and Gordon had made a rustic seat under the big pear-tree. I liked nothing better than to spend a few hours there with Hope and Nina with the sunshine flecking the green leaves over our heads, and the distant gleam of the river before us. The birds, and the bees, and the butterflies, seemed to love the place too, and Nina often brought her favourite black rabbit to browse on the herbage. The pretty creature was perfectly tame, and would nibble at the lettuce-leaf in my hand quite fearlessly. It was nearly four o'clock, and I had just placed the bowl of roses in the middle of the tea-table when I saw Hope crossing the lawn. She had some pink roses in her belt; perhaps they had given her cheeks a tinge of their old colour.

"What have you done with Mr. Campbell, Hope, my dear!" I asked, for I was surprised to see her alone.

"He has gone, Berrie," she returned quietly, but she spoke quite cheerfully. "He is half-way to the station by this time. He was so sorry not to bid you good-bye, but he has promised to come again before he goes to Oxford."

"Did you have a nice talk, dearie?"

"Oh, yes! He has been telling us about old Lady Jean. I think he did it on purpose. He was so kind, Berrie. He has made me feel so differently about things. How I wish Aunt Faith could have heard him. He said half the troubles and miseries of this life would be smoothed away," she continued, "if we would only put ourselves in other people's places and try to see things from their point of view. 'It is the great blank wall of self that hinders us,' he went on. 'But some of us manage to peep round the corner. Couldn't you peep round the corner this afternoon, Miss Hope? You will find the air fresher, and the view worth looking at'—and his manner was so droll that Nina and I could not help laughing. But I know what he meant—that I must think of father and not of myself." And Hope's eyes were a little dreamy.

I think she would have told me more only the green door that led into the lane was opened suddenly, and then we saw Miss Ashton and Mr. Mostyn crossing the tennis lawn.

I thought Hope would have gone to meet them; but very likely she was too shy, for she began nervously putting finishing touches to the tea-table, though Johnson had arranged it as prettily as possible.

What a handsome pair they looked as they came towards us. I have often heard people say that Graham Mostyn was the beau-ideal of a middle-aged English gentleman. He had a fine commanding presence, and as far as looks went Miss Ashton certainly matched him.

She was always a striking-looking woman; but I had never seen her to greater advantage than I did to-day. She wore a grey silky material—grey was her special colour—and a shady hat with long curling feathers. She had some dark damask roses in her hand. Hope told me afterwards that it was one of her peculiarities never to wear flowers, though she loved to have them near her. If only Gainsborough or Sir Julian Reynolds could have painted her, for the grey feathers and beautiful face and the graceful draperies would have made a lovely picture, and very likely Mr. Mostyn thought so too by the way he was looking at her.

"Hope, my child," he said, as the girl advanced rather slowly and timidly, "you and Brenda must be dear friends."

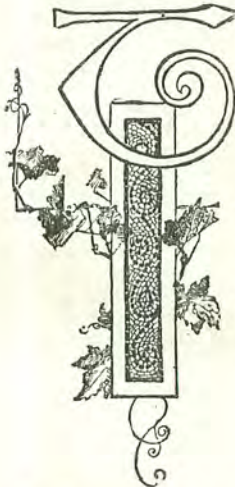
"We are so already, are we not, Hope?"—but I could see there were tears in Miss Ashton's eyes as she embraced her very tenderly. I liked her all the better, when I heard how her voice trembled; it was evident even at that first moment that she recognised her own position and Hope's very acutely.

(*To be continued.*)

THE LITERARY LIFE FROM A WOMAN'S STANDPOINT.

(A PAPER READ BEFORE A YORKSHIRE Y.W.C.A.)

By ISABELLA FYVIE MAYO.



HERE is one feature of literary life — especially woman's literary life — which differentiates it from every other profession. Unlike nursing or teaching, medicine or philanthropy, it does not set its worker into any special groove of existence. Nay, if she is to do justice to her work, it compels her to shun any tendency to drift into grooves of thought or experience. Nor does it withhold her from any of the callings and functions of ordinary womanly life. Indeed, her ready access to these gives her some advantage over her men-competitors, since she has the less temptation to endeavour to "make bricks without straw" by evolving brain-spun theories, unchecked by practical experience. Her best intellectual movement can go on parallel with the life and work that are common to all women, and it is but supported, enriched and renewed by them. The literary worker has plenty of leisure for worthy womanly life and work. The mere time absorbed by the actual labour of very real professional literary life is probably not greater than that which most middle-class women squander on conventional "calling," or fritter away on bazaars and other unprofitable forms of industry by which two and two only make two. The true literary worker has no temptation to indulge in shallow social frivolities. She knows of better use for her time and energies. The mere superficials of society offer her nothing. When she has once seen "how they are done," they can show her no more. She would no more make "studies" of them than an artist would paint his portraits from a waxwork show. Let her once cut off these, and she has abundance of time for household ways and friendship and neighbourly energies. For her treasure she must dig deep into the bed-rock of humanity. She must see men and women where their real selves, good or bad, are made manifest. She must study circumstance and character as real life develops them, not as they are displayed in complimentary speeches or politely manipulated biography.

