

A COMPETITION FOR PROFESSIONAL GIRLS.



HERE are so many girls in London, in our big cities, and even in country districts, who are earning their livelihood in professional work, that it has occurred to us to open our pages especially for their benefit. We therefore announce a competition on similar lines to that for "Girls who work with their hands," but under the title of

MY PROFESSIONAL WORK.

Under this title all girls who earn money and are not connected with what is known as the industrial class, are eligible to compete. Such, for instance, as governesses, teachers, journalists, artists, type-writers, government inspectors and lecturers, clerks, shorthand-writers, companions, high-class dressmakers and milliners, women-doctors, nurses and dis-

pensers, hospital sisters, deaconesses, musicians, and many others, whose name is legion, and whose paid labour places them in a professional capacity. Each girl is invited to tell us all about her occupation, the nature of it, how she obtained it, hours, salaries, etc., together with any critical remark as to how her labours or position could be improved, or, in fact, anything that occurs to her that would be of interest for other girls to know about. The private names of employers are not to be given in any case. Four pages of foolscap are to be written upon, so that only two sheets will be required. Each paper must be fastened at the left-hand top-corner, and sent by post to the Editor of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER, 56, Paternoster Row, London, and must bear the words "Professional Girl Competition" upon the envelope or wrapper.

The writer of the essay that is adjudged to be the best will receive a cheque for two guineas, and the four that follow in order of merit will each receive a cheque for one guinea. There will also be an honours list.

These papers need not be certified by another, but each competitor must write these lines at the end of the paper:—I declare the statements in this paper to be true. Here follow name in full

Name.....

Address.....

Date.....

Should the writer wish her name withheld in case of publication, or if printed in list of Honourable Mention, she may follow her signature with the name of her favourite flower, which alone would be printed in connection with her article or in the honours list.

This competition is open to English girls all the world over. The last day for receiving the essays is Wednesday, January 6th, 1897. As no essay will be returned, whether stamps be sent for the purpose or not, each writer is advised to keep a copy of her MS.



THE WHITE ROSE OF THE MOUNTAIN.

By ANNE BEALE, Author of "The Queen o' the May," "Seven Years for Rachel," etc.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT a change had one short week made in Plás Llewellen. Joy and festivity had given place to gloom and sorrow; the new year, that had dawned so brightly, was already overclouded; the doors, so lately open to rich and poor, were closed; the huntsman's horn echoed no more in the woods; the voices of sportsmen were no longer heard, and all was quiet as the grave.

The children were sitting in the nursery with sorrowful faces, when the solemn funeral bell sounded. Gwenlleean's eyes were red with weeping, but she tried to comfort her sister. The sound of wheels drew them to the window, and they saw the hearse that was to bear their father's body to the tomb. Clare asked what it meant, and gazed with childish wonder at the mourning coaches and carriages she saw before her; but Gwenlleean, whose glance fell upon the velvet pall which covered the coffin, put her hand before her eyes, turned away, and left the room. She crept into a small apartment that had been appropriated to her use, and burst-

ing into tears, fell down upon her knees, clasped her little hands together, and began her infant petitions. When she came to the words, "God bless my papa and mamma," she paused, whilst the tears rolled faster down her cheek. "Oh God, take my papa to heaven," she said, in her innocence, "and bless my dear mamma."

She rose from her knees, and stood a few moments buried in thought, a lovely but melancholy picture of early sorrow. She had not seen her mother since her father's death, for Lady Llewellen had been lost to everything but her affliction; so she returned to the nursery, and taking Clare by the hand, and bidding the nurse follow with the baby, she went to her mother's apartment. She tapped softly at the door, but received no answer; she tapped louder, but no gentle voice bade her enter. A stifled sob was audible within. She unclosed the door with a trembling hand, and entered the darkened room.

Seated in a large chair, her face covered with her hands, and her bosom convulsed with emotion, was Lady Llewellen. The little sisters walked

quietly towards her, and stood by her side unnoticed. Gwenlleean looked upon her mother's haggard face until her heart trembled with fear; for she had never seen such grief before.

"Mamma, dear mamma, look at us, speak to us, my own dear mamma," she said, casting her arms around her neck.

Lady Llewellen removed her hands from before her face, and looked wildly at her children. At last the pent up current of her feelings gave way, and she burst into a flood of tears.

"Alas! alas! my children!" she cried, whilst she pressed them to her heart; "you are fatherless now, and your mother is a widow and desolate. Dead! and so soon—so suddenly! Oh! that I had died with him!"

Gwenlleean looked thoughtfully into her mother's face.

"Mamma," she said, "will not the good God be our Father now? You told me once that he always took care of the fatherless, and even fed the little sparrows. Shall we not ask Him to take care of us, now papa is gone to heaven?"

"Oh, my God!" said Lady Llewellen,



CLOTH GOWN AND CAPE OF THE SAME.

style altogether will come in. I hear that bright red hats will be the fashion, or white hats with red trimmings, and that one of the most fashionable novelties will be the red geranium, for the decoration of hats; this is a flower which has suffered a very long eclipse, and it is one also that is eminently suited to millinery. The beauty of the leaves is very great, and they are admirably imitated in the artificial flowers. Birds of paradise plumage is gone out, I am glad to say; I think it proved such very unsatisfactory wear, and

failed to stand the least bit of wind or weather, that we may put that down as the reason; when the least shabby it presented the most dreadfully dowdy and down-trodden appearance, and it was quite unsuitable to our climate. One is so thankful to have the poor beautiful birds spared for any reason. Wings and birds of all kinds are as much in fashion as they were, but one takes comfort in the idea that they are generally artificial, and made up from the feathers of the pigeon and the barn-yard fowl. It would be pleasant

though to see the fashion change entirely, and the plumage of the poor birds be no longer in demand.

