

THE FAILURES OF THE BUSINESS GIRL.

BY FLORA KLICKMANN.

PART I.

IN LITERATURE AND JOURNALISM.



SOME hundreds of girls desiring employment come under my notice every year. They invariably tell me the same thing: they cannot get work because everything is over-crowded. From one point of view this may be true; in each profession there is a crush; but that is only half-way up; go further, and you will generally find there is plenty of room at the top. There never was a day when business women, in every department of life, were able to earn the big salaries that some of them do now. The utter failures are due to one of two causes, incompetency or ill-health.

I am going to point out a few of the mistakes which have led to the downfall of the unfortunates. The first profession I deal with shall be that ever-popular one, Literature and Journalism.

It is a grave error to imagine that the only stock-in-trade required for this business is a good education and pens, ink and paper. It is essential that you have health if you propose to take up journalism, by which, in this instance, I mean newspaper work more particularly. Incidentally I would say that I, personally, do not consider this is girls' work at all; nevertheless many undertake it and make a good living out of it, and still more undertake it and barely extract an existence from the proceeds; therefore it comes under our consideration.

Unless a girl is exceptionally strong, it is far better to leave this branch of literary work entirely alone. One sees delicate, sensitive, neurotic, and even consumptive girls going about at night, often in frail evening gowns, to report concerts, dramatic performances, society functions, lectures and political speeches, after which they may have to trail home by the last train to some remote suburb; or, what is equally undesirable, they compress themselves and their belongings into the smallest possible space and live in town, thus disposing of the good they would get from sleeping in purer air. I know girls at the present minute who begin the day tired and weary, from the strain of the previous night and insufficient rest. They start by going to a fashionable wedding, or a flower show, or any similar function that has to be noticed in their paper; they may have to travel a long journey, irrespective of weather; food they take when and how they can get it; they have to return home to change their dress, and then out again to some night meeting. This does not end their work, as in many cases the copy has to be in the printer's hands the same night, to appear in the next morning's paper. After writing it they go home, wearied in body from lack of proper, regular meals, worn out with the rushing about, and brain-tired from thinking and writing at high pressure. These girls, sooner or later, become failures; because, unless one has a constitution of cast-iron, a nervous breakdown is inevitable; and in too many cases the poor, struggling workers do not give up until the mischief is beyond repair.

Writers of fiction and magazine articles escape these disadvantages, but in their case much more originality of thought is required. This is the stumbling-block to many. Although a good education is necessary, something in addition is required to make a successful writer. And this raises a curious point that I have proved over and over again: the girls who have had a university training seldom make such good all-round writers as those who are equally clever, but who have had a wide general

education rather than a classical one. Of course there are exceptions, and I should be the very last to under-estimate a college course; I know its value only too well. But the fact remains that it has proved an actual drawback to more than one who has embarked upon literature as a profession. It would appear as though the excess of scholarship had overpowered their individuality; they spent so much time in accumulating other people's wisdom that they scarcely developed any originality of their own.

As an example: a girl who has been very distinguished at Girton besought me to find her some work to do—anything, only she must earn money at once. I wanted an article on the official life and duties of the American President. I gave her abundant data to go upon, and told her the article must be written in a bright, chatty manner, as it was for a popular magazine.

When the MS. arrived, it started with a dozen lines of Greek; it bristled with quotations from the classics; the actual information—with which I had supplied her—was told in the most precise, stilted language, and merely sandwiched in between the extracts before mentioned. I pointed out to her that by far the larger proportion of English people do not understand Greek, and in any case it had no connection with so modern a subject as the ruler of the United States. But she could not see it. What was wrong with her grammar? she asked. Did I wish her to be flippant or to use slang? No. Well then, she could not understand what fault I could find with it.

There are many clever girls who miss success for this one reason: they try—consciously or unconsciously—to make their writings convey a sense of the amount of learning they have acquired, instead of dealing with the matter they profess to be writing upon, and trying to infuse into it a little of their own originality.

Another type of girl who usually sinks to the bottom is she who seeks to bolster up indifferent work by drawing upon the editor's sympathies. She explains that she is only writing to make a little pocket-money; or she informs him that she has a widowed mother to support. She pays a very poor compliment to her work by so doing; as naturally one thinks it must be very bad indeed if so many excuses have to be put forward on its behalf.

Other girls, who might do well, fail because they scorn the small subjects close at home, and aim for heights which are only attainable after years of toil. Another illustration may explain my meaning: a girl came to me who was apparently in great straits; suddenly left penniless, she wanted to write for a living. Could I assist her? I asked if she had had any experience? No; but she was sure she should succeed if only she could get a chance. I wanted an interview with a well-known singer. "Madame Blank is a very old friend of mine," I began, but she interrupted me with a look of positive disgust.

"I should hate to write interviews!" she said. "I don't want that sort of work!" I tried to show her that it was a matter that could be well done or badly done; it rested with the writer. But she was firm. I then suggested that she should try to write some short articles on subjects of topical interest which I mentioned, and send them to certain papers that would be most likely to take them. "Oh, no! I should not care to write on trivial matters like these." In desperation I asked what she would like to write about. She replied—

"I would like to write an article for one of the big Reviews on the Persian poet Firdausi and his works." I explained to her that it would be of little use; as she was quite unknown, her opinion on such a subject would be valueless. She had far better work steadily up from the bottom rung of the ladder. But she would not hear of it; and the consequence is she will probably be one more added to those who have failed because they over-estimated their own importance at the outset.

Quite a number "go under" because they will not think.

One writes an article on "How to Scalp Red Indians," we will say, and sends it to the editor of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER. A moment's thought should have shown her that he is a peaceful man with neither time nor inclination for such a hobby; and it could hardly be of use to the "girls" themselves! Another writes a paper on "Novel Cake D'Oyleys" and sends it to *The Railway Magazine*, when everybody knows that cake d'oyleys, however novel, have no part in the building of locomotives or the laying of tracks. These sound impossible instances, but they are fair specimens of the wildly unsuitable articles an Editor receives daily.

Again, when a certain subject has been dealt with in a magazine, it would seem clear, to all but quite young infants, that the editor would not require another article on the same topic. Yet it is a fact that one frequently receives letters to this effect: "Seeing an article on 'Hobgoblins' in your last issue, I forward one on the same subject, in which you will observe I state several instances not mentioned by your previous contributor." Sometimes the letter takes another form: "Seeing an article on 'Hobgoblins' in your magazine, I beg to say I do not agree with your contributor, and am therefore forwarding you an article which shows the absurdity of the previous statements." Now this is nothing short of impertinence; if the editor had considered the previous statements "absurd," he would not have published them in his magazine.

Another fault of the thoughtless girl is that she entirely ignores the fact that a magazine takes any time to print. The week before Good Friday she will send an excellent article, possibly accompanied by beautiful photographs, on "Easter in Jerusalem," saying that as this subject is so appropriate to the season, she hopes the editor will use it in his next number, apparently quite unaware that he is by that time putting together his June or July number. An illustrated magazine, with a big circulation, goes to press (*i.e.*, it is finally handed over to the printers) about two months before the date it is on sale in the shops. But in addition to this the editor has it all schemed out at least a month before that; illustrations and blocks have to be made, and a hundred details to be attended to.

Therefore, look ahead. The girl who never thinks of a subject until the matter is in everybody's mind, will never be a success. And yet this mistake is constantly made. Whenever a national celebration occurs, magazine offices are flooded with poems, long after the event. We have all smiled over the story of the old lady who wrote from the Shetland Islands (was it?) in June, 1887, saying she had just discovered that Her Majesty would that month complete the fiftieth year of her reign, and "oughtn't something to be done?" There are hundreds who are by no means old ladies who do things as misguided every week!

My final failure to-day is the unbusinesslike girl. She writes and offers a subject. If it is accepted, she promptly

writes half-a-dozen more letters explaining it further, or asking questions. Editors are very busy people; the contributor who worries them with letters is doomed. When the article finally arrives, it is probably late, and much longer than the length specified—both serious faults. Or the photographs that should have accompanied it are incomplete, or damaged, or without titles. No matter how brilliant the article, that carelessness as to details will leave an indelible impression on the editorial mind. In many cases it is far less trouble to take a poorer article (and re-write it oneself) from a contributor who sees that every photograph is there, and each one titled, with the photographer's name attached, rather than take a literary triumph from some unreliable girl, who gives one endless labour in getting together the requisite illustrations, and possibly omits the photographer's name from the few prints she does send, or gives a wrong one, making the publisher liable to litigation and heavy damages for the infringement of copyright.

And another equally irritating type of the unmethodical literary aspirant is the one who sends an article or story on approval, badly written, when it should be typed; possibly without either name or address on the MS.; and—worse fault of all, in a girl—the paper soiled and ragged. When a dirty MS. falls to my lot, I handle it as little as possible, out of respect for the deadly germs that I always suspect are lurking within its uninviting creases!

The sender of a MS. who forthwith bombards one with letters as to why it has not received immediate attention, is sure to make but scant progress; she proclaims at the outset that she is unbusinesslike, otherwise she would know that such matters can seldom be dealt with by return of post. Moreover, if the editor has not previously asked for the article, and it is being sent on the writer's own initiative, it is only ordinary courtesy to permit him to attend to it at his own convenience.

These are a few of the errors girls are frequently making in the business of literature, and undermining their chance of a distinguished career in consequence. Of half-heartedness, open carelessness, and laziness there is no occasion to write, since everyone knows that these spell certain failure everywhere.

Let me conclude with some advice that was written to me when I was a school-girl, by one of the wisest and most experienced men of the nineteenth century, the late Sir George Grove, who was at that time head of the Royal College of Music—

"Find your own particular corner in the world," he said; "it is somewhere waiting for you. No matter how small or how big it is, you must fill it. And you must determine to fill it better than anyone else in the world could possibly fill it. If you do this, you need not trouble about Failure or Success."

(To be continued.)

MARGARET HETHERTON.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AFTER that night of anxiety, Mr. Hetherton's grief seemed to have entered on a new phase. He went no more to the cemetery and turned to books for consolation. He remained taciturn, but he looked less melancholy, more resigned, and seemed at times to be making an effort to rouse himself and assume an interest in what was going on around him.

About the end of October, Rob came home bringing fresh life into the quiet little house. Margaret welcomed him joyously. The time was past when she could have confided her troubles to Rob, but he was "her boy" still, very tall and very nautical by this time, but still the same honest, good-hearted lad, full of fun

and humour. Her father, she noticed with regret, suffered under Rob's merriment and often made his escape when the sailor-lad had at last succeeded in making his brother and sisters, who had been living in an atmosphere of perpetual melancholy before his arrival, join him in a hearty laugh. She felt sure that her father misunderstood Rob's cheerfulness. Only she, to whom every expression of his face was familiar, knew how often he gulped down rising tears—knew how often boy-like he laughed that he might not cry. The first night at home he had sobbed brokenly on Margaret's shoulder, but that was the last time.