Everything is grist which comes to the literary worker's mill. Not that she goes about searching for "material." Any such self-conscious activity would defeat itself. Memory and observation lay up stores for her just as they do for anybody, and it is well for her if her observation be keen and her memory good. But out of these stores she can create clothing for her ideas. Of course nobody's experiences in life are wasted, so far as himself is concerned; but the literary worker has the power so to manipulate hers as to make them serviceable and suggestive to other people.

Yet memory and observation alone are not the outfit of the literary worker. They may furnish the material of the ideal world which she creates; but then it must be flooded by the atmosphere of imagination, or it will be as a world without sunshine. "Imagination," we must remember, is not really the faculty which invents incredible adventures and monstrosities of character or circumstances. Imagination has nothing to do with the production of falsenesses; it is rather a singular kind of insight which penetrates to the deepest truth, and so brings it out that it can be recognised by many who might never have found it for themselves. It is a faculty of which few are wholly deficient, though the share of some may be small indeed compared with that of others. Of nothing is it more true than of imagination that to him who hath shall be given, and from him who hath not shall be taken even that which he hath. There is a deep reason at the bottom. True imagination and warmth of sympathy are mutually connected, and each fosters the growth of the other, while in those in whom the original supply is scanty, they often dwindle together to vanishing point. Imagination can be cultivated, and the one recipe is to study how to look upon the things of others as if they were our own—to put ourselves in the place of our neighbour, instead of regarding him or her, as we are sometimes tempted to do, as of different clay from ourselves. A clever writer has said that "the Colonel's lady and Judith O'Grady are sisters under their skins," and this sympathetic imagination carries us safely behind mere external differences. Let me assure you that this cultivation of the imagination is not only of service for creative work, it has also many practical uses, one of which is that it constantly saves us from being hoodwinked by the glib statements of interested speakers and writers.

The literary worker, however, besides memory, observation, and a cultivated imagination, must have the power of adequate expression. There are some people who have all the literary worker's outfit except this, and these are they from whom literary workers receive the sincerest appreciation and the warmest sympathy. For, next to the joy of clothing one's own thought in fitting words, is the delight of finding it so clothed by another.

"I have always felt that, but I did not know how to say it. Thank you for saying it for me," is a form of praise which falls warm on the literary worker's heart. And literary workers, with their own modicum of expression, can also enjoy this power of recognition. For on every rung of the literary ladder there are those on the rungs above who can grapple with subtleties of thought and feeling which escape from those below.

On the other hand, I am obliged to say that there are some literary workers who seem to have little literary outfit save a fatal facility for words. They produce pages upon pages, yet, when one has read them, one asks vainly, "What has one learned?" "What has one gained?" Let that pass, for we are now considering what the literary life is, rather than what is not the literary life.

Let us go on to its more individual side. And here, perhaps, you will forgive me for being a little personal, because when one gets down to details, one can but speak for oneself.

At the beginning of any literary life, there is a great deal of work which nobody hears much about. For instance, it may seem as if my literary life began with *The Occupations of a Retired Life*—the book which appeared in 1867, and which made a modest success. In truth, that is the work by which I "arrived." I had been toiling diligently for years before that, for I began before my school days were over. For seven long years I "endeavoured," and yet was scarcely once published or paid. I do not in the least wonder at it. It was all quite right and as it should be. I marvel rather at the kindness and patience of the editors who had to endure my early experiments and from whom I was practically receiving a free apprenticeship. I have letters from Jean Ingelow, from Mrs. S. C. Hall, who afterwards became my great friend, and from Tom Hood (not the author of the "Song of the Shirt," but his son)—long letters, full of wise criticism and kind encouragement and hope. (I often wonder whether I have really fulfilled their hopes!) Towards the end of the seven years sundry editors began to take short poems and little stories; and then the great miracle of my life happened, for a publisher, prompted by an editor who had noticed some of my little efforts, actually came to me and asked me to write the book which grew into *The Occupations of a Retired Life*.

I have told you this, because I want to say that there is no royal road into the literary life—there is no way, but just to "try, try, try again," and put what one does to the practical test of submitting it to an editor. So one gets "licked into shape." It is a hard process and a bitter one, but it weeds away those who have not that innate love for their work which will uphold them against all disappointments, and which remains its own reward even if it can get no other.

