

SONG.

"WHILE CUCKOOS ARE CALLING."

By CLARA THWAITES.

WHILE cuckoos are calling
 In the greenwood gay,
 Through windflowers and daffodils
 I take my way.
 Ankle-deep in bluebells,
 Deep in moss and fern,
 The primrose sweet and violets meet
 My steps at every turn,
 While cuckoos are calling.
 None so blithe as I,
 While cuckoos are calling.

Through the bridge's broken rafter,
 Where I stand and sing,
 Comes the river's gleam and laughter
 Like a call of spring.
 Oh, there's laughter from the throstle,
 Rapture from the sky,
 Yet in all the woodland rustle
 None are blithe as I,
 While cuckoos are calling.
 None so blithe as I,
 While cuckoos are calling.



DOMESTIC CHANGES OF THE LAST FIFTY YEARS.



In this jubilee year of Queen Victoria the air is filled with reports of manifold changes and improvements. The Archbishop of Canterbury, in a speech at the Mansion House, said, "If there was one word characteristic of the reign of our gracious Queen, it was the word 'Progress.'" There has been political progress, and social progress, and progress in science, art, religion, education, invention, and in all departments of public life. But there has been little said as yet about the changes that have been witnessed in domestic life. Let it be our more modest task to refer to a few of the changes in this respect. Wherein do things differ now in our houses and homes from what they were in the days of our mothers and grandmothers?

In some of the most important points of home life, in household relations and arrangements, there is little of change to record; furniture, dress, service, cookery, and other domestic affairs are very much now as they were in other reigns and times. In fact, there has been in some of these things the reverse of progress. I do not think, for example, that servants are now better than in olden times; dress may be cheaper, but certainly is not better in substance than in times before stuffs and "shoddies" came in. It is the same with furniture; the old things were more solid and substantial than in this age of veneer and French polish. Still, there are sundry novelties and inventions of recent times that have

brought additional comfort and pleasure to our homes.

For example, what an immensity of time and toil is saved by the sewing machine, an instrument unknown a few years ago! Other American inventions as ingenious, if not so important, are of recent introduction. In the South Kensington Exhibition, popularly known as "The Inventories," there was quite a multitude of machines and contrivances of varied use quite unknown in former days. A whole host of useful things are produced from caoutchouc, or indiarubber, from "mackintosh" cloaks and sheets to the substitutes for ancient "clogs," familiarly called by our American cousins, "rubbers." Even in so small a matter as striking a light, what a contrast in the safety match to the old tinderbox or phosphorus bottle of fifty years ago!

Letter-writing is one of our common home occupations. What an advance we have seen in every epistolary and postal arrangement! The use of metal pens, whether steel or gold, is a great improvement over the old goose-quill pens, the frequent mending of which by a penknife must have been a great nuisance and waste of time. Paper is cheaper and better, with envelopes of every sort. Postage is vastly cheaper, and the conveyance of letters cheaper and safer, both by home and foreign mails. Do you know that no steamer had ever crossed the Atlantic to America until Victoria came to the throne? Railroads had only begun to run. The postage to Scotland was more than a shilling, and the time twice what it is now. There were no cheap newspapers in those days, and the so-called "taxes on knowledge" made books and advertisements, as well as newspapers, dear.

Photographs, with all their family and social pleasures, were unheard of in the early years of Victoria's reign. The new art of sun-printing was just beginning to be spoken about among scientific men; but it took years of invention and experiment before the now

universal photograph, whether in portrait or in landscape, became popular.

In the department of the kitchen and larder there is not much change to mention, except it be the introduction of gas cooking-stoves and register grates. The enormous supply of all sorts of provisions in tinned cases—meats, soups, vegetables, fruits, and even milk—is the chief novelty in the store-room.

In bedrooms the old wooden beds are very generally superseded by iron and brass bedsteads. The huge four-poster beds, with their heavy drapery, have disappeared from all but old-fashioned state rooms. We are told by Burton, and J. K. Lord, and other travellers, that not a few of the British four-posters have found their way to the houses and tents of Arab sheiks, and there do duty as the raised dais, on which the chief sits in ceremonial dignity smoking his pipe.

With regard to general changes in our houses, the last fifty years have seen improved drains, water supply, baths, and other sanitary arrangements. In the homes of the rich there are also various conveniences in the matter of lifts, speaking tubes, electric bells, and other comforts unknown in earlier years of the reign.

Last, not least, let us be grateful for what our parlours and libraries show of improvements in books and magazines. Take the illustrations alone. The art of wood-cutting has made immense advance since the days of the *Penny Magazine*, the first volume of which was contemporaneous with her Majesty's accession. Compare the pictures in that once popular periodical with those in similar works of our own day, the *Leisure Hour*, for instance, and the advance in illustrated literature is striking. Most conspicuous is this improvement in every branch of youthful literature. To go no further than the publication now in the hand of the reader, the earlier years of the Queen's reign could not have witnessed the production of a periodical known throughout Her Majesty's empire as THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER.