

IN PRAISE OF RAIN

ANONYMOUS

A HOT, sultry summer morning when the very leaves seem limp and lifeless, and the air is almost unbearable, so stifling is it. Animals and plants alike are languid with the heat and seem to have no energy, but long for the departed coolness and freshness of spring. Then, as the weary afternoon wears away, grey leaden clouds cover the burning sun, but as yet the heat has not diminished.

Suddenly, a rustle of expectancy from the leaves, a strange whisper of sound from the thirsty earth, and a cool, silvery veil of summer rain shuts out the distance. Afterwards, green and shining hedgerows; cool, soft, moist air, damp vivid grass, and all creation rejoicing in the calm of a peaceful summer evening. This is a picture of the pleasant side of a shower. Pessimists do not remember the pleasure of such a shower as has just been described but rather always complain of the discomfort of muddy streets, damp clothes and wet umbrellas, all the attributes of an average winter's downpour in this land of mists, fogs and rain. Yet to those who have eyes to see there is a quiet beauty in a dull cloudy day which is just as wonderful as that of a smiling world under a summer sun. To see the rain-clouds driven low across open country, the distance wrapped in a grey haze, and the long drops, so lightly sprinkled, yet so deeply penetrating scattered far over the eager earth has a charm of its own.

In the town the mist of falling rain makes a kindly veil over the sordid sootiness of brick buildings, and every street is reduced to a "study in tones of grey and black." The pools on the pavement but serve to double, as in a mirror, the brilliance of the street lamps, and the passing trams—blazes of cheerful light—lend a welcome touch of color to the scene.

So even in this dear but not over brilliant country of ours a rainy day, whether in town or country, may be glorified with a little imagination into a real "thing of beauty" even though it can scarcely be called a "joy for ever."

So far, only English rain has been mentioned. We have a sufficient but not excessive rainfall so we cannot well imagine the experience of living in a monsoon land during the wet season. Now can we imagine what it must be like to live in an oasis of the Sahara, where a shower is almost a miracle, and where every shower seems to have magic properties, so soon does the herbage spring up from the moist earth after it. Could we have had both these experiences, more especially the last one, I think we should appreciate more the bountiful supply of rain with which we are blessed. Without rain man could not live. Many people do not stop to realise this fact when grumbling about the weather. "What a nuisance!" It is beginning to rain. Perhaps if these discontented people were to live for one month in the heart of the Sahara on a small oasis, when they came back to their own land their

opinions on rainfall in general and the British climate in particular, might have undergone a slight modification.

There is no time now to go into a detailed description of the various uses of rain, such as purifying the air, being the source of rivers, giving life to all vegetables and through them to all animals. Instead that sign of hope and promise, formed by the rain and the light, the rainbow, shall be noted. A bridge from the dwelling of the gods to that of mortal men; the messenger of the gods; the sign of pardon and peace, all these are meanings that men,—Christian and Pagan—have given to this beautiful phenomenon. And the old Pagans showed a wisdom and beauty in their manner of explaining this wonder, which was only excelled by our Christian belief. Great poets have written exquisite songs to rain; great writers have praised its beauty and usefulness; great artists have painted it in all its varying forms; and, so long as there are men on this earth who are willing to listen to the voice of nature humbly and sincerely, it will never fail to inspire them with great thoughts and great reverence.

MEDICAL MAGAZINE PAGE

BY MISS MACKENZIE.

THE *Practitioner* has a practical note on the treatment of tonsillitis by Lapat. He regards it as a local injection in the first few hours, and uses applications to destroy the bacilli and their toxins. He removes the exudation from the tonsils by swabbing with hydrogen peroxide, and then applying iodine Solution (5 per cent). These applications are made twice a day, and the throat is also sprayed with a preparation of ichthyolis and olei anisi.

Rosenberg (*The Practitioner* June 1915) in "American Medicine" regards cinnamon oil as an excellent remedy for warts. A drop of oil is applied daily to each wart, which disappears in a few days leaving no scars. The application is painless and not unpleasant. An extract from the *Paris Medical Journal* in the *Practitioner*, suggests the substitution of quiniodor for iodoform. It is a preparation of iodine and powdered red cinchona; has a pleasant aroma and is as powerfully antiseptic as iodoform, besides being cheaper.

A conference was recently held in Dundee. (*Lancet*, July 31, 1915) between representatives of the Royal Infirmary and the Approved Societies to consider how the work of maternity hospitals might be brought into line with the objects of the Insurance Act (Maternity benefit). As some of the most practical ways of achieving this object are antenatal care, a carefully supervised puerperium and care and attention to the infant during the first few days of life, it was proposed that Maternity Hospitals and Approved Societies in Dundee should co-operate towards this end.

Recent investigations by American and British medical men seems to throw some doubt on the efficacy of strychnine as a cardiac stimulant. (*Lancet*, August 7, 1915). It is reported in the *British Medical Journal* of June