White woollen and white chamois leather gloves continue to be the most fashionable wear, and the latter wash so very well with a little care that they are by no means extravagant; with three or four pairs in wear at once you can always look well and appear spotlessly clean. The way to wash them is very simple. Put them on the hands and wash in pretty hot water just as if you were going to wash your hands with white Castile, or what is known as white curd soap. Rinse carefully free of soap and hang to dry in the air, pinning them on a tape fingers downward. Put them on again while not quite dry to stretch them, and then hang them again in the air. Do not use ammonia, as it hardens leather, and be as quick as possible over the business of washing, for the gloves must not be either soaked in water or left wet too long. I hear that white kid gloves are not to be so much worn this year as they were, and that light shades of tan will be the correct thing.

Very fashionable people seem to be wearing the white (not the cream-coloured) washing veils just now, with a border and a small-sized spot. These are seen both on hats and the small bonnets. The middle of the veil is slightly gathered at the top to make it very full over the face, and the tying is arranged so as to tighten the border below the chin. Black veils, with chenille spots and very fine foundation nets, are liked, and white veils are much worn in tulle-spotted nets and even gauze.

Black dresses are likely to remain in fashion, and, now that they are relieved with bright colours of all kinds, they are very becoming. The bodices may be of pink, yellow, orange, green, or blue, with the sleeves of black to match the skirt. With black gowns at night are worn red morocco shoes and stockings to match; a very pretty fashion which made its appearance first in the autumn. Red morocco is also worn for house shoes; but the stockings are usually black.

Many gowns that have not the wide bands have long sashes for afternoon wear. A gown of heliotrope cloth had a sash of heliotrope satin ribbon, rather wide, and another of the same colour and material had a sash of wide white satin ribbon. The jewelled embroidery, which has been such a feature of the winter, seems more than ever beautiful just now, and the fashionable stone in it is the turquoise, and these are of all sizes and shapes. Of course the expense is very great, and hardly worth incurring except by those who have to dress, and who can afford to spend more on it than the ordinary sensible woman would ever think of doing. After all such styles are short-lived and extravagant.

OUR COMPETITION FOR PROFESSIONAL GIRLS.

ONE of the remarkable features of our Queen's long reign is the vigorous, earnest way in which her girl subjects of all ranks are taking their part in the battle of life. They are no longer content to idle away their days and let the men bear the whole burden of existence. One reason of this is not far to seek: deep in the heart of every girl is love for her Queen, who stands first in the army of workers; for fifty years

her example has been gradually but surely making its mark in every home in Great Britain. It is no longer the fashion to be idle, for the highest in the land are the most diligent workers, and our Queen the hardest worker of them all.

The knowledge of this gave an impetus to girls, hitherto idle, to bestir themselves and get out of the groove in which custom had

placed them; and the reward they have reaped by so doing is that they work now for the love of it and for the health and satisfaction it brings into their lives.

If we wanted proof of this we have it in the hundreds of papers which have been sent to us during the year from girls of all classes describing their work, the manner of doing it, the effect upon themselves and their families,

and the way in which, as workers in the world's hive, they are treated.

Perhaps nothing has ever afforded us greater pleasure in our Editorial capacity than the insight we have gained into the honest, straightforward, conscientious daily round of our girls, whether the occupation be of head or hand.

In comparing the professional competitors with the hand-workers, we are struck by one or two points of difference; for example, the hand-worker if she be a good reliable girl, may slip into work at once with a moderate wage without any serious preparation or previous outlay, while the professional girl must spend time and money in procuring a high-class education and in gaining experience in her special branch of art or science, and even when she is fully equipped for the battle and eager to try her powers, she finds herself on the outside fringe of a mighty army with only a remote chance of being enrolled for active service. Even when this difficulty has been overcome, the wage or salary is so small that it is barely sufficient for her daily wants, while help for the home is impossible.

Again, the handworker's hours and labours are strictly defined, and she can arrange her life accordingly; the professional girl, on the contrary, has no such chance; she goes on from morning till night too often at starvation salary.

Again, the hand-worker is shielded by the government, who will allow no mean advantage to be taken of her willingness to work beyond hours; but who, we would ask, takes care of the gently-nurtured girl-governess in a private high-class school, whose hours are from half-past six in the morning till eleven or twelve at night, and even to the small hours of the morning previous to the examinations, and all this for £18 a year; and not an hour she can call her own?

Or who is there to shield a young governess from her lady employer? One was engaged to teach a little boy, take charge of him night and day and mend and make for him,

Gradually the lady has put upon her so many duties that she has drifted into a drudge, till, as she says, she does not know how to describe herself, and this for a salary which no cook or housemaid would accept.

It is pathetic to read some of these competition papers and note how ambition and hope have been almost crushed out of the writers notwithstanding the love of their profession and the desire to help those at home.

Still there is much to be thankful for in the fact that during our Queen's reign many other ways have opened out by which girls may earn an income beside teaching in private schools and private families.

The last fifty years have developed in girls the power and desire to work, and at the same time opportunities have increased for employing their powers in many directions hitherto unknown.

Girls young, bright, full of hope and motherly tenderness find an outlet for all that is best in them in the wards of a hospital or infirmary, and the papers we have received show how successful they are in the work.

Other girls find suitable work as typists or clerks in telephone, telegraph and post offices; or, if they are clever at figures, as clerks in large wholesale houses. Music and painting form the life and daily round of many, although the income is not so reliable as in many other kinds of work.

Extremely touching are some of the references to parental self-sacrifice in order that their children may pursue their career without let or hindrance. We could fill the whole number with interesting matter culled out of these competition papers, which are excellently written; but this is not possible. We congratulate our professional girls on their excellent work.

We hope to print the prize papers next month.

PRIZE WINNERS.

FIRST PRIZE (£2 2s.).

Agnes Eugenie Smith, Hospital Nurse, Sunderland.

SECOND PRIZE (£1 1s.).

St. John's Wort Folk-Lore Collector, Port Charlotte, Islay, N.B.

