

simplicity, the plan will be to get out a frame, something like a canvas-stretcher, and then glue this down on to thin panels, the size of the outside of your frames. American white Bass wood should be used for these panels, as it is free from knots, and is nice for painting or decorating.

Brass butt hinges, which must be sunk, will have to be screwed on to the bottom of the doors and cupboard, and small catches with knobs at the top of the doors to keep them closed. These can be purchased at a good tool or metal shop. Brass chains would be better than cord for keeping the doors at a certain angle when opened. There is a disadvantage in fixing them at the top as I have indicated in sketch, for they are more in the way there.

Such an article as I have schemed could be made at home, or if there are no brothers to assist, then a carpenter would get out such a thing at a small cost. The coal shoot could be made at an ironmonger's of sheet iron, the

shape of D, *i.e.*, just smaller than the inside of the cupboard, and by having two holes made with screws to correspond screwed inside the door, it could be removed to be filled, and then hung on the screws, and while at the bottom it could rest on a block of wood.

Now as to finishing the cupboard from the outside. If the wood is good and nicely finished up, it might be stained and polished with beeswax dissolved in warm turpentine, but if the wood is not so good, then it would be better to paint it some nice colour. It would require two good coats of paint, and it could then be finished with enamel.

The decoration of the panels should be some rather severe treatment of foliage as I have indicated, put on in flat tints, or it could be stencilled. Those who are skilful enough might paint the panels with flowers and birds, while those who fear to venture on hand-work of any kind could fill the panels with Japanese gilt leather paper

SHORTHAND AND TYPEWRITING CLERKS.

IN days long since gone the Preacher warned his son that "of the making of books there was no end." The nineteenth century has added its testimony to that of the previous eighteen that the Preacher was right. A very large proportion of the books made is of a fictional character, and efforts after original plots are many and ingenious. There is one theme, however, which never seems to grow old. It is the self-sacrifice of women. It varies with the years, its form changes, but we can always see the woman sacrificing herself in some way or another for the good of those she loves. In these days of competition, when the struggle for even a bare existence is so keen, the heroine of a novel is often the breadwinner of the family. The father, a hard-worked, worried business man, dies, leaving his wife and children totally unprovided for, and the eldest daughter, or the one with most energy, nobly steps into the breach. Without any previous training or experience, she invariably succeeds—if not at first, at any rate in a few months. In a short time she is earning enough to provide for the family—large or small—in addition to herself.

A young, inexperienced girl reads many such stories, and she imagines them all virtually true, or only a very little overdrawn. She does not know that in real life girls in a similar position are seldom so fortunate.

A girl left upon her own resources will find that, after she has considered every situation open to her, one of the best and easiest to enter is that of a typewriting and shorthand clerk. Of course she will need a little capital—sufficient to support her while she is preparing for work—but the course of study is not prolonged. Six months of steady application to work at a good shorthand school is sufficient to fit any ordinarily intelligent girl for a situation as a shorthand and typewriting clerk.

Equipped with the knowledge she gains there, she can hope to live independently of outside assistance and save up for a rainy day. At first, of course, being inexperienced, she can only obtain a small wage. With fairly satisfactory certificates, however, 12s. to 15s. a week is easily earned.

After a year's experience a girl's wage is just what she makes it. If she is careful and painstaking and attentive to her employer's interests, she will become a valuable clerk, and so be able to earn a larger salary. The number of advertisements for typewriters is a sufficient proof that there is a great demand for them. The supply is equal to and frequently exceeds the demand, but it is not of a sort that satisfies the demand. Business men, who have learned by experience what the ordinary typewriting girl is, are very eager to engage one who has made it her chief aim to be thoroughly proficient. Such a one frequently earns from 25s. to 30s. a week, and at the same time has good hours—*not* more than seven or eight daily—and a fortnight's holiday every year.

Of course it must be understood that such a position is only obtainable by an earnest worker—one who not only has made it her aim to know her business perfectly, but

who besides is trustworthy, quick, and obliging. A clerk who is unwilling to oblige her employers—and there are many occasions for so doing—will never become invaluable to the firm. Consequently, as employers usually express their satisfaction in a monetary way, the clerk who objects to doing a little extra work or staying half an hour later in the evening will not receive a rise of salary or a present at Christmas.

A shorthand and typewriting clerk can add very much to her value by becoming mistress of one or two European languages. Of these naturally the two most important are German and French—more especially the former. It will easily be understood that a knowledge of the pure classical French or German is not so useful as an intimate acquaintance with the colloquial and commercial forms, trade terms, etc. A letter from an English to a French firm is not by any means the sort of composition a girl is taught at school. It may be asked, then, "How is one to obtain a good working knowledge of a language for commercial purposes?" The answer, of course, must vary with the individual case, but generally I might suggest that the language can best be acquired by studying for a time in the country, lessons in English, etc., being given meanwhile to solve the question of bodily support. Failing this, lessons might be exchanged with a German or Frenchman eager to be initiated into the mysteries of English. Let the knowledge be acquired as it may, its possession is important. It is often the "open sesame" to a good position in one of the great London or provincial hotels, where foreigners are constantly coming and going, and where the foreign correspondence is a matter of much moment. A lady clerk in such a position not infrequently has a salary of £2 or £3 a week, and of course, being well equipped for her work (no others need apply), earns it quite as faithfully as her humbler sisters their more modest wage.

It has been urged by some that when a girl has mastered the theoretical and practical parts of typewriting and shorthand, and is ready to begin her life-work, it is very difficult to get a suitable situation. There is a certain amount of truth in this, and for the information of those ignorant of such matters it might be stated that nearly all the big typewriter-manufacturing firms keep a list of those who use their own special make of machine. Often it is to these city merchants apply when they require a typist. Most of the schools, too, undertake to recommend successful pupils to situations. In these cases, however, if the pupil so recommended is engaged by the firm, she agrees to pay her school a certain commission, generally five per cent. on the first year's salary. Answering advertisements in the daily papers is the plan usually adopted, and one open to all. It is besides, as a rule, the most satisfactory, and though a clerk must make up her mind to some disappointments and difficulties at first, there is no doubt that if she is determined to earn her bread in this way, with training and experience she will most surely succeed.