

had questioned out the whole story. "I was never so deceived in my life; it is a sad end to my plans for you, but I dare say I can soon hear of something else."

"No, thank you, Aunt Clara," said Edith. "I have had enough of such experiments, and now I am going back to my work again."

There was a determination in her voice that warned Miss Mowbray that it was no good to argue with her, so she prudently dropped the subject.

"Oh! well," she said, "I'm sure I don't wonder that you are disgusted and disappointed. What a dreadful woman that Lady Benson must be!"

"I think she is more to be pitied than blamed," said Edith.

"Now, my dear, don't try and defend her;

such conduct is quite inexcusable, and I hope that you will never go near her nor even mention her again."

But on this score also Edith refused to make any rash promises. She felt genuinely sorry for her late hostess, and when she found that through Captain O'Hagan's kindness Lady Benson had been enabled to return to a quiet little home of her own, she made an early opportunity of going to assure her of her help and friendship. Nor did she seek to bury her experiences at Westleigh in oblivion, for when she and Mr. Vaughan found their brief acquaintance ripening into something deeper and closer, they fully agreed that the most fortunate day in all their lives had been the day that brought them together in Lady Benson's house-party!



BY ELIZABETH L. BANKS.



THOSE English gentlewomen who decide to take up such occupations as are included under office work, must, in the beginning, expect to encounter opposition from certain quarters. At the outset they will be told

that a woman's sphere is in her home and not in an office, that she should remain with her parents and prepare herself to become a good wife and mother, instead of pushing out of employment some man who might otherwise marry her.

In answer to this objection, it may be said that the man who can be pushed out of

employment by a woman, without finding something very much better for himself, is hardly the sort of man intended to make a good husband. And then, again, the protest that is usually entered against women as office workers will, if analysed, prove to be a most ridiculous one, for can any sensible person assume that a woman, unless she be a "new" or abnormal woman, would prefer office work to the privilege of living in a happy home? It is necessity and not inclination that forces a woman to become a bread-winner. Either she has no home, or, having one, her father's means are insufficient for her comfortable support, or there are other circumstances which make it desirable and needful that she should earn her own livelihood; and that being the case, it behoves her to engage in

that occupation—whether it be home, outdoor, or office work—for which she finds herself best fitted, or can most readily prepare herself.

The objection that gentlewomen should marry, instead of engaging in office work, is also without weight, since women usually do marry when the proper circumstances present themselves; and, furthermore, it cannot be disputed that those women who engage in office work are far more likely to marry early and happily than those who remain in homes where poverty prevents the making of desirable acquaintances. In the large cities of the United States there are thousands of American gentlewomen (in applying the term "gentlewomen" to Americans, I mean those girls who are well born, well bred, and well educated) employed in offices. The majority of these women are considerably under twenty-five, and their youthfulness is accounted for by the fact that most of their predecessors have married and left their places to be filled by younger women, who in turn will do the same thing for their successors. So I would advise those Englishmen who so kindly wish to see their countrywomen settled in happy homes to encourage them to take up office work: although I hope I shall not be understood as advocating office work for gentlewomen on account of the matrimonial prospects it may hold out. I mention this aspect of the matter only because I would enlist the sympathy and encouragement of those men who, through false ideas of gallantry, would shut their office doors against women who are in need of employment and want only an opportunity to show their capabilities—capabilities, I may add, which are in many instances far superior to those displayed by the present young men incumbents.

First on the list of suitable and agreeable office occupations for gentlewomen, I would mention the work which is now open to them in the various departments of the General Post Office. Having recently made the acquaintance of a young lady who is employed in the Savings Bank department, I asked her for information concerning the work and the workers.

"Now, I'll tell you the bright side of being in the Civil Service," said she, and this announcement at once prejudiced me in her favour. I had become so accustomed to hearing of the "wrongs" perpetrated on the wage-earning woman that it was a pleasant change to listen while the young lady related the "bright side" of her working life.