THIRD PRIZE (£1 1s.).

Pimpernel, Organist, Plumstead.

FOURTH PRIZE (£1 1s.).

Cauliflower, Literary Woman, Brixton Hill.

FIFTH PRIZE (£1 1s.).

Dandelion, Post Office Clerk, Islington.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

Polyanthus Narcissus, Governess in private family, Norwich.

Clover, Nurse, Ickley, Yorkshire.

Lily of the Valley, Clerk in a Wholesale Confectioner's, Hackney.

White Violet, Daily Governess, Stoke Newington.

Shamrock, Governess in private family, Eaton Place.

Tea Rose, Sorter of postal orders in General Post Office, Barnsbury.

Alice Mary Townsend, Lady Principal of Girls' School, Stewarts Town, Jamaica.

Amy Clare, Shorthand-writer and Typist, Goswell Road.

Holly, Typist and Shorthand-writer, Old Broad Street.

Mignonette, Teacher in high class private school, near Baldock, Herts.

Wild Rose, Photographic Retoucher, Manchester.

Heather, Hospital Nurse, Wakefield.

Christmas Rose, Nurse, Guildford.

Emily Archer, Edgeworthstown, E. Longford.

Water-Lily, Typist, Glasgow.

Pansy, Elementary Teacher, Nottingham.

Fuschia, in Fancy Needlework Factory, City Road.

Isabella S. Lyall, Teacher of the Blind, Arbroath, N.B.

Pansy, Postal and Telegraph Clerk, Liverpool.

Marsh Margold, Teacher, Manchester.

RECIPES FOR THE MONTH.

EGG COOKERY.

EGGS are now cheaper and more plentiful, so we ought to make free use of them.

Fricassee Eggs make an excellent dish. Dissolve two ounces of butter in a stew-pan, then stir in a small tablespoonful of flour; boil six eggs for five minutes, remove their shells and cut them in halves; add them to the butter and with them a good spoonful of minced parsley, a pinch of aromatic herbs, some seasoning, and a grate of nutmeg. Shake well over the fire until the sauce is cooked, place the eggs in a dish, pour the sauce over and garnish with slices of lemon and tufts of parsley.

Eggs with Brown Gravy are another variation of the above, using the eggs in the same way, only making a good rich brown gravy, leaving the eggs uncut, and garnishing the dish with sippets of dry toast.

Baked Eggs.—Take a shallow fire-proof china dish, butter it thickly. Break into it, without damaging the yolks, as many eggs as it will conveniently hold without their overlapping each other. Drop a small pat of butter on the top of each and sprinkle salt and pepper over all. Set them in the oven for a few minutes; as soon as the butter frizzles and the whites are well "set," the eggs are done. Serve at once. Done this way eggs are much more digestible than when fried. Bring to table in the dish in which they were cooked.

Pancakes and Fritters.—Pancake Day will soon be with us. This institution is so faithfully observed that every cook finds it essential to be acquainted with the method of making King Alfred's favourite dish. There is nothing more wholesome than a well-made and light pancake, and few things are more simple in composition.

Pancakes.—According to the number of those who will partake, allow one large egg and a tablespoonful of flour with a quarter of a pint of milk per person. Separate the whites and yolks of the eggs and whisk them until very light. To the yolks add the number of spoonfuls of flour, a pinch of salt, and the milk by degrees, beating the batter until perfectly smooth; then lightly but thoroughly stir in the whites. Make the batter at least an hour before it is needed for frying, it will be all the lighter for so doing. A thin batter makes the lightest pancakes, therefore add more milk or a little water, if necessary. An iron frying-pan is the best to use, and lard is better than butter or dripping. Refined beef suet is excellent for frying purposes of all kinds. Let the fat be very hot—boiling, in fact, then pour in a small teacupful of batter, tilting the pan that it may run equally all over; as soon as the pancake is lightly browned on one side, turn it sharply over on to the other, using a thin broad-bladed knife for the purpose. Slip each pancake on

to a sheet of paper that is well sprinkled with castor sugar; roll them up and arrange neatly on a paper d'ouley. Keep very hot. Send oranges and lemons cut in halves to table with them, also more sugar.

Almost synonymous with pancakes are—

Fritters.—As the same batter makes them, only to the batter is added a little sugar, a few raisins or currants, or the grated rind of a fresh lemon, etc., to give flavour and character. A small pan should be used for frying these, and they should be folded over in half instead of rolling them.

Apple Fritters are differently treated, or, we should say, made. The apples are cored and pared, then sliced through; the slices are dipped into a batter that is made from the white of an egg beaten to a froth, two spoonfuls of salad oil, two of flour, and a little water. The batter must be rather thick. Drop the rings of apple into boiling lard, fry them very quickly to a crisp golden colour, sprinkle with sugar, and pile on a dish.

Oranges sliced make very nice fritters, and apricots and peaches cut in quarters also.

Any remaining batter after pancakes are made may receive the addition of a little fine oat flour and a spoonful of barm, then it makes exceedingly nice flapjacks or oatcakes for tea.

COMPETITION FOR PROFESSIONAL GIRLS.—THE FIVE PRIZE ESSAYS.*

FIRST PRIZE (£2 2s.).

MY PROFESSIONAL WORK.

WELL! I am a Hospital Nurse, and such a world of meaning is contained in that short sentence, that as I have often said—had I known all I should never have had the courage to begin such a work; but no one can know until they themselves have gone through it, and that is why I am going to try and tell you girls a little bit about this profession.

It is no play—far from it! downright hard and earnest work. There *are* those (a shame that it is so!) who dabble in the work, but these never stay long at it, and perhaps best so for all parties concerned, so we will pass quickly over them, and if *you* want to be a nurse, do make up your minds to give up the worship of such gods as "Pleasure" and "Self" and let your high ideal henceforth be—"I was sick and ye visited Me."

