gravely, "that all people should learn to distrust my child, should have reason to put no faith in her promises. And all because she persists in indulging her indolent love of putting off everything she has to do, or undertakes to do, to the last moment."

"I thought that you did not care much about fancy fairs," muttered Ida, turning restive again under reproof; but the tears streamed as heavily as before when her mother answered, in the same sad and serious tones—

"I care very much for kept promises, very much for the healthful, bright activity of spirit that does its best to keep them. Ah! Ida, when do you mean to pray, not with lips only, but with your heart, against your besetting sin? Is that also to be put off till a last moment, which may come as a thief in the night when you are least aware. From the moment you rise in the morning, which is always so late that you have scarcely time to say your prayers much less to pray them, till you jump into bed hurriedly at night in the same prayerless state, your days are all passed in putting everything off till the last moment. I confess that I feel ashamed, as most mothers would do, that our friends should all have to learn your laziness, but I am much more grieved when I think of the doom pronounced against the unprofitable servant who was too idle to make use of his Lord's gift. Remember we are not told that he did anything whatever that we call "bad," he was only indolent, lazy, idle. And for him the awful words were said, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness."

As Mrs. Deacon uttered that last solemn word she moved away from Ida's side, and left the room. It had indeed been a painful shock to her to find that not even a matter about which Ida had professed a great amount of girlish enthusiasm had induced her to make any effort to overcome the indolence to which day by day she showed an increasing disposition to yield. If Ida felt miserable, her mother was at least equally sad.

But to return to Maggie Hill, whom we left plodding her weary way home to her sister, with her bag as heavy as when she started, and her purse as empty.

(To be concluded.)

THE MIND AND THE HEALTH.

By MEDICUS.



NE of England's greatest political heroes, now, alas! gone from amongst us—succumbing in his goodly old age to the accident of a cold—was probably one of the hardest working men that ever lived. And not in politics alone were his talents displayed, for his labours

were equally as arduous in the vineyard of literature. His career is surely a proof that hard work and constant employment of mind are the very reverse of incompatible with longevity.

A lady of my acquaintance is not ashamed to confess to the allotted span—the three-score years and ten. She has been a most active woman all her life, both in mind and body, and there are certainly few signs of age about her yet. On the contrary, she enjoys exceptionally good health. She is fond of young folks, as all right-minded people of her age are, and there are few of their amusements she cannot take part in with zest. She says she tires sooner than she used to do. This alone reminds her of the flight of time. But why, you may ask me, do I adduce these cases? Is long life, then, a thing to be so devoutly wished for? I do not say it is. This paper is not written with the view to teaching my fair readers how to attain longevity, else it would have had quite a different title. But when we look at the number of aged people who are infirm, we must confess it is far better to be old and hale than old and ailing. Why should age be infirm? Nature, I am convinced, never meant it to be so. On the contrary, after a long life, well spent, the only forerunner to the coming change—apart from accidents—is simply a feeling of tiredness, a weariness, and a wish for rest. This is natural old age. Ah! but mark me, girl readers, there is an old age that cometh not of years, but of carelessness in living and waste of health. Some there be who, as far as all the phenomena of old age are concerned, positively begin to go down hill shortly after twenty. Now I would have those I address be the healthiest of the healthy; that is my ambition. I would have them learn these words by heart, and lay them to heart: *Non est vivere sed valere vita.** And it is with this view that I come before you, month after month, and in my homely matter-of-fact fashion try to teach you some of the golden rules of health, and the simple but beautiful laws of hygiene. My subject matter this month, I flatter myself, you will find neither dry nor uninteresting. The mind has a marvellous effect for good or for bad over the health, and if it be allowed to lie fallow and never exercised, or if the thoughts are unemployed, they act as a depressant, lower vitality, and prey upon the human frame, making it in reality old before its time.

But not only should the mind be kept rightly employed; it should be kept amused as well. Constant work means oftentimes constant worry, and this in itself is depressing and wearying.

But, on the other hand, relaxation from hours of labour does not necessarily imply rest. If the body is tired and the bones ache, lie prone by all means, and take a book and read. But do we not often hear girls complain—after they have got a day or two's holiday—that they don't know what to do with themselves?

* Life does not consist of mere living, but living in the full enjoyment of health.

There seems to be a gap made in their everyday life that they do not know exactly how to fill up. Apart from holidays, however, every girl has, or ought to have, several hours of the day all to herself; the question, then, "What should I do with my leisure time?" comes to be one that is far from unimportant, and one's happiness and health may depend upon a correct answer thereto.

I will try to answer the question for you, or, failing that, put you on the fair road to answer it for yourself. And, to begin, I wish you to believe with me that idleness is prejudicial to the health. This is a truth; it is more, it is an axiom.

Every girl, then, should, in my opinion, have a hobby or hobbies. I confess I do not like the sound of the word "hobby," but I have no better to use. I mean to imply by it some pursuit which may be followed with pleasure. I will now mention a few of the hobbies which may be taken up by girls, with the certainty that by keeping the mind delightfully employed they are conducive to health and a vigorous longevity.

Hobbies may be divided into two classes—namely, outdoor hobbies and indoor hobbies. The former are, of course, more suited for summer recreation; the latter, for the long fore-nights of winter.

Can anything be more delightful, I wonder, than the occupation of flower gardening, when conducted with care and taste? It is not necessary that the space you cultivate should be very large. Better, perhaps, it should not be so, but it will be very small indeed if you cannot succeed in keeping up a perfect succession of beautiful blooms, from the very day that the snowdrops, crocuses, and primroses first rear their modest heads above the brown earth, until the starry and radiant chrysanthemums droop and die beneath the chilling breath of the coming winter. In adopting the flower garden as a hobby a beginner should not attempt too much at first. Lay out your plot of ground, if possible, in the end of this year or very early in the beginning of next. Let the ground be as rich as possible, for you cannot expect to get rich flowers from a poor soil. Let it also, if possible, have a sunny aspect and shelter from the high winds. Follow some plan in laying out your ground, and this plan should first be devised and sketched on paper, with all its walks and beds and borders. For a small garden, tiles, I think, make the best edging, though some like box. Daisies look pretty as an edging, so does the crimson-blossomed sea-pink. Do not despise early spring flowers; no flower that blows or blooms can be considered common, they are all beautiful, and remember Who made them. Do not despise old-fashioned flowers either; what can be prettier than stocks and wall-flowers, or gorgeous bells of foxglove growing in semi-shaded nooks, or daisies white and red, or pansies of every hue. Sweet williams make a nice show, and there are dozens of others all easy of culture coming into season month by month and generally blooming for eight weeks at a time. Roses you will have; half standards are best for small gardens, and you can easily learn to bud them yourself on stems of the wild brier. In bedding-out time geraniums will come in charmingly, their gorgeous blossoms enriched by the blue of the tender lobelia, and the orange green of the golden pyrethrum. Nor will annuals be forgotten, best sown in beds, clusters, or borders. What can be more taking, for example, than a border of crimson linums (*Linum grandiflorum rubrum*), set off with splendid marigolds and starry larkspurs. But there, I must not pretend to teach gardening, I am but an amateur myself. I only want to show that health is to be found in the garden, and if you put your heart and mind to the