

FIFTH PRIZE ESSAY.

"WHAT I DO WITH MY TIME."

AN uneventful everyday home-life like mine seems an unpromising subject on which to write, but I will, nevertheless, try and describe it as interestingly as possible.

I am the only girl,—in fact the only young thing of any description,—at home: for my three brothers are in India, my sister is in Ireland, and pets are not permitted. My parents and I live in London with my Grand-mother, who is a very active old lady, despite her advanced years, and likes to do nearly everything herself. All she does not do my Mother does for her, so there is little or nothing in the way of home-duties left for me. We do not entertain or go out much now, so I have to make my own employment for my time. But before describing my present mode of life, it is necessary to go back a few years. I was educated at a Church of England High School, and remained there for eleven years. I think now with great pleasure of those happy old school-days, and am quite convinced that there is no more delightful method of education for girls than the modern High School system. Nearly all my dearest and most valued friends date from the old school-days, and that is, I think, one of the chief causes of my loving gratitude to my "alma mater." I was nineteen when I left school, and, instead of experiencing the expectant, keen delight that I have heard most girls feel on "coming out," I was deeply grieved at having to say goodbye to the dear old place and the loved faces. However school-days must come to an end sometime, and by degrees I reconciled myself to that fact, and realised that a new life was before me. One thing I determined most strongly and that was that I would not waste my life. Our dear old Head Mistress, in speaking to us girls, used to lay great stress on the awful seriousness of life and the tremendous responsibility resting on everyone as to the use they made of it; and if I have learnt to realise anything of the greatness and possibilities of life, I owe it all to her. My real innermost desire was to take up a branch of work on which my heart had been set ever since I was quite a young girl. But this I found to be impossible, for my Mother raised insurmountable objections,

adding as the crowning obstacle that I was far too young. Of course I did not agree with her, for what girl ever yet thought herself too young for anything she longed to do? The idea of "waiting a few years" was very uncongenial to me, and the struggle came to me as it must come to all girls with whom it is a question of self or duty. I think a conflict of this kind is all the harder when the opponent of duty is something which *in itself* is good and noble. It is then that it is so hard to realise that after all this splendid work is only a subtle form of selfishness. It is so difficult for a girl, especially in these days of advanced thought and action amongst women, to see that home must be right and that the noble ideal work, if in opposition to home, must, for her, be wrong. Of course I am now only thinking of girls whose positive duty it is to remain at home. I am quite sure that when this crisis comes in a girl's life, her whole after-career and character are influenced to an unbounded extent by the choice she makes. But is it not terribly hard for an eager, enthusiastic girl to realise that duty done quietly and lovingly at home is as grand in the sight of God as the noblest work done amongst poor or suffering? Is it not difficult for such a one to grasp the truth of the words, "They also serve who only stand and wait"? Happy indeed is the girl who in this struggle can renounce self and welcome duty and say in the beautiful words of Christina Rossetti:—

"Lord, I had chosen another lot,
But then I had not chosen well;
Thy choice, and only Thine, was good;
No different lot, search heaven or hell,
Had blessed me, fully understood;
None other which Thou orderest not."

Fortunately for me, just about this time something occurred that completely changed my way of looking at things. This "something" showed me things in their right proportion and in their true light. The result was that I was content to stay at home, and for the rest, to wait.

So I turned my attention to self-improvement. I remember taking a sheet of paper (I always was, and am still fond of drawing up tables and lists!) and dividing it into two parts. At the head of one side I wrote,

"Things I know," and at the head of the other, "Things I ought to know and don't know." When carefully filled up the result was humiliating to a degree; but it led to the determination that this state of affairs must be corrected. Accordingly, with the approbation of my Mother, I started the plan which I have ever since carried out, of studying a subject every year for the Cambridge Higher Local Examination. During my last year at school I had done the literature for that Exam.: I now began with History and Arithmetic, and worked steadily at them for a year. Next, I did French and German, and this last year I have been working at the Divinity Group, which has interested me exceedingly. For next year I hope to study Political Economy, which will, I think, take up less of my time than my former subjects, and will give me more leisure for independent reading. The C.H.L. sets a high standard in all its branches, and requires extensive reading, so I find my days pretty well filled up by my studies. It is exceedingly interesting work, and as long as I am needed at home, I hope to keep up my yearly exams. Besides the principal subject at which I am working, I generally have a minor course of lectures going on at the same time, on such varied subjects as architecture, ambulance and sick-nursing, which make a pleasant variety. But I do not spend all my time at books. I also learn the violin, and my Mother, who is anxious for me to play really well, provides me with first-class instruction, and takes me to numerous good concerts. I practise two hours a day with fair regularity, and belong to an excellent orchestra, which is a great interest to me.

But fond as I am of my work, I am also very fond of "play," and enjoy my holidays like any schoolboy, revelling in the rare delight of being able to "do as I like," and read what I like, and have plenty of time in which to do it. For I am firmly convinced of the truth and wisdom contained in that deservedly popular proverb, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," and I by no means wish to be "a dull boy."

I declare the statements in this paper to be true.

"DAISY."

Eaton Place, London, S.W.

VARIETIES.

SELF-RESPECT.

One of the good and true things said by the late President Garfield was this:—

"I do not much care what others think and say about me, but there is one man's opinion which I very much value—that is the opinion of James Garfield. Others I need not think about. I can get away from them, but I have to be with him all the time. He is with me when I rise up and when I lie down, when I eat and talk, when I go out and come in. It makes a great difference whether he thinks well of me or not."

THE POLITE SHOP-KEEPER.

Lady (after going over the whole stock of blankets): "You needn't show me any more. I only came in to look for a friend with whom I had an appointment here."

Shop-keeper (weary, but polite): "If you think your friend is amongst the blankets, madam, I shall be happy to go over them again for you."

I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT THAT.

Young Lady (out yachting): "What is the matter, Captain Quarterdeck?"

Captain: "The fact is we have broken our rudder."

Young Lady: "I wouldn't worry about that. The rudder is mostly under water, you know; and it isn't likely people will notice it."

THE BOOK COLLECTOR.

A book collector had just purchased, at an exorbitant price, a volume which, except for its rarity, had no value whatever.

"It is very dear," said a friend.

"Yes," replied the collector, "but it is the only copy in existence."

"But if it should be reprinted."

"Are you mad? Who would be fool enough to buy it?"

A JURY TRIAL.—Our life is a constant trial, and all our neighbours are on the jury.

A GRATEFUL SOUND.

"Grateful is the noise of noble deeds
To noble hearts."—Tennyson.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC I. (p. 103).

1. M aryboroug H (a)
2. O rellan A (b)
3. Z ebulu N (c)
4. A lmon D (d)
5. R ozinant E
6. T oynee Hal L

Mozart. Handel

(a) Queen's County and King's County were colonised in the reign of Mary Tudor, the respective chief towns being Maryborough and Philipstown.

(b) Orellana discovered the river Amazon in South America.

(c) Zebulun signifies "dweller" or "dwelling": see Gen. xxx. 20, and marginal note. For the prophecies concerning himself and his descendants, see Gen. xlviii. 13, and also Deut. xxxiii. 18, 19.

(d) A river of Perthshire affluent of the Tay.