

by the dry heat of our greenhouses are at once apparent. Your camellias and azaleas will, by the end of June, have made their growth; they will be benefited now, therefore, by a removal from your greenhouse to any sheltered situation out of doors for a couple of months at least.

And in the kitchen garden one of our troubles this month is certainly the weeds. Not only our crops but our very garden paths want constant hoeing and clearing.

Our cabbage beds should also be attended to; have your ground prepared, and then sow for spring use towards the end of this month, while cabbage plants that you want for use in autumn and winter may now be planted out.

Cauliflowers, too, that you may, perhaps, have sown in May, may now be pricked out and set in a rich and warm border, and a little successional planting out of celery is admirable just now. The great fault and mistake in our domestic gardening is, for the most part, that thoughtless one of sowing everything at once; one great crop of peas, one great crop of beans, and so on. Many families could supply a boys' school with peas for a single week, but for the rest of

the summer could not find a dish for their own use. Successional sowing is the only remedy for this idle waste and extravagance. By the end of the month or in August the onion bed may be sown.

While, however, we can contrive to have several crops of one vegetable throughout the summer, by means of successional sowing, we have to be content with a single crop of our fruits, such as our strawberries, currants, and gooseberries, for which this is our harvest month. For preserving, choose a dry day for fruit-picking, and even then do not begin in the early morning. Fruit gathered for preserving which is not dry will only result in disaster. The strawberry crop, however, will go on bearing for some little time, and you will help the fruit-bearing properties of your plant by gathering some few at least *as* they ripen. And then we must have a word as to our cucumber and melon frames. A little clear manure-water, though very much diluted, helps to keep the bearing cucumber plants in vigour. Stop and regulate all shoots that are disposed to go ahead too much; they only tend to exhaust the plant, and will make it cease bearing earlier than would be otherwise the case; nor should you allow too many cucumbers to be ripening at once.

A DAY IN A PROOF-READER'S LIFE.



HAVE often thought of writing a description of my present course of life, a life so different from that in which I formerly had a share. After the perusal each of my readers will, no doubt, answer the first advertisement he sees for a proof-reader.

To begin with, night work of this kind cuts me off from all social enjoyments, my work-time being other people's play-time, and *vice versa*. The afternoon I have to myself, and this would be a great advantage were I strong enough to take a long walk every day: as it is, I have to stay in the house, and amuse myself as best I can, generally by a little light reading. I dare not read long, for fear of sore eyes; serious or hard reading would give me a headache, and spoil me for my long night's work. Once I tried to get a smattering of German, but found it altogether too much.

Six o'clock finds me ready for work. The composing-room is a large, rather low room, at the very top of the newspaper building, the roof-beams being its only architectural adornments. Half is occupied by the rows of tall wooden frames, on which the compositors place the cases of type they are using; the other half by the "stones"—in this case iron-covered tables—on which the type, when "set," is arranged in

columns and pages. The walls and ceiling (in this particular newspaper office of which I write) are white-washed once a year or so, but the floor has never been washed since the place was built, and as the ventilation is imperfect, the atmosphere which greets one on going into the room on a warm summer evening may be imagined. At one side of the room is the overseer's raised desk; on the other side are the three little boxes for the readers, resembling Dutch ovens (and just as suitable for roasting us), and scarcely large enough to hold a desk and two people. Here I sit all night, with a blazing gas-jet a few inches from my head and the hot-water pipes at my feet, scarcely once leaving my box from six till half-past three. The only break is the supper half-hour, but the work slackens considerably after two o'clock, when the first edition has to be ready, to catch the early trains, and most of the compositors leave.

Most people know what correcting a proof is. But it is one thing now and then to correct a proof of something in which you take an interest, and quite another to be obliged to read proof after proof as fast as possible for hours together, the contents, whether advertisements or what is ironically termed "news," being quite uninteresting, and often disgusting. I have to contend with broken type, and badly-printed proofs—anything is good enough for the reader; I must mark every mistake of compositor, reporter, telegraph clerk, and editor, from the smallest "printer's error" up to mistakes in grammar and construction,

and in statements of fact ; and I must make no mistake myself. As you may imagine, this becomes very monotonous ; but it is hard work, demanding constant careful attention ; and try as one may, the chances are that if the compositor makes a really bad mistake the reader will not notice it, and every copy of the paper will contain it.

Such is my "daily round." Perhaps something about the men amongst whom I work would be interesting. My companion in my box is the reading-"boy," who reads over the manuscript copy to me, so that I may mark the compositor's deviations on my proof. Though quite uneducated, he is very intelligent, and has often helped me in a difficulty ; indeed, I am constantly incurring new obligations to him for his attention. The most irritating and depressing thing about him is the contrast between the indifference with which he reads a literary or scientific address, and the zest with which he goes through some miserable police case.

The overseer is the most important man in the place ; he dismisses compositors and readers at his pleasure ; and even the editors have to attend to what he wants. So far as I am concerned he has been civil, even considerate ; only in the matter of overwork and holidays have I any grievance.

The men are fair specimens of the "respectable British working man." As compositors their trade itself is an education, continually requiring the exercise of their minds, if only within a limited range. Some

few grave faults and defects I have noticed, but it would be most ungenerous for me to dwell upon them ; for, if I can find only one or two whom I would care to have for friends, I owe much to all of them for the civility and good-will they have shown to me. I came here as an outsider, and had they chosen to take offence, as would not have been unnatural, they could easily have made my position untenable. They have done the very reverse. To mention only one thing : again and again when I have passed some gross or ludicrous blunder, the corrector has brought the proof back to me, and asked me to put it right. You will see how different this might have been when I tell you that I have known a compositor, in correcting a proof, to come across a silly mistake unnoticed by the reader, leave it uncorrected, and next day himself call the overseer's attention to it on finding that none of the editors had made complaint about it. So you see that even in this prison-house I have something to be thankful for.

So much for the newspaper office. The longest night is over at last, and I set out on my three-miles' walk home. Occasionally snow or rain makes it one continual toil and wretchedness ; but, in compensation, I have sometimes a fine starlit sky, or (in summer) a beautiful sunrise to gladden my eyes and occupy my thoughts as I pass along the deserted streets. I am thoroughly tired in body and mind when I get home, but "the rest of the labouring man is sweet," even if he does not have enough of it.

BIRDS OF THE MONTHS.

JULY—CUCKOO.

HE'S told his name to every grove—
Cry shame such vanity upon !
Yet now at parting we grow sad,
For when he leaves us spring has gone.

