

OUR SUPPLEMENT STORY COMPETITION.

A CAGED NIGHTINGALE.

A STORY IN MINIATURE.

FIRST PRIZE (£2 2s.).
S. Elizabeth Hughes, Stoke Newington.

SECOND PRIZE (£1 1s.).
Cécile Rahier, Brest, France.

THIRD PRIZE (10s. 6d.).
Letitia E. May, Alton, Hants.

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M. M. Tapp, Cheltenham; D. Vallance,
Devonshire; L. Ward, Nottingham; A. M.
Whichelow, Muswell Hill; "White Heather,"
Edinburgh.

TO THE COMPETITORS.

MY DEAR GIRLS,—Have you ever stood before a quaint, many-sided mirror that flashes back reflections from surfaces placed at different angles? If so, you can understand a little what the effect must be of seeing my own fancies flashed back at me from hundreds of varying points of view. It has been a delightful, though rather a bewildering task to examine every paper, and I felt grateful to the writers.

Many, apparently admirable, sketches, I may say in parentheses, were disqualified by non-attention to the rule that they were to be written "on one page of foolscap only."

The exercise afforded by these "Stories in Miniature" is specially adapted to train young writers in "selection," which is one of the most difficult principles of the art of fiction. What to omit and what to dwell upon—to choose these fitly is essential to the right proportion of the story. For instance, very many competitors slurred over, or omitted altogether, in papers otherwise excellent, the heroine's encounter in the *Trümleten-Thal*, which had so important a bearing upon her fortunes.

But the standard generally reached has been a high one and makes me wish that the competition were like the race in *Alice in Wonderland*. "All have won and all must have prizes." Your affectionate friend,

LILY WATSON,
Author of "The Caged Nightingale."

FIRST PRIZE ESSAY.
A CAGED NIGHTINGALE.

On the slopes of one of the Bernese mountains, just above the village of Tannenwald, stands the pretty *Hôtel Schöfels*. Here, amid mountain and valley, torrent and waterfall, Marie Courtenay had grown from childhood to womanhood, and during the season was to be seen from early morning to nightfall in her pretty Bernese costume waiting on the visitors. For Marie's ready help and fluent English made her always in request. But though she worked so hard, she was by birth and education a lady. Her father was an English barrister, but when he died a year after his wife, his relations, who had looked coldly on the gentle Swiss mother, sent Marie to be brought up in her uncle's home. Her aunt, a grasping woman, was very ready to find fault, but barely praised, doing her best to make her niece feel her dependent position. In her loneliness Marie had been guided to the Friend of the friendless, and in Him found strength to perform bravely and cheerfully her daily duties. Her one recreation was singing, and she was eagerly looking forward to the *Gesangfest* at Interlaken, for

which the village choir were diligently practising and which her aunt had reluctantly consented she should attend.

Hugh Godfrey, a young Englishman staying at the hotel with his mother, was exploring a lovely glen near the foot of the Jungfrau, when the strains of Gounod's *Prière* fell upon his ear. The rich contralto voice and the passion of the singer delighted him, and he was about to seek the vocalist, when Marie came into view. She blushed deeply, but answered his polite questions with dignity and went on her way in search of a missing cow. He continued his way upward, when he heard a loud noise above him and became aware of a large mass of snow that was rolling down the mountain side. He took shelter under a projecting rock, but a stone glancing aside struck him and he fell to the ground. When he opened his eyes, Marie was bending over him, bathing his forehead. He made light of the accident, but was glad to return with her to the hotel, finding her a charming companion.

Meanwhile a letter from a London lawyer arrived for Marie, announcing the death of an aunt and a bequest of £50 per annum. Madame Mühlbach opened it, and persuading her husband that it was for Marie's good, took possession of the letter. Mr. Gibson, some days later, received a letter signed, "Marie Courtenay," which caused him great amusement, and his son determined to see the writer if possible when he should join his friend Godfrey in Switzerland. In due course Marie's first cheque arrived. Madame opened the letter and signed the receipt. She could not yet bring herself to endorse the cheque, but locked it safely in her cashbox.

The *Gesangfest* drew near, and having arranged for her absence, Marie sought her aunt. Madame absolutely refused to allow her to go, she could not possibly be spared, for her aunt had discovered that Mr. Gibson was staying at Interlaken, and after earnest pleading Marie retired to weep over her shattered hopes. She was interrupted by her cousin, who laughed scornfully at her tears and advised her to act for herself; she would bring her the door key and make peace with her mother, as she believed she was the cause of this disappointment. Marie yielded: tyranny had outreached itself. Long before the light, four days later, Marie quietly opened the door and passed into the darkness. She was full of nervous fears, and was very thankful when she reached the outskirts of Interlaken, where she would be joined by the remainder of the *Liedertafel*.

Godfrey, walking disconsolately about the town, caught sight of his Swiss friend in one of the many Choir processions parading the streets, and suddenly became deeply interested in the National Festival.

Marie received a letter from her uncle that night. As she opened it a cheque fell out: he had roused himself at last and insisted that justice should be done to her.

The Tannenwald Choir did not win the prize banner, though its excellent work was highly commended, but

on the evening of the great concert one of their number was brought forward to take the place of a soloist, suddenly indisposed. The vast audience hung on every note as she put the yearning of her life into Gounod's beautiful *Prière*. Hugh Godfrey could restrain himself no longer. Seeking her as she left the Hall and leading her away from the crowds, in passionate words he declared his love for her. And Marie did not hesitate to trust her life to him, if he could win his mother's consent; and the lonely Swiss girl found a resting-place in his great loving heart.

S. ELIZABETH HUGHES,
32, Heathland Road,
Stoke Newington, N.

OUR NEXT STORY COMPETITION.

STORIES IN MINIATURE.

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

"A VILLAGE SCHOOLMISTRESS," By Harriet Hughes, Author of, "Cousin Madeline," "Adelaide's Reward," etc.

We offer three prizes 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 June 20th; and no papers can in any case be returned.

Examiners:—

The Author of the Story (Harriet Hughes), and the Editor of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER.

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