

FOR A FRIEND'S BIRTHDAY

BY CELIA THAXTER

WOULD I could bring you some beautiful gift,
 Something to gladden you, something to charm,
 A blessing to brighten, to cheer, to uplift,
 A shield to protect you from shadow of harm!

Had I the power I'd gather for you
 All the world's treasures of good and of fair,
 All things to comfort you—friends that are true,
 Joys that are purest, and pleasures most rare.

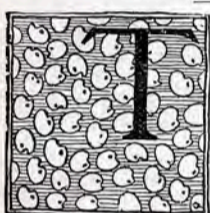
These at your feet on your birthday I'd lay,
 Fill its swift moments with quiet delight,
 Make it divine from its earliest ray,
 From the gleam of its morn to the dusk of its night.

Empty my hands, but my heart holds for you
 All the good wishes of heaven and earth,
 Fragrant as roses at dawn in the dew—
 With these let me crown the glad day of your birth!



*XI.—WOMEN AS ILLUSTRATORS

BY MAUDE HAYWOOD



HE first point to be emphasized to any one who contemplates taking up illustrating for the press as a means of livelihood, is the absolute necessity of possessing a good knowledge of drawing as a requisite and indispensable

qualification at the very outset. Otherwise, there is nothing which justifies the choice of this as a profession. Moreover, without the previous acquirement of at least the first principles of art, it is both useless and foolish to expect to achieve success. It is best and kindest to be entirely frank and decisive in this statement from the beginning. This series of papers is not being written in order to raise false and delusive hopes of a visionary career in the various callings treated of, but to give honest advice, based on practical experience, which shall help those possessing the necessary ability to turn their knowledge to profitable account, and which shall, at the same time, if possible, save those not having the needful qualities from an attempt that can only result in heart-sickening failure and disappointment.

A certain facility of execution with the pen, and the exercise of that care in the finish of a drawing, however slight and sketchy it may be, which is a distinguishing mark of professional workmanship, is likewise necessary; and also, finally, that which can only be gained by each individual, gradually, often through failures at first, namely, a practical knowledge of how the drawings will come out under various conditions, and of the technical details, which must be duly regarded, in order to ensure satisfactory reproductions. For instance, it is obvious that illustrations for a high class of magazine, which will be printed on good paper, in the best manner possible, must require a different method of treatment from those destined for a newspaper hastily turned out by the thousand, on very absorbent paper, with common printer's ink. For the latter, the lines must be simple, fine, clear, unbroken, vigorous and sufficiently far apart not to blur together in the printing. The shading should be very slight. A glance at the city dailies will show at once what is meant, bearing in mind that the originals are always drawn considerably larger, in order that they may be reduced in the reproduction, and therefore that the lines are made by the artist much farther apart than they appear when published.

The improvements in the photo-engraving process, and the comparative cheapness of reproducing drawings by this method, in late years, have greatly increased the demand for pen draughtsmen, and there is always an opening for any one, women equally with men, who can turn out really good work. Perhaps more even might be said for the chances of those whose drawings are of undoubted merit. Editors frequently complain of the difficulty of getting the work satisfactorily accomplished, and profess themselves willing, so to speak, to pay any price to a really competent artist, while they are obliged to reject by the score the utterly unsuitable drawings submitted to them, because a practical eye can see at a glance that it would be impossible to reproduce them with any good result, apart from the consideration of their artistic value. While the woman who seeks to illustrate should have the artistic values of her work in mind, she must not forget the market for which that piece of work is intended.

Now, a few words of advice as to finding a market for the work in the beginning. We will imagine that the reader is possessed of the first two requisites mentioned above, namely, a knowledge of art in general, and of pen-drawing in particular, but that at present the third—practical experience—is entirely lacking. This, therefore, it is the primary object to obtain at any cost; and in the beginning the amount of actual pecuniary return should be a very secondary consideration, success being reckoned according to the experience gained rather than by the dollars earned. Later, this period—a period of apprenticeship—will be amply made up for by the prices which really good work always commands. It is worth while to be patient, provided it can be felt that something is learned from every drawing made. Moreover, where a worker is really capable and energetic, using to the utmost every opportunity for gaining experience and making progress, it will soon be found that one thing leads to another, once a start has been made in actual practical work. A good method of obtaining steady employment is from photo-engraving companies, which have a very varied class of work pass through their hands. Apart from the reproduction of *bona fide* pen-drawings, they are often called upon to imitate more expensive processes. For instance, many illustrations are made to resemble wood-cuts so closely as to be almost indistinguishable from them. For examples of this, study the advertisement pages of the principal monthly magazines. The drawings have to be made by copying the line shading peculiar to wood engraving; and although in many cases this requires little more than mechanical skill, there are so few, comparatively, who can do them successfully, that the work is very well paid, and any one competent to undertake it would find no lack of employment.

