

"MY ROOM" COMPETITION—PRIZE WINNERS AND REPORT.

One Guinea Each.

Eileen, Langholme, Dumfriesshire. (*Please send full name and address.*)
 Mary Law, West Street, Hertford.
 Mary Fowell, Wellington Road, Oxtou, Cheshire.
 "Sidney Keith," Wootton Court, Warwick.
 Lina Francati, St. Oswald's Road, West Brompton.

Half-a-Guinea Each.

Country Maiden. (*Please send full name and address.*)
 Emily Bennett Bewsey, Old Hall, Warrington, Bogmyrtle, Dumbartonshire.
 Bet, The Manse, Portcharlotte, Islay.
 Edith M. Watts, Buckland, Portsmouth.

Honourable Mention.

Irish Nan, Birmingham.
 Letitia F. May, Tremayne, Hants.
 Ella M. Tennant, Catford.
 Fair Flower, Bodlondet, Newtown, Montgomery.
 Lizzie Donald, Straith Cottage, Cluny, Aberdeen.
 Bess Evans, Park House, Newquay, Cardiganshire.

REPORT.

THE cheerful promptness with which the girl readers of the "G. O. P." have responded to the editor's invitation to describe their own special rooms has pleased him greatly.

It has, as he anticipated, given him an insight into their characters, capabilities and resources beyond that afforded by any former competition.

So attractive have been the majority of the descriptions that he earnestly wishes it were possible for him to accept some of the invitations so pressing given to come and

see for himself the dainty sanctums, the bright kitchens, the studios and the living rooms of the many competitors, and to note all their clever contrivances to press beauty and comfort into rooms which otherwise would have been bare, empty and characterless.

Before presenting some of their cosy nests to his readers, the editor cannot resist expressing his great pleasure at the thoroughness of the appreciation of his editorial work expressed in almost every paper sent in; he is greatly encouraged by it to persevere in his endeavour to render the "G. O. P." a faithful friend, a comfort and teacher to every reader.

One of the competitors, speaking of the "G. O. P." says 'tis—

"Enjoyed in mansion, in cabin and cot,
 And read in every available spot."

The editor has reason to hope that this may be true, for the competitors are of every class and send in their papers from the remotest corners of the British Isles.

Out of the large numbers of papers sent in, only a few have been discarded without a second thought as being simple catalogues or inventories; the majority of the competitors understood that the editor wanted to judge of their characters by their surroundings and again to note the effect of their surroundings on their dispositions. They have done their work so well that it has enabled him to picture them in their quiet hours and has made the friendship between him and his readers still closer.

Some of the writers have invested every article in their rooms with interest; either it has been the gift of a friend or obtained by self-denial and economy, or made from instructions found at various times in the "G. O. P."—they have painted the rooms, stained the floors, made the rugs, upholstered couch and chairs, filled the windows with plants, till as

you look you see as in a looking-glass the reflex of the girl herself; her hand has been like that of a fairy, changing dirty old boxes into delicate book-cases, pretty ottomans and all sorts of dainty articles.

The editor has been interested to note that in a very large percentage of rooms described, whether in castle, mansion, farm or ordinary home, they have a few things in common; first, horseshoes over the doors for luck and to keep the witches out; second, a copy of the "Soul's Awakening" on the walls; third, Ruskin's works on the book-shelves, and lastly, a Persian cat before the fire.

In a few cases the tastes of certain girls are strongly marked; for example, one gives a minute description of every plant in her room in a most interesting manner, and having done this she concludes, "and the rest is merely furniture and photographs."

Another describes every book in her room and concludes, "I don't think there is anything else but furniture."

Another is a collector of swords, and her description of them is enthusiastic; all else in the room is as nothing compared to these.

In most of the papers, however, one recognises the effect of the daily surroundings upon the dispositions, how they rest the tired mind and body, how they quell the angry temper and encourage self-control, how they develop talent and foster industry.

The papers are all so really good that it has been difficult to make a selection. Three foreign papers have been sent in with this first set of papers, and will be considered with those yet to come in from abroad; one is from a Portuguese, a second from a German, and a third from a French lady.

The editor thanks the competitors for their good wishes and reciprocates them most heartily. He hopes to print the first five of the prize essays.

"MY ROOM" COMPETITION.

(ONE GUINEA.)

DEAR MR. EDITOR,*

I am afraid you will feel inclined to debar me from taking part in the competition when you discover I have no other room to write about than my mother's kitchen. Let me, however, say a word in my own defence. Our house certainly possesses "a but and a ben," and in the latter apartment are stored all our household gods as is customary with the working classes, leaving the kitchen somewhat bare and uninteresting by comparison; but then I seldom enter "the room," as we call it, except to do the usual dusting and sweeping, whereas my days are spent almost wholly in the kitchen doing housework and sewing. Clearly then, the kitchen must be my theme if I am to adhere to the rules of the competition.

There is in it such a curious medley of things ancient and modern, valuable and utterly devoid of value, that I hardly know where to begin. Then again, taken as a whole, it looks so homelike to me, for I have been surrounded by its old-fashioned furniture all my life, but I feel that the analysing of its contents is bound to do away, wholly or in part, with that impression, and so I shall have failed to do it justice. I shall try to do my best however.

* This essay is printed exactly as written, without correction or alteration of any kind.—Ed.

Our kitchen is one of the real old-fashioned sort with stone floor, recess for a bed and large open fireplace minus an oven. It has, however, got two important modern improvements, a high ceiling and a big window, so it is both light and airy. The floor is a sore point with me—it needs so much washing to keep it clean. After being thoroughly scrubbed, too, the hard flagstones of which it is composed are rubbed all over with a piece of rather soft sandstone and the borders are decorated with marvellous devices in the form of whorls and lines executed in white chalk. The hearth is treated in a slightly different manner for mother applies whitening and makes it all white. Both look very nice and have a clean wholesome appearance certainly, but in my inmost heart I have a leaning towards the waxcloth so many of our neighbours have adopted to lesson labour, and to deaden the musical clank of their wooden clogs. Mother and I made two big rugs of woollen remnants of all kinds cut in small oblongs and thrust through holes bored in coarse sacking and these are always laid down in the afternoons when the fireside is "redd up" and the kettle put on for tea.

Our walls until recently were destitute of paper—we used to whitewash (!) them annually with a wash of a pale pink tint instead—but the paper certainly gives a cosier appearance to the kitchen and even mother's conservatism is

broken through on that score. From the walls the next step is to the pictures, but how shall I describe them? for they are simply a collection of co-operative-store calendars. A new one makes its appearance at the beginning of each year and the oldest and most fly-marked one disappears for ever, and for a while one misses an old friend. Odd, isn't it? that a mere trifle like that should have rather a saddening effect on one, and should somehow have the power to set one a-thinking strange thoughts on the mysteries of life and death.

"What a motley collection!" you would feel tempted to exclaim if you could take a survey. There in one corner is a girl looking from her casement over the sea and singing, "Abide with me," while in close proximity is a representation of Lord Rosebery and Ladas. Here a crowd of grandees are hanging on Burns' words as he stands in their midst reciting, while right opposite Lord Nelson lies mortally wounded in the midst of his brave sailors. Another one seems very comical to those who know the joke. It represents seven geese slowly waddling past before the admiring eyes of a little child in its mother's arms, and its title among store-goers is "The Store Committee," the reason not being far to seek for the members of the unfortunate committee are seven in number as well as the geese. One or two neatly framed texts hang over the