It had a very bright side indeed, and I feel quite convinced that many gentlewomen

might do far worse than to become employées of Her Majesty's Government. Any English girl between the age of eighteen and twenty has the privilege of trying to pass the competitive examination, which, though it has the name of being rather "stiff," is not difficult for one who has enjoyed the advantages of a good high-school education. Having passed that, she must next submit to a medical examination by the lady physician. The most pleasant thing concerning employment in the Civil Service is the absolute certainty in regard to the future; for, once having passed the examination and the year's probation, a woman is sure of an income up to the age of sixty, unless in the meantime she marries or is discharged by reason of gross misconduct. Commencing as a second-class clerk in the Savings Bank department at sixty-five pounds a year (surely a reasonable salary for a beginner), there is, after the first year, an advance of three pounds yearly until a salary of one hundred pounds is reached, after which comes promotion from second to first-class clerk, with a salary again increasing year by year up to one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty. Every summer each employé has one month's paid holiday. She is also free on all Bank Holidays and at Easter time from Thursday until the following Tuesday. In case of illness she is allowed to go home on sick leave for several days, and sometimes weeks or months, receiving her usual pay in the meantime. She also receives from the lady physician free prescriptions and medicine without charge. If she remains unmarried and at work until she is sixty, she may then retire on a pension.

In view of the pleasant things connected with employment in the Civil Service, I have no hesitation in recommending it to the attention of young gentlewomen—I say *young* gentlewomen, because the examinations are open only to those between the age of eighteen and twenty. The salaries paid may not be so large as those to be received in a few other occupations, but the certainty of steady employment and the very satisfactory knowledge that one's employer cannot go bankrupt, together with the other bright features I have mentioned, should be taken into consideration.

In a former article I have spoken of typewriting as a suitable home occupation for gentlewomen. It may also be treated under the subject of office work. Indeed, it is in the professional and business offices that educated women typists are most needed. Up to the present, typewriting in offices has been almost entirely left to those young women whose education has been "completed" at

the Board Schools and are in many cases absolutely unfit for the work. Having recently had occasion to visit a solicitor's office in the City, I was greatly amused and surprised at the detailed manner in which he considered it necessary to dictate the most ordinary business correspondence to his typist. I afterwards discovered that the typist received ten shillings a week, and was looked upon as an "under-paid working girl." Her employer explained that she was not worth more, being, as he said, "merely one part of the typewriting machine—the hammer which was applied to the keys to make them strike the paper!"

Afterwards, on going through an establishment where a large number of young women typists were employed, I asked the manager the cause of the very low wages paid to English women typists, and received the answer: "Lack of education and good business sense. We speak of the typewriter as the 'machine,' but the truth is that the typist is also a machine, and usually not in good working order either." Then, pointing to a young lady whose fingers were moving rapidly over the typewriter keys, he said:

"Now, that young lady is not a 'machine.' She is a highly-educated gentlewoman, and she receives a salary of four pounds a week."

"But that is an American salary!" I exclaimed.

"And why not?" returned the manager, laughing. "I assure you she's quite as clever as an American girl, and so I pay her an American salary."

Now, I have given illustrations of the two extremes in typists, examples which have come under my own personal observation, and I cannot help wondering why English gentlewomen with clever heads and clever fingers do not take up typewriting as office work, and earn thereby a comfortable living. It is clean, easy and agreeable work, which is in no way incompatible with gentility. In the United States there are many young women whose bringing up and education have fitted them to move in the best social and intellectual circles, who hold positions of this kind, and greatly prefer typewriting to teaching either in the public schools or as governesses. Many of them go direct from college or university life to posts as typists in business houses, and receive large salaries for their work, because their education has fitted them for the responsibility which is put upon them. A great many are receiving from fifteen to thirty dollars a week, and the hours of their working day, usually from 9 to 5.30, leave them ample time for enjoyment and self-culture.

I have no thought of holding out to all English gentlewomen the prospect of re-

ceiving what are known as "American prices," especially in the beginning, but they may certainly command from thirty shillings to three pounds weekly when once they have gone into the work and proved their abilities. Typewriting, as I have indicated in a former article, is easily learned. A knowledge of stenography is not essential, although it is an aid in securing larger salaries, as is also book-keeping. An acquaintance with German and French is also an advantage, as there are many offices where translations are required. There is a good income to be made by taking up "piecework," that is, starting in business for one's self in a small way. There should be an opening for a typist in every prominent London and provincial hotel, as there is in the large American cities, the proprietor furnishing "desk room" to the typist in return for one or two hours' work daily, the rest of her time being occupied in writing letters and documents for guests, who in England would pay at the rate of one and a half pence per one hundred words.

Photography has for some time been looked upon as a suitable occupation for English gentlewomen, but recent inquiries among the leading photographers have shown me that although it may be pleasant work, it can hardly be considered in the light of profitable employment except in very rare cases. Two years are required in which to learn the art of retouching, working up, and other lines, and for the two years' instruction a premium of fifty pounds or more is asked. At the end of this apprenticeship, the woman who can earn a pound a week may consider herself fortunate, unless she has the ability and capital with which to start in business for herself. Of course, miniature-painting is well paid for, some artists being able to earn as much as four or five hundred pounds a year, but this can hardly be called a branch of photography, and it demands extraordinary artistic talent.