"Doesn't it seem almost wrong to be happy again, Rob, after losing someone so dear to you?" Margaret asked one night as the two sat together close to the

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PART II. IN MUSIC AND ART.



Davies plays one of Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words." "Why, I learned that ages ago," she exclaims, "and I played it perfectly at our school concert when I was only fourteen!" From this she promptly argues that she is qualified to become a professional pianist, and then wonders why it is she makes no headway. Another, whose voice has had a modicum of training, hears Patti sing "Home, Sweet Home." "Just the simplest thing in the world!" she says to herself, or her friends say to her. "You have a voice—not so fine as Patti's, of course, but still a very good one. All that is necessary is to get up a few of those dear old-fashioned ballads—they always go down with the public—and there you are!" Such girls fail through not realising that this apparent ease and simpleness is, in reality, the great art that conceals art; and the musician has spent years and years of hard work in acquiring it. It may be taken as a universal rule that the less effort and work that appears in any artistic masterpiece—be it a painting, a song, or a poem—the greater has been the time and thought devoted to it.

Again, a girl who could have sung a ballad very creditably may miss success by a too ambitious attempt at first. Many have the mistaken idea that they should play or sing the most difficult thing they have studied, when they are making their *début* or entering for an examination. By so doing they are taxing their powers to their utmost extent—an unwise plan for any public performer; and there is the risk that they may render the difficult work imperfectly; whereas, if an easier piece be selected and executed faultlessly, the audience will not know where the limit of the performer's capabilities may be. Always have a certain amount of power in reserve, as it were; you may be glad enough to draw upon it if you are nervous. By this I mean be more than sure of yourself; if you decide to play or sing a work about which you feel the very slightest uncertainty, that performance is almost bound to prove a disappointment. It is one thing to play at home, and it is an entirely different matter to play amid the unaccustomed surroundings of a concert-room platform. The girl who leaves a wide margin for nervousness is wise, and she is the one who experiences the least nervousness of any. Feeling absolutely safe in the consciousness that the piece she has chosen is so well within her executive powers that she could perform it blindfold, or from memory, she does not worry

over the possibilities of making mistakes, or slipping in the more difficult passages; and she is able to devote all her mind to the artistic side of her rendering. If you are practising vocal exercises up to the high B and C, take nothing beyond G or A flat, when first singing in public; you will then feel no anxiety as to whether you will get the high note at the finale. If you are only working at violin studies in the fifth position, never attempt anything beyond the third position, when playing to other people.

Girls who study nothing but their own particular branch of music will never rise to any eminence in the profession. It is absolutely imperative that one must be good all round, as well as an expert in one department; our leading musicians are proof of this. The vocalists are in most cases clever pianists as well. Sims Reeves could play several orchestral instruments, and he told me that he attributed his success as a singer primarily to his early training as an organist and an orchestral player. More than this, a singer who hopes to make anything like a living out of her voice must be acquainted with French, German, and Italian, since a vocalist of importance may be called upon at any moment to take part in works other than English.

Instrumentalists must be prepared to play concerted music, as there is practically no opening for soloists who are nothing but soloists. Every musician must be able to read at sight, and the girl who does not study all the standard works, new ones as well as old, is unprepared for a sudden emergency, and in consequence often loses the very chance that would have made her name, and possibly her fortune, had she been equal to rising to the occasion and stepping in to fill some unexpected opening.

Excessive practice may do more harm than good; after a certain point, it is actually detrimental to the nervous system. Three hours' instrumental practice is the utmost that a girl should do daily, and this should be divided up into short periods. Turning to drawing and painting, I shall confine my remarks to magazine and book illustrations, these being the most profitable openings to girls of moderate ability who wish to follow art as a business. Now it is a curious fact, and I have proved it again and again myself, that the art-student is one of the most difficult of all girls to whom to offer advice. If one gives a musical girl a few hints upon the subject of her technique, for instance, she invariably listens to what is suggested, and tries to act upon it; and in the same way, with her singing, she will be interested if one indicates a point that might be improved upon, or discusses a different rendering. But the average artist often resents criticism as a personal affront, and this in itself will frequently prove their great hindrance to success. It falls to my lot to see, and examine the work of, a large number of girl artists. Not long ago I looked at some drawings that showed promise in one respect but were weak in another.

"Your sea-scapes and shipping sketches are excellent," I said to the girl, "but your figures are out of drawing. I should advise you either to devote yourself entirely to marine subjects, or else work hard for some time from models."

"You are quite mistaken," said the young artist brusquely; "anatomy is my strong point; my figure studies are some of my best productions."

Now this was foolish, as well as conceited, seeing that the girl was seeking work. Of course I said no more; I had no time to waste in scattering advice to the winds. It is a common failing of the novice to be unable to see her work as editors see it. They know exactly what *they want*; they know what will reproduce well, and what will deteriorate in the process. If they offer suggestions (which is by no means the rule) the sensible girl is grateful and acts on them, for those suggestions are worth money.

The artist who is not accustomed to working for reproduction often falls into the error of imagining that the only thing necessary is for the picture to be a perfect drawing when it is handed in. A huge delusion! When a sketch is reproduced for a printed illustration it is reduced about one-third, sometimes more, sometimes less, and allowance must be made in the original drawing for this. If it is too precise and "finicking" in detail, it will become hard and wooden-looking in reproduction; if it is heavy in the shadows and background, it will close up very black in the reduction. Moreover, a pale grey tone is added to the picture by the blockmaker, and this must be taken into consideration by the artist. Colour is another point that proves a stumbling-block; remember that the sketch is very often photographed on to the block, and the colours undergo certain radical changes in photography. I have seen bright-looking sketches come out deadly fiascos because the colouring employed would not reproduce.

