

OUR PUZZLE POEM: PRIZE WINNERS AND REPORT.

SOLUTION.

"ON THE GENTLE ARTS OF MAKING AND TAKING TEA."

How careful to the jaded mind is tea,
If careful blended and well made it be!
Use teapot made of earthenware and cheap,
And watch the water, from the kettle leap
By spout or lid; then make the tea-pot hot.
Put in the tea, not recklessly a lot,
One teaspoon each, nor churlishly refuse
Another for the pot; so will your muse
With Dr. Johnson's praise this wondrous cup,
Though, unlike him, do not immoderate sup,
Lest theine and tannin and essential oil
Combined unfit you for continued toil.

PRIZE WINNERS.

Seven Shillings Each.

Edith Berry, Carlton Curdie, Leicester.
Isabel Borrow, 219, Exving Road, Upper Clapton, N.E.
M. S. Bourne, 14, The Broadway, Bromley, Kent.
Rev. J. Chambers, Woodhead, Manchester.
T. O. Cooksey, 60, High St., Bridgnorth, Salop.
Mrs. A. D. Harris, Redcote, Llanishen, nr. Cardiff.
H. E. Klein, 46, Clifton Crescent, Asylum Road, S.E.
Eliza Learmonth, 3, Ravensbourne Terrace, South Shields.
E. M. Le Motte, 15, Linden Park, Tunbridge Wells.
T. H. Mann, 15, Glebe Road, Bedford.
May Merrall, Ulverley, Olton, nr. Birmingham.
Florence E. Russell, 3, Rosendale Road, West Dulwich, S.E.
Ellen Rothery Smith, 11A, Union Court, Old Broad St., E.C.
Gertrude Smith, 10, Ferron Road, Clapton, N.E.
Emily M. Tattam, 23, Springdale Road, Green Lanes, Stoke Newington, N.

Special Mention (equal with prize winners).

Agnes McConnell, Emily L. Reid, Ada Richards.

Very Highly Commended.

Edith Ashworth, Edith Barnes, Rev. S. Bell, Joanna M. Bell, Eliza Blunt, Sarah L. Bromwich, B. Bryson, Lucy Chakona, Mary I. Chislett, Margaret W. Cornack, M. A. C. Crabb, R. D. Davis, E. H. Duncan, Winifred E. Eady, Edith E. Grundy, M. Hodgkinson, G. D. Honeyburne, J. Hunt, Rachel V. R. James, Mildred M. C. Little, F. M. Morgan, F. A. Prideaux, Lucy Richardson, W. M. Roberts, Fanny Shepard, Harriet C. Smyth, Isabel Snell, E. Swebstone, Mary J. Taylor, Caroline E. Thurgar, Ellen Thurtell, Evelyn Townend, Edith White, Frances Whitlock, Florence Whitlock, Edith Gladys Wynne, Elizabeth Yarwood.

Highly Commended.

Lydia Belling, M. Bolingbroke, Mrs. J. Brand, Alice W. Browne, Walter W. Bryant, Louie Bull, A. C. Carter, Agnes B. Chettle, Lillian Clews, Edith Collins, Helen M. Coulthard, Dr. R. Swan Coulthard, Mrs. G. Cumming, E. Danell, Amy Dawson, Lizzie Dawson, Annie E. Dineen, Rose Ferrington, Herbert V. French, Florence M. Graves, Julia A. Hennen, Rosa S. Home, "Iselt," Alice E. Johnson, Violet Lendrum, E. Lord, Annie G. Luck, Francie Massey, F. Miller, Mrs. Nicholls, Annie Page, P. H. Pevland (?), F. A. Powell, Ellen M. Price, Davida Reid,

Henzell G. Robson, John Rodway, Janet Scott, Amy I. Seaward, A. C. Sharp, Ethel J. Shepard, Ellen C. Tarrant, Daisy Tyler, Alice M. West, W. L. Wishart.

Honourable Mention.

Eliza Acworth, Dora N. Bertie, Amy Briand, E. Burrell, N. Campbell, Mrs. E. Cunningham, Annie Kate Edwards, E. W. Floyd, A. and F. Fooks, D. L. Griffin, V. M. Griffin, Mrs. Grubbe, Mary Hinkson, Rose A. Hooppell, Edith L. Howse, Mrs. Kemp, Ellen H. Kemp, Leonard F. Kemp, P. R. Kemp, Arthur Madin, Mrs. C. A. Martin, Mrs. Amy Moraine, Phyllis Pearson, St. Clair Conway Poole, Janet M. Pugh, V. C. S. Sams, Mary Sanders, Alice M. Seaman, M. Sinnatt, Elizabeth A. Skinner, Florence White, M. Wilkins, T. Francis Williams, Alice Woodhead, Emily Wright.

EXAMINERS' REPORT.

