

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

GIRLS' EMPLOYMENTS.

PRINTING.—*I am just leaving school, and should like to be apprenticed to the stationery and printing trade. Is it a good trade, and is any special preparation required?*

PRINTER.

In the printing and stationery trades generally women cannot do well on the whole, though there are exceptions. Young women employed as stationers' assistants earn only small wages, and have no great hope of promotion; but girls employed in the manufacturing departments of wholesale houses (such, for instance, as Messrs. Parkins and Gotto, and Messrs. De la Rue), occupy a different and much better position. In such a house as that of Messrs. Parkins and Gotto the work is principally die-stamping. This wants care and neat manipulation. A good workwoman can make eighteen shillings and upwards a week, working, of course, the regular hours prescribed under the Factory Acts. Then there is work also to be had under the numerous firms of chromo-lithographers in London and the large manufacturing towns. For this sort of work some artistic power, though not at all demanded, would be a great help, and might lead on to better work than that which girls in these places usually perform. In the printing trade proper women are not employed, for the reason chiefly that the printing of periodical literature and newspapers entails working at night, and this women, under the Factory Acts, are not allowed to do. There is, however, in most large printing and publishing establishments a department in which women are employed as bookfolders and bookbinders. We know only of one place where a girl could be trained as a printer and compositor, and that is the Women's Printing Society, 66, Whitcomb Street, W.C. Here every kind of periodical and book-printing is done, and good wages are paid. There is, of course, no night-work. You would have to consider if you apprenticed yourself to the Society the position in which you would find yourself

supposing the Society could not employ you permanently. Of course, there is no reason why other businesses of the same kind should not be started; but so far as we know there is not another at present.

GARDENING, DAIRY-WORK, etc.—*How can I earn my living as a lady gardener? I cannot afford to be trained at a horticultural college; but I feel that I have no taste for anything except gardening, bee-keeping, or dairy-work?—HORTICULTURE.*

There is undoubtedly some demand for women as gardeners, but it is almost impossible for a girl to obtain the requisite training in conservatory and outdoor work, unless she can pay either to be taught at a college or by some private person. Under these circumstances a girl naturally turns to the florist's side of the business, in which women are more ordinarily employed; but even here she is met by the pecuniary difficulty. No employer will pay her enough at first to cover the expense of board and lodging; and it will be matter of surprise if an apprenticeship premium is not charged. Still, undoubtedly, this is the best way to begin. The names of leading florists and dealers in cut flowers would be found in the principal gardening papers (such as the *Gardener's Chronicle*), and "Horticulture" could then write to some of them offering herself as an apprentice. There is, for instance, a firm at Coventry that employs a large number of girls in making bouquets, etc. A girl who can pack and arrange flowers well need never want for a livelihood; but the first few months of learning are difficult to arrange for when funds are not plentiful. We do not advise bee-keeping to a girl who must earn enough to support herself all the year round. Dairy-work, on the other hand, is an excellent business. But here, too, we must remember that money cannot be expended on the training that a large public dairy school affords. Yet County Council lectures supplementing the practical instruction that a capable dairy-woman might give for a small fee might

suffice as a general preparation. "Where there's a will there's a way" in employment difficulties; and we do not think that any resolute girl, or young man either, has failed to succeed because the money for technical training was not forthcoming. Employers are always ready enough to teach a bright apprentice, though they may neglect a dull one.

TEACHING TECHNICAL SUBJECTS. *I have very good certificates for arithmetic, book-keeping, French and shorthand. At the Chamber of Commerce examination here last year, I won the first prize, with honours in French and book-keeping. Is there any chance of making a living by teaching shorthand, etc.? I do not want to become a typist, because continual work at the type-writer results in dreadful back-ache.*

A COUNTRY COUSIN.

In London and large commercial centres many teachers of the subjects "A Country Cousin" mentions are engaged. If "A Country Cousin" is a thoroughly good teacher, we do not see why she should not have as good a chance as another of obtaining an engagement at some technical institute or polytechnic. But it would be well either to advertise or to apply direct to County Councils and similar bodies. In one of the best schools of business-training in London, one lady teaches type-writing, and the other takes the other subjects. We do not see why this plan should not be more generally followed. But usually only type-writing is taught at a type-writing office, and the pupil is left to pick up a knowledge of shorthand, book-keeping and French elsewhere. We therefore suggest to "A Country Cousin" that she should approach some lady at the head of a type-writing business with an offer to instruct pupils in the subjects mentioned; the arrangement need not be a partnership; both parties could remain quite unfettered. But this co-operation would probably prove mutually advantageous.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MEDICAL.

