



PAYING OCCUPATIONS
for GENTLEWOMEN
out door work

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UNDER this title may be considered not only such open-air occupations as gardening, which would include fruit and vegetable raising and flower culture, but such employments as would take a gentle-

woman away from her home for a part or the whole of the day without necessitating her engagement in an office or in a family where she would be required to spend not only her days but her nights and Sundays.

The subject of gardening for gentlewomen has been so often and so thoroughly ventilated in the English newspapers and magazines that there is little left to be said about it except perhaps a suggestion as to the most inexpensive and practical way of engaging in the work. At the same time it should be understood that gardening, taken up in a small way, would be an occupation from which one would derive more pleasure than profit, since the market prices for flowers, fruits, and vegetables are extremely low. Yet a gentlewoman having a small income might find gardening a means of adding to it. If, for example, she is occupying a house in London, she would probably experience little difficulty in letting it furnished for the fashionable season, during which time she might take up her own residence in a little country house with a small garden, at the low rental of forty or fifty pounds a year. The profits of her town house ought surely to be enough to pay the rental of the country house and the wages of a man and wife, who during the summer could act

as gardener and general servant and during the rest of the year as caretakers. Selecting her country home as convenient as possible to a railway station, a gentlewoman should be able to secure among her friends, and by advertising, a dozen or more customers whom she could supply during the season with vegetables and flowers. If with the supplying of vegetables and flowers she could combine the very agreeable profession of table decorating for dinner parties and receptions, going by train to London as occasion required, her income would be materially increased. In making her charges for this latter work, she must, of course, take into consideration the cost of her railway fare, so that her profits would not be so large as though she resided in town and incurred no travelling expenses. For table decorating the remuneration varies according to the simplicity or elaborateness required. From two to five shillings an hour is received by ladies who have taken up this profession.

However, for women who have neither homes nor incomes, it would be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to start in the business of gardening or poultry raising. The same may be said of turning farmers, as many American women have done in recent years. In some parts of the Western states where land is cheap, a number of girls, after graduating from colleges with such degrees as "Bachelor of Science" or "Bachelor of Letters," have bought farms, and are now engaged in grain, fruit, and poultry raising, with the assistance of "hired men" for the hard manual labour, and growing rich. These girls, however, have had the opportunity of studying scientific farming in their

State universities—an advantage which Englishwomen have not had, and, even if they had, they would find no means of putting their knowledge to use unless they went to the Colonies or to America.

Another occupation which certain educated and daring American girls have taken up, especially in the Western states, is that of "breaking in colts" for riding and driving. They are said to be earning from five to ten dollars a day. This novel method of making money is, of course, only attempted by girls who have been brought up among horses and have a knack of controlling them. It is said that the idea originated with a bright farmer's daughter, who, having just returned from boarding school, undertook to "break in" for her father an unruly young horse which the "hired man" had given up as a hopeless case. So great was her success that her fame spread about the whole country among the farmers and her services became greatly in demand. Other girls took it up in adjoining counties and states, and are said to be "coining money."

I do not cite this occupation as one in which many gentlewomen, either English or American, would care to engage, although it might be commended to the passing attention of certain English girls who, as equestriennes, are the acknowledged superiors of the majority of their American cousins.

To turn from the subject of horses to that of dogs, I would mention poodle-clipping as an agreeable and remunerative profession in which a few gentlewomen might engage. In an article on "New Paid Occupations for Women" published in CASSELL'S FAMILY MAGAZINE about a year ago, I spoke of a new employment, then recently started in New York—that of brushing, combing and exercising pet dogs, and have since heard that the occupation has been taken up by some English girls with great success. There are so many pet dogs in London that there is chance for much competition in this matter, and it is certainly a very healthy and agreeable sort of outdoor work. The business of poodle-clipping for women, however, is one that, so far as I know, has never been attempted either in the United States or in England, and I would suggest to some enterprising gentlewoman that she be the first to engage in it. The idea occurred to me about two months ago, when on making a morning call I found a friend wielding a pair of clippers on her own poodle, which she explained had been previously subjected to careless if not cruel treatment by his male barber, who charged twelve shillings and sixpence for his mutilations. In recommending poodle-clipping as a suitable employment for women, I am able

to vouch for its practicability, because I have since made the experiment myself on a poodle, and have had the pleasure of hearing my handiwork highly commended.

