

There was rebellion, of course, for the child up to this time had revelled in the wildest freedom, and as the hours went by, and Nature with hot and fiery passion resented the wrong that was being done to her, she would entreat her mother, with tears streaming from her eyes, to loosen the bandages, if only but a little, that she might be freed from the strain that was crushing the very life out of her. This prayer, of course, could never be granted. With the winding of those cruel strips of calico round her feet a new era in her life had begun, and the happy, careless joys of childhood had vanished never to return.

After a certain interval of time, enough to prevent too great a shock to the system, the same process was repeated, only it became more severe and relentless as time went on. The supreme aim that was never lost sight of was to shorten the feet as much as possible and to stop any further growth in the future. To carry out these cruel thoughts the toes were drawn with savage force under the soles, whilst the heels were drawn forward as if to meet them.

Screams and agonies and floods of tears and piteous entreaties and shrieks of despair had all to be disregarded, whilst heels and toes, lying in opposite poles, were drawn with irresistible force towards a central chasm that acted as a boundary-line between members which Nature had ordained should never approach each other without disaster.

WOMEN.

The out-patient department of the new South London Hospital for women, which is to be staffed entirely by women doctors, is to be opened by Lady Castlereagh on April 2nd, at 88, Newington Causeway, to be followed by the erection of the new Hospital, staffed by women doctors, for the reception of in-patients on Clapham Common. The Clapham Maternity Hospital, which for twenty-five years has maintained an out-patient department for the diseases of women and children, has, on the urgent recommendation of King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, which promised "substantial help," decided to reconstruct the Hospital at a cost of £6,000. The Committee is working in friendly relationship with the authorities of the new Hospital, and considers itself relieved of the necessity for building new premises for "general" out-patients. At the same time, it is considered important that the position should be quite clearly stated, and that the public should understand that though two quite separate hospitals at Clapham are appealing to the public for funds in aid of building purposes, there is no overlapping.

The activities of women in the religious world are never more apparent than during the "May Meetings," which will shortly be upon us. A number of these, especially in connection with home and foreign missions, are restricted to women.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

THE COMBINED MAZE.*

The title takes its name from a favourite exercise of the Poly-Gym of which young Ranny Ransome was an enthusiastic member. And the Poly-Gym was just the short for the Polytechnic Gymnasium. It is the breezy wholesome atmosphere of the Gym that is the greatest charm of the book. Ranny was the son of a little middle-aged chemist, "weedy, parched and furtively inebriate." From the very first his mother said that Ranny was that venturesome, "It beats me where he gets it from." He himself was an utterly insignificant clerk, but his dream was yet of cleanness of health and of physical perfection. "He was the exponent of a city's desperate adolescence, these inarticulate enthusiasts of the earth. If you asked him the reason of his physical exercise he would say you did it because it kept you fit; also, if you pressed him, because it kept you decent." So much for Ranny as a youth. It was at the Gym that he first met Winny Dymond. Nothing could be more conventional or more unspeakably decorous than the young ladies of the Polytechnic Gymnasium. From the first Winny holds him. "It was not so much love as some inspired sense of comradeship mixed inextricably with that other sense of absurdity and tenderness."

Ranny's conversation is Cockney pushed to the extreme. In fact he would have described it as "the limit." It was really a pity that he could not consider it the "decent thing" to propose to Winny while his prospects were poor. Lying on his back in a meadow on a Sunday afternoon with her beside him he said that for his part he thought life was a pretty rotten show.

"Think," said Winny, "of the things you have got."

"What things?"

"Why," said Winny counting them off on her fingers, "you've got a father and mother, and new tyres to your bike. Good boots"—she stuck a buttercup in their laces—"and a most beautiful purple tie" (she held another buttercup under his chin.)

"It is a tidy tie," Ranny admitted, smiling because of the buttercup, "but me hat's a bit rocky. It's what a fellow hasn't got he wants. I've no prospects, not for years and years."

"No," said Winny, with decision, "and didn't ought to have, not at your age."

And so Ranny's opportunity passed, as he must of course do the decent thing.

And then Delilah came along in the shape of Violet Usher, and in one mad moment he forgot to do the decent thing, and in his raging remorse he married her within three weeks. The description of the little cheap villa that was far beyond their means is cleverly drawn. Their first quarrel

* By May Sinclair. Hutchinson & Co., London.

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