Had Charles Kingsley still been with us, I think he would have thought me justified in using his words when I say it is truly the case that we

"Do noble things, not dream them all day long,"

though more often than not the "noble things" consist in being very common things after all, but then—"He has learnt to live well who has learnt to do common things uncommonly well."

My first impressions on entering upon my hospital duties were anything but pleasant, in fact if my home had been within walking distance my apprenticeship might have been brief, as it was I had taken good care to go out of my own town. I began work on my twenty-third birthday, and a more wretched day I have seldom spent! Instead of kind looks, and the dear familiar voices wishing me "Many happy returns of the day," I had to pass through the ordeal of being stared at as "the new pro:" and spoken to accordingly. *Now* I look upon it with different eyes, and may I never live to regret the step I took that day.

I said it was hard work for you will rarely find nurses working for less than twelve hours a day, though we do not in consequence "strike" for eight hours like many of our abler brethren! Is it because we work with the motive that all we do shall be for others, and not that we may grasp all we can get for ourselves?

So in hospital we were content to rise at 6 o'clock—no! rather must I say we were *called* at 6 o'clock, for to be honest we did not rise then: I shall not mention the correct time but shall trust to your finding ready excuse for us if our caps *were* rather crooked, and if our beds *were* only "smoothed up"—we were tired nurses! To be in time for 7 o'clock breakfast was compulsory, woe betide the one who appeared after Grace was pronounced by the "Sister" at the head of the table. Breakfast and Prayers over we began the day's routine—Patients' breakfast first and the bed-making then the medicines to be given round, and next the dusting of the wards, and the arranging of plants and flowers etc. in which one and all of us took great pride, and vied with one another as to whose should look best. All this took time, but we were supposed to have finished by 9.30, when the matron went her rounds distributing in each ward the ever welcome letters, though

to read them then was an impossibility for now we were busy with the dressings, the poultices, rubbings and what not; doctors coming and going of course "Just when we did not want them." But 1 o'clock would see us all clear again and serving out our patients' dinners amidst the usual grumbles and thanks. More routine, and then our own dinner, and I noticed we did not climb the stairs quite so easily as we had scrambled down first thing in the morning!

On alternate afternoons it was our luck to be off duty for two hours, and many were the arrangements made at the table as to what we should do, and where we should go. And here let me add that if when entering upon this life we should be willing to give up everything for it, I do not for one moment hold that we should, as it were step outside the world altogether—should give up our music and singing, our bicycling and our visiting—by no means! a girl will find in her time off duty that a run on her "bike," or an hour at the piano, and even a pleasant chat over a cosy cup of afternoon tea will all help to invigorate her, and so she will be more fitted for her evening's work, than if e.g. she had gone to her *bed*—a practice of which our wise matron highly disapproved. So *my* advice is to go on with such innocent pleasure, but just so long as you do not give it the first place in your life, tho' to do so at times is a temptation, and no very small one either, and often when I hear of others going to every concert, attending theatres and dances, well, then like the little boy in the old old poem—

"... I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see."

but since they never were "promised me" I just make up my mind to submit and not to be "dull."

So the afternoon would find only half the staff on duty. During the first hour as a rule we would have nothing very special to do, though it varied: on admission days I have gone to my ward to find several new patients waiting, and if women or children this meant a good deal—if men the warders attended to them. Oh! those women! I remember one who insisted she had had a bath only that very morning. I said it mattered not for all were treated alike, unless their temperatures were much above normal, or for some other equally good reason. Poor thing! her scare upon reaching the bath was pitiable, and in her wild despair she let the cat out of the bag for alas! she had never seen such a thing before! Once in bed, and fully alive to the fact that for *this* time, at least, her life had been spared, and she had not been "drowned," she looked much happier with her now clean face, tidy hair and the orthodox red-flannel "Nightingale" across her shoulders.

At other times "urgent cases" would arrive, or an accident. Now we each had our turn for receiving these, so during our respective weeks we had always to have a bed ready in case of emergency—What lessons to be learnt by the side of some terribly mangled form, sometimes beyond human aid, and sometimes, indeed, where life was altogether extinct! Truly, "In the midst of life we are in death."

So time rarely hung heavily upon our hands, and at 4.30 the big bell would sound when we knew we might go to the kitchen for our patients' teas. By 5 o'clock we were

generally ready for ours, and needed not many little delicacies to tempt our appetites—plain bread and butter sufficed! In the evenings, besides attending to our patients, we would water our plants, tidy the lockers, (and what treasures we would find concealed therein!) and cupboards etc. for in a hospital everything must be kept as neat as a new pin; our matron would look sorely displeased if on opening a linen cupboard for visitors' inspection, she found it not up to the mark!

In the children's wards, where several nurses worked it was so arranged that every one got alternate evenings off duty, but when with the adults it depended upon our work, as to when we could get free. Sundays I confess I never liked, and would fain have taken my seat in the pew at the old church at home: the routine was similar as on other days. We got to church once a day and Evening Service was held in our chapel for all patients able to attend. And so, in spite of long hours and tired feet how short the weeks seemed, and sped past in a remarkable manner, carrying us on to Christmas and Christmas festivities, which all meant extra labour if extra pleasure. The holly to put up, the texts to choose and illuminate, and still the daily work to be got through. What wonder if our friends looked in vain for letters that week! It was at such times as these that those nurses who could play or sing were in great demand. Oh! the pleasure in getting up the "Patients' Concert"—the excitement in choosing the glees, tho' at times the weariness in singing them! I smile to think of one night when we all gave it up as a dead failure, each found fault with her neighbour for being "flat," till at length we all joined in a hearty laugh and agreed *in totum* that "Operation Day" was the wrong day on which to have a practice. So we crawled off to our beds and hoped for better success the next night!

