

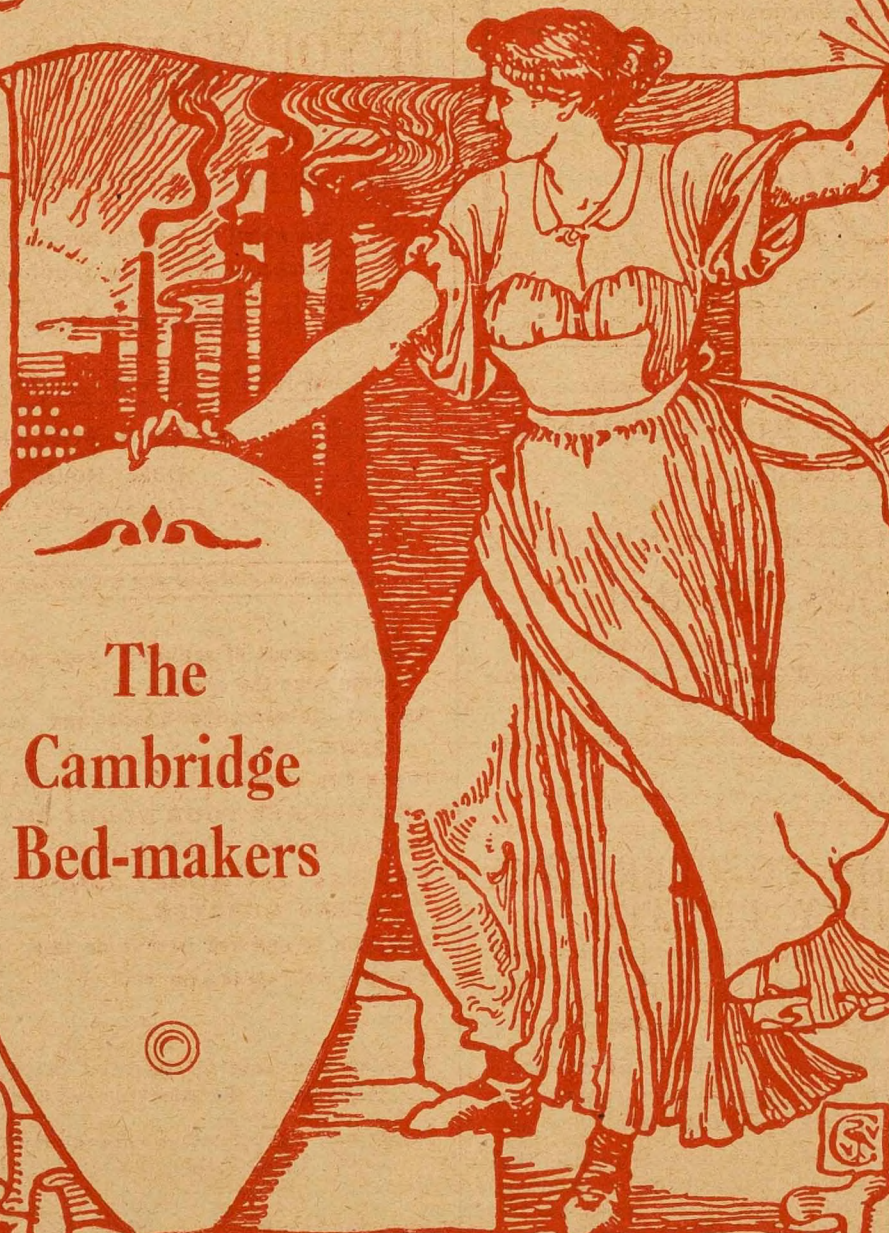
Whimsical Winnie on Industrial Unrest

WOMEN'S SERVICE

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APRIL, 1919

THE WOMAN WORKER:



The
Cambridge
Bed-makers

PRICE
1d.

PUBLISHED
MONTHLY

A JOURNAL FOR
WOMEN TRADE UNIONISTS

TRADE BOARD FOR LAUNDRIES

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The Woman Worker

"We wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

No. 39 (New Series) A PAPER FOR WOMEN TRADE UNIONISTS April, 1919

Light upon Secret Discussions

By WHIMSICAL WINNIE

[A committee of leading employers and trade unionists was recently appointed by the Government to consider and report upon the question of industrial unrest. The deliberations of the Congress have been completely secret, but Whimsical Winnie by concealing herself under a table was able to overhear part of them and notifies our readers accordingly.]

