

NORAH CREINA.—Your verses are on the whole above the average of those we receive for criticism. The first verse is, we think, the best—

"I ask not that my barque sail smoothly ever
Across life's sea,
That tempest's blast, or rising wave, should never
Come near to me;
But that when dark and stern the storm clouds
Lower,
Thou wouldst watch over me in danger's hour,
And safely to Thy haven, by Thy power,
Wouldst pilot me."

In the second verse the ear is offended by "would" and "wouldst" close together, and "do" is used with "weep" simply to make the line long enough. It is a little difficult to answer your query as to "wasting your time," but if you are neglecting no obvious duty by writing, we should recommend you to persevere. Read the poet Southey's advice, quoted in *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER* for June, 1897.

PINK HEATHER.—1. We have asked for the composer of the piece, "Ade, du liebe Stadt," in our "Open Letter-Box."—2. Your sister, Marigold, would like one of the books on astronomy by Richard A. Proctor, such as *Easy Star Lessons, Half-Hours with the Stars, and The Flowers of the Sky*. We can only answer two questions at one time; but think you will find your inquiry about to free answered in back numbers of *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER*.

DORIS.—As you are twenty-six we are afraid you cannot hope for much success in learning the piano for the first time. The hand should be exercised on the keyboard from childhood to give it the necessary suppleness. You might take a few lessons to see whether it was of any use for you to persevere, but we are unable to encourage you very heartily.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE.

MARIE ABRAHAM, care of British Post Office, Smyrna, Asia Minor, would like to correspond and exchange stamps with girls in the West Indian Islands, Canada, South and Central America, Africa, India, Oceania and the Far East.

JESSIE WHITSELL, Dormansland, Lingfield, Surrey, wishes to correspond with a French girl, and thinks that each should correct the other's mistakes.

"UNA CONCHA DE LARCHO" would like to correspond with "the French young lady if she has not found anyone else yet." Doubtless some French correspondent will volunteer, as we cannot identify the special one referred to.

A German governess, **ELSIE HUFFER,** to, Place des Célestins, Lyon, France, would like to correspond with **SPIRO,** Ireland.

French correspondents are asked for by Miss **GENEVIÈVE STRILING,** of Algernon Road, Lewisham, London, S.E.; and **PENSEE,** who is 19, and would like a correspondent about her own age.

MISS L. POTTER, of Crossley Street, Halifax, Yorkshire, would like to correspond with either a French or a German girl.

OUR OPEN LETTER BOX.

ADELAIDE asks for the verses of a poem beginning—

"Word was brought to the Danish king,
Hurry,
For the love of his heart lay suffering."

MISS C. GUNDRY (Arne), kindly writes to tell "Mademoiselle Nemo" that the quotation she asked for in our March number, is from "Studies of Girls," Part II, "The Girl who Endured," by Isabella Fyvie Mayo, in *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER* for March, 1883. Miss Gundry offers to lend the number if desired.

MISS MARIA A. WARD suggests, in reply to "Vee," that there is an admirable version of Old Mother Hubbard in the style of the *Idylls of the King*, by the late Sir Edward Hamley. It appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* for January, 1872, and begins—

"The widowed chief of Hubbard's ancient line
Turned to her cupboard cornered anglewise,
Betwixt this wall and that, in quest of ought
To satisfy the craving of Sir Travy,
Prick-eared companion of her solitude."

MISS WARD (25, Tudor Road, Hackney, N.E.) offers kindly to lend "Vee" her MS. copy if she cannot get the magazine.

We have two answers to "LUCIE's" query; one from "A CONSTANT READER (Bramar)," who tells her that the author of the poem she inquires about is Charles Kingsley, its title "Step by Step;" the other from **DORA ALISON** (Dalkoth), who says the poem is called "Upward," and its author is J. G. Holland. The stanza, Miss Alison remarks, is not exactly as quoted by "LUCIE," but runs as follows:—

"Heaven is not reached at a single bound;
But we build the ladder by which we rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies."
And we mount to the summit round by round."

"**BLACK LUFFY,**" asks if one of our readers can give her the poem in full entitled "An Advent Serenade," by M. E. Sangster, which appeared in a number of Harper's *Young People*.

DORIS asks for a poem entitled "The Late Lamented."

PINK HEATHER (Russia) wishes to know who composed the piece "Ade, du liebe Stadt."

OUR SUPPLEMENT STORY COMPETITION.

"A FLOWER OF LIGHT."

A STORY IN MINIATURE.

FIRST PRIZE (£2 2s.).

Sybil, Lorne Street, Lady-Bank, N.B.

SECOND PRIZE (£1 1s.).

Kate Densham, Olden Lodge, Purley, Surrey.

THIRD PRIZE (10s. 6d.).

Letitia E. May, Tremayne, Alton, Hants.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

Rosa Cooke, Lowestoft; Eva M. Moore, Cumberland; Agnes Cheverton, Portsmouth; "White Heather;" Lucy Richardson, York; Sybil M. Combe, Great Yarmouth; "Catherine;" "Beckington;" Elizabeth Chamberlain, Fareham; Cécile Rahier, Brest; Carolina M. Porter, W. Hampstead; S. E. Bryans, S. Wales; Elsie M. Garnett, Burton-on-Trent.

TO THE COMPETITORS.

