

MINNIE MAY'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NIECES,—

A good many girls who are just beginning to take up life seriously are a little troubled about how to become self-supporting. No doubt there are plenty of ways of earning one's living, so many paths are hewn out nowadays, each purporting to be the royal road to fortune. Of course, a great many of my nieces need never go away from home to make a livelihood. Their parents may be in circumstances comfortable enough to allow their daughters to remain at home without thinking of going out into the world to fight the battle of life. Many homes, again, are such that they cannot possibly "get along" without the girls. There may be a great many household duties to attend to—enough, perhaps, for two or three girls—or the mother may be delicate and unfit for much. These latter daughters are earning their own living just as much as those who go out into the great arena of the world. But we are talking more particularly about those who are in a position where they can go and have to go away from home to become self-supporting.

At the present day the cry is for *Specialists* in everything. Applicants for situations must be especially trained, no matter what kind of position is wanted. "Work is becoming more and more specialized every day, and women, particularly those no longer young, should bear this in mind, and by study and observation seek to bring themselves up to date."

Take housekeeping for example. Less than a quarter of a century ago, a thorough and complete training in home duties and responsibilities was a thing unknown, girls were supposed to attain such knowledge by instinct, or were compelled to acquire it in a manner calculated to make housekeeping distasteful to them, or else they were allowed to grow up in utter ignorance of how to boil a potato even; and only when they married did they realize their helplessness, and bitterly wish that they had learned something. A matron once said that if her better half had not been blessed with the patience of Job, and the digestion of an ostrich, he could not have survived the experiments of the first year of married life. Happily, such instances are becoming fewer, and housekeeping is now a science, and all its branches, hygiene, nursing, cookery, laundrywork, dressmaking, sewing, etc., are taught along regular lines. Now if a girl wishes to gain a livelihood by any one of these, each a science in itself, the wisest way would be to attend classes where her chosen branch is taught, and perfect herself in that particular science. In the teaching of these branches to others, too, a profitable career has been opened up for many an educated woman.

What an army of clerks there is in the world! Some people think that anyone who cannot find a position elsewhere can take a clerkship, but to-day there are very few vacancies for those who are merely accurate and painstaking. Special knowledge is required, and those who do not understand shorthand, typewriting, etc., must expect to earn next to nothing in the way of salary. The best means of qualifying for such a position would be by taking a course at one of our many good business colleges.

Many women nowadays are successful photographers. Perhaps some of them had a fancy for the Kodak as an amusement, and from that developed into full-fledged photographic artists. Some ladies confine their attention to taking pictures of children, brides in their wedding-gowns in the privacy of their own rooms, and to entire families in their homes. Some people prefer women for this. I have heard of two bright girls who advertise themselves as leaders of games, etc., for children's parties. They are tactful and witty, are able to sing and play, and must, I fancy, be in a sense kindergartners, so as to enter into sympathy with child-life.

I read an account lately, of a woman who made a fortune out of gingerbread. Through reverses, she had to do something, and offered to supply this delicacy to a lunch room. The proprietors had been unable to find any of this commodity to suit them, and this lady thought she would try it. So she set to work to make gingerbread, and tried a dozen recipes before she produced anything to satisfy herself. Then one came out light, moist, delicious, and next day a dozen similar cakes were sent to the firm. These met the want perfectly, orders followed, and as custom grew, demands spread from gingerbread to cakes of all sorts. She had to employ assistance; other restaurants asked for supplies, and so her business grew.

Among other positions which my nieces might ably fill, may be mentioned that of companion. Many an elderly or sickly lady is in want of the society of a bright, cheery, sympathetic girl, and would willingly give remuneration for such a companionship. Then there are lady doctors, lady dentists, lady lawyers, teachers, nurses, boarding-house keepers, printers, retouchers, etc. The making up of furs employs many girls too, and enables them to be self-supporting.

The main thing is—whatever you do, do well and do willingly. "Be patient, be courteous," was spoken long ago, and it holds good to-day. Study the wishes of those in authority; in fact, make yourself indispensable. Aim high, according to your ability, and strive to attain whatever purpose you are most fitted to pursue, being sure it is a true and honest one. Remember that "Life is not as idle ore," and you will become fired with a noble ambition. You will wish to live, not merely to exist. But let not ambition blind you to the path beneath your feet. Duty is a stern mistress: but

"He that, ever following her commands,
Shall find the toppling crags of duty scaled,
Is close upon the shining table-land,
To which our God himself is moon and sun."

Your loving old Auntie,

MINNIE MAY.

Saint Cecilia—Patron of Music.

Nearly all the world loves music, so this well-known picture should be interesting. Perhaps not every one knows much about this Patron Saint of Music, although the name "St. Cecilia" is often given to musical clubs. This poor martyr died, it seems, in 230, and accounts of her are vague in the extreme. One very generally accepted story is that she was of noble Roman family, was converted to Christianity and refused to worship idols. With the barbarity of those early times, she was thrown into a cauldron of boiling water, where, however, she remained unhurt. She was then condemned to be beheaded, but the executioner found it impossible to obey orders.



SAINT CECILIA—PATRON OF MUSIC.

Poor St. Cecilia then saved all further trouble by dying a natural death three days after.

The great poet Dryden appears to have shared a belief that this celebrated Christian martyr invented the organ, because he thus writes:

"At length divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame."

And Pope wrote, we must remember, the "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day."

This picture represents the fair Cecilia with her sacred halo over her head and the angel children ministering to her and showering flowers upon her hands and the keyboard on which she plays.

Legends are legends, and one often reads different accounts of the same people and things, but whether or not we accept all that is related of this gentle saint, the idea of her is beautiful, and we can try to imagine how, in her sorrow, she beguiled the time with her sweet music, and how she was comforted by this heavenly vision and sustained to bear all the affliction thrust upon her as punishment for her steadfastness.

Our Library Table.

"WHEN A MAN'S SINGLE." J. M. Barrie.—There is a fascination in Barrie's style which is irresistible. The scenes stand out so naturally, yet so dramatically, that one can easily divine the reason of his success with his dramatized work. So few novels can stand the difference between the mere reading of them as novels and the almost entire change of style produced by stage setting and dra-

matic dialogue. However, Barrie's novels can, as is amply proved by the overwhelming success of his "Little Minister." His "Window in Thrums" is a household word now, and, indeed, so are many others. The book we now review is, perhaps, less known than some others of Barrie's, and deals but little with Scottish life—although it opens and finishes with it. The story is of a clever young Scotchman, Rob Angus, whose thirst for knowledge is such that, although brought up as a saw-miller (at which calling he is first-class), he yet contrives to educate himself and get his newspaper articles accepted. He contemplates going to college, but Fate wills otherwise. His dying widow sister leaves her wee girl baby to his care, and to Rob this charge is sacred. He relinquishes all idea of college, and later on even the tempting offer of a good journalistic position, for people are beginning to hear of "the literary saw-miller." He simply accepts the fact that he is "not single" and must stop and care for his little niece, Davy. Tammas McQuahaffy's humorous description of little Davy's name runs thus: "It was an accident at the christenin'..... Hendry cud hardly tak' courage to tell the minister. Weel, the minister—it was Mester Dishart—somehow had a notion 'at the liltin was a laddie, and when he reads the name on the paper, 'Margaret Dundas,' he looks at Hendry wi the bairny in's arms an' says he, stern-like, 'The child's a boy, is he not?'..... So, says he, all trem'lin, 'Yes, Mr. Dishart.' Then, says the minister, 'I cannot christen him Margaret, so I will call him David!' and David the liltin was baptized, sure enouch."..... Says Hendry, "I daured na conderdick the minister."

Faithful Rob Angus soon becomes "single," and the way of it is one of the most pathetic bits ever penned. One can see, with misty eyes, strong, brave Rob standing, dazed with grief, with Davy's little shoe in his hand. The next scene carries us into a new life. Rob Angus is now a journalist in Silchester. The description of the editorial department of a country newspaper is very edifying and amusing, the daily bickerings between the sub-editor and the foreman of the composing-room being especially good.

"But, but," cried Protheroe, all in a flutter, "It's town council meeting; it must be set, Mr. Penny." "Very well, Mister; then that special from Birmingham must be slaughtered." "No, no, Mr. Penny; why, that's a speech by Bright." Penny sneered at the sub-editor, and flung up his hands to imply that he washed his hands of the whole thing—as he had done every night for the last ten years, when there was pressure on his space."

In this quiet country town Rob Angus meets his fate—the usual one—and succumbs utterly to Mary Abinger, a young lady of position and birth very different to his own. Nothing daunted, he simply resolves to win her, and plunges away off to London with a few pounds in hand and a grim determination to do or die—especially the former! There is no formal description of Mary Abinger. She grows upon you gradually, and you know her as worthy of the deep, strong heart she has taken captive. "A face to stir the conscience of a good man, and make unworthy men keep their distance, for it spoke first of purity, which can never be present anywhere without being felt."

Of Rob's struggles in the big, cruel old city, one must read to thoroughly appreciate. There was one terrible month when he wrote from morning to night and did not make sixpence. "I will get on," cried Rob to himself, "I'm not going to be starved out of a big town like this." One night he dreamed that he saw all the editors in London being conveyed (in a row) to the hospital on stretchers. A gratified smile lit up his face as he slept, and his arm going out suddenly to tip one of the stretchers over, hit against a chair. Rob jumped out of bed and kicked the chair round the room. By and by, when his articles were occasionally accepted, he told his proofs that "the editors were capital fellows."

In spite of all set-backs, however, Rob does eventually get on, and not only in journalism, but in other ways. His innate good sense and refinement soon cause a great change. He begins to discover that he can enter a drawing-room without knocking down all the pretty things, and can wear his clothes like any other gentleman. His manly and simple adoration of Mary is beautiful, and the little weaknesses he is sometimes betrayed into only serve to show his honest devotion. How he "looked on in ecstasy while she searched for the pocket of her dress. The day before, Mrs. Meredith had not been able to find her pocket and Rob had thought it foolish of ladies not to wear their pockets where they could be more easily got at."

There are many other characters in this charming book—the old Scotch types being especially good—and there are some really useful hints on journalistic life. Altogether, there is an immense amount of character and wisdom in "When a Man's Single," which makes it a book one can read and re-read—each time with profit.

FELIX.