Poodles are now so fashionable and are so frequently to be seen in the streets and parks that I need not describe the "costumes" affected by them, but it is not generally known that the machine which clips and shaves them so fantastically and artistically may be purchased in a small size suitable for ladies' use for seven shillings and sixpence, and that a pair of nippers for cutting their nails is to be bought for half-a-crown. These two things are all that are required for starting in business. The shopman from whom the clippers are purchased (they are to be bought at any of the general stores) will explain all that it is necessary to know as to the manner of using the machine, which is an affair greatly resembling a pair of scissors, composed of two rows of sharp teeth or combs and worked precisely on the scissors principle. If, however, one is fearful to begin the work without having first seen it done, it is an easy matter to gain admittance to a dog fancier's and see a poodle clipped. The gentlewoman must, of course, be clever with her fingers and have something of an artistic eye in order to clip a dog in the prevailing style, which demands "ruffles" and "shoes and stockings" and "mustachios." The nail nippers are only an extra strong pair of scissors, which must be used in such a way as to cut off only the tip end of the nail in order to avoid hurting the dog.

The next thing is to get the poodles, which should be an easy matter if a well-worded advertisement is inserted in the newspaper columns where dogs and horses are announced for sale. This department of the paper is much better than the ordinary "situations wanted" column. It would also be well to advertise in a popular ladies' weekly paper, or, better, in a periodical devoted to the interests of household pets. Let the advertisement state that a gentlewoman who is fond of and kind to animals is prepared to visit ladies' houses for poodle-clipping. The price should be stated as being lower than that charged by ordinary dog fanciers, and as there are probably none who would undertake the work for less than half-a-guinea, let the lady poodle-clipper shave dogs for seven shillings and sixpence each. The work would require no setting up in a shop and no tools except those I have mentioned. The owner of the dog will have a large kitchen table which is to be used as the "barber's chair" during the clipping process, and the person who does the clipping will need a large print apron.

There is room in London for at least six or eight gentlewomen as dog-clippers, and as the up-to-date poodle needs clipping every month or six weeks, there is no reason why such women should not find steady employment. The time required for clipping one dog is from three to four hours. For women who are fond of animals—and kindness to animals is one of the most pleasing traits in the English-woman's character—this work should be neither difficult nor disagreeable, and it is quite within the bounds of practicability, which is more than can be said for many other occupations recommended to gentlewomen.

A large number of women have a talent for drawing and sketching, and it has often occurred to me that such persons might establish a very pleasant and advantageous partnership between themselves and women writers for the newspapers and magazines, who, going about London in search of "copy," often feel the need of assistance in the way of making illustrations of scenes and incidents which would greatly enhance the interest and value of their articles. These writers, not being able to skilfully handle a pencil, and finding it a disadvantage to be always burdened with a camera, would be only too glad of the companionship and assistance of a lady artist who would be willing to sketch on the same terms as the journalist must write—that is, taking the chance of acceptance or rejection. There are, of course, any number of artists who may be engaged for such work at so much per hour, or at a stipulated price for each illustration, but a writer, unless her articles are actually ordered beforehand, is scarcely in a position to pay for illustrations which may be returned to her in company with her manuscript, or, if accepted, may not be paid for until after publication, some time in the vague and distant future. Such sketches as I have mentioned are especially in demand by writers who contribute for periodicals in foreign countries, since in that case subjects are often taken up with which the editors are unacquainted, and hence they are unable to direct their own artists in the matter of illustrations. Now, if a gentlewoman with artistic ability should make known the fact that she is willing to illustrate for journalists on the rejection or acceptance basis, I feel sure she would very shortly find herself established in a business from which she would derive both pleasure and profit. In order to secure work of this sort she would need to advertise in literary papers which are known to have a good circulation among newspaper, magazine, and book writers. She might also do well to send out letters (personally written

letters are always preferable to printed circulars) to persons whom she thinks likely to be in need of such assistance. In regard to the payment for her work, that must be settled in the beginning by mutual agreement. If the writer is able to make an arrangement with editors by which they will allow a certain rate for the article itself and a distinct price for the illustrations, the latter, of course, would be given to the artist, while if illustrations and articles together are sold at so much per column or page, one-third or one-fourth of the price received for the article would belong to the artist.

To again take up a matter in which my own country people are chiefly interested—that of collecting old silver ornaments, bric-a-brac, and antique furniture from the London pawnshops and curiosity shops—I would call the attention of gentlewomen to an outdoor occupation which they would find exceedingly agreeable and remunerative. Let them advertise in three or four of the higher-class American newspapers and weekly society papers, say in New York, Chicago, Boston, and Baltimore or Washington (this would give their advertisement a circulation in all parts of the United States), that they are willing to collect such things as I have described for intending American visitors to London, the terms to be arranged on a commission basis. Let the advertiser be careful to make it plain that she is a person of taste and accustomed to refined surroundings, but she should avoid the expression "lady by birth," which, for some reason, is extremely distasteful to Americans. Let her advertisement state that she is an "English gentlewoman."

