

to attain the position it now occupies as the most comprehensive carrying agency in existence. It is now linked with the postal organisations on the Continent and in the colonies. This has increased its usefulness as well as its business, the foreign and colonial post sending and receiving six thousand packages per week.

We shall just say a word now about the chief office at St. Martin's-le-Grand. Here we have parcels coming in as they would at any other post office, being handed over the counter, weighed, stamped, and booked. For this purpose there are two counters, one facing the west for the convenience of those coming from that direction, the other facing the east for those coming thence. At these counters the ordinary business is at the rate of four thousand parcels per day. The other inlet for parcels is at the south end of the building, and receives all that are collected from the City and suburban offices as well as those passing through London.

In this end of the Post Office yard, scenes of rare bustle and animation are daily, and indeed hourly, to be witnessed. Van after van, with its freight of parcels, disengages itself smartly from the stream

of vehicles which flows along Cheapside, rattles into the yard, and in a few minutes its cargo of parcels quietly descends by the hydraulic lift, which carries them to the sorting rooms below. From a platform in this yard, too, parcel despatches, in almost constant succession, are being hurried off to the principal London railway stations, at each of which, it should be remarked, there is a large Post Office *dépôt*, into which, and from which, parcels are collected and delivered over a large surrounding area.

These latter and the parcels received at the counters are sent down to the basement, where they are sorted into racks, each rack being devoted to a certain district or town, the name of which is painted in large letters. From these racks the parcels are then removed by packers, those for one destination being carefully packed in one basket, and those for another in another, and so on. These baskets are then sealed, placed on a hydraulic lift, and hoisted into the vans, to be conveyed to the railway station. Everything is done with such method and such care that mistakes are next to impossible, and the only feeling with which one can view the scene on a busy day is a feeling of admiration for a truly wonderful system.

W. B. R.

NOTHING FOR NOUGHT.



A GREAT deal might be written and very curious information given upon the whole subject of advertisements past and present, but it is only now to one class of them that we particularly wish to draw attention: a class most specially attractive in these days—the offers of work.

“Work for the Unemployed;” “Work for the Half-employed;” “Work for the Clever;” “Work for the Ignorant;” “Work to gain an Income;” “Work to gain Pocket-money.” “None of it

troublesome!” “All of it genuine!” “Position no hindrance!” “Distance no drawback!” “For those in society, work!” “For far-away country-folk, work!”

Such has been the tenor of the advertisement sheet of the newspapers through the many long weeks of the last few months.

No one, it may be taken for granted, is so fond of work as not to substitute for it in his own mind that which it represents—money. And is that indeed to be obtained so easily?

We speak only of what we have read. It is in print; it must be true. “No previous knowledge re-

quired.” So runs the advertisement. “Easy work; pleasant work; no pressure as to time; work to be done in your *leisure moments*—not even your disengaged *hours*. Quite private; no one need know anything about it. If you are a lady you remain a lady still.” (No one need know that you *worked* to buy your pretty hat!—such must be the inference intended.) “Ten shillings, twenty shillings, forty shillings easily gained every week.” Oh, delightful!

The pay is higher, certainly, than we are accustomed to hear of as being earned by women easily. True, very clever embroiderers, card-painters, or copyists may occasionally command the highest of these sums, and obtain it with less labour than those who can only gain the lowest. But what of that? It is not for them that work is so earnestly needed; they are the few, and their skill is in demand; but that has nothing to do with our subject; the work offered in these advertisements is so easy that it needs no knowledge or experience or special faculty. In some exceptional cases a little instruction may be required, but then success is assured at fixed periods:—*e.g.*, drawing of ordinary kinds you shall do in a week; designing, arabesques, flowers, &c., soon after. You need never have had a pencil in your hand before or seen a paintbrush, yet in a specified number of days you shall draw the human form divine with perfect accuracy—nay, more, with the success which is the test of excellence—the remunerative evidence of a weekly salary!

Why, then, do we allow these golden offers to require repetition day by day and week by week? Surely the laziest of the "upper classes of either sex" might find something inviting enough in such work to induce them to rush in and fill their purses.

There is, however, one small stipulation. You must buy your tools; no one can work without his tools. In order to make quite sure of their being good—so good that not even a bad workman can complain of them—you *must* buy them of your employer. Then if, unfortunately, after all these precautions, your unpractised hand should not produce work quite up to the standard he has set before his mind's eye, the ten or twenty shillings you have paid him for materials will, though he is forced to reject your work, secure him from any loss your want of skill might have occasioned him by the expense of correspondence and the advertisements of which you availed yourself. While, on the other hand, if your artistic powers are undeniably equal to the work, and yet, perchance, his market be at the time overstocked, so that a quantity of good work coming in weekly would be embarrassing, he can, acting on the impulse of an honourable man, employ and pay you until you have been quite reimbursed for the outlay on the materials.

Who can complain? You lose nothing—nay, you gain, for you have no doubt some of the paints left—he loses nothing; he made his little gain on the sale of the materials, and he has your work to sell. Plainly, this is a most admirably just distribution of work and profits. Oh, but your time and skill! Bah! what is the value of that? It was only for leisure time and ignorance that he advertised.

A fee of one, two, or three guineas, paid for instruction, is supposed to carry with it a promise of employment—for how long, we believe is not specified.

All these money-making promises demand your time and trouble in experimenting and inquiring. They are disheartening—perhaps you have called them so. Let me, then, introduce the seekers after profits to another and easier road designed to reach the same happy end.

You are in "society"; you see many people; you hear much talk on many subjects—house-building, furnishing, decoration, investments. Among your extensive acquaintance there are many who want a little advice on matters great or small.

Get up a subject—several subjects. Offer your services, or, more correctly, accept the offered engagement of a company, a firm, a syndicate—by any name 'twill pay as well—become their agent; then your advice, offered gratis to your friend, will be gain to you as well as to him, or whatever it may prove to him. The locks on his doors, the screws to his windows, the paper adorning his walls, the grate by which he sits to enjoy the ruddy glow—nay, the very coals which produce that genial heat, may all, if you but understand your work, be made to contribute to your yearly income.

What a happy thought for your friend, were he but cognisant of it! Surely the gratitude he feels for your

kind help would sparkle and run over if he but knew the whole.

You may go a step further in the course of mutual assistance. People in society are not all rich. How invaluable is the advice of a friend—not a professional financial adviser—who "understands about things," and can give good counsel upon small concerns in the stockbroking way—"things" that will make small savings yield a good dividend. Why, if you can impart such knowledge, is it not fair that you should have a fee?—paid, of course, by the company you serve. In this case, again, you effect a double good—one to your neighbour, the other, more certain, to yourself.

If you live away in the country, out of society's reach, there are still many things you can use for your self-help business.

There is paint, and cattle medicine; there are new pens, and nickel silver pencil-cases, but that last venture has been rather discredited. There must be also, though far beyond the reach of all ordinary aspirations, the position of head promoter to each of these beneficent schemes of the enviable potentate who, unlike the curmudgeon of our early years, scatters broadcast invitations to all comers to "pick up gold and silver on Tom Tiddler's ground."

Who invents the schemes? Who justifies them? Who are taken in by them? are the questions which arise in one's mind after some investigation and a little experience on the subject.

The last question is the one most easily answered. Over the two first there hangs a mystery which it may be as well not to seek to solve.

We know that a good many hungry fish must rise to the bait, or the line would not be worth the trouble of throwing. They belong to two classes, the larger of which comprises those who do not believe, or who have not lived long enough to understand, that nothing is to be had for nought—that if they offer Mr. A. or Mr. B. perfect ignorance and scraps of time, however kindly he may assure them that such shoddy is all he desires, he will not give anything worth having in return. By the same rule, having advertised for what "any one can do," there is no contract binding him to esteem or remunerate valuable work as of any greater worth than what he asked for.

Good work is always to be bought. The man who advertises a high remuneration for work that "any one" can do will soon find the market glutted, and cease to pay, or will pay good work badly.

The other class of dupes consists of people who are always on the look-out for money *easily* made—for work without labour, which, in truth, never does and never will produce anything more than an occasional and accidental flash in the pan. They are the same kind of persons whom we may imagine likely to answer another description of advertisement in which, for the consideration of £50 or so, paid to-morrow, you are assured that you shall receive employment or interest worth £500—some day.

It is a melancholy evidence of the ignorance and gullibility of thousands in our midst, that it should be

worth the while of speculators to make so many offers of these kinds. There is nothing new in them, except their multiplicity.

Besides these offers of work easily done and well paid, and these agencies for helping to make others happy, comfortable, and rich, there is yet another description of advertisement addressed to the literary, the intellectual, the amateur who would fain see himself in print, the writer who would be an author could he but get ducats for his thoughts.

"Come!" cry the voices of more than two or three societies; "come to us; we will help you; we will advise you. Your talent need no longer be hidden. You have offered your wares in the market, and in vain. Ah! publishers are unappreciative; editors are over-busy; but we—we have nothing to do. We will read for the publisher; we will advise the editor. Your MS. shall be weighed and sold—at least, we hope so; if not the first, then the second, the third,

the fourth. Continue to write; continue to send us your guinea yearly; subscribe to our magazine, and do not fear—we will try what we can do for you. Look at our list; did you ever read any of the books to which we have acted guardian? Look at the names of our patrons, and be persuaded. Just for the sake of a few guineas will you let your MS. remain ever a manuscript? You think that from a publisher or an editor you have the best chance of getting a right judgment. Do you not know that the world is governed by go-betweens? Pay your money and confide in us."

It is strange indeed if, between art, literature, and finance, sensational tales, society paragraphs, Stock Exchange syndicates, and word competitions, something is not to be gained by the experience one derives from the tempting offers of would-be benefactors.

Something—but it is a salutary lesson, to find that work is work, all promises to the contrary notwithstanding.

C. W.

MORE HINTS ABOUT ARTISTIC FURNITURE.

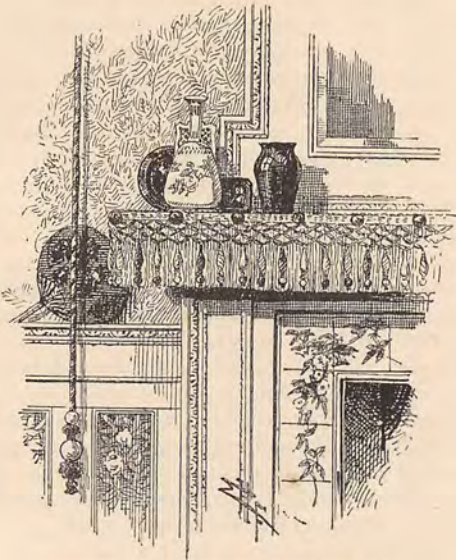
HANGINGS.



SI turned to examine the carpets, curtains, and furniture coverings in the set of rooms I was describing last month,* I was struck with the wonderful change the last few years have worked in such things; instead of the then fashionable magenta and pea-green rep curtains which, in turn with stiff netted cotton,

used to adorn our windows, we now see soft hanging serge, art plush, and the lightest Madras muslin. The largely-beflowered, many-coloured carpets are things of the past; even in first-class lodging-houses they only live in memory. In some rooms the white wool hearth-rug is still a cherished idol, upon which no chair may ever be placed, but its reign is nearly over: it is being fast hurried to the dye-pot, and will end its days a peacock-blue or sage-green harmony instead of a white atrocity.

To properly describe the hangings in this set of rooms, it will be best to take them one by one, as only minute details can give an idea of the appearance of the whole. The first room I entered was small and square, with two rather large windows side by side; it struck me as being very richly furnished. The same tone of colour was used for walls, carpet, curtains, and coverings, but in different degrees: the walls were papered with a plain unpatterned paper of light Venetian red; a wooden dado ran round the room and was painted white, the same colour as the door and the window-shutters. The mantelpiece was also of white painted wood, and it stood out well from the Venetian red background. The entire floor was covered with Indian matting: not the ordinary cheap substance of white and red, for this was dyed in colours of the old Egyptian mattings, and is therefore just the thing for putting under Persian carpets; it can be bought in London at from two to four shillings a yard, according to quality and width. Over this was a Persian carpet, covering the centre of the room: it was fourteen feet nine by eleven feet one, and had cost twenty-nine pounds ten shillings; it was a small pattern, an Eastern design in quiet colours; it had been down for some years when I saw it, but showed no sign of wear. The Persian carpets cost money



MOROISH MANTEL-FRIEZE AND BELL-PULL.

* "Some Hints about Hand-painted Furniture." CASSELL'S MAGAZINE, December, 1886, p. 30.