A girl will bring a lovely painting on a rough surfaced canvas, never realising that this may reproduce a mottled background, and look as though it were printed on coarse sugar-bag paper. It is on technical points like these that the girl artist more often fails.

In art, as in literature, it is useless to offer an editor a summery subject in June; by that time he is arranging his Christmas number. Likewise with Christmas cards, take your designs to the makers at the beginning of the year; it is no good to wait till September and October, when they are packing the cards for exportation to the Colonies.

Finally, to become a successful illustrator a girl must also possess an accurate knowledge of costumes in relation to certain periods, the scenic backgrounds of different lands, and similar details, in order that she may be able to illustrate stories of various types. Though I could cite some amusing instances of curious errors artists have made in illustrations of this kind, these must be reserved for another occasion. But, as an example, I will quote the funny mistake that appeared on the first edition of W. W. Jacob's volume of stories, *Sea-Urchins*, wherein the artist unthinkingly sketched a sailor-boy with his two feet reversed, the right foot on the left leg and the left foot on the right leg! I am not certain, but I fancy that these were amputated, however, and "re-set" in the more orthodox manner for the subsequent editions.

(To be continued.)

MARGARET HETHERTON.

CHAPTER XXVI.



IT was Thursday afternoon and Oskar had come. Slowly Margaret came down the stairs trying to gather courage for the ordeal. She opened the sitting-room door, and Oskar hurried to meet her, holding out his arms and smiling in his genial way. She gave him her hand but evaded

the kiss she felt sure he was bending forward to give her.

"Are you well, Oskar?" she asked, and hated herself because her tone was so cold.

"Little *Braut*, I am well, but you, it strikes me, are not," Oskar answered caressingly. "Your cheeks are much too pale, and your eyes look like two wells of sadness. Come, sit down near me, and let us talk together as in the olden days."

And though she had meant to meet him with an explanation short, sharp and decisive, to confess her sins and be upbraided, she found herself sitting beside him listening to his lively stream of talk with a feeling in her heart of respite, if not of peace. He had much to tell her about his father, their common acquaintances of last year, his plans for the summer, but Margaret noticed that he made no mention of their marriage and felt relieved. She knew that she was playing a very poor part in the conversation, and also that Oskar's eyes were resting on her inquiringly, so that when at last that inevitable pause in all one-sided dialogues occurred, she felt, like an automaton, compelled to jerk out the words—

"Oskar, I have something on my mind."

"Have you, dear? I thought so. Out with it."

"Oskar—I—I want to ask you to forgive me"—her lips began to tremble, and Oskar chimed in cheerily—

"Why, so I do, for all sins past, present and future, although what you may have on your conscience, I cannot imagine."

"Oskar, I"—she began again, then a sudden idea occurred to her; she went to her desk and took out the letter she had written to him days ago. "Please read that," she said; "that will tell you all I want to say. It was written before your telegram came, and then, of course, it was no use sending it."

Oskar took the letter, and Margaret walked to the window and stood there while he read it. There was silence for a few minutes, then Oskar's voice broke it.

"*Kindchen!*" he said gently.

Margaret turned and came towards him.

"I suspected something of this kind," he went on, lightly touching the letter; "that was partly why I came to see you."

"You suspected?" Margaret repeated in amazement.

Oskar took a letter from his pocket and passed it to her.

"This reached me a week or so ago. My first thought was to disregard it altogether, then it occurred to me that unconsciously perhaps my unknown correspondent might be doing my poor little *Braut* a good service, and so I determined to reconnoitre."

There was no address and no date to the letter which Margaret unfolded. It ran thus: "A friend would like to let you know that M. H. does not love you but another." That was all. There was no signature, and the hand was evidently feigned. Margaret flushed crimson. In her letter to Oskar she had merely begged her freedom and implored his forgiveness for the pain she was causing him; she had naturally made no mention of what was to her her dearest secret, and here was her very heart laid bare in a matter of two lines by some blunt, ruthless mortal. Who was it? She turned to the post-mark. It was Moorton, a town some twenty miles off, where she had neither friends nor acquaintances.

"Well, who wrote it?" Oskar asked.

"I do not know, but I have a suspicion," Margaret answered, slipping the letter into her pocket; "perhaps I shall be able to find out."

"It is scarcely worth while. That individual may drop out of our lives—we should have come to an understanding without his or her interference. And so,

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PART III.

CLERKS AND TYPEWRITERS.



It will usually be found that there is some irksomeness attached to every business occupation: to my mind the great drawback in the life of the girl-clerk is that she must above all things be regular in her attendance. Girls who have had no previous experience of business life often lose sight of this; they have a headache or a

cold one day, and stay at home. I am not blaming them for it; very often it is the wisest thing they can do, so far as their health is concerned; but what I would point out is, that to persist in such a course is fatal to their business prospects. After a few absences an employer gets impatient, and either engages a girl who is more robust, or else a man, for the work. Almost as unsatisfactory as the girl who is frequently away is the one who is continually in a state of semi-collapse, and bemoaning her aches and pains. She looks so dismal while she takes down the letters, and the dictator may possibly remark on it, and express a hope that she is not ill. This unlocks her heart, and she promptly unburdens it of all her woes. "I had neuralgia so terribly all night that I didn't sleep a wink; and my head aches so fearfully, I can hardly hold it up. I thought I should never get here this morning. I felt so ill, I couldn't eat a morsel of breakfast, and I nearly fainted after I got into the station. Even now my eyes water so I can scarcely see what I am doing." Of course, after this the man feels he is a brute to give the girl any more writing to do. Yet the work has to be done; he is paying a salary to someone to do it. And although it sounds hard to say so, it is nevertheless only fair, if that one cannot do it, someone else must be found who can.