Mr. Lloyd George, who opened the proceedings, said the main cause of unrest was suspicion, which had been growing ever since he entered political life. (Cries of "No jolly wonder!") They must try to get rid of the cause of that suspicion. ("We will at the next election" and laughter.) Continuing, Mr. Lloyd George said that further sources of unrest were Miss Susan Lawrence, Jazz dances, Charlie Chaplin, influences which induced girls to want more pocket money, and the shorthand writers who were always present when he called the Labour Party Bolsheviks or told the trade unions to be audacious. These were, however, small matters if we really loved one another. Concluding by a promise to make the workhouses of England fit for heroes to live in, Mr. Lloyd George rose to such a height of eloquence and emotion that at the end of his peroration it was impossible to get him down again, and he was taken out of the hall through a top window.

Sir Allan Smith (Engineering Employers' Federation) said unrest was entirely a question of machinery. He proposed that when a dispute broke out in any works it should be referred in the first place to the office boy, then to the typist, then to the sandwich man, and then in succession to Mr. Bottomley, Marie Corelli, Dr. Clifford, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the League of Nations. If no solution was reached they could begin all over again. The merit of this scheme, said Sir Allan, was that under it there could never be a deadlock between the parties, and consequently never a cause for a strike. (At the conclusion of his speech Sir Allan was warmly thanked and cheered by his colleagues for his interesting and ingenious proposals.)

Mr. Arthur Henderson said that he was in favour of disputes being referred to the League of Nations.

but only after they had received thorough treatment at home. His suggestion was that whenever any difference had not been solved within the industry in which it arose all the trade unions should meet together in Hyde Park to consider it. Such a gathering would not necessarily solve a dispute, but it would stir up so many others that the original trouble would be lost sight of or completely forgotten.

Miss Isobel Sloan wanted to know what would become of the arbitrators and conciliators in this country if they allowed British disputes to be sent abroad? So far from having too many industrial quarrels at the Ministry of Labour there were often not enough of them to go round.

A representative of the Welfare Section said that industrial unrest was largely a question of dietary. She had noticed that girls who consumed pickles for supper were always ready to strike, while on the other hand those who took nothing but malted milk were so sweet tempered that one could stick pins into them. She proposed therefore that the Government should immediately introduce a Pickles Prohibition Bill, and that all trade unionists should be fed compulsorily on malted milk, Benger's Food, and other such soothing dishes.

Mr. Marston (Policemen's Union) thought a cure for unrest would be to compel everybody to do a little "time." He knew many convicts who, while in gaol, had attained to great sweetness of disposition, and he thought that the same result might follow even in such seemingly obdurate cases as that of Sir Allan Smith. Give the policemen a chance, said Mr. Marston, and they would soon render every factory and workshop as peaceful and as put to you by the Court as possible. You may supply additional information after the Court has finished cross-examination.

6. Don't forget to explain matters carefully to your doctor if a certificate is necessary in your appeal to the Court of Referees. It is useless to produce a certificate saying you are unable to follow your present occupation. Busy doctors are likely to give you this sort of certificate unless you explain carefully what you want. Should a certain class of work be injurious to your health the certificate should definitely state this.

FEDERATION NOTES

Fish Hooks and Needles.

Our members engaged in the needle and fishing tackle trades are now awaiting with intense interest the award of the Arbitrator, who heard our case at Birmingham on Friday, March 7th.

The case for the women was stated by the local secretary, Ray James, and this is enough to tell us that a good fight was put up.

Time and piece rates have remained unaltered since November, 1916, and, although various increases have been paid in the form of war allowances, our members saw the necessity of securing a more permanent form of increase than can be represented in the shape of war allowances, and hence we went in for increased rates.

Our members had recently some fun at the B.S.A. A newcomer commenced in the view room, and was soon approached by our energetic collector, Mrs. Oakes, with a view to admitting the newcomer into the fold. Alas! the good lady was both obdurate and obstinate in her refusal to join a trade union. Our members waited patiently for a week or so, and then hammers and anvils ceased to ring, and the firm became interested. A visit from Mr. James became necessary, and now the recalcitrant one is gathered in. Other collectors and members please copy.