So the time of training passed by, and though ill health will at times prevail dominant, and it was only with a struggle that I got through the last few months, yet it has not been without a feeling of regret that I have turned over the leaf to begin a fresh chapter and have joined the Private Staff, still you see in the same great work—that of nursing the sick, and still do I call myself a "Hospital Nurse," and very proud am I to hold forth my three years' certificate as testimony. But now I almost tremble to think of how Xmas will this year dawn for me, for the Private Nurse is on very different footing, often only appreciated because necessary, and after all that is not the most comfortable feeling for the poor "Necessity"! But here again the great Ideal of a nurse's life is to do for others, so I must bury such selfish thoughts, and instead shall begin to wonder what I may do in order to brighten that Day for the sick one whose lot it may be to be cast under my care, so that at night I may lay down my efforts as a birthday gift worthy for the Great Master to accept, and my Christmas will have been bright indeed, if my lot it has been to have heard His kind voice saying, "Well done! good and faithful servant,"—"She hath done what she could!"

I declare the statements in this paper to be true.

AGNES EUGENIE SMITH,
Nursing Institute,

December, 23rd 1896. Sunderland.

SECOND PRIZE (£1 IS.).

MY PROFESSIONAL WORK.

FOR some time back I have been engaged in Folk-Lore collecting. To me it has become most interesting, as well as being a means of making me so far independent of circumstances.

I. How I began my profession.

Having a good deal of time on hand, and seeing many things I would like to get with a little extra money; if I could only earn it at home, I began to wish I had something to do, that would be interesting, and profitable. I had learned no trade, or profession, and as my home is in an out of the way part of the country, home employment was difficult to get. Well, I was in this frame of mind about three years ago, when a person asked me if I would care to do some Folk-Lore collecting.

I asked about the terms, and the work, and whether he thought I could undertake to collect information on a subject with which I was practically unacquainted. Receiving encouragement from my friend, and making myself so far acquainted with what was wanted, and the terms offered for such work, I resolved to make a start. Although I confess I had little expectation of being successful. Indeed it was two months after that, before I summoned courage to send off my first collection of Lore; which I may say here, was a very meagre production.

II. My method.

At first I had no method. I simply talked to people about old times, who told me many stories of such things as constitute subjects of enquiry by Folk Lorists. These stories I wrote on scraps of paper in the first instance, and then when I had time, I transferred them to my collecting sheets. The penciled scraps I burnt. As time went on however, I found that I would need to take note of what I was sending, as well as what I had on hand, otherwise, I would be in danger of repeating myself. I therefore decided on the following plan. I bought some large minute books; these I paged, and indexed, and I also provided myself with a few small note books, and pencils which I gave to some of my young friends whose help I solicited, keeping one for my own use. I then took note of every item of information I could get on anything bearing on the subject in hand, and if a story, a rhyme, a legend, a riddle, or anything else was incomplete, I told my young friends, and we all did our level best to get it completed. From the note books the information was

transferred to the large minute books, with the headings written with red ink, and the page entered in the indextable. This enabled me, when filling up my sheets, instead of filling them up with all sorts of scrappy information, as I had been doing at first to fill them up page after page with one, subject. It had the further advantage of giving far less trouble to the receiver, for at a glance he could see how much information he had under each heading. My sheets I paged, and joined together at the left hand corner. I numbered each item of information given in them, and where the reciters name was not to appear, I marked the top of the page with red ink. While to keep me right as to matter already sent off, I drew a blue pencil line through every page of the big book, so soon as the matter had been transferred to the sheets, as well as marking off the corresponding page in the index.

I have said nothing so far, as to the manner of dealing with those from whom information is to be got. At first I thought women would be much better versed in Folk Lore, and much more communicative than men. In that I soon found out I was mistaken. Men I found to be much more willing to tell what they knew, and they really seemed to know more. With either sex however, a F.L. collector need not expect to succeed unless she herself is interested in the subject, and has something in common with the reciter. There is no use going to a house and proceeding to pump the inmates right off. This would simply have the effect of freezing them up. The only way to succeed is to go in when you are invited; to be pleasant, kindly, and polite, and to converse with those from whom you expect to get information, as you would converse with your most intimate friend. Another thing that chokes the spring, is the presence of a note book. And this brings me to the difficulties.

III. The Difficulties of my profession.

My residence being in the Highlands, it was a great drawback to me that I knew so little of Gaelic. I could understand that language pretty well, but could hardly converse in it, and as for writing it, I could do absolutely nothing. In these circumstances, my work at the commencement of it was very much up hill. I could not use a note book in presence of my informants, for I found out from experience that if I did, it would interfere with the freedom of the conversation. My plan was to get things repeated over, and over

again, until they got fixed in the memory, after which, I took the first opportunity, to commit to my note book such information as I had obtained. The Gaelic I wrote phonetically, pending an opportunity of getting assistance from some qualified friend to have it reduced to proper form, after which I transcribed it into my large collecting Book. It will be seen that this at least was a slow process, and many a time I found that I had forgotten important points of my information, and had in these cases to go back to my informant to have it repeated, and this I had even to do in many cases, two and three times over. Such experience soon convinced me, that if I was to have any pleasure in my work, or success; I must face the learning of Gaelic, I therefore made a commencement with the result that I can now speak it wonderfully well, and am besides able to do a good deal in the way of writing it. And now I am able to tell something of my encouragements.

IV. My Encouragements.

First among my encouragements is, that I have been giving entire satisfaction, and instead of the fee at first offered, I have all along got two thirds more, and consequently I make a fair salary. Then my gaelic has improved so much that it is a great pleasure for me to hear a story in that language, and I have seldom now to search my dictionary for any word I hear. Folk-Lore is a wide subject, and the Study of it is most educative; so that to my profession I am indebted for a great deal of my culture, and general information, as well as the ability to put my thoughts in writing. It has also shown me my ignorance. Before I began collecting I was inclined to think that book learning was the only kind of learning under the sun. Now I know that there are people who may not be able to read a line, who nevertheless have their minds stored with most useful information. They know plants, and their uses; they know the names of stars, when, and where they rise, and when, and where they set; they know how to extract dye from plants, and even from the scurf of stones, and can tell far more of how our forefathers lived than can many who profess to have studied history. All the same I think it would add much to the pleasure, and profit of my Highland friends, if they had a Gaelic G.O.P.