Before I go further, I should say that nobody should make this endeavour in the mere hope or under the need of earning money. Its pecuniary result is far too uncertain. Do not think that this shuts out all but the wealthy from the struggle into the literary life. During those seven trial years I secured my own independence—indeed, towards their close, I was a woman with others more or less depending on me. I owe a great deal to that fact. To earn one's own income in some absolutely practical way brings one upon solid experience of life and human nature which can be reached in no other way. I reserved literature as my recreation and my hobby until I had a full right to make it my profession.

Some good literary workers accomplish a regular daily task, exactly as bank clerks do. Anthony Trollope did so, and I could name one or two excellent living writers who do thus. So, I understand, did Sir Walter Scott himself—a very high example. But it has never suited me. It is true that I generally sit down daily in front of my desk among my familiar tools. One puts oneself thus, as it were, in position to catch a favouring impulse if it come. But it does not always come. Very often it does not, and I have knitted hundreds of stockings and done miles of hemming while vainly waiting. Then sometimes the impulse will arrive most inconveniently—just as one wants, for instance, to start on a journey. I have often noticed that any sudden involuntary change in one's surroundings will promote the coming of the impulse. I can remember many instances of this.

There are some people, too, whose presence seems, as it were, to fertilise one's mind and aid its productive power. They are not always clever people or even educated. There are others, again, in whose presence one's ideas wither and dry up as grass does in the east wind. There are books, too, which are distinctly nutrient—however familiar they become. I imagine most writers could name certain authors to whom they resort when they need stimulus or suggestion, though such books may seem to have nothing in common with the work to which they prove provocative—as, for instance, a novelist may turn to a theologian, or an essayist to a book of ballads. There are even certain places which produce these effects. I know city streets and country lanes whose very atmosphere seems saturated with "stories" which tell themselves when a "hearing ear" comes along. In such places I have often felt as if a companion walked by my side making confidences to me, which I could afterwards work up into a narrative. The basis of most of my stories has been some "character" therein which has entered into my mind, much as an acquaintance enters into one's life, and the circumstances grow out of the character, as incidents crystallise round a person and make a life-history. When one writes a long story, one lives, as it were, with its people all the while, so that one often feels depressed and lonely when it is finished, as if one had parted from dear and intimate friends.

In conclusion, let me say that the true joy and blessing of literary life should be in literary work itself. What fame or profit it may bring is uncertain and external. Its own delight is unfailing and innate. This is in its way a secret which one scarcely knows how to impart to any who do not share it; but those who have it are almost inclined to wonder how life looks to those who have it not. Quite apart, too, from fame and profit, it has influences on one's outer life. It draws into near friends those who are afar. It sets up an affectionate confidential link between the literary worker and many who would be otherwise unknown. It is a sort of introduction wherever one goes, bespeaking interest at least—probably kindliness—so that it "saves time" in forming friendships—an important item in a world where so much that is pleasantest is so quickly "passing away." It abolishes many of the foolish little boundaries set up in society.

I remember once when I was invited to dine with a certain family under circumstances which made them fear lest their valued old cook should resent the appearance of a guest. They told me afterwards that they mentioned to her that a visitor was coming, adding, as she frowned, "It is Mrs. Mayo."

"Oh, well," she answered, her face clearing, "we reckons her as our friend in the kitchen just as much as yours upstairs!"

I could not help seeing some truth in the remark whimsically made to me lately by a wealthy and highly-placed young man—

"I say that things in this world are not managed fairly, for I would pay to be able to write stories, but you are paid for writing them!"

Finally, let me declare that nobody should value noble and tender deeds and beautiful lives more than should literary workers. For it is only by the light which shines from such that they can see to do any work worthy the doing.

VARIETIES.

Can a Woman Throw Straight?

"How did this happen?" asked the surgeon, as he dressed the wound in the cheek, and applied a soothing poultice to the damaged eye.

"Got hit with a stone," replied the patient.

"Who threw it?"

"My—my wife," was the reluctant answer.

"Hum! it's the first time I knew a woman to hit anything she aimed at," remarked the sarcastic surgeon.

"She was throwing at her neighbour's hens," explained the sufferer. "I was behind her."

A Hint.

If the world is not square—
Which is wrong, I admit—
Just be right square yourself,
Which will help it a bit.

Live Wisely.

So live that when the sun
Of your existence sinks in night,
Memories sweet of mercies done
May shrine your name in memory's light;
And the blessed seeds you scattered, bloom
A hundredfold in days to come.

Sir John Bowring.

The Bird on Her Hat.

A moral tale is told by an American newspaper of a fashionably-attired lady who met a little bare-legged urchin carrying a bird's nest with eggs in it.

"You are a wicked boy!" said the lady. "How could you rob the nest? No doubt the poor mother is now grieving for the loss of her eggs."

"Oh, she don't care," said the boy, edging away; "she's on your hat!"

Living.—Simply to breathe is not to live. Who does not work is prematurely dead.