MY DEAR GIRLS,—I must begin by stating that a certain competitor, whose name does not appear in this list, is equal to the winner of the first prize; but unfortunately she has disqualified herself by writing on both sides of the page. The task of picking out the best, among such a large number of really good essays, is a very trying one. The younger girls, of twelve, thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen, have greatly distinguished themselves. It has been a true pleasure to me to be in touch with all these unseen friends of mine.

Among this mass of papers, there has not been one which deserves to be called a failure. Every essay bears, more or less, the stamp of capability; so that I can honestly advise all the competitors to try again.

Always your friend,
SARAH DOUDNEY.

FIRST PRIZE ESSAY.

"A FLOWER OF LIGHT."

LUCIE ALDERWOOD is an orphan, living for the past five years with her rich uncle in his palatial mansion, just on the banks of London's river. Mr. Alderwood is a widower, and has one son, Edgar, who is abroad. Edgar has had every indulgence that, to his father's mind, would make a young man's path pleasant; but Edgar's views differ widely from his father's, and when at last he marries a gardener's daughter, his father bitterly disowns him, and Edgar, with his young wife, seeks a home in Australia. Luce is taught by her uncle to consider Edgar as a heartless and ungrateful son, and herself as her uncle's heiress.

Previous to this, Luce has lived a quiet life at Wood Farm, her aunt's home, and the influence of that gentle home is in her heart still, though her uncle tries to make her forget them, telling her that a life of pleasure and sunshine is the life for a beautiful flower such as she—a flower-de-luce. Luce bends to his influence, and enjoys the sunshine, and the power her beauty gives her. Claud Franklin is the one, amongst her many admirers, to whom her heart responds. He is on the point of declaring his love to Luce on her birthday; but is warned by his sister, Maggie, who pretends to Luce to be her devoted friend, that there is something wrong, and he hangs back. Luce feels the difference, and the first cloud comes up on her sky.

Mr. Alderwood dies suddenly, leaving no will, and Luce finds that after all her uncle's fortune will go to Edgar. She is overwhelmed chiefly at her uncle's seeming neglect of her; after all his years of kindness, and at the thought of Edgar's unworthiness. Claud and Maggie desert her now that she has no fortune, and she gladly turns to the true hearts at Wood Farm, where a loving home welcomes her back, with no hint of reproach at her neglect of them when in her uncle's mansion. But Luce feels reproached by

their kindness, and their influence begins again to work in her life. She engages herself as daily governess to a family living near, and one day, when out walking, encounters suddenly Claud Franklin in company with a Miss Pansy Cotton, a reputed heiress. The meeting is a shock to her, and crushes for ever a hope that lingered in her heart; but she learns in time that it is well that our joys have wings, so that they lead us to higher things, instead of being a chain to keep us to earth. An accident to her youngest and best-loved pupil, Tony, leads to her meeting with a Mr. Martyn, and with him she forms the closest friendship of her life. She discovers that he has met her cousin, Edgar, in Australia, and expects to hear nothing but dishonour about him. Instead of this, Mr. Martyn assures her that Edgar has been misunderstood all along—that it was his utter loathing for the vanity and sham of his father's circle, and the intense longing which he had for equality and fraternity, to which his father was utterly opposed, that drove him to seek a new and purer life with the young and innocent May, who loved him for himself alone, and who had paid her devotion with her life. Luce is melted by the pathetic story, and gives Mr. Martyn a message of peace to Edgar, which he, with a curious smile, promises to deliver. One afternoon, as he is in the garden with Luce, her cousins Libby and Christie appear, accompanied with Mr. Bernard Rayne, an old Australian friend, who addresses Mr. Martyn as Alderwood, and Edgar Alderwood has to discover himself. In his confession, he tells Luce that her uncle's fortune was, after all, only an accumulation of debts, which he is now busy clearing off—for he has been prosperous in Australia. Christie marries Bernard Rayne, and on the same day Luce and Edgar, ever married, each feeling that the thorny paths which lie behind had led them into a "large place"—even love's home. Libby, the gentle elder sister, we leave, quietly busy amongst her labours of love. And Luce has learned now that it is nobler far to blossom in the shade, cheering others' gloom, than to live in the glare of pleasure for self, withering at last, even in the sunshine.

SYBIL,
Lorne Street,
Ladybank, N.B.

OUR NEXT STORY COMPETITION.

STORIES IN MINIATURE.

Subject:—"THE G. O. P. SUPPLEMENT FOR JULY."

LOVE AND WAR, by Patricia Dillon, Author of "During the Terror," etc.

We offer three prize of TWO GUINEAS, ONE GUINEA, and HALF-A-GUINEA for the three best papers on our "Story Supplement" for this month. The essays are to give a brief account of the plot and action of the story in the Competitor's own words; in fact, each paper should be a carefully-constructed *Story in Miniature*, telling the reader in a few bright words what *THE GIRL'S OWN STORY SUPPLEMENT* for the month is all about.

One page of foolscap only is to be written upon, and is to be signed by the writer, followed by her full address, and posted to the Editor, *GIRL'S OWN PAPER*, in an unsealed envelope with the words "Stories in Miniature," written on the left-hand top corner.

The last day for receiving the papers is July 20th; and no papers can in any case be returned.

Examiners:—

The Author of the Story (Patricia Dillon), and the Editor of *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER*.