

MISCELLANEOUS.

NOVA SCOTIA.—Such slight divergence of religious creed ought not to prove a barrier in married life—but rather the reverse. Our opinion, based on a large outlook, is that most marriages are happy, and that a union of hearts such as yours ought to be the highest form of human existence.

TOURIST.—Yes, Wilson's *Handy Guide to Norway* (Stanford) is the best and the only one up to date.

HEED.—SAY, "I wish Daisy were (not was) here!" also, "If I thought she were going, I should wish to leave too." Certainly it is not "the right way" to pronounce "congruity" as "superfluity." The words have perfectly dissimilar significations. The former has four syllables divided thus—con-gru-i-t-y, and the latter had five syllables—su-per-flu-i-t-y.

NURSE'S DAUGHTER.—If you so much like, and have reason to respect the young man you so often meet as a stranger, and whom you describe as "an angle," you might perhaps obtain his introduction to you through a mutual friend. If not, then do not set your heart on an acquaintance as it would seem that God's wise Providence had denied it to you, and He knows best. Your writing is fairly good, but your spelling needs attention.

JOSE.—To make little cakes for breakfast, take one pint of whole meal; one teacupful of milk, butter about the size of a walnut, and one teacupful of baking-powder. Mix well and bake for half an hour.

KITTY and L. F. S.—April 17, 1870, was a Thursday; and Dec. 2, 1871, was a Wednesday. Also Oct. 21, 1850, fell on a Sunday (leap year).

K. G.—We see no objection to the photographing of a couple engaged to each other in the same picture. But it needs not to be said that were there the remotest chance of a rupture between the affianced pair it would be exceedingly unpleasant to have been thus coupled together.

A TROUBLED ONE.—You must decide for yourself, but in any case you should see the clergyman or the minister, and arrange with him about your baptism. He will probably put you through a course of instruction in preparation for the rite. Make no further delay in fulfilling this duty.

CERTES.—To prevent the rubbing off of pencilled sketches, they should be set by dipping them in milk and water. The bath should be broad and flat, and the immersion should be only for an instant, just in and out, the surface wetted but not the back.

OUR SUPPLEMENT STORY COMPETITION.

"A VILLAGE SCHOOLMISTRESS."

A STORY IN MINIATURE.

FIRST PRIZE (£2 2s.).

"Soldanella," Montreux, Switzerland.

SECOND PRIZE (£1 1s.).

"Hope," Nieder Schlesien, Germany.

THIRD PRIZE (10s. 6d.).

E. M. Watts, Portsmouth.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

M. Bishop, Wellington; A. Bowers, Belfast; M. N. Bryant, Redditch; M. A. C. Crabb, Rickmansworth; "Elsie," Oldham; B. Fitch, N. Brixton; E. M. Garnett, Burton-on-Trent; E. L. Hawkins, Bultih; L. Hope, W. Hartlepool; S. E. Hopkinson, Chesterfield; A. M. Hutchinson, Eynsford; M. F. Jamieson, Portobello; R. Judge, Banbury; R. Knight, Wandsworth Common; L. E. May, Alton, Hants; M. Moscrop, Saltburn-by-the-Sea; A. E. Munro, Highbury, London; A. S. Murphy, Tullow, Ireland; C. M. T. Reindorp, Beckenham; L. Richardson, York; L. A. Rogers, Parkstone; A. Somerville, Edinburgh; M. A. Venn, W. Kensington; M. G. Watts, Portsmouth; "White Heather," Edinburgh.

TO THE COMPETITORS.

MY DEAR GIRLS.—It was an almost impossible task to select from the hundreds of papers sent in, the three—or even the thirty which gave the best idea of both the plot and action of the story epitomised.

What surprised me most was the large number that on the first reading appeared to be of absolutely equal value. I had, therefore, to judge them by some principle which might act as a separator and reduce the number within the necessary limits.

I remember, when a child, hearing several people discuss the respective merits of two sermons, and though I have long forgotten everything else that was said, a certain remark remained in my mind. It was pointed out that one sermon was not so well balanced as the other—that the speaker dwelt too long on the earlier divisions of the subject, at the expense of the later. I found this to be the case in many otherwise excellent papers.

A number of candidates were disqualified by failure to keep the rule which limits to one page only.

It is not a little difficult to avoid every pitfall, but a resolute and continued effort to succeed is of undoubted mental value, so that, in this sense, there is a prize for all.

Your affectionate friend,

HARRIET HUGHES

(Author of "A Village Schoolmistress").

FIRST PRIZE ESSAY.

A VILLAGE SCHOOLMISTRESS.