Some girls get into a habit of detailing every twinge to their fellow-workers. This is a pity; for one reason, they never get genuine sympathy when they are seriously ill. Moreover it is actually selfish. Everybody suffers something at times; what a miserable world it would be if we all issued a daily bulletin as to our feelings and symptoms. The brave girl, and the successful girl, is she who makes it a rule never to refer to her own health so long as she is able to go to her office. Then, when she is forced to remain away, people are far more concerned about her, concluding there must be serious cause since "she is never one to complain."

The question of health is at the bottom of two-thirds of the City girls who ultimately prove failures. Originality of work and ideas is seldom required of them, a thought that may comfort those who are conscious they are endowed with no particular genius; but, as I have already said, regularity is imperative. Therefore especial care should be taken of one's health. As a general rule, women in business offices are more conscientious workers than men; yet in the long run they seldom accomplish any more, because, despite a greater sense of duty and responsibility, theirs is often a case of "more haste, less speed." It is no uncommon thing to find several girls working, for a whole morning, in a small room which they have hermetically sealed against any possibility of ventilation. At midday,

instead of giving nature that little chance of recuperation, they remain on and lunch in the vitiated atmosphere. In their zeal for work they may start again before their regulation hour has elapsed. But they are not far on into the afternoon before they tell one another that they have fearful headaches; and then they wonder why it is they can get through so little work.

Men-clerks act differently; they do not exclude the outer air to the extent that girls will; and at one o'clock there is a general stampede, windows and doors are flung open, while for about an hour the rooms are empty and airing. The men get change of scene, exercise, and a breath out of doors; the result is one rarely finds them suffering from the afternoon headaches that seem chronic with many girl-typewriters. I know City streets are not inviting promenades for women; but it is a steady undermining of one's constitution to remain in the office for the whole day.

In addition to this, no matter how small a girl's salary may be, she should take a proper hot meal at midday. Tea and buns never build up brain and nervous tissue, and "Medicus" will, I know, endorse my experience that the hundreds of anæmic "wrecks" among City girls, for whom doctors have to prescribe annually, are in nearly every case due to a neglect of food and air. Because a girl cannot afford to sit down to an expensive luncheon, it does not follow that there is nothing to meet her requirements. In the large towns restaurants are scattered plentifully around, and at most of these a plate of good soup, thick or clear, can be obtained for a moderate cost; if this, or a cup of extract of beef were taken instead of so much tea, it would make a difference to the health, and indeed be more digestible than a heavy meal. Even hot milk or cocoa is preferable to tea; but whatever it is, the girl-clerk should avoid as much as possible the chilly lunch that has no substratum of real nourishment.

Adequate clothing is another matter the business girl is apt to neglect; when she is bound to go out every day, irrespective of the vagaries of the English climate, she must, if she wishes to keep well, pay heed to her wardrobe. A relay of stout shoes and gaiters, a duplicate waterproof and umbrella to be kept at the office as well as those at home, a good coat with fur collar and muff for the winter, a succession of skirts and petticoats to withstand the ravages of rain and mud, and a sufficiency of blouses to maintain a fresh appearance despite the dust and dirt of the City—these are some of the items that cannot be done without, and they are also items that run away with money. Girl-clerks, even in Government or Civil Service employ, do not receive salaries of overwhelming dimensions; many have to practise all sorts of economies to keep their exchequer at a state of steady balance. To such I would say, whatever else you go without, do not stint yourself in warm clothing. We are apt to think that it is only the factory lassie who dispenses with necessaries that she may have a gorgeous feather in her Bank Holiday millinery; yet better-born girls will do much the same thing. It is far more sensible to wear an eighteenpenny sailor hat all the year round, and an inexpensive evening dress, if you cannot otherwise keep well shod and have coats and cloaks that will defy the weather.

This reminds me of another matter that the business girl overlooks at times, viz., her personal appearance. It is natural and right that a girl should be dainty and love pretty things; but office life has a demoralising effect on many, and one only has to study the girls going to town by the morning trains to realise how soon the majority degenerate into a mere "study in drab." This should be overcome as much as possible, both for the sake of one's own spirits, and also for the sake of work and those with whom one comes in contact. The girl who looks fresh and bright invariably feels so likewise. She is an inspiration to all around her, and she is certainly more appreciated than

the dull-looking girl who seems to have interest in nothing. If a girl has lost all heart, so that she takes no pains with her appearance, she is practically acknowledging herself a failure; and the world usually accepts the verdict at once. Further than this, the girl who is careless as to dress is usually untidy over her work—obviously an undesirable trait in an amanuensis. Therefore cultivate cheerfulness and a pleasant look and manner, as you would any other advantageous business faculty.

Try to bring light into the dingiest of rooms. You remember Ruskin's words? "It is little to say of a woman, that she only does not destroy where she passes. She should revive." You are spending a large portion of your life in your office; either you must influence the room, or the room will influence you. If you can do nothing else, put a blue Japanese vase on the table (quite a cheap one will do) filling it with marigolds, and it will be strange if nine out of every ten people who come into that room, yourself included, are not better for that handful of sunshine.