Difficult enough to frighten many yet easy enough to be solved by many, must be the conflicting verdict on the August puzzle. Perhaps the summer heat had something to do with the fright, and it is possible that freedom from the more fascinating duties of school life had something to do with the solving. "Howsoever these things be," let us accept the facts and forbear to waste valuable time in wondering, an occupation which is, by common consent, exclusively reserved for the other sex.

A glance at the solution will cause many solvers to regret that they did not observe that the letters Gent were on The. Others will lament their ignorance in mistaking the beautiful jay for a common crow or, even less excusably, for a "bird." But the puzzles are meant to teach the differences between many things that are not at all alike, in spite of appearances, and such faults may be readily forgiven—for the first time.

The correct name for a mixture of teas is "blend," and the adoption of it was necessary for the accurate rendering of line 2. As to the grammar of the same line, to which several solvers kindly call attention, we must point out that there is a difference between a grammatical exercise and a poem. "If carefully blended and well made it be," would have been excellent grammar but indifferent poetry, and if one of the two must be indifferent, poets always sacrifice the grammar.

The sixth line was responsible for a very interesting duplicate reading—"Put in the tea, not recklessly, allot," etc.

Inasmuch as inaccurate spelling is frequently introduced into these puzzles we have not a word to say against such an admirable reading and we have adjudged it to be equal with the author's. A few competitors who adopted this version spelt allot with only one l, a blending of the two readings which could not be allowed. Others again preserved the w in the wreck, making "wrecklessly," quite a new and inadmissible word.

Now what shall we say as to the teaspoon? Perhaps it might have been smaller with advantage, though scores of competitors had no difficulty in identifying the species. However, our own doubt as to the size leads us to accept "large spoon," and also though less willingly "spoonful." As a matter of fact the usual indications of a full spoon are wanting, but on the other hand it is difficult to assert its emptiness with any degree of confidence. Never before has a teaspoon given us so much anxious thought.

Poor old Dr. Johnson was sometimes mistaken for William Cowper, but, apart from the question of likeness, what evidence is there

that the latter ever drank too much tea? "Theine" was evidently a new word to many solvers, and was accordingly rejected with that confidence which ignorance sometimes inspires. As we always like to be instructive, we may explain that theine is an alkaloid obtained from tea leaves which, in any quantity, is injurious to life. Wherefore, tea drinkers beware!

No solution of the last line which failed to note the combination of the U and N could be accounted good.

The extension of the r was generally expressed by "continued" or the equally good word "extended." "Prolonged," "protracted" and "long lengthened," in the same connection are all inferior by reason of their clumsiness, but none of these readings could be reckoned as more than a small fraction of a mistake. And this brings us to the end of our report. The prize list being so long we had to leave out previous winners regardless of their entitlement to a second prize.

It may be interesting to competitors to know that these reports are meant to be read. If "Kathleen" had read the one on "Poison d'avril" she would not have troubled us with an elaborate inquiry as to the reason of her failure. And we must ask A. E. J. and many others to note that one good, honest mistake often disqualifies for mention of any kind. As to the indentation of lines of poetry we may say in answer to E. E. G. and "Ubique" that the solution of "Poison d'avril" was wrongly printed; lines 6 and 12 ought not to have been indented. On the general question a note has already appeared in the Answers to Correspondents. We did not receive a perfect solution of "Suppositions" from E. S. A. G. B. shall have credit for all her solutions, however wrongly her name may have been printed.

One regular solver, whose opinion is entitled to every consideration, complains of our adjudication on the puzzle "Still Life." He maintains that his was a perfect solution "although it differed in two words from the copy." The copy received by us differed in three, and after examining it again and yet again we are quite satisfied as to the justness of our decision. But following a criticism in detail our competitor writes—"The only difficulty to be found in these puzzles is assigning the best word to a picture that may represent several ideas." In fact a kind of missing word competition." We have little fault to find with the first of these remarks, but we do protest most strongly against the second. There is no warrant whatever for such a conclusion. It is clearly impossible, if there is to be any "puzzle" at all, to avoid the use of pictures which may represent more than one idea. But taking the whole series of the puzzles, it has rarely happened that more than one of the possible interpretations of a picture has fitted in with the purpose and rhythm of the verse. But even such a possibility cannot be wholly avoided, and now and then we do find a duplicate reading equal in every respect with the author's. In these cases we do not favour one reading more than the other. Once (and once only) the difficulty of adjudication was so great that we had to resort to an arbitrary ruling. We called attention to the fact in our report and expressed our regret. From the beginning of these "Puzzle Poems" we have consciously made every endeavour to keep them above the level of the chance competitions now so popular, otherwise we should not have taken so much notice of our expert correspondent's criticism. Nothing would be easier than to make the puzzles more difficult and nothing would be more unpopular.