With regard to obtaining a permanent position with a magazine or newspaper, it must naturally be greatly a matter of chance, however capable the artist, whether such a position be vacant. Those not living in any of the large cities will often have a better opportunity of getting an opening with a local publication, because there would be less competition to encounter. This might possibly be only a stepping stone to something better, meanwhile proving the occasion for testing the powers and developing the capabilities of one thoroughly in earnest. In submitting work to an editor, try to look at things from his point of view. Do not send him drawings that anyone of common sense must judge unsuitable or unworthy, and expect to have them accepted. In dealings with him be business-like, clear and to the point. Be, above all, reliable and prompt. On these points a woman should be especially careful, in order to vindicate the possession of business qualities by her sex. And it is a fact that—man or woman—anyone taking up illustration work, to be successful must be very practical as well as artistic. A good deal of patience may also be needed, and the realization that the fact of a drawing being rejected does not necessarily imply that it lacks merit; there may be many other reasons why it is not available just where it was offered. At first it may seem very discouraging to have work declined, but perseverance, always provided it is backed by capability, is bound finally to gain the wished-for opening, and then success wholly depends upon the use made of one's opportunities.

Probably the question naturally arising in the minds of many, on reading this article, will be: "How much could I earn at this work?" Such a question is very difficult to answer with any degree of definiteness, obviously so much must depend on the ability of the artist, the rapidity with which drawings can be accomplished, the class of work undertaken, and much, also, on the "push" and perseverance of the individual. The writer recently asked a draughtsman of experience as to the average prices paid by the photo-engraving companies, eliciting the reply: "Anything from fifty cents to a hundred dollars;" and nothing less vague could be extracted from him. But he vouchsafed the information that thoroughly competent pen-draughtsmen are in actual demand, and can make their work very remunerative, even without entering into the highest branches of their art; but that those who are not able to accomplish what they attempt, and who are careless, deficient or incapable, cannot hope to achieve success. Salaries vary as greatly, ranging from perhaps fifteen or twenty dollars a week upwards; the higher branches of illustration, which however require great artistic ability, and a special gift, commanding good incomes. Those who can do such work, however, will need no advice as how to obtain employment, neither have they made their names or their fortune at one step. They have mostly fought their way up by sheer hard work, and from modest beginnings. There is no royal road to success, although nature has endowed some with greater natural talents, and so made their progress easier and more rapid. But in any case, don't expect to gain your ambition in a week, a month, or even a year.

Don't become discouraged, impatient or out of heart if the drawings do not come out at first just as you expected. Nothing worth knowing was ever learned except through failure.

Don't expect mistakes to miraculously disappear in the reproduction. This is a common delusion with beginners. Reducing the drawings refines them somewhat, but never corrects a wrong line.

Don't copy. This is the biggest don't of all. Whatever the work, let it be original. Draw directly from nature as much as possible, and never get into the way of cribbing other people's ideas; it is fatal to the development of individuality. Freshness and novelty of expression have their market as well as their artistic value, and are an indispensable quality in order to rise above the common level—and this is the legitimate aim of even the humblest beginner.

*This series of papers "Women's Chances as Bread-winners," was commenced with
 "HOW TO BECOME A TRAINED NURSE" January
 "WOMEN AS STENOGRAPHERS" February
 "WOMEN AS DRESSMAKERS" March
 "BEE-KEEPING FOR WOMEN" April
 "WOMEN AS DOCTORS" May
 "WOMEN AS TYPESETTERS" June
 "THE GIRL WHO WANTS TO TEACH" September
 "WOMEN AS INTERIOR DECORATORS" October
 "WOMEN IN ART" November
 "WOMEN IN ART" December
 The back numbers can be obtained at ten cents each.