

evening came to a close; then followed a hearty "Good night and thank you," and each one took his or her way home accompanied by the guide. These receptions sometimes take the form of beautiful concerts or of praise and prayer meetings, for Mrs. Starey's work is definitely a Christian work. A week or two ago Mr. Jackson devoted an evening to them and told them about his Arctic expedition.

Can you not see what a break these Thursday evening receptions make in the monotony of the lives of these blind people? They give them something to think of, something to look forward to, and last, not least, they bring them into communication with the one human being who cares for and loves them.

As to Mrs. Starey, she is like a hen with her chickens. She gathers the blind around her and shields them under her wings of watchfulness and tender care, and at the same time does not pauperise them.

But to return to the reception: one more full of pathos and interest we never attended, and if any who read this sketch of Mrs. Starey and her work would like to be present at one of her evenings they would, I am sure, be heartily welcomed; they could then see for themselves that she is the mother, friend, guide and comfort of the blind poor in their homes, and it will be strange if a strong desire does not arise in the heart to help her in her labour of love.

Of course these weekly gatherings form but a fringe of the work. Every day she is occupied in visiting them, getting suitable employment for those who are capable, cutting out and making clothes for them, providing them with nurses and doctors in sickness, and in sending the weak to the seaside, in fact doing everything for them that a loving mother does for her own household.

To many she gives regular weekly allowances ranging from one shilling to ten shillings. She gives this with a full knowledge of the circumstances of each person, and finds it decidedly the best method of helping.

Some of the cases requiring weekly help are very touching. For example, one of the oldest of Mrs. Starey's blind people was cared for by a loving, good daughter. This girl married a respectable young shoemaker, who became like a real son to the blind old man. All went happily for a time in this humble home; a baby was born, and was the delight of all three, but it died, and not long after this first trouble the young husband, while busy at work, had the misfortune, by the slipping of his hand, to run the gimlet right into his eye. Intense agony of pain followed, and he was for months in the hospital, where he underwent one operation after another. At length by the aid of glasses he hoped to see well enough to do a little work; his own business was gone, but he worked for some weeks at house-painting. At length the eyes speedily lost their sight; his case is now hopeless and total blindness is before him; nor is this all: he suffers such terrible pain in the head that one fears the effect on the brain. Work is impossible. Meantime the blind father has just passed away, and the poor young wife is earning a scant pittance by making gentlemen's ties for a City house. Mrs. Starey is allowing her five shillings a week and helping in every way she can.

Another pathetic case. A blind man died quite lately leaving a wife and five children. He was an educated man and in good position until he lost his sight. Latterly his reason went by the same disease which caused his blindness. Mrs. Starey through the kindness of a friend is able to give weekly help for a year at least. I could tell you of many like cases in which Mrs. Starey proves herself friend and comforter.

She has succeeded in forming a small committee of people like Mr. and Mrs. Peter Graham and Sir Robert and Lady Romer, of whom she can seek advice and support in the many cases of difficulty and sorrow which are constantly coming before her.

Her work is not all sorrowful. There are periods of great rejoicings among her blind.

For example, just before Christmas some three hundred attend a special reception which is known as "parcel night," when each person receives at her hands a large parcel containing such things as Mrs. Starey knows she or he most needs. Each parcel is made up and directed with this kind friend's own hands.

This is one of the most substantial benefits of the year. In addition to the parcels which contain clothing, groceries, or bedding, a new half-crown is presented to each person, the gift of one of Mrs. Starey's most valued helpers, Mr. Lindsay Bennett, who is, alas! now passing away.

Mrs. Starey had an intense desire that her poor blind friends should share last year in the Jubilee gladness, and a few friends of hers made this possible. Of course their eyes were closed to all the gorgeous, joyous sights enjoyed by the sighted; nevertheless they had a grand Jubilee reception. Each person received a Jubilee medal, five shillings, half a pound of tea, and a sweet-smelling nosegay.

Lord Salisbury proved himself a friend of Mrs. Starey and her work, and on June 30th he threw open Hatfield for the day to enable her to take down five hundred and seventy blind people and guides, and gave her the use of the riding-school for meals. As they all went over the house the blind felt the carving and object of interest, and listened eagerly to the descriptions given, and thus, in their own pathetic way, they "saw" everything, and took a most intelligent interest in all. It was a happy party and a glorious day.

Mrs. Starey, who lives at 53, Hilldrop Road, N., would give full particulars of her work to anyone who desired to know more of it.

From my knowledge of Mrs. Starey and her work among the blind in their homes, I can say it is earnest and persistent, filling her time and heart, and demanding her means as well. To use her own words to me: "I do certainly give the very best of my time, strength, and all I have to my blind. They are my portion of my Lord's vineyard, and I would not change my work for any other in the world."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

STUDY AND STUDIO.