Girls often fail in business life by not taking a sufficiently intelligent interest in their work. They are not particular over the matter of addresses, for instance. Every firm has a set of special people with whom they hold constant communication, and it is necessary to have all details in connection with their correspondence on the tip of the pen, so that the information can be given at a moment's notice. Make preparation for particular work on certain days. If board-day is on Wednesday, care should be taken that you have all papers and other items ready at hand that day for any work you may be called upon to undertake with the greatest despatch. Attention and forethought over such points make all the difference between a mere machine and a clerk with brains. Girls should not argue, sulk, or, in common parlance, give themselves airs when errors are pointed out, or if blamed for any irregularity; even when entirely guiltless in the matter, a cheerful readiness and concern to have the matter looked into is far better than indignant denials or excuses.

Special firms have special work, and in order to be ready for any exigency a few months' training in any of the large copying offices is invaluable to a beginner. There she will learn all the different branches of her work; and when later on a post is obtained, she can then devote all her care and attention to mastering the details of the business she has been engaged for. Girls should also guard most carefully against any tendency to become officious or ostentatious; men, and business men especially, have a great dislike to a woman fussing round or fidgeting over trifles.

I will say nothing of the need for accuracy, method, and reticence in connection with secretarial work; everyone knows that these are essentials.

A final word for the relations of the girl-clerk. Do not, I beg of you, look upon your City-going sister as a general burden-bearer of commissions. When she has only just time to catch her train in the morning, do not ask her to call at the cleaner's about your gloves, or to leave your bicycle lamp to be mended. Do not expect her as a matter of course to be continually shopping for you. Relations in the country are woefully ignorant of the distances in London. "As you are in town every day," writes a cousin to a girl whose office is in Cheapside, "I'll get you to run into Whiteley's and match this silk for me," little realising that a whole afternoon would practically be necessary to perform the required "run."

The business girl is usually wearied out by the end of the day, and has often a rush again to get her evening train. Her brain is on the stretch the whole day long; do not add to this at home. And if she does occasionally forget something—even fail to bring you the new number of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER on the day of publication—be lenient with her, for her life is a monotonous, tiring one, under the best of circumstances; do not contribute the "last straw" by taxing her memory with small domestic details, if it can possibly be avoided.

(To be continued.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

STUDY AND STUDIO.

PATCH.—Your story shows ample power of describing the life and talk of children, and you ought to be able to do something with your pen. Your characters are kind-hearted, well-bred, healthy, unselfish, unpretentious, and it is pleasant to read about them. The great fault in the sketch is a lack of proportion. You call it "Miss Magic," and the name for a girl is a good one, but is there any thought running through the story specially to justify the title? "Miss Magic" seems to us to rank very much with the rest of the children as to her sayings and doings. You detail comparatively insignificant conversations at great length, and slur over an important event such as the introduction to the "Gibraltar children." There should in every story be a beginning, a middle, and an end; but "Miss Magic" is just a series of incidents and conversations. You have no "motive" or "central idea"—and in a short story this is more important than even in a long one. We hope we are making this plain, for you write in so fresh and graphic a manner, it is worth while for you to take pains to improve. If, for instance, you kept the character of your little heroine prominently in view, and showed in a natural way how she justified her title, that would be a "motive"; and by "selection" of certain incidents and conversations with this end, the whole would acquire a more artistic significance. The story, we may add, is better than the last sent under your name.

IMPATIENCE.—Your poem shows that you do not understand the laws of metre and rhythm. "Next" and "best," "child" and "side" do not rhyme; and you use the word "more" as a rhyme with itself in alternate lines (verse 7). You do not "rebel a loss," but "rebel against a loss." "Unite we two" is not grammatical. What is the meaning of "to wipe away all parting?" Your last verse defies various laws of composition. If you "dearly love" writing, try to master these laws, and make a serious study of them, using any good handbook to English composition.

A STUDENT OF MUSIC.—Alas! we are afraid our reply will come too late to be of use to you. Have you read Miss Jessie Fothergill's story, *The First Violin*? That gives a charming description of the life of a music-student at a German conservatoire. You might be interested in the Rev. S. Baring-Gould's *Germany Past and Present*, published by Paul at 7s. 6d., and *German Home Life*, articles reprinted from *Fraser's Magazine* (Longmans, published at 6s.)

ADA SHAW.—Many thanks for your pleasant letter. Your writing might be made good; we think you need to round the turns of your letters more, make your d's, etc., taller, and in fact take pains with form; copybook practice would improve your writing, if you did not disdain it. Beware of a tendency to slope your lines and words downwards.

EVELYN LANCASHIRE.—The idea of your story is very good, and it is always well to say a word in favour of a much-decried class. Your expression "Mother-in-laws" is incorrect in every sense here. "Mothers-in-law" is the plural of the word—but your lady is a "step-mother." Dickens, however, makes the same mistake, in confusing the two relationships. The sketch would not be suitable for publication; it is written in too colloquial and amateur a style. Writing for the Press is an art that requires study and practice. One question is our limit, but we think we have answered both of yours.

PRINCESS.—We are sorry that neither we nor anyone else can tell you "what became of Noah's Ark after the Flood." We can, however, assure you that it is not in existence in any known spot. It could not have lasted intact, you know, unless it had been miraculously preserved, for countless years of the world's history.

C. B. H.—The drawing of a head you enclose, though fairly good for an amateur, is quite unfit for reproduction. You need instruction, and if you are fond of drawing, you would probably find it quite worth your while to take really good lessons. We do not undertake to return specimens sent for criticism, or our task would be never-ending.

BLANCHE.—We cannot advise you better than to write to the Secretary, Science and Art Department, S.W., asking if there is not such a book of studies published under the auspices of South Kensington. You would find *The Studio*, 5, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, published monthly at 1s., of use to you.

RUTH WOOLLAND.—We do not recollect receiving any lines of poetry from you; but if they came into our department they would be criticised in due course. "Winter" is correctly written as to metre. There are no very poetical ideas in the verses. "And prompts most true" is an ambiguous phrase. But we have received far worse performances than yours.