The branch steadily grows, and interest in political work is steadily spreading.

Birmingham Vegetarians.

Miss Harris has had great success in Birmingham. She has been busy organising some factories making fancy vegetarian foods.

As soon as they were organised she wrote to the Trade Board, ascertained that the goods came under the Trade Board Act, and invited a Trade Board inspector. As a result, the Trade Board notices were posted in the works, and the wages have risen from 15s. and 19s. to £1 8s. Needless to say, the workers are delighted.

Self Help at Kingston.

Five of our members recently in the employ of the Astral Construction Co., Surbiton, were dismissed without a week's notice. This was reported to the branch meeting, when they were obliged to send their claim to the Munition Tribunal. Before acting on this advice, however, they had an interview with

case was heard before the Court on Thursday, March 6th, at Great Marlborough Street, and her claim was granted.

Mrs. Burley writes with reference to the case of Mrs. Clarke. Mrs. Clarke was employed at New-haven Docks, and met with an accident to her knee and shoulder, for which compensation was duly paid. She suffered for some time from shock, and the Bureau secured for her the sum of £50 in settlement. Mrs. Burley asks that the case should be reported in the "Woman Worker."

Shorter Hours.

A conference with the London rope-makers was held in February, at which it was agreed that a week of forty-seven hours should be worked, with full wages at the rate of fifty-four hours per week. The firms represented were Messrs. Fort, Hawkins and Tipson, James Wat, and J. T. Davies. We have now to report that Messrs. J. N. Lyons have also put the agreement into force.

Hertford Wakes Up.

A very enthusiastic and lively branch has started in this old town. The employees of the biscuit factory are certainly thankful and feel what a good thing the Federation is. Since its advent in this factory a Works Committee has been formed to meet the directors once a month and on special occasions. A factory the other end of the town are also waiting to feel the advantages of the Federation. All members hope that the girls at the Gramophone will soon wake up to the fact that they are losing every way by holding back. Please take courage and join.

Luton.

Many thanks to our energetic secretaries. They are certainly putting in some time to get the branches in good going order, and they are succeeding very well. Will all unemployed women please take forms and become members, as there seems to be a lot of work for the Court of Referees, and no wonder when jobs are going at 10s. per week. A good wage to starve on. Straw work is not proving profitable to workers either. Still they can remedy it if they chose.

F. M. LEES.

Back Pay.

A very nice little note has been received from Miss Forster, the Secretary of our Trafford Park Branch. She wishes to thank the Federation and Mrs. Pearson for all they have done for that Branch. The firm, Messrs. Smith and Coventry, whose girls joined the Federation last year, was approached some time ago on behalf of our members. The girls had to wait for results, but Mrs. Pearson has their wages readjusted and they have received pay of over £4 each.

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The Federation to the Rescue.

I was dodging about Labour Exchanges and very often making members when, about a month ago, I came across a woman named Mrs. Pearson, of 109 Roan Street, Greenwich. She seemed very distressed, and I heard someone say to her—"There's the Union lady over there. Ask her if she can help you." She came over and I asked her if she was a Union member. She said she was not, but I had some forms and cards with me and told her to come along with me and I would make her a member. And I did.

I then took her up to the Labour Exchange and asked what was wrong. It appears that Mrs. Pearson had been registered there for seven weeks and had never drawn a penny donation. The Manager of the Exchange said she had refused a job, but she had six children and no one should expect her to go on night work and leave them, so we had an argument, and I said that if something wasn't done for her soon, our Federation would take the case up. He then promised to do his best for her.

However, the matter went on till the ninth week and nothing came along. At last I consulted Miss Jewson on the matter and she told me to go and blow the Manager of the Exchange up! I did, and he informed me that he had sent telegrams and 'phone messages in all directions on behalf of Mrs. Pearson, but in vain. "Well," I said, "our people want to know what is going to be done for her as the case has hung about too long to suit them."

So then the Manager sent a telegram to the Ministry telling them that the Union were making inquiries about Mrs. Pearson. I asked to hand the telegram in, so as to have the satisfaction of knowing that it really did go, and I am now pleased to say that the following week Mrs. Pearson drew £12 10s. in a lump sum for 10 weeks' donation.

