

notes of the cornet broke on their ear again, and Greville and she joined the company again.

(To be continued.)

LADY DISPENSERS.

By MEDICUS.



WENT on a tour in the far north of Scotland last summer I happened to enter a druggist's shop of some considerable pretensions, for the purpose of writing a prescription.

A piece of paper and a pencil were handed to me by a neat-fingered Phyllis behind the counter. Another younger girl was writing in a book at the desk, and a third I could perceive in an inner room

doing something at the table. There was no male person visible. Having written my recipe in terribly crabbed characters, and read it over, I stood waiting for someone of my own sex to appear.

"I'll take it, sir," said the aforesaid Phyllis.

"Oh, thank you," I replied, with a slight touch of sarcasm; "taking it is only one thing; I want it compounded, and that, too, at once."

"Well, sir," she said, smiling, but firmly, "I'll compound it. My sisters and I do nearly all the dispensing in this shop."

I opened my eyes, perhaps, but I kept my mouth shut and handed her the prescription. It was a mixture, and while I stood there pretending to examine the various patent knick-knacks on the counter, I was silently admiring the deft and business-like way this young girl went about the work of dispensing.

Nothing escaped me. She took a six-ounce bottle from a drawer, turned it upside down and looked through it to see if it was perfectly clean; took down bottle after bottle, measured the contents with the graduated glass, giving now and then an eye to the prescription to make perfectly sure she was correct; added the *aqua distillata*; found a cork to fit in a moment; turned the bottle once more upside down to prove there was no leakage; wiped the bottle; took a label from the drawer; actually closed the drawer again; wrote the directions in English from my abbreviated Latin; damped the label—not with her tongue as some horrid masculine dispensers do; affixed it; capped the cork with a morsel of crimson gossamer paper; neatly did the whole up in paper, using the sealing-wax without burning a finger or dropping a morsel on the counter, and handed it to me.

"Ordinary price," she said, "is so-and-so, professional price so-and-so."

And I paid her the latter.

She was quite cool all the time; she never even rattled a bottle, and she certainly did not switch her skirts about, as if dancing Roger de Coverley, and knock down things.

Her hair was neatly braided; her fingers were white and not stained; her sleeves tight, with pretty cuffs—behold how observant your Medicus is!—on the whole her personal appearance was everything one could desire.

Well, I said "good morning," and went away wondering rather. But I was no sooner out of doors than my thoughts reverted to my GIRL'S OWN girls.

"Why!" I said to myself, "that lassie

behind that counter looks quite in keeping with everything around her, and perfectly up to her work. And why shouldn't she? Why shouldn't girls dispense as well as young men?"

And the echo in my thoughts answered:

"Why, indeed?"

I found out, before leaving the place, that these girls were not passed dispensers; they were simply taught by their father to do the work of the shop. But I was told that they all three meant to pass.

Now, I am quite sure in my own mind that I have already interested many of my readers by what I have said. My object in writing, however, is not only to interest, but to instruct them. There are thousands of girls in these islands who have been brought up in genteel homes, and whose parents—not over rich, perhaps—are struggling to keep them happy and at home, but many of whom would gladly do something to ease the burden that lies so heavily on the parental shoulders, if they only saw a way. I believe myself there are many ways, but before entering on any of these, with what I may call a professional intent, out and ins, pros and cons, ought to be most critically studied. As regards dispensing, I may say at once that no girl should attempt to "go out" in this line who has not both the wish and the will to do well. She must also have good business habits; she must be in fairly good health, energetic without being nervous or fidgety, no sluggard, no dreamer of dreams (day-dreams I mean), and of a willing, thoughtful, and cheerful disposition.

Let me tell you to begin with, then, that in order to attend behind a druggist's counter and dispense medicines and make up prescriptions, it is not necessary to have passed the examinations of the Pharmaceutical Society, but before a girl would be allowed to dispense in any way, she would be required to serve a time of probation and prove to the owner of the shop that she was conversant with the routine of the business—in fact, well up in the various duties appertaining to it. To be so she would require to serve an apprenticeship for a time at a chemist's shop. This would be one way to push into the business.

But I am going to tell you of a far better plan than this, and one less derogatory. This plan is commenced by a course of home study, and something else, which I shall presently mention. Have you youth on your side? Yes. Very well; have you time? You can make a deal of time, remember, and I may tell you that even if anything should occur to prevent you ever going out as a dispenser, the studies that I recommend will be far more beneficial to you in after life than the smattering of music, etc., you are now trying to acquire. Well, there are two examinations you must pass, and a third you will do well to pass.

1. *The Preliminary.* For this nothing else but home study, or school and home study combined, are required. The subjects are Latin, arithmetic, and English. (1.) Latin grammar; translation of simple sentences from English into Latin; translation into English of a paragraph from Caesar, "De Bello Gallico," book i.; or Virgil, "Æneid," book i.