MAB.—We are afraid our reply will come too late to be of much use to you. You might try the recitation of Milton's *Comus*, or the scene between Arthur and Hubert in Shakespeare's *King John*.

THE FAILURES OF THE BUSINESS GIRL.

By FLORA KLICKMANN.

PART IV.

IN DRESSMAKING.

THERE is something radically wrong in a girl's work and methods if she does not make a tolerable income as a dressmaker. There never was a time when materials were so inexpensive, and when fashions changed more rapidly; consequently, women in all grades of society equip themselves with treble the number of gowns that their mothers considered luxuriously sufficient. The pros and cons of this modern wave of extravagance I am not discussing here; but, so far as the dressmakers are concerned, it should be an ideal state of things. Yet a girl who has only one other competitor in a country town told me, a few weeks ago, that she could barely make ends meet. When I saw specimens of her handiwork, my only surprise was that she ever managed to bring those said "ends" within even shouting distance of one another, for that was more than several of her clients could do with the waistbands she provided.

A really clever dressmaker can earn excellent money, as well as her board and lodging, by entering the employ of some well-known London house. Under these circumstances her salary is fixed, and she has no anxiety as to whether customers come or remain away: her only responsibility is the work itself. These girls are seldom failures; they have to prove themselves distinct successes before they are engaged for such posts; the employers have their reputations to consider; and they never run the risk of taking on a doubtful worker. In the rare instances where such a dressmaker goes "down hill," it is invariably the result of ill-health, or some sudden inexplicable mistake on her part.

But by far the larger number of girls have either no wish to enter a large establishment, or they have not the opportunity. Yet if these are awake to the requirements of their business, there is no reason why they should not earn a larger income than those in someone else's employ; since most women prefer to have their dresses made near home, if only the work is as good, rather than have the trouble of going a distance to be fitted. And there is the additional advantage that a private maker is her own mistress. It is here that the first pitfall is encountered. The knowledge that there is no supervision of any kind, and no possibility of one's work being submitted to some higher authority, permits a girl to become a trifle careless at times—only a trifle, but it is a habit that grows, and it is fatal to one's interests. Unpunctuality in the fulfilment of orders is a failing peculiar to the private dressmaker, and an inconvenience to which one is not liable at a large establishment. To allow indifferent "finishing-off" to appear on the inside of a bodice, to bone it badly or insufficiently, to omit the loops for hanging, all this indicates an unreliable worker; women with expensive materials to be made up will not entrust them to such a one, and the result is that little negligencys will often lose a dressmaker a wealthy customer who would otherwise have employed her frequently and with profitable commissions. Eventually she has to content herself with the only work that presents itself, blouses and commonplace costumes required by people who do not know good making from bad, and who pay accordingly.

One characteristic of the second-rate dressmaker is her tendency to introduce extreme fashions, or to crowd on embellishments, under the delusion that they will hide a misfit. This is only adding insult to injury, because the wearer is then compelled to endure ill-setting trimmings, and faultily-cut eccentricities of style, as well as a bad foundation. The girl who does not strive from the very outset to acquire the art of fitting perfectly can never hope to rise in her business.

Again, there are some who take great trouble in studying thoroughly the scientific principles that underlie the "cutting-out" process. This is right enough so far as it goes,

but it is not the whole of the matter. If everyone grew to exact proportions it would be a different thing; but as it is we are most of us a series of variations from the original model, and therefore the scientific principles must be modified to suit individual needs. A matronly friend of mine recently had a gown sent home which was found to have a collar a couple of inches too big.

"Oh, I assure you, madam, it must be correct!" said the dressmaker, even though the bodice was donned again for her inspection. "You see, your bust measure is so-and-so; therefore, according to proper calculations, your neck measure is bound to be such-and-such to be in the right proportion. Now I'll just measure that collar to prove to you that it is cut on a scientific basis."

"But," exclaimed my friend despairingly, "I don't desire my clothing to be made to accommodate a basis, I require it to accommodate my figure! As I evidently have an unscientific neck, I must beg you to allow me an unscientific collar."

Another matter that is sadly neglected by the inefficient dressmaker is the style of garment and material that is suited to each individual woman. She follows the fashions of the moment blindly, quite irrespective of the personal characteristic of the client she is dressing. "Boleros are much worn at present, and a skirt with three flounces is quite the latest thing," she tells her customers. The short stout lady, who naturally decides on "the latest thing," is then surprised to find that she looks stouter and shorter than ever, never realising that her waist has been cut off by the bolero, and her height by the flounces. The dressmaker who pays no heed to these things, who offers no counteracting suggestions if a woman desires an unsuitable style, will eventually rank among the nonentities. Other people have only to look at the outcome of her labours to determine at once to run no risk of being themselves made such pitiful objects.

But perhaps the greatest source of failure in the private dressmaker is her lack of originality, coupled with the way she neglects to keep in touch with the everchanging modes of the hour. To produce an exact replica of a fashion-plate or a model is the extent of her professional ambition. This is, in reality, the most elementary stage of the business. I have seen the Chinese dressmaker at home and at work. He calls himself a lady-tailor. He is usually about the most odoriferous, unprepossessing modiste a woman could wish not to have near her. But he can copy anything and everything you choose to show him. An American lady in Shanghai, ordering half-a-dozen nightdresses, sent a most elaborate one as a pattern. It chanced that a button had come off during her travels, and she had replaced it with an odd pearl button, which was the only one available at the moment on board ship. When the almond-eyed Mr. Sing San Sen waited upon her in due course with the six garments, reproduced most exquisitely, like the original, it was found that an odd pearl button appeared faithfully on each. He explained, with pride, how gratified he was that he had been able, after all, to match the estimable lady's honourable button, since at first he had feared there were no others like it in all Shanghai.

