

strong needle they are in good condition for the purpose required. Make brine to cover them by boiling six ounces of salt in each quart of water needed, and carefully clear away the scum as it rises. When cold put in the walnuts and stir them night and morning with a stick. Change the brine at the end of six days and let them remain six days longer, or if time is a consideration let the walnuts lie in brine for nine days and change the brine three times during that period. When they have been salted sufficiently drain them in a colander, and then spread them on a dish and lay them in the open air until they turn black, which they will do in about twelve hours. Pour over them enough hot vinegar (which has been boiled with spices for five or six minutes) to cover them; and divide the spices equally amongst the walnuts. When quite cold, tie down securely and store in a dry place. The pickle may be made by boiling two quarts of vinegar with a teaspoonful of salt, two ounces of black pepper, three ounces of bruised ginger, three blades of mace, six cloves stuck in three onions and an ounce of mustard seed. This pickle should be kept for six months before using; it will improve with keeping.

Small and even sized capsicums, also barberries, are very good when pickled according to the recipe given for nasturtium seeds. These brightly-coloured vegetables are very useful for garnishing. The barberries should be gathered before they are quite ripe, and should be put with the stalks into pickle, the leaves having been previously removed.

There is only one more recipe which I should like to give. The pickle made from it is so excellent, and I believe so uncommon, that I hope some of the girls who belong to our cookery class will be induced to try it this season. It was given to me by an English lady who was brought up in Germany; I have made it several times, and I do not remember having met with more than two people who, on tasting it, have not been enthusiastic in their appreciation of it. Here it is.

Sour Plums.—Take three pounds of what are called in Germany Zwetschen (a long, blue autumn plum, the nearest approach to which procurable in England is called late damson). Rub off the bloom, prick the plums with a needle, and cut the stalks short. Take as much vinegar as will cover, measure it, and for each pint allow a pound and a half of sugar, three (the original recipe said "a few") blades of mace, one stick ("a few sticks") of cinnamon, and half a teaspoonful ("a little") of allspice. Boil the vinegar with the spices, pour it through a strainer over the plums, and let them stand for twenty-four hours. The next day boil the vinegar and pour it over the fruit, and afterwards put it on the fire with the plums to simmer for a few minutes. Cover close down whilst hot. These sour plums may be used with roast mutton or with hare instead of red currant jelly. Strictly speaking, they are more suited for purposes of this kind than they are for eating with cold meat.

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FEMALE CLERKSHIPS IN THE POST OFFICE.



HE recently expressed intention of the Postmaster General to extend the employment of female clerks in the Savings Bank Department of the General Post Office has evoked some criticism as to the wisdom of the policy which was initiated by Lord John Manners. The feeling displayed by some of the critics can only be compared to that which was shown by some members of the

medical profession when it was first proposed to allow ladies to qualify as medical practitioners. To judge by the opinions expressed and the fears which are entertained in some quarters, one might suppose that to be of the gentler sex was a disqualification for all employment requiring an ordinary amount of common sense. One journal devoted to the interests of the Civil Service states that when Female Clerks were first appointed to the Savings Bank Department, "The susceptibilities of the male clerks were soothed by official assurances that it was only intended to employ them on mechanical work," and complains that this understanding was not adhered to, and that important work in this Department has since been entrusted to females. We are unable to see on what ground females should only be entrusted with mechanical duties, unless it be the exploded idea that they are incapable of performing higher work. We believe that the steps taken by the Postmaster-General will meet with general approval, and that the verdict of the public would be in favour of throwing open some of the posts in other offices also to the competition of ladies, where a similar experiment might be tried with an equal prospect of success.

A short account of the progress of the movement since its introduction, and the existing regulations as to appointments, will be of interest to many of our readers. In the early part of 1881, the Postmaster-General determined, with the assent of the Lords of the Treasury, to throw open these appointments in the Savings Bank Department to public competition. Previously to this date, for all female appointments in the Post Office, only candidates were admitted to compete who had been "nominated" by the Postmaster-General, and such nomination could only be obtained by those candidates who possessed influence, direct or indirect, in the right quarter. Under this system of limited competition, only a few candidates were allowed to compete for each post, and the ordeal was thus less difficult, and reserved only for favoured competitors. For clerkships in the Savings Bank Department, however, the competition is open to all subjects of Her Majesty who comply with the following conditions:—(a) that their age on the first day of the competitive examination is not less than 18 nor more than 20 years; (b) that they are unmarried or widows; (c) that they are duly qualified in respect of health and character; and (d) that they have passed a preliminary test examination.

The preliminary examination is intended to ascertain that the candidate possesses a fair knowledge of Handwriting, Spelling, and Arithmetic (including Vulgar and Decimal Fractions). For the convenience of candidates, it is usually held in London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Liverpool, Bristol, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Hull, Leeds, Birmingham, Norwich, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Swansea, Belfast, and Aberdeen. Before candidates can be admitted to this examination, applications must be made to the Secretary, Civil Service Commission, Cannon-row, Westminster, S.W.; by whom an order for admission is forwarded. In due course, the candidate is informed whether she has successfully passed the first examination; and full instructions are then given to those who are admitted to the severer contest. That the preliminary examination is not mere child's play to all, it may be mentioned that at the first open competition held in Sept. 1881, out of 747 candidates, 525, or 70 per cent., failed to pass this test, the remaining 222 competing for the 76 appointments which were to be made.

The competitive examinations are held only at London, Edinburgh, and Dublin. The subjects of examination and marks allowed for each are as follows:—Arithmetic, 150; Compound Addition, 50; Orthography, 200; English Composition, 100; Geography, 150; and English History, 150. In this examination, no matter how high the average excellence of the candidates may be, only the best of them can be successful. Since the examination in September, 1881, two other competitions have been held, one in May and June last, for 35 vacancies, and another on October last for 40 vacancies. It is probable that another examination will be held very shortly. A fee of 1s. is charged to each candidate attending the preliminary examination, and 1s. 6d. to each candidate attending the competitive examination.

The salary of a female clerk on appointment to the Savings Bank Department is £65 per annum, rising by £3 per annum to £80. Promotion to vacancies of a higher class depends on merit. The following statement (which is taken from the Parliamentary Estimates for the current year) shows the proportion of higher appointments:—

- 1 Superintendent. Salary £180, rising to £300.
- 48 Principal Clerks. Salary £120, rising to £170.
- 17 First Class Clerks. Salary £85, rising to £110.
- 138 Second Class Clerks. Salary £65, rising to £80.

Every effort appears to be made by the Post-office authorities to provide proper accommodation for the ladies in their employment, and the fact that it is intended shortly to increase their number, shows that the Government are satisfied with the success of the experiment, and that the ladies employed have made good their claim to the possession of the requisite ability. The authorities of King's College have made arrangements for the preparation of young ladies desirous of competing for these vacancies. The evening class which is carried on with this object is held in a large airy room, with a separate entrance and cloak-room, the latter being in the charge of a female attendant; and the number of students from this College who have been successful in the examinations shows that the care bestowed upon them by the authorities has not been thrown away.

We must not omit to mention one important regulation which is not referred to above, viz., that any female clerk who marries is required to resign her appointment.