

Type Writing and Shorthand . .

. . AS AN EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN IN SYDNEY.

By M.F.W.



THE end-of-the-nineteenth-century employment for women, which appears to appeal to a great number of young persons of average education in Australasia, seems to be type and shorthand writing. It may be interesting to New Zealanders to hear how those engaged in this line of industry fare in the sister colony of New South Wales, especially in the metropolis. In Sydney the modes of obtaining training are about the same as on the "other side" of the Pacific. Various firms of typewriting agencies have rooms in which they give instruction in their special make of instruments, whilst the different copying offices take pupils either on payment of premiums or at the rate of five shillings a week (paid by the learner) for a term of three or six months.

When proficiency is gained in both typewriting and shorthand (there is very little scope now for the mere typewriter) three channels of employment are open:—1. To start a copying office for outside work and to take pupils. 2. To get an appointment under Government (decided by competitive examination). 3. To go into a mercantile or lawyer's office, or become a private secretary. The rate of payment for Government servants in this branch ranges from £75 to £130 a year, but the average may be struck at £104 per annum. Positions

are difficult to get owing to the keen competition among women workers.

Of typist copying offices run by women, there is no end in Sydney. Many amateurs who have done a little copying for "Pa" think they would like the *kudos* of a little office of their own, and relying for their clientele upon their large circle of gentlemen friends with whom they have danced and flirted, they solicit patronage without having gone through the necessary drudgery which training entails. Alas! here as in other branches the indifferent amateur spoils the business of the professional without greatly benefiting herself. A society belle, whose circumstances had so greatly altered that she took to typewriting, margined a note in a valuable document thus: "Please excuse grease mark, I have had sardines for lunch." The amateur finds the typewriting path thorou, and usually retires from the business with the remark that "it is too mechanical an occupation for her."

"We have," said a lady who runs the largest and most successful copying office in Sydney, "not only to contend with the vicissitudes of trade, but with the incompetency and want of training in our sister workers, which often reflects on woman typists as a whole, and makes employers say, 'I prefer giving my work to a man.'"

The wage-earning typist, when engaged in a private merchant's or lawyer's office, or in any similar employment, gets from 10s to £3 a week, but the average might be struck