Mrs. Pearson says she does not know how to thank the Union for it, as she says that, without their help, she would never have seen the money.

(K. COOMBS.)

Sex Demarcation in Industry.

A very interesting conference was held by the Labour Research Department on Saturday, March 8th, on the demarcation between men's and women's trades.

Mr. Geo. Ryder, of the A.S.E., stated that the whole problem revolved round semi-skilled and unskilled labour, for whom there was no standard rate. He said that there was a tendency in industry for women to sort themselves into particular trades or processes, and he was of opinion that if this tendency were encouraged, the men would not feel so much, as they are certainly feeling to-day, that the women were taking their jobs.

Mr. Alex. Gossip, of the Furnishing Trades Association, very strongly repudiated Mr. Ryder's suggestion, and said that the women should be given an equal chance with the men. His own Union had formed an emergency women's section to safeguard their interests.

Mrs. Drake, author of "Women in the Engineering Trades," was of the opinion that artificial demarcation would not solve the problem. The only way was to enforce equal pay for equal work.

The Court of Referees. Some Don'ts.

By M. HARDY.

As a Trade Union representative I have attended at Courts of Referees and have heard many appeals disallowed, sometimes justly, sometimes unjustly. Many are disallowed because the workers do not know how to state their case. Some appeals, however, which I was sorry to see disallowed, might not have been so had the following rules been observed:—

1. **Don't** forget to tell your local trade union official when your case for appeal is to be heard before the Court of Referees. Give time and place of the hearing so that a representative of the trade union may be sent to speak on your behalf.

2. **Don't** refuse employment at the Exchange merely because you have heard that conditions are bad or that the wages are low from one of your friends. Take the green card given you by the Exchange and go and see for yourself what the job is like. If it does not suit you, you can refuse it, and give first-hand objections to the Court of Referees.

3. **Don't** forget when stating your reason in writing to the Labour Exchange for refusing employment that one good reason is sufficient. For instance, if the employment offered you is injurious to your health, that is a good enough reason. Do not also state that you do not like the work or that there is not enough freedom, as the first reason is sufficient.

4. **Don't** sign any paper without first thoroughly reading it, or you may find that without knowing it you have signed an agreement to have your case heard before an incomplete Court of Referees. A full court should consist of a chairman, an employers' representative and a workers' representative, who in your cases must always be a woman. If the workers' representative is absent, you may very likely have the majority against you in the Court.

5. **Don't** give any more information than you are asked for when you appear before the Court of Referees. It confuses and worries the Court, and is likely to prejudice your case. Answer the questions put to you by the Court as briefly as possible. You may supply additional information after the Court has finished cross-examination.

6. **Don't** forget to explain matters carefully to your doctor if a certificate is necessary in your appeal to the Court of Referees. It is useless to produce a certificate saying you are unable to follow your present occupation. Busy doctors are likely to give you this sort of certificate unless you explain carefully what you want. Should a certain class of work be injurious to your health the certificate should definitely state this.

HOME HINTS



Just
Try
Them!

Vegetable Pie.

Half lb. cooked macaroni, 1 lb. Spanish onions, 1 lb. potatoes, ½ lb. tomatoes. Slice the onions and fry until light brown. Grease a pie-dish, put a layer of macaroni in the bottom of the dish, then onions and sliced tomatoes, till the dish is three quarters full. Mash the potatoes smoothly with a little milk, pile on top. Bake in a moderate oven, one hour.

Cinnamon Buns.

Half lb. self-raising flour, 3 ozs. lard, 1 tablespoonful sugar, 1 tablespoonful golden syrup, ½ teaspoonful cinnamon, 1 egg, ½ teacupful milk, or rather less. Mix the dry ingredients, rub in the lard, add the egg well beaten and the syrup dissolved in the milk. Mix thoroughly and bake in quick oven, 20 minutes.

Tea Cakes.

Cream 2 ozs. butter and 2 of sugar, add 3 tablespoonfuls flour and 3 of ground rice, add one well-beaten egg to a half-teacupful of milk. Mix well and half-fill well-greased patty tins and bake 15 minutes.

Baked Cod.

Two lbs. tail-end. Place the fish in a greased pie-dish. Pour over one pint of parsley sauce. Bake 1 hour.

Meat Roll.

Half lb. cold minced meat, ¼ lb. bread crumbs, ¼ lb. cold mashed potatoes, 1 tablespoonful parsley, 1 dessertspoonful mixed herbs, 1 tablespoonful ketchup. Season well. Bind with a well-beaten egg to a little stock. Shape into well, wrap in a greased paper. Melt some dripping in a flat baking tin, put in the roll and some sliced new potatoes. Bake 1 hour in fairly hot oven.

LONDON LAUNDRIES.

By the time these notes appear we shall have formed a strong branch at Wimbledon. This district has taken a long time to persuade, but now it will forge ahead, and add strength to our movement. "Sunlight" girls will be glad to welcome "South Park" Laundries—all three being under the same management.

"Things" are moving in other directions, too. Two interviews with the Laundry Association to press our claim for 35s. minimum and forty-eight hour week have been followed by our referring the claim to arbitration under Regulation of Wages (Temporary) Act, as the employers' best offer was a fifty-hour week and 6d. per hour—25s. weekly. Many members are demanding a forty-hour week, and think our claim far too modest. We are now awaiting notice of the hearing of our claim.

Trade Board.

A Laundry Trade Board has been won at last. When its first sitting will take place is not yet known, but it cannot now be long delayed, in spite of much opposition from the employers' side. The Federation has great hopes that the Board will at once raise the status of workers in this trade. Meantime all will be glad to hear that Miss Symons will represent the head office and Mrs. August (chairman of Fulham Branch) will represent London workers. Provincial workers have nominated Miss Codrington.

A very large number of laundries have joined up since last we wrote—especially is this the case in Willesden. Branches have been formed in Chiswick, Holland Park, and Notting Hill. The South-Western Branch has been greatly strengthened, and, owing to the way it has of increasing, another secretary has been appointed to help Miss Rhodes—Miss Roalfe—who now works the Clapham side and attends to minutes, etc. We hope soon to bring in Camberwell in strength, as well as Kensington and Brixton. Our members well know the need for organisation in these three districts!

How We Play.

A social and dance for adult members of Fulham Laundry Branch has been postponed, as the Walham Green Branch has invited our members to join with them at Fulham Town Hall on Thursday, April 3rd. Miss Burfoot is in charge of this festive arrangement, and it is hoped Miss Bondfield will be the speaker. Inclusive admission, 2s. Tickets from the branch treasurer, Mrs. Fritzwel.

Later on, a merry evening will be arranged for the "youngsters" in this branch. To this only a very limited number of grown-ups will be admitted on the understanding that they act as helpers.

This branch hopes shortly to establish a club. Meantime I am looking forward to a great London mass meeting of laundry workers very soon after Easter. Let us make our claim for leisure and decent conditions clear enough for the Government to understand.

THE BEDMAKERS OF CAMBRIDGE.

Bedmakers Join their Union.

Miss Lister has created a sensation in Cambridge. She has been successful in organising the bedmakers. She has held several successful meetings, some of which were attended by some of the men from the colleges—a most hopeful sign.

The condition of the women does, indeed, need improving. The wages are very low, and, owing to the difficulty of obtaining "helps," much extra work has been thrown on the bedmakers. We give below statements from some of our members.

What the Women Say.

Mrs. A. (Trinity College): Received before the war 12s. 6d. a week and the help 8s. 6d., and, in addition, a considerable quantity of food. The wages paid this term are 17s. 6d. for the bedmakers and 13s. 9d. for the help. Since the war very little food, if any, has been received.

Mrs. B. (Pembroke) has nine sets of rooms to attend and no help. Wages 12s. 9d.

Mrs. C. (Caius) has eight sets to attend, and one help. Before the war she received 11s. 6d. and her help 7s. 10d.: recently increased to 18s. and 12s. 6d.; breakfast is provided. Mrs. C. states that for two years some of the women have done their own work and the helpers' without increased money.

Mrs. D. (John's) does six sets of rooms, with no help, for 13s. 6d. a week. These workers are paid monthly, and say they are not paid for any extra days in the month over the four weeks. They further say that since the war there have been twelve bedmakers too few, and that this imposes extra work upon the remainder.

Mrs. E. (King's) before the war did six sets of rooms with one help; wages, 15s. for herself and 7s. for help. She now does eight sets, and is paid 19s. 9d. and her help 15s. They have both received 2s. extra for the past two weeks.

The statements above given refer to term time. In the vacation the work is very much lighter and the wages paid are the same. The hours vary considerably. One case has been mentioned of a woman who actually works for eleven hours a day for six days in the week, with a considerable amount of Sunday work.

What Will the Dons Do?

It will be seen at once how low the general level of wages is, and the wide difference between the wages paid at the various colleges. It is time that a trade-union rate should be fixed and observed by all colleges.

Taken altogether, the hours and wages of the bedmakers of Cambridge cannot be said to reflect credit on the college authorities. Their grievances are of old standing, but attempts to organise have hitherto failed.

Now, however, members have been enrolled (Continued at foot of next column.)

NOTES AND NEWS.



Our members will be pleased to hear that Miss Susan Lawrence has been safely returned to the L.C.C. She was nominated by the Millwall Branch, and her candidature was endorsed by the Executive. The great feature of the election was a parade of Federation workers bearing sandwich boards (made in the office) with inscriptions of a stirring character. They created a veritable sensation, particularly on the day

of the election, when, greatly daring, they walked down Christ Street.

Albert Hall Meeting.

Our deputation to the Prime Minister has not taken place yet. Mr. Lloyd George asked the Federation to arrange that the deputation should see Mr. Bonar Law, as he himself would be detained in Paris. The Federation immediately applied to Mr. Bonar Law, and heard that he, too, had departed for Paris. On his return, however, a letter was received saying that an early date would be fixed. We hope that by the time these lines are printed our deputation will have been received.

already at Trinity, John's, Corpus Christi, Jesus, Magdalen, Clare, Trinity Hall, Emmanuel, Peterhouse, Catherine, and Selwyn, and new members are flocking in daily.

The Trade Union Demands.

The Federation has sent in a formal demand for better wages and conditions to the heads of these colleges. The demands include a minimum wage of 35s. to bedmakers and 25s. to helpers; overtime rates for extra work; Sunday work to be limited to six hours; one helper at least to every bedmaker; and sick pay. We hope that the heads of colleges will deal promptly and adequately with these demands.

In the meantime, we make an appeal to the undergraduates. We are confident that they will feel that they have a special responsibility in this matter; and that they will be resolute in insisting that the women upon whom their comfort depends shall not be underpaid or overworked.

The Woman Worker

APRIL, 1919

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The Editor Talks

Our Federation members will be glad to hear that **Our General Secretary.** Mary Macarthur has decided to take a short rest, and by the time that these lines are printed will have left us for America. We know that every member of the Federation will hope that the complete change will be of benefit to her. The Executive have appointed Miss Bondfield to act as Deputy Secretary during her absence.

Mary Macarthur writes to thank all those who have written to her to sympathise with her sorrow, and to say that the one thing which has comforted her has been the affectionate tributes to her husband's memory which have reached her from so many friends. She cannot as yet reply to all individually, but she hopes to do so in time.

The New League. We print elsewhere in this paper a report from an eyewitness of the meeting of the Women's Industrial League.

The policy explained at that meeting was the familiar one of admitting women to men's occupations on the condition of equal pay for equal output.

We have often explained in these columns that such a principle strikes at the root of collective bargaining, and would, in practice, mean any wage that the employer chose to pay. It is a new principle in

industry. When, for instance, a man engages a joiner he does not do so on any terms depending on output. He engages him at the district rate. If the particular joiner's output is infinitesimal, the employer can get rid of him, but he cannot lower the rate for the job. It is clear enough that to make the worker's wage depend upon information only accessible to the employer is to leave the worker without protection.

But without further going over this trodden ground, let us turn to the new information elicited by questions.

Shadow and Substance.

The League does not propose to register as a trade union. It does not propose to pay the ordinary benefits of a trade union which pay unemployment benefit or strike pay. It merely proposes to form and educate public opinion. Obviously, therefore, it is no substitute for a trade union. The Federation, to take one trade union instance, has done a good deal to form public opinion; but it also affords protection to its members in industrial difficulties, and this—the major part of a trade union's activities—the League cannot and will not undertake. The workers, therefore, who join the League instead of a trade union will find that they have exchanged the shadow for the substance.

Further, workers may no doubt claim to guide public opinion, but they desire to do so through their own democratically-elected organisations. They most emphatically do not desire to have a policy sent down from above, formulated in some private conclave, launched upon the world with the blessing of the Prime Minister, and not till then submitted to open discussion. This would be so even were the policy an excellent one, and as we have so often pointed out, it is a policy which places the worker absolutely at the mercy of the employer.

New Friends for Old.

The weekly "Herald" has been a good friend to the workers, and especially to the women. Our old friend is now to disappear, and its place will be taken by the "Daily Herald." The "Woman Worker" sends fraternal greetings to the "Daily Herald," and wishes it every success.

Unemployed Workers.

The regulations for the new unemployment donation of 15s. a week have now been published.

The conditions are exceptionally severe. No benefit will be paid "in normal circumstances" unless the worker was employed before the war, or was less than fourteen at the time that the war broke out. She must have been in continuous employment since the outbreak of war.

Now, in the first place, this regulation at one stroke deprives of their employment benefit all women who became widows during the war, and were forced by that circumstance to take up employment.

One would have imagined that even a Government department would have realised in the first place that very many women are in this most unfortunate of all positions, and secondly, that such widows deserve not less, but more, consideration at the hands of their country.

But no. Our mandarins have decreed that recently made widows are to have worse treatment than single women.

Indefensible Regulations.

Secondly, a glance at the census of occupations will show that great numbers of wage-earning women begin their industrial life at fifteen or sixteen. There are many reasons for this. Busy mothers like to have the little girl to help at home for a year or two. Careful mothers often make great sacrifices to give their children a few more months at school. If any parent made such sacrifices for her children in 1914 the girls must now be penalised.

It is, of course, possible for a humane court of referees to find a loophole in the words "normal circumstances." We hope they may use this power, but we confess that this appears but a poor refuge for the two great classes of workers we have mentioned.

Such regulations are explicable from one point of view only. They are admirably adapted to force women into any badly paid occupation that may want workers. From any other point of view they are indefensible.

THE EDITOR.



Questions and Answers



The Women's Industrial League held a meeting at Central Hall, Westminster, on March 20th. Lady Rhondda was in the Chair. The meeting was by no means unanimous, and there was a good deal of heckling. Mr. B. Morgan, formerly of the Ministry of Munitions, was the chief speaker. The objects of the League were detailed—admission of women to all trades on the basis of "equal pay for equal output" and the general improvement of conditions. The first interruption occurred during Mr. Morgan's speech. Warming to his peroration he invited his hearers to "join the League," and from the gallery came the cry "join the Federation." The speaker paused, harked back, again came to the same point—and was again drowned in the cries of the gallery. From that point onwards there was a good deal of interruption, many individuals attempting to obtain answers to questions in the course of the speeches.

Question time came at last, and some interesting information was obtained, so interesting was it that we give some questions and answers.

Question: Did the League intend to register as a trade union? Answer: No.

Question: What steps did the League intend to

take to carry out its programme? Would it, for instance, in the last resort authorise a strike and pay strike pay? Answer: No.

Question: If this were so, would it not be necessary for the members of the League to also belong to a trade union? Answer: Yes.

Question: Why then were the organisers of the League advising women not to belong to their trade unions? Answer: That the assertion was not correct. (The questioner here rose and protested, saying that she could give instances and some confusion occurred.)

Question: Where did the League obtain its money? Answer: A balance sheet would shortly be published.

The resolution demanding equal pay for equal output was carried by a show of hands. A considerable number being held up against the resolution.

Altogether an interesting meeting, and one which has considerably cleared the air. We hope the promised balance sheet will give the names of subscribers and the amounts subscribed.

More About Ourselves

Wapping Waking Up.

A very successful social was held in the Paddie's Goose, Shadwell, February 18th. Although we held the social just after working hours, our members slipped home and quickly returned in pretty frocks which made the scene a gay one.

During the course of the evening Mrs. Taplin, secretary, presented Miss Lister with a beautiful gold watch.

In thanking the girls, Miss Lister appealed to them for enthusiasm, which would make us realise the great ideal of unity.

A Note from Poplar.

Although our little branch at Poplar seems tucked away, a little bird hears that the members working in the Far Famed Cake Company will soon become far famed for their devotion to the cause of trade unionism.

Millwall.