MUSICAL JESSIE.—We think the little girl you mention must be unusually advanced in music for her age. We advise you to write to the Secretary of the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music, 52, New Bond Street, London, W. You will receive full details from him of the local examinations held by the "Associated Board." It is a matter of proficiency rather than of age as to when musical examinations shall be taken.

WHITE LAUREL.—We should strongly advise you to undertake the study of Italian. It is the easiest of all European languages, and you would readily acquire it, especially as you seem to write English so well. The book we usually recommend is Dr. Lemmi's Italian Grammar; but we presume, as a Frenchwoman, you would prefer a grammar written in French. The reading of Dante in the original will repay any effort in the way of preliminary study.

PEGGY.—The names you mention are probably fictitious, although we cannot be absolutely certain. Many thanks for your kind letter.

META E. G. RANKIOR.—1. *Glaucis*, by Charles Kingsley, is published in a 3s. 6d. series. We believe the publisher is Macmillan. — 2. We are afraid we cannot tell you of any cheap and thorough work on Rotifera, Infusoria, and Diatoms. There is *The Rotifera, or Wheel-Animacules*, by Hudson and Gosse, with coloured plates, in six parts, 10s. 6d. each; supplement, 2s. 6d.; complete in two vols., £4 4s. Perhaps Morgan's *Animal Biology*, 8s. 6d., would suit you; or Dr. Schenk's *Manual of Bacteriology*, 10s. The illustrations of necessity make such books costly. We recommend you to write to Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., 39, Paternoster Row, E.C. (the publishers of the above), saying what you want, and asking if they have issued anything at a popular price.

BELVOIR.—You will find all rules relating to the Puzzle Competitions in THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER itself, and if you consult them, you will see your question answered there. We are glad you are pleased with your success. Your suggestion appears below.

OUR OPEN LETTER BOX.

We still have answers for "ROSEBUD," and a correspondent, GOLD DUST, has kindly copied out "The Doctor's Fee," and sent it to us for her. HILDA GOSLING says it is to be found in the January number of *The Sunday Magazine* for 1891. GOLD DUST inquires where she can get a poem entitled "Tit for Tat."

MISS N. J. KNIGHT informs "An Inquirer" that the recitation she seeks (describing the telling to a child of the story about George Washington and his little hatchet) is in a book called *American Humour*, one of the *Humour of the Nations* series. Miss Knight adds, for the benefit of "Viv," that there is a serio-comic version of "Old Mother Hubbard" in a book called *Cole's Fun Doctor*.

KATE wishes to know where she can procure the poem called "Kate Barlass," and the author's name.

LEXNOK wishes to find the poem of George MacDonald's in which occur the two following verses:—

"Alas! how easily things go wrong!
A sigh too much, or a kiss too long;
And then follows a mist, and a weeping rain,
And life is never the same again.

For things can never go badly wrong
If the heart be true, and the love be strong;
For the mist, if it come, and the weeping rain
Will be changed by the love into sunshine again."

We must say we do not recognise the two verses as belonging to the same poem. The first is familiar to us; yet we cannot light at the instant upon the volume in which it occurs.

BELVOIR recommends to R. A. T. a book entitled *Stories from Dante*, by Morley Chester, published at 2s. 6d. by Fred. Warne & Co.

M. K. inquires the author of the lines under Landseer's picture "The Monarch of the Glen." They are from *Legends of Glenorchy*, and begin—

"When first the day-star's clear cool light,"

CECILY wishes to know the derivation of the surname "Snewin."

MISCELLANEOUS.

INQUISITIVE.—1. We have answered your question very recently. There is no difference of opinion on the subject of how cheese should be eaten by persons who are acquainted with the rules of etiquette and good breeding in the upper class of society. To put your knife to your mouth under any pretext whatsoever would stamp you at once as an ill-bred person. Place a small piece of cheese on a small piece of bread, and convey it to your mouth without touching the cheese. Butter is served with it, and thus it can stick to it without trouble.—2. You slope your letters so much the wrong way that it dazzles the eyes.

FATIMA (Smyrna).—1. English girls do not wear natural flowers in their hats, they are always artificial.—2. The names given to dogs much depend on the breed of the animal. The following are common, Rover, Lion, Jack, Marcus, Prince, Snap, Bruno, Peto, Jack, Queen, Rigo, Rita, Roy, Spot, Mungo, Sprig, Perro, Haco, Spey, Juno, Turk, Shot, etc.

D. L. A.—When Charles II. was crossing the channel from Brightelmstone to Dieppe, an inquisitive mariner went up close to him, puffing tobacco in his face. Observing this, the master of the ship desired him to retire further off. Upon which the sailor replied, "A cat may look at a king." This is the origin of the popular saying.