SUNSET.—Shortness of breath may be due to many causes, the chief of which are anæmia, and diseases of the lungs or heart. The attacks of shortness of breath and tightness of the chest that you describe are very like attacks of asthma. You say that you are liable to bronchitis, so that we think that your trouble is bronchial asthma. You should read a rather lengthy answer on the subject of coughs which we published in the June number of *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER*. A few extra hints is all that is necessary. Can you trace the attacks to anything?—to irregularities or indiscretions in diet? If you can, these should be corrected. During the paroxysms of shortness of breath loosen your garments and see that nothing presses upon your neck and chest; open the window and inhale as much fresh air as you can. The fumes of burning stramonium leaves often greatly relieve asthma. Inhaling the smoke of stramonium cigarettes is the best way to use this drug; but the fumes must be inhaled, not merely taken into the mouth. Change of residence often has a marked effect in asthma, and if you can do so, we would advise you to try the effects of a change of scene.

IVANO.—The condition of your hand is due to one of the forms of eczema or an allied complaint. Cannot you discover the cause of the trouble? You might try the following cream:—equal parts of olive oil, lime water and oxide of zinc. This is very soothing and allays irritation. Calamine ointment is also likely to be of service to you. Whichever of these two you use, apply it plentifully, and keep the hand swathed in a cotton bandage.

LILAC.—Turpentine fomentations are exceedingly useful, and are generally to be preferred to the other methods of counter-irritation, such as mustard or cantharides plasters. They are best made in the following manner:—take a good large square of thick flannel and fold it four times, rinse it out well in boiling water, and sprinkle about a teaspoonful of turpentine upon it. Dip it into the hot water again, rinse it until almost dry, and apply it while hot. If it is to be used for bronchitis, apply it high up on the chest, just below the notch between the collar-bones. Leave it on till it begins to smart, not merely till it starts to prick a little. If the place is at all sore afterwards, a little vaseline or simple ointment may be applied.

MARIE.—Giddiness may be due to many causes. Indigestion and anæmia are common causes, but there are very many other conditions which will produce this symptom. Errors of refraction of the eyes, almost any abnormal condition of the ears, and very many nervous diseases produce giddiness. In old persons it is very common for giddiness to occur after stooping. This is probably due to the fact that the blood-vessels in elderly persons are more or less rigid, and the stooping posture interferes with the circulation through the brain. If your ears, eyes, and digestion are perfectly healthy, you might try a little "tonic" treatment—by "tonic" we do not mean taking the so-called tonic medicines, but taking a little extra stimulating food, a cold or tepid bath in the warm weather (that is if it makes you feel better, for on no account should you take a cold bath if it disagrees with you), and a moderate walk or drive every afternoon.

E. L.—We should think that by "contraction of the bronchial tubes" asthma is meant. There are two totally distinct forms of asthma, bronchial asthma—a frequent complication of bronchitis; and true asthma, which is a nervous disease. Of the cause of the latter we know but little, and, as in every patient the exciting causes of an attack of breathlessness are different, we cannot tell you whether singing is likely to produce an attack, but we rather think that it would not. Weakness of the heart could not produce asthma, unless it first caused bronchitis.

L. E. N.—Are the "ulcers" that trouble you little white spots about the mouth, but chiefly beneath the tongue and in the space between the lip and the gum? If so they are due to indigestion. If you look to your digestion the ulcers will vanish. Locally use a mouth wash of chlorate of potash, or of borax and tincture of lavender.

TIREBOME FLO.—We would indeed be sorry to be the means of introducing our English patent medicines into any foreign country. Most patent medicines are made by tradesmen possessing the most profound ignorance of medicine or pharmacy. A few of them, certainly, owe their origin to respectable practitioners of medicine, but few of even these are of any value. We know the composition of most nostrums, but we have not yet discovered any which we would recommend to anybody for any complaints. Patent medicines are made to sell, and to cure by chance!

A SUFFERER.—You are the fourth correspondent who has asked this identical question. We published a detailed account of the treatment of constipation some weeks ago.