I declare the statements in this paper to be true.

"ST. JOHN'S WORT"
Portcharlotte.

THIRD PRIZE (£1 IS.).

MY PROFESSIONAL WORK.

I AM a musician, a sort of local celebrity in a small way, having at nineteen years of age been chosen out of ten candidates for the post of organist of a church. Before that I had been assistant-organist at the largest church in the district. Since then I have been able to spend four years at the Royal Academy of Music, where I was moderately successful as a student. I left with silver and bronze medals, and what is better, the highest award of the Academy, the Certificate of Merit. I have also gained the medal of the Society of Arts, and the gold medal of the London Academy of Music entitling me to put L.A.M. after my name, which I never do.

So much for my credentials. Now for my work. When I left the Academy I hoped to

do something as a singer, but I found that I could not get enough engagements. There are so many girls who want to be singers: it looks such a very grand thing from the outside. I fear I have not the requisite "push." But however that may be, I took the work that lay nearest and began to teach. Now it happens that the music-teaching profession is also very overcrowded. There are quite a large number of teachers within a stone's-throw of where I live. Then too we are near London, and people have a great idea of going to town for lessons. All this makes it difficult to get pupils, and also keeps fees low. Unfortunately the public does not discriminate at all between good and bad music-teachers. In the scholastic profession it is quite different; the standard is very high, and so it ought to be: but in ours, nobody seems to care whether

you know anything or not, so long as you do not charge much. The true evil is that there are a lot of bogus degrees and worthless certificates obtainable in music, and that girls rush into teaching directly they have got a certificate from anywhere and of any grade. This is a sore point with every qualified musician so I hope I may be excused the writing so much upon it. When people advertise to teach for sixpence an hour, and get pupils, there is something wrong somewhere.

My terms are two guineas for twenty-five half-hour lessons. I do not think this is at all good pay, but I frequently have to take less because if I do not I lose the pupil. I am not at all sure that it is right, but what else can one do? As a matter of fact not one of my pupils pays me my full fees. Recently a lady

sent for me and offered me fifteen shillings instead of my two guineas! "That is all Miss So-and-so charges!" she said. I was aghast, but seeing I should get little if any more I said I would take her little boy for a guinea as a great favour and since he was one of my choir-boys. She held out for a long time, haggling and haggling, and I do not quite know whether to be ashamed or proud to say that I held out too, but at last she said, "Let us split the difference, Miss Pimpernel. Take seventeen-&-six."

That is the sort of thing one meets in the music profession.

As for the work, nothing can be more delightful. The hours are very irregular, because I must suit my pupils' convenience, & some of them must come at a certain time or not at all. Many of my lessons are given in the evening, and I am sorry for that, but in this district many people are engaged all day & have only the evening free. On Mondays I have little to do: two lessons, I think. On Tuesdays two lessons in the day, and lessons from six till nine in the evening. Until lately I then went out to give a lesson at half-past nine to a girl who is in a shop and cannot get home till then; but I gave that up as I did not get home till half-past ten, & in winter I found it very trying. On Wednesdays I have a pupil at two, then I rush off as a rule to an afternoon orchestral concert given here in the winter: home to tea, then out to give two lessons from six till seven, then off to church. Service is at half-past seven. Only the boys of the choir attend that, and as we sit in the gallery out of sight, it is all I can do to keep them in order & attend to my own work as well. At half-past eight the rest of the choir comes in and we practise for an hour at least, frequently more. I play and conduct as well. It is quite easy to me now to detect faults in the singing although I am accompanying all the while, and of course I have to stop and correct them. After practice I have to write down the numbers of the hymns for the next Sunday, and give the paper to the vergers for the hymn-boards. Also I must make a copy for myself, with the numbers of chants &

everything else for the service-lists. Then I have to see that the books and music are gathered up and the place left tidy. I get home between ten and half-past.

Thursday is rather an off-day with me as far as teaching goes. I usually go to London to the house of an eminent professor of singing who very kindly invites a few young teachers and students to come and discuss with him & each other the difficulties which arise in our work. It is wonderfully good of him, but he says he learns as much as we do.

On Friday I have five lessons to give, and I often have the younger boys of the choir, new ones especially, come to me for an hour for a little extra teaching. I do not do this every week, neither am I expected to do it at all, but I think it is a good thing. Choir-boys want no end of attention: indeed some organists say that you cannot make them really efficient unless there is a daily service at their church.

On Saturday mornings I begin at nine o'clock with a girl who teaches in a school all the week. She takes both pianoforte and singing lessons, and is now preparing for the Trinity College Senior Local. At the end of her hour, two little boys arrive, twins of nine years old. They are darling little fellows: both learn pianoforte, and they are also being trained for a church choir. They enjoy their lessons thoroughly and consider me their especial property. On Sundays they come to church with their parents and are very delighted if they can make me smile from my perch at the organ. After them comes the boy whose mother "split the difference," and then my head choir-boy for his singing-lesson. I give him one lesson a week for nothing, because he is a good boy and quick to learn. At two o'clock I begin again with another piano-lesson, and so on till half-past three. Then I usually write the service-lists for next day, and then I am free till five o'clock. After tea I hurry away to church for the boys' practice, which lasts until eight o'clock. We go through the next day's psalms and hymns, as well as any anthem or "service" which we have in preparation, & I usually manage, even if there is ever so much to be done, to give them a few minutes talk about

keys, time, how to produce their voices, how to manage the breath or say the words. I often think that the shorter this little interpolated lesson, is the better they remember it.