It was a great many years since the little village of Stillmere had experienced an owner's care. Young Mr. Beverley, the Squire, had spent most of his time abroad since his coming of age about four years ago, so that Mr. Grant, the trusty but generous agent, had still continued to have the whole management of the estate in his hands. Strongly opposed to the spread of education among the lower classes, he considered any money devoted to this object as worse than wasted. The village school he held in contempt! But the post of schoolmistress being left vacant, the choice of another teacher fell to him, nor when he had accepted the offer of a young lady, a clergyman's daughter, was he disposed to be over-friendly to her—as perhaps his absence from the station when she arrived seemed to testify. The new-comer, Mary Evelyn, was not the only person bound for Stillmere on that showery October day; two other people had travelled from town in the same train—a distinguished-looking young man, who after eyeing her curiously as she left the station, drove away in a dog-cart, and a woman, who was chiefly noticeable for her good-humoured face. Mary, finding herself unexpected, had to walk the four miles to Stillmere, and when she arrived, in drenching rain, she found the school-house deserted. Taking up her abode at the inn, she was warmly received by the landlady, in whom she recognised her travelling companion. The next morning a visit was made with Mr. Grant to the school-house, which would have been a pretty cottage, had it not been in a sad state of repair. Undaunted by the discouragement of Mr. Grant, Mary, with the aid of a charwoman, was soon able to completely transform the house. But her difficulties were by no means at an end. The girls whom she had to teach could neither read nor write well, and having never been accustomed to obey, there was greater unlikeness in the class than Mary had been led to expect. Added to this, everything belonging to the schoolroom—desks, books, maps—was in the most dilapidated condition, and Mr. Grant had impressed upon her that no help was to be expected from him. A visit from the Squire helped her, however, out of her difficulties. He came one day accompanied by Miss Alice Herbert, a young lady living at the Grange and the aged rector—a scholarly man who took but little interest in the village. Mr. Beverley, the handsome young fellow whom she remembered having seen at Emsleigh Station on her arrival, promised to provide all she needed in the way of schoolroom fittings, while Miss Herbert came to her aid by giving a few hours' teaching every week. Slowly and surely Mary had made way with her pupils; in a few months a great change was visible. Tidy obedient girls had taken the place of the unkempt, rebellious creatures of former days, and in Alice Herbert she had not only found a true friend, but one who helped her greatly in her arduous task. To no one did this change appeal more strongly than to Henry Beverley. He regarded with admiration the girl who thus devoted her life to the care of a few poor children, and the gentle face, with its sweet eyes, had a peculiar attraction for him. Late one night, when Mary had been called out to see a poor woman who had burnt her foot, she found to her surprise on leaving the house that Mr. Beverley was waiting to escort her home, for he had seen her go forth in the dark on her errand of mercy. As they wended their way back together on that dark, dreary night, the words which he spoke to her were those of love: he told her about his lonely life, rich perhaps in worldly goods, but destitute of that which makes life most precious—the destitute of a good woman. It remained with her, he said, to compensate for that which he had never known; for, from the first time he had seen her on the platform at Emsleigh, he had felt that she was the only woman who could ever fill

the place of wife to him. The answer was rather chilling. Mary begged him to wait six months—during which time they might learn to know each other better—before she could give him a decisive answer; but it was not without hope that he left her. Soon after this old Mr. Clinton left, and under the new rector, a fine, energetic man in the prime of life, the state of affairs changed. Mr. Blount's first work was to reorganise the Sunday-school. His interest in the village school, too, was of great encouragement to Mary, and he increased the ardour of the girls by offering rewards to those who had worked best during the year. . . . The prize-day had come and gone, and thanks to the energy of the rector and other kind friends, it had been a great success. To Mary especially had it been a memorable day. Henry Beverley had reminded her of the promise she had made a few months before, and when he had overcome all her conscientious scruples, Mary, with perfect confidence in his love, had promised to be his wife. . . . Some time later, when Mr. and Mrs. Beverley had returned from their honeymoon on the Continent, to learn of Alice Herbert's engagement with the rector, Mary felt how much happiness had come out of the few months she had spent in Stillmere as village schoolmistress. "SOLDANELLA,"

5, Avenue du Kursaal,
Montreux, Switzerland.

OUR NEXT STORY COMPETITION.

STORIES IN MINIATURE.

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

A SAILOR'S BRIDE, by MINNIE DOUGLAS.

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 (that is a quarter of a full sheet which consists of four pages) 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 August 19th; and no papers can in any case be returned.

Examiners.—The Author of the Story (Minnie Douglas), and the Editor of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER.