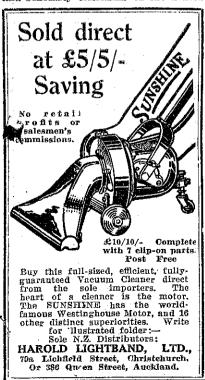


RS. VIRGINIA WOOLF, in a recent series of articles, told the world how impossible it is for a woman to achieve memorable literary work and do justice to her imaginative faculty, unless she has a settled income. and, if not a house, at least a room of her own, which can be locked at will, and the insistent, clamouring world left on the other side. Many of us would be disposed to think she is right, including the male as well as female of the species, remembering how carks and cares bear heavily on artistic temperament, which is easily thrown off its pivot and quickly disturbed and distressed by ugliness and stridency of the world we live in. Yet one remembers that Charlotte Bronte wrote great novels within the shadow of the sad, restricted and unhappy atmosphere in which her sister Emily achieved the immortal "Wuthering Heights"; while Mrs. Gaskell, amid the everyday cares of a country vicarage. proved herself admirable wife and mother, open-hearted hostess and unfailing friend, and yet found time to lay us under a debt of gratitude by writing the lovely literary cameo "Cranford," and other keenly observed, cameo though less well known, studies of life in those days. The writer remembers Frank Morton, one of New Zealand's ablest journalists, dashing off brilliant and scholarly criticisms of the drama



Prize Poem Competition

THE prize of half a guinea in the current competition is awarded to "Oh Mack" for her poem entitled "The Wisdom of the Roads," and we feel sure its loving observation and human sympathy, coupled with lilting expression thereof, will find many The general level of work sent in during the past fortnight has been of a high average of quality, and we select for special commendation "Rain After Drought," by "Ginger," which runs the prizewinner very close but is not quite so strong in imaginative insight.

(The winning poem appears on the opposite page.)
"Ocean and Air Mails": An attractive effort anent lack of unison of

Nature's moods with those of poor humanity.

U.C. sends an outstanding poem in which echoes something of the music of the spheres. Unfortunately our contributor has neglected to comply with the condition, which sets a limit of 25 lines to any poem accepted for publication in this column.

"Thur's" small ode to friendship is skilfully composed with a true touch of sentiment.

"Cantor" contributes melodious requiem of Nature for one who in life cultivated his garden:

> In the Chapel, dimly lit, One lay in state who planted it, Who saw in bird and flower and tree The favour of Divinity.

D.A.S.: Your versification of ancient Maori legend catches something of the spirit of romance, but the workmanship is not above reproach. "Mother": We admire your versatility, but perhaps the "Baby" poens would have better luck with an exclusively feminine publication.

H.R.S.: Your pagan poem, with its insistence that beauty is truth, truth beauty, is attractive; as also the two brief verses voicing respective lure of swallow and cuckoo, clematis and rata. But neither is up to prize-winning form.

"Oxford": Your "Dreaming spires" are very mundane in architecture.

amid babel of reporters' room and general din of a newspaper office at mid-night. Gissing starved in a garret. Balzac strove long and painfully be-fore achieving fame. Thomas Burke evolved his poignant dramas of the underworld amid sordid and povertystricken surroundings of his youth. Mrs. Woolf, profound student of the ways of men, and wife of a poet, insists upon solitude and economic security for creative achievement; but the fact remains that many works of genius have been brought to birth under the lash of circumstance.

MORE than three decades ago, in Paris, a brilliant English novelist, poet and playwright, passed to where beyond these voices, it may be, four or five bottles of it a week,

his tempestuous heart found peace which was denied him in life. Now at this late date come some intimate details of those last few years. According to the "Sunday Times," in the spring of 1897 there arrived at the Hotel d'Alsace, in the Rue des Beaux Arts, a tall, stout Englishman. who gave his name as Sebastian Melmoth, took a bedroom and sitting-room, and lived there for 3½ years. His real name was Oscar Wilde. His real name was Oscar Wilde. "When he wanted anything," said the proprietor, M. Dupoirier (now retired), "he always asked for me. 'Go and get me some brandy in the Avenue nificent brandy, very expensive at of excellent tested recipes. Write for that time, and in the early days of Free Copy to-day to "Anchor," Box 344, his sojourn Mr. Melmoth consumed Auckland.

"Every day I served his breakfast," proceeded his former landlord and friend, "and about two o'clock a mut-ton cutlet and two hard-boiled eggs. He never varied his menu. In the afternoon he read or wrote, in the evening he went out, and did not return before two or three in the morning. He was very patient during his last illness, when injections of morphia were necessary to give him relief. Two nurses were in attendance, and before he died he was converted to the Roman Catholic faith. Some days before the end his sight went, and he asked the nurses to read poetry to him. He died one morning at about nine o'clock, after heaving two or three sighs. On his coffin were but two wreaths of the flowers he loved, one from a friend, the other from the proprietor and staff of the hotel." One wonders what poets were chosen to solace the last hours on earth of that unhappy genius.



is a wonderful song when the dishes have been cleared away and you are sitting by a cosy fireside—but it isn't much of a help to the housewife preparing scones and cakes for the evening

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