The desirability of dentistry as a profession for a gentlewoman who has aspirations towards a "career" in life has been of late somewhat extensively discussed. Young ladies wishing to enter the profession have complained of the many stumbling-blocks thrown in their way—one of which is the refusal of the dental colleges to receive them as students, thereby necessitating their going to Scotland to pursue their studies. Having inquired of a number of London dentists concerning their individual opinions as to the fitness or unfitness of women for dental work, I have found the English practitioners opposed to women dentists, seemingly on general principles. They have with one accord informed me that "it really

wouldn't do," while on the other hand, the American dentists, faithful to the traditions of their American bringing up, have assured me that in some branches of dental work women really excelled, especially in the matter of gold fillings and the care of children's teeth.

But if there are difficulties in the way of the Englishwoman taking up dentistry as a profession, there is nothing to prevent her engaging as lady assistant in a dental office at from twenty to thirty shillings per week. In the United States the "lady assistant" is to be found in almost every dental office, and there her salary is considerably higher than that I have mentioned as being obtainable in London. The duties of the "lady assistant" are to prepare the fillings for the dentist's use, to hand him the different instruments necessary, and to "sympathise" with female patients. The work is light, the hours are short, and the duties should not be disagreeable. At any rate, they cannot be nearly so unpleasant as those of professional nursing. Among American dentists in London, a number of English women are employed as assistants, while among English dentists young ladies may secure places where they may combine the duties of assistant with those of a secretarial nature, the salary for which would, of course, be higher than that paid to a mere assistant.

It has long been a theory of mine that in every large city there should be two or three women so skilled in veterinary science as to be able to prescribe for the ailments of domestic pets—such as dogs, cats, and birds. To become a regular practising veterinary surgeon would, of course, be as impossible as it would be distasteful to a woman, but I can see no objection to the "lady vet." who would confine her prescriptions to household pets. With this idea in mind, I have lately visited the Royal Veterinary College to inquire whether it lay within the bounds of practicability. One of the college officers firmly, though very kindly, announced to me that it was impossible, so far as that institution was concerned; so that now it would appear that the only way of bringing about the desired end would be for a woman to begin her studies under private instruction, and although under such circumstances she would be unable to obtain a diploma, she could still put her knowledge to valuable service.

To turn from a matter at present hedged about with difficulties to another which is absolutely practicable and easy of accomplishment, I would call attention to the need in London for a restaurant for gentlewomen—an establishment to be entirely in the hands of gentlewomen, including manageress, cashiers, waitresses and cooks, and to be run for the

convenience of such gentlewomen as find it necessary to patronise a restaurant for all or some of their meals. Such a place is in demand in the vicinity of Fleet Street, and a capital of four or five hundred pounds should be sufficient for its establishment. There are numerous quiet, refined places where ladies may go for afternoon tea, but, so far as I know, there is no exclusively woman's restaurant where gentlewomen may have served to them breakfast, luncheon, tea, and dinner. Such a place should be open at eight o'clock in the morning, and not closed until nine-thirty at night. It would be a boon not only to the large number of women who would patronise it, but to those who would find employment in the different departments. The prices should be as low as consistent with good food, good cooking and cleanliness, and it is unnecessary to say that there would be no tipping. A gentlewoman could dine alone at such a restaurant with all propriety, and for that reason, if for no other, the establishment would become exceedingly popular.

In journalism there is still room for many gentlewomen, but it will be well for those who are contemplating literary work to remember the large number of women who are engaged in fashion and society work, and instead of applying for a post as fashion or society critic, let them spend a few days, weeks, or even months in evolving a new and original idea, and then take it to an editor. Let them, as far as possible, keep out of the beaten paths.

Manicuring is another branch of work in which gentlewomen may engage with a reasonable assurance of success and profit. It would be necessary to apprentice one's self for a short time to an established manicure, but the time of the apprenticeship may be shortened if those wishing to become proficient in this art would first spend a small part of each day in practising on their own finger-nails and those of the members of their family.

In mentioning these various departments of office work for women, I have referred only to such as it seemed to me would be agreeable for gentlewomen to undertake, and I have endeavoured to select, as a rule, those employments which are most easily obtained. Advertising is the most successful means to be used for securing employment, and it is also well to keep a sharp watch over the "want" columns of the morning papers. But let such advertisements as promise profitable employment without stating the nature of the work go unanswered, as well as those demanding "premiums," for in the majority of cases they are not worthy of consideration.