To the clever dressmaker a fashion-plate merely suggests ideas which she modifies or amplifies to suit the peculiarities of her customers. She would scorn to copy it slavishly; for one thing, she knows her client does not wish to be a duplicate of anyone else who may happen to have copied the sketch. To obviate the chance of such a thing, all the most famous dressmakers have their own exclusive designs, and they charge proportionately.

Finally, it is absolutely imperative that one should see how certain styles look on certain people; mere fashion-books are not sufficient. A dressmaker must make a point of visiting places where well-dressed women do congregate. More especially is this necessary for those who live in the provinces. Londoners can see a galaxy of tastefully-gowned

women any day by spending an hour in the Park. But in other parts of the country it is not so easy. The fashions that are mostly in evidence there are those that are becoming *passé* in town, and these are useless as inspirations.

An occasional week-end in London or Paris is no longer a formidable undertaking to the country girl. It can be accomplished with little cost and with still less trouble. Under the auspices of some reliable "personally conducted" tour a girl can go abroad, even alone, with perfect safety. And hundreds do so, coming back to their work freshened in body and brain, and full of ideas and novelties; these are the girls who make a financial as well as an artistic success of their calling. She who says she has not time to spare is invariably the girl who has the least to do. What she lacks is not so much the time as the enterprise.

Without enterprise, and a small initial outlay, no one nowadays can hope for big returns in any business, and dressmaking is no exception to the rule.

As an instance of what can be achieved in this direction. A country girl came to London about six years ago, being suddenly left penniless. She obtained a very subordinate appointment in the establishment of a fashionable West End modiste. Quickly realising that there was a demand for brains in addition to manual work, she set herself to develop ideas. Spending every available holiday in Paris, she speedily enlarged her experience and cultivated her taste. Her ability soon secured her promotion, clients were pleased with her suggestions, and would specially request that she should attend to them. She saw her opportunity and started a business of her own; the customers followed her. Her present income is about £5000 a year.

HARMONY.

BY ISABELLA FYVIE MAYO.

HE wooed her; she was young and gay;
 He was a scholar, grave and stern.
 They wedded; then they found one day
 They had each other's speech to learn!
 He, thoughtful, spake of men and books,
 When she desired he'd speak of love.
 She, thoughtless, talked of dress and looks
 And things he wished she'd rise above.
 And so the couple drew apart.
 (They loved each other all the same!)
 "Is it my fault?" she questioned, tart.
 He sadly asked, "Am I to blame?"
 And thus one evening in their room
 They silent sat and suffered much,
 Till from the organ in the gloom
 The music woke beneath his touch.

He played; and through the twilight came
 A sunbeam from the earlier hours;
 A whisper, like her old pet name
 Breathed as they stood amid the flowers.

He played; the music sighed and said
 A something words could never say.
 (And Love awoke, the sleepy head!
 And Love resolved to have his way.)

The player paused; his wife arose,
 With hands outstretched, and whispered low,
 "Husband of mine, your music knows
 You love me, and it tells me so!"

"Of course I love you, dear," he cried.
 "There's no 'of course,'" she sweetly said.
 (Love gave a mortal blow to Pride.)
 And wedded hearts anew were wed.

ANCIENT AND MODERN BUILDINGS: A CONTRAST.

PART X. REFINEMENT.



N all works of art, whether painting, sculpture, or architecture, refinement is an indispensable quality. An architect may design in any style—Greek, Roman, Gothic, or Renaissance—but refinement there must be, because art precludes the very notion of vulgarity. The artist must be a man of education and refinement, and these qualities must appear in his work. Whether his work is original or founded upon something which has been done before, vulgarity must be avoided or absent. Now what in art is vulgarity? Vulgarity is ostentation, unnecessary display, pandering to bad taste, and attempting rather to appeal to the wonder of the uneducated or ill-educated, instead of producing that kind of work which will be appreciated by people of taste and culture. It may be said, "But suppose you have to build for those who have 'popular tastes,' what then?" Well, of course, there is a difficulty in the matter, but it does not follow that what is "popular" is absolutely bad, and work may be executed in a popular style which is neither coarse nor vulgar. At the present time a great deal of art work is turned out which is remarkable

for repulsive ugliness and eccentricity. We see in many pictures faces which are positive deformities, figures which are absolutely repulsive, and from which the mind recoils with loathing. Now the excuse put forward for this kind of art is that the artist should not attempt to attract by "mere prettiness," and that more ability is shown in depicting an ugly face than a pretty one. But as an artist of great experience said once to us, "It is so much more difficult to paint a pretty face than an ugly one, that one is apt to suspect that the men who always paint these monstrosities are incapable of representing beauty!"

And in architecture it is the same thing. Why do we see these short stumpy columns bulging out as if they were squeezed out of shape by the weight above them, with vast floppy capitals like badly-baked muffins, or segmental arches depressed as though some very fat man had accidentally sat upon them before the "casting" had set firmly? These are things which popular taste naturally condemns, and rightly so. Mere ugliness should always be avoided. We have seen a design for a modern church in which every arch is formed of a very flat segment. Of course, segmental arches may be used and must in some places, but whole rows of segmental arches supported upon round columns produce a hideous effect.

Ostentation or unnecessary display should always be avoided. Of course, buildings may be as elaborate as circumstances and means will allow, but if it is attempted