We hear a lot about the dockers and the men's trade unions down by the docks. But the girls are alive too. Those working in John Smith's Tent Works have formed a branch of 300 strong.

Norwich Waking Up.

The annual meeting of our Norwich Branch took place on February 10th in St. John's, Madder Market. Miss Tooke conducted the business in a most splendid way. Miss Lister spoke to the girls about the shop steward movement and appealed to them for individual strength, which our movement relies on. A vote of thanks was passed for the splendid work which Miss Tooke has done.

A Record of Success.

Cambridge is going ahead strong. We have now nearly all the factories in the town organised. Miss Barnes, 39 Norfolk Street, is a most enthusiastic secretary. She has quite a record of work done in Cambridge.

Also the Chivers' Histon Branch is a most wonderful organisation; over 1,200 girls are in the union, and Miss Nichols, the secretary, is kept very busy with the work entrusted to her by the girls.

We hear from the Walham Green and Fulham Branch that the following new officers have been elected:—Miss Cavalier, president; Miss Prowler, secretary; Mrs. Scott, treasurer. Although most of the members in this branch are now unemployed, they are holding firmly to their union.

Protest meetings have been held at Newcastle, Gateshead, and South Shields, and resolutions have been forwarded to the Prime Minister calling on the Government to organise schemes of useful work; demanding that the out-of-work donation be increased to 25s.; and asking for a minimum wage for domestic servants of 20s. a week, with board and lodging.

Southall.

We are all so glad to hear that our secretary at Tickler's Jam Factory, Mrs. Hollings, is getting better. We are very indignant about the conditions through which she met with her accident by slipping down in the boiling jam, and we mean to do all we can to make the Jam Kings treat their workers as human beings and not machines. Cheerio, Mrs. Hollings, your work in the movement will never die.

MacAlpine and Sons: Special Notice.

We ask any member who knows anyone employed last December at Messrs. MacAlpine and Sons, Middlesbrough, to bring this paragraph to their notice.

The above firm paid walking time to their men, but not to their women.

The Federation took the case to arbitration, and obtained payment for walking time, with retrospect from December 5th.

Unfortunately, many of our members have left, and it is difficult to trace them all.

Any member who was at work at this firm after December 5th should write at once to Mrs. Pretty, 37 Albion Street, Darlington, so as to obtain back money.

The Interim Court of Arbitration has given an award with regard to chainmakers.

The Federation had sent in a claim for 20 per cent. increase on piece prices.

The Court has awarded a 10 per cent. increase; and has further decreed that the scale in force on November 11th, together with the new increase, shall be the rate of wages for the purpose of the Temporary Wages Regulation Act.

Waitresses and Restaurant Workers Organise.

The Glasgow Branch of the Federation has held two successful meetings of waitresses and restaurant workers in Glasgow, and have been able to enrol some of them. Those workers are very poorly paid, some of them only earning 10s. per week. However, better late than never, and when they are inside the Federation we can demand a decent minimum for that class of work. Another meeting has been arranged for Sunday, March 30th, from which good results are expected.

Wire Weavers (Govan).

A very successful meeting was held in the Morris Hall, Govan, on Thursday, February 13th, for the purpose of organising the women employed in the wire works of Messrs. Christie and Co., Govan. All the women who attended the meeting joined up and promised to urge their fellow-workers to become members of the Federation. Another meeting will be held this week, when I hope to be able to report Christie's Wire Works at a "union shop."

WHAT OUR READERS THINK

A FAIR FIELD AND NO FAVOUR

ARE WE DOWNHEARTED?

Deptford No. 4 Branch.

Dear Miss Macarthur,—I feel it my duty to send a word of thanks to the N.F.W.W. for the fight they put up which won for us our 6s. bonus from September last. We feel we have lost a lot by not being in the union before, but we are going to stick tight and carry on this time.

Messrs. Francis paid out our back pay on Saturday of the bonus which was due to us after all this time, but, my word, they just paid it with the one hand and took it back with the other, which was the cause of my having to go along to Mrs. Coombes early on Monday morning. Of course Mrs. Coombes said: "Don't get downhearted; come along with me to Dilke House." I did, and had the pleasure of meeting Miss Symons, who gave me the invitation of going along to the conference with her, and I must say it won't be her fault if we don't get our due rights.

I had no idea it was such a hard fight, and I may say