The summer American visitors to London are nearly all people of wealth who appreciate the beautiful things to be found in the little side streets of London, but they usually pay twice as much to pawnbrokers and curiosity dealers as would a Londoner. Their accent proclaims their nationality at once, and the dealers fix their prices accordingly, while the Americans even then think they are procuring "great bargains."

The gentlewoman who engages to make these collections for them, or to accompany American ladies on these tours, must be able to distinguish at once between a real thing and an imitation, and she must also have a good knowledge of "bargain making" and "beating down," for she knows that no dealer expects to receive for his wares the price he originally asks.

Besides advertising in the American papers, the lady would also do well to advertise in one or two of the London papers, and also leave her address at the exchanges frequented

by Americans in London, as well as at the hotels chiefly patronised by the rich Americans. She could also enlarge her field of usefulness and profit by offering to accompany American ladies on their general shopping expeditions, recommending to them the best drapers, milliners and dressmakers, thus receiving a commission from both parties.

There is among professional singers in London a great demand for really good and "sympathetic" accompanists on the piano, as well as on the violin and guitar. Singers complain that, although there are large numbers of women who, in a general way, play the piano exceedingly well, yet there are few who understand the art of accompanying properly. As there are many gentlewomen who have received a musical education and have talents of a high order, here would seem a good opportunity for them to earn a fairly good income. By devoting particular attention to private practising for several weeks or months, they could, by consulting with singers, very soon discover whether or not they had a talent for accompanying; and if so, their next step would be to insert their cards in a musical paper, and to communicate personally with professionals.

The usual price paid by singers to their accompanists is half a guinea for each performance—that is, for each "at home" or concert—although when receiving a more than ordinarily large fee themselves, they frequently pay their accompanists twice or three times this amount.

For those who have talents in this direction, the business of accompanying will be found much more agreeable and profitable than that of musical governess, or the giving of music lessons to classes. The gentlewoman who engages an accompanist will, on account of having an entrée to society, be able to assist the singer by recommending her to her friends, thus securing her engagements, in which case the singer should, instead of paying the usual accompanist's fee, divide the proceeds with her assistant.

An employment which would take gentlewomen away from their homes for a few hours during the day, and one which I think has not yet been attempted by anyone, is the cleaning of jewellery and silver toilet articles for wealthy ladies whose maids have so many other things to engage them that they have no time for this work, which would require to be done once a week under the personal supervision of the owner. For such work two shillings and sixpence an hour might be charged, and if a dozen or more customers

could be secured, an income of about thirty shillings a week ought to be obtained.

The going about from house to house for the purpose of dusting expensive furniture and ornaments, the washing and putting away of valuable china and plate, and the draping of windows, are subjects which I have spoken of in a former article, but I would again call attention to the great demand for "lady cooks," who need only to look over the advertising columns of the daily papers to find hundreds of places where their services are required. The "lady cook" need not take up her residence with the family by which she is employed. She could engage to cook the luncheons and dinners, going to her employer at eleven o'clock, and returning after dinner has been prepared in the evening. Or she might advertise that she will give her services for special occasions, such as large dinner parties and receptions, emphasising the fact that she has mastered the art of making thin, dainty sandwiches, a thing which many ladies assert that they cannot get done properly by ordinary cooks.

Other branches of domestic work, such as the cleaning of silver and plate, laying of tables, watering of plants, filling and emptying flower vases, etc., might be undertaken by gentlewomen for a few hours daily, although, of course, cooking is by far the more remunerative employment. Many ladies whose nerves and tempers are almost shattered by the study of the domestic servant problem would gladly pay a gentlewoman from fifteen to twenty shillings for the preparation of a dinner for a large party, and there is no doubt that hundreds of gentlewomen could keep themselves constantly employed in this way, especially during a fashionable season.

I have not referred to the profession of daily governess as a suitable and paying occupation for gentlewomen for the reason that, having investigated the treatment and the salaries received by governesses, I could not conscientiously do so. It is a wonder that the plaintive cries of the English daily governess have not long ago drowned those of the English working girl. The lot of the latter is an enviable one compared with that of the former.

I recently saw an advertisement which read thus:—"A City man wishes governess for six hours daily for three children. Must teach French, German, music, drawing, all English branches, and *social etiquette*. Salary sixteen pounds;" and I am told the advertiser probably had a hundred applicants for the position! What more need be said on the subject of daily governessing?