Then comes Sunday. There are only two services for me, at eleven and at half-past six. The afternoon service is merely hymns, and a young man in the Sunday-school expects & likes to play, so he is quite welcome to do so. Our services are not very ornate, since it is a Low Church, but I find quite enough to do in preparing the choir for them. We have ten boys and eight men in the choir. By the way, we sometimes use a hymn-tune of my own, & some of my chants are quite favourites. I have a nice little organ by Robson, recently renovated. It has nine stops on the great & room for a trumpet, six on the swell & room for an oboe, one pedal stop, three couplers & three composition pedals. I have given recitals for charities, got the church full & good press notices. My salary is twenty-five pounds. No extras except an occasional wedding, when as a rule the interested persons object to pay me anything, but go off & ask somebody to play—on my organ—who will do it for nothing.

Of course I get concert engagements, but the same thing is found. Cheap people can be got, so I must be cheap too. I am quite commonly offered half-a-guinea. Country engagements pay better. An oratorio engagement in the West of England last month brought me £2. 10. 0, but the expenses ran away with most of it. These are cut-throat days, and one must take what one can get. Last year I gave a Vocal Recital. Everybody called it an artistic success, but I only made about thirty shillings. However I was lucky not to lose on the venture.

Nevertheless, in spite of my grumbling I know I have a good deal to be glad about. In 1896 I made between seventy and eighty pounds, and there are many girls who work far harder for far less.

I declare the statements in this paper to be true.

"PIMPERNEL."

5th January 1897.

Plumstead.

FOURTH PRIZE (£1 is.).

I EARN my living with pen & brains; my sister works in the same office (a publisher's), and we two have a little room all to ourselves; it is a very ugly little room, & not very tidy, I fear: paper is dreadful stuff for getting scattered about; when I screw up useless sheets, I always aim at throwing them into the waste paper basket, which stands by my desk, but somehow or other I but rarely succeed. On one side of our room is a large window, where my desk stands; the window commands a not very extensive view of dirty roofs, but above them is always the sky—at which I gaze when in search of ideas. Another side of the room is almost entirely occupied by a sofa, which, even if it were not usually piled up with papers & books, would hardly be conducive to repose, for it is a very hard & uncomfortable piece of furniture; by this sofa, in true foreign fashion, stands a table, at which my sister works, & where I work too, when I require plenty of room; on the opposite side of the apartment is a gas-fire (horrid thing: I would far rather have a coal fire!), & in the corner a cupboard & book case combined; against the fourth wall of the room are just three chairs which, like the sofa, are generally piled up with books & periodicals. In one corner is a typewriter on a small stand. On the walls hang a few coloured fashion-plates, a thermometer, sundry notes & reference lists, pinned up at random, a portrait of the Duke & Duchess of York, an almanac &

a picture of four chickens & three frogs playing tug of war with a poor unfortunate worm; over the mantel-shelf hangs a card upon which is printed: 'My Work is for the King': that card sometimes calls me to account when I am wasting my time.

So much for our room; on the same floor with us is a large room where four girls work at patterns, & next to that is a dining-room for those of the girls who do not go home to dinner. We are on the first floor; below us is the shop, two offices, & a room where two more people work at patterns. Downstairs is the machine room, where 3 men work at cutting out paper patterns, packing etc. On the 2nd floor of the house is the care-taker's sitting-room, where my sister & I take our meals; also a kitchen. On the 3rd floor are 2 bedrooms belonging to the care-taker, a store-room for books, patterns etc. & a large workroom where several girls work at patterns—cutting, stamping & folding them. On the 4th & last floor is another, still larger workroom, where a good many girls work; I do not exactly know how many. These workrooms are all reached by a back stair-case. The three ladies who do the bulk of the editing work, do not come up to the office, except occasionally: they send their work on by post.

At home we breakfast at 8, & a few minutes after 9, my sister & I go off to business; we have a good long omnibus ride before we get

there, but I enjoy that; we always ride outside, so as to get as much fresh air as possible; besides, when we ride outside, we are not tempted to read & so spoil our eyes & make ourselves sleepy. I find it exceedingly interesting to look at all that passes; to watch how cleverly the driver dodges between all the vehicles on the road; & to note familiar faces. At 10-o'clock we start work: my sister does various odd jobs—if I may use so inelegant an expression; my work is to write descriptions of dresses & other garments for five monthly fashion magazines; that is my chief work; some of the descriptions I translate from the French; some I write by looking at the illustrations; but of most I have the patterns given me, which I open out separately on the table, & write from those, aided by notes & explanations which accompany each pattern. I also have to write descriptions to send abroad—lists of such being sent up to me as pleasant little surprises now & again: most often when I am very busy, seems to me. Another branch of my work is to read & correct the proofs of the magazines, before the latter are printed off; this needs careful attention to every detail, as the printers make very funny mistakes sometimes. I also have to read all French & German papers that are sent up to me, & translate anything that I consider worth translating; occasionally, too, I have French or German letters sent up to me to translate & answer. Sometimes I find

myself with nothing particular to do; then I employ my time in writing stories & things that come into my head; if these be worth anything, I get paid for them, which is nice for me; my regular pay is £1 a week, but more has been promised me in the near future. We work from 10-o'clock till 1-o'clock, that is, my sister & I do; at 1-o'clock we go upstairs, where we find a hot lunch awaiting us; I generally spend the luncheon hour in reading a book or the newspaper; then at 2-o'clock we recommence work, and keep at it till 4-o'clock, when we lock up & go home—arriving there in time for tea. After tea we of course do as we please; our evenings are always pleasant, & home is all the more appreciated after a day at the dingy office—for it is dingy: there is no denying the fact. On Fridays, we do not get home until about 7 or 8-o'clock, but we do not mind that, as we have a whole holiday on Saturdays. Every Tuesday evening we have a sewing-party

(which consists of six members), from 5.30 to 7.30; why I mention this is because I wish some more girls would do the same; very likely there are many who would, if once the idea were put into their heads. We get from our clergyman the address of some poor woman who has a family to provide for; then, somewhere about October, two of us go and visit the woman, and ask permission to make clothes for her children; these we work at every Tuesday evening; when we have made one garment for each child, we take them round, & perhaps a cake or something as well; then we go on to make them something else each; we make for each child two sets of underclothes and one dress; then we leave them & go on to another family. Worked thus, I think a sewing-society is very interesting. So far, we have only been able to manage one family a year, as we stop work in the Summer; but every little helps. If all the girls who could, would!