Now, it is by no means difficult for a girl of ordinary brain capacity to acquire a sufficient knowledge of Latin to slide through on. But I can assure you a girl wants far more to succeed well as a dispenser. She will do well, therefore, to make Latin a special branch of education, for apart from the fact that it is the only true and solid basis of a good English education, I know of no better brain tonic. If we liken the brain of a young girl or boy who is meant to make a way in the world to a field of husbandry, then a course of Latin may be called the thorough cultivation thereof, pre-

paratory to seed-sowing. Given a well-tilled field, you may sow what you like thereon, with a prospect of success, while you may scatter on your fallow ground the best seed obtainable, and results will be *nil*, or thorns and thistles will come up where you had expected golden grain. Or, liken the brain to a regiment of young soldiers, then Latin is the drill instructor; without him, without discipline, no matter what the courage of the men individually may be, they will remain what they began as, simply Johnny Raws.

2. *Arithmetic.* The more of this the better, though the examination board only insists upon a knowledge of the first four rules—simple and compound vulgar fractions and decimal fractions; simple and compound proportion; and a thorough knowledge of the British and metrical systems of weights and measures.

3. *English Grammar and Composition.* In awarding marks for these, spelling and the quality of the handwriting are taken into account.

Little comment is needed on this; I may merely add that English composition is too little studied by school girls.

The fee for the preliminary examination is two guineas; it is wholly in writing—not oral—and one hour and a-half are allowed for each paper.

This examination is held at the following centres throughout Great Britain, at eleven o'clock, on the second Tuesdays in January, April, July, and October in every year:—Aberdeen, Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Canterbury, Cardiff, Carlisle, Carmarthen, Carnarvon, Cheltenham, Darlington, Douglas (Isle of Man), Dundee, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Guernsey, Hull, Inverness, Jersey, Lancaster, Leeds, Lincoln, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Northampton, Norwich, Nottingham, Oxford, Peterborough, Sheffield, Shrewsbury, Southampton, Truro, Worcester, York.

Candidates must give notice to the Registrar in London, on a printed form of application, to be obtained from him, and pay the fee not less than fourteen days prior to that on which the examination is to be held. Each candidate must state at which of the centres she desires to present herself.

So much for the preliminary examination, and if a girl be really in earnest she can study for it, as I said, at home. But it must be study, not a mere "cram," as it is called. The mind and memory both must be in the work.

Now for the "something else" I hinted at above. It is this, then: I wish you to learn young. I wish you, even while studying for the prelim., to arrange with some respectable chemist in the town where you live to let you come to his shop an hour or two every day and make yourself acquainted with the appearance, etc., of the various drugs in their crude state, and also of the same made up for medical use. Before you do this you ought to know enough Latin to read their names easily. You will thus become familiar with the various leaves, barks, fruits, roots, gums, resins, etc., used in medicine; while at the same time, at home, you may be studying the botany of these and all about them in some book on *materia medica*.

But you will also learn, at a chemist's shop, to recognise at a glance, or by smelling them, the appearance and character presented by the different tinctures, powders, salts, etc. This is all very practical education, and would greatly assist you in getting a situation in a shop or institution sooner than you otherwise would. For no amount of book learning is of avail by itself alone.

Well, having passed the preliminary examination, it is well you should know something of what is before you if you mean to go on with your studies and pass as a dispenser.

Now comes the push.

"Oh! there is a push, is there?" I think I hear some girl remark. "Yes," I reply, "and there is a push for everything worth having in this world." I passed along a street in Birmingham the other evening, and saw a crowd of about 2,000 persons waiting for the opening of the doors of a hall in which a popular lecturer was going to dilate. As the hall would only seat a thousand, of course only those who pushed could obtain places, and the worst of it—so it seemed to me—was that poor women-folks had less chance of getting in than men. "Such is life," I thought as I struggled on.

But here is where the push is needed in the case of lady dispensers. Before you can pass the second or minor examination, you must produce a certified declaration that "for three years you have been registered and employed as apprentice or student, or have otherwise for three years been practically engaged in the translating and dispensing of prescriptions."

The words I have put within inverted commas will bear reading over once or twice. The word *otherwise* I have put in italics intentionally; it may form a kind of side door through which our girls may get into the hall and *present themselves* for examination without having given all their daily time to actual shop-work behind a counter. I think, myself, that a few hours a day spent in a chemist's shop and laboratory would be enough to satisfy the registrar. Well, that is the reason why I advised the student to attend a shop even during the time of studying for her prelim.

Anyhow, proficiency must have been acquired, and classes attended at some good school in the following branches: botany, materia medica, chemistry and pharmacy.

The following are the subjects for this examination, the fee for which is three guineas, and the age of the candidate not under twenty-one:—

Prescriptions.—The candidate is required to read without abbreviation autograph prescriptions; translate them into English; and render a literal as well as an appropriate translation of the directions for use. To detect errors, discover unusual doses, and have a general knowledge of posology; also to render in good Latin ordinary prescriptions written in English.

Practical Dispensing.—To weigh, measure, and compound medicines; write the directions in concise language in a neat and distinct hand; to finish and properly direct each package. (In awarding marks in this subject the time taken by the candidate in doing the work is taken into account.)

Pharmacy.—To recognise the preparations of the Pharmacopœia which are not of a definite chemical nature, and have well marked physical characters, such as extracts, tinctures, powders, etc.; to give the proportion of the active ingredients, and possess a practical knowledge of the processes, and the principles of the processes, by which they are made, and of the best excipients and methods of manipulation for forming emulsions, pills, etc.

Materia Medica.—To recognise specimens of roots, barks, leaves, fruits, resins, gums, animal substances, etc., used in medicine; give the botanical and zoological names of the plants, etc., yielding them, and the natural families to which they belong; name the countries and sources from which they are obtained, the official preparations into which they enter, and judge the quality and freedom from adulteration or otherwise of the specimen.

Botany.—To recognise the more important indigenous plants used in medicine. To possess a general knowledge of the elementary structure of plants, and the structure and distinctive characters of roots, stems, leaves, and their parts. To name and describe the various parts of the flower.

Chemistry.—To recognise the ordinary chemicals used in medicine. To possess a practical knowledge of the processes by which they are produced, the composition of such as are compound, and explain the decompositions that occur in their production and admixture, by equations or diagrams. To determine practically, by means of tests, the presence in solution of the chemicals in common use, and explain the reactions which occur in each case. To possess a general knowledge of the laws of chemical philosophy, and a practical knowledge of the means of determining specific gravities, densities, and temperature, and of the instruments appertaining thereto, and the physical and chemical constitution of the atmosphere.

There is a still higher examination, namely that for registration as pharmaceutical chemist. If a lady wanted to set up a large shop or dispensary, she being the owner or superintendent—to make, in fact, a business of life and career as chemist and druggist, then she must pass this examination.

But for lady dispensers it is not required.

Well, I may say, in conclusion, that I think there would be but little difficulty experienced by a well-trained, smart, earnest girl in obtaining a situation as dispenser, either under a medical man or in a hospital. The occupation is not only lucrative, but far more independent than that of a governess, for instance, or many other situations for which girls often work hard to qualify.

SEVEN YEARS FOR RACHEL;

OR, WELSH PICTURES SKETCHED FROM LIFE.

By ANNE BEALE.

CHAPTER XXIII. THE BIDDING.



LONG before daylight the whole household at Glenhafod were astir. Even little Tommy could not sleep—he must get up to put on his new frock for "Achel's" wedding. From nine to ten o'clock the guests were assembling. There appeared to be no end of them. Parlour and kitchen were filled, and Mrs. Shenkin looked complacently around her. But what was her complacency compared with Bill's, who was inwardly reckoning up the half-crowns and shillings that each individual was likely to contribute, and counting upon who would lend, and who give. Bill was a bit of a philosopher, and thought

he might as well combine amusement and improvement, during the anxious moments of expectation, by an effort at calculation. He remembered, too, that there was a considerable quantity of ale, tea, coffee, and sugar to pay for, and that the money must be subtracted from the collection made at the bidding, for Mr. and Mrs. Shenkin's treat consisted in the eatables.

At about ten o'clock the party sat down to breakfast. As there were between seventy and eighty persons present, I am perhaps wrong in saying that they sat down, for seats failed, and many were obliged to stand.

The most conspicuous pair are Mr. and Mrs. Shenkin, who are doing the honours, the one at the top and the other at the bottom of a long table, upon which reek tea and coffee, beverages poured forth from large tea-kettles, and drunk with evident satisfaction by a considerable portion of the assembly. Some of the gentlemen, however, do not approve of this effeminate drink, but apply themselves with vigour to tankards of cwru da, which pass from mouth to mouth with business-like despatch. Toast-and-butter and bread-and-butter are distributed to the ladies—bread and

cheese to the gentlemen. At Mrs. Shenkin's right hand sits William, who endeavours to cover his awkward modesty and conceal his restless feelings by helping everyone to more than they can possibly devour. Bill is similarly engaged at the bottom of the table, and supports Mr. Shenkin. He, however, unlike his fellow bridegroom, eats and drinks like the rest; cracks a joke with one—returns the banter of another—and does not forget the pounds, shillings, and pence; for in an occasional aside to his master, he mutters conjectures upon the probable effects of the bidding. Bolt upright on the left of Mrs. Shenkin sits the Corporal, and many a smart saying and grand word does he pour into the ear of that edified lady, who is heard to declare that "Rachel's father-in-law is an uncommon well-spoken man, and very handsome and civil too." Mrs. Corporal is likewise present, together with several other old friends, amongst whom Pally shines in her glory. Rachel's uncle smiles good humouredly upon William when he upsets a cup of coffee, whilst several of her cousins look bashful amongst so many strangers.

The voices swell—the conversation mingles—as each of the excited eighty