Of course I occasionally find things to grumble at. For one thing, it is rather a bother getting up to business and going home again, when the weather is bad. It also annoys me that I cannot get my work regularly: sometimes I have ever so much to do in a very short space of time, and sometimes I have very little to do; sometimes I get through a whole day without having done anything in particular; and then, just when we are thinking of going home, something is sent up for me to do at once. Then again, it is very vexing when, through no fault of my own, I have to do the same work twice over, as sometimes happens. But there, we cannot have everything just how we like it; and these are, after all, but very minor troubles.

I declare this all to be perfectly true.

“CAULIFLOWER.”

Church Road,
Brixton Hill.

Jan 4th, 1897

FIFTH PRIZE (£1 is.).

MY PROFESSIONAL WORK.

WHEN I was fifteen I made up my mind to earn my own living: so I went to my father and said—

“Father, I want some work to do.”

He smiled at me encouragingly.

“Find some,” he said.

After that I went about for days turning things over and over in my mind. The result was a letter, written in my neatest style, to the village postmistress. This letter took me some hours to indite, but was very satisfactory in its result, for the answer arrived promptly by return.

My delight when it was given to me was unbounded. It was the first step toward the end I meant to achieve. I can remember the words it contained to this day—

“In answer to Miss P—’s letter, the postmistress wishes to state that she will undertake to teach all post-office duties, and telegraph instrument, for a fee of £4. 4. 0.”

I carried this precious document to my father. He read it, silently laid upon it four bright sovereigns, and four shillings, then passed it back to me.

I squeezed his hand affectionately, and went away.

Those four guineas were a perfect mine of wealth in my eyes, and indeed they must have seemed almost as important to my father, for times were very hard then, and there were so many hungry mouths to fill. I was old enough to understand a little of the look of care that rested upon my mother’s brow, and the money seemed to put a dreadful responsibility upon me. What if I were to fail, and so waste it all! I determined to try so hard, and all the way—as I walked to the office, with my little purse clasped tightly in my hand, for my first lesson—I was asking God, in my heart, to help me in my self-chosen career.

I was to have two hours tuition a day, and after the first week the strangeness had considerably worn off, and I found myself getting used to the duties. I remember how pleased I was, because, when I arrived exactly at 10

one morning, my teacher said “she needed no timepiece with such a punctual pupil.” That was the character my father had earned. I wanted to copy him.

Of course there were difficulties to be overcome. The dots and dashes of the telegraph instrument were very bewildering, and the different rules for everything—Registered letters and parcel-post and a thousand other things puzzled me exceedingly; but I laboured—(I had almost written *manfully*) on.

In those days I slept with a penny edition of the post-office handbook under my pillow, that I might have it in readiness to study the first thing on waking, in the quiet time before the children were up. Looking back upon them now those short three months seem very bright ones, for long ere they ended my work grew full of interest to me.

I was quite sorry to leave the office, and really begin alone, although it was something delightful to bring home my first earnings. I proudly gave the money to my father. I meant to pay my four guinea debt—for it was a real debt to my thinking—as quickly as I could.

After that the way became comparatively easy. I took several holiday engagements in the country, and greatly enjoyed the novelty of seeing fresh people and places. I can safely add that I never met with anything but the greatest kindness and consideration in all my wanderings, being always treated more as a child of the home than a hired assistant.

I would like to tell you a little about my present situation, because among so many girls in business who have real grievances, it is nice, I think, to hear of those whose lines have fallen in pleasant places.

This is a small London sub office. I always thought I should hate London. Maybe it was my country up-bringing that led me to expect to find everybody in the great City rogues and “sharpers.” It was not without a feeling of dread that I first took my place behind the counter here. Here—where day by day I meet with honest hearts and true as ever country villages produced, where, amid

the busy stream of men and women who hurry into the office for letter stamps, on their way to the city, in the morning, scarcely one is too busy or self-occupied to wish a pleasant “Good-day,” or make some kind courteous remark, before they mingle with, and are lost in the never ending procession of toilers for daily bread. I often laugh heartily over the comical questions people put, and the strange ideas they hold. Once a lady, very aged and feeble, came to deposit the savings of her lifetime. When I gave her a bank-book with the amount entered, she looked earnestly into my face and said, “I am pleased to lend you the money, my dear, and I hope God will bless it to you.”

Such confidence was certainly pleasant.

One dear old gentleman never comes to draw his monthly allowance without bringing me a nose-gay from his own tiny garden-plot, or in the winter-time from some precious indoor plant, and one hot afternoon a great basket of strawberries came. Everybody down to the smallest telegraph boy remembers what a delicious feast they were.

The hours are long. On duty from 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. without only about 15 minutes for each meal, but by the kindness of my employer I get half an hour’s rest after dinner, in which time I do all my odd jobs of mending and brushing my clothes. I have to keep the accounts, and see that everything runs smoothly in the office, but I do all in my own way, and just as, and when I like. My salary is only a pound a week, but I have Sunday quite free, beside one evening. At 8 P.M. sharp I close the office, and, as I am engaged, and hope to be married before so very very many months are over, I spend the rest of my leisure time in making pretty things to adorn, what to me, at least, will I am sure be, the most wondrously beautiful little home in the whole world.

I declare the statements in this paper to be true.

“DANDELION,”

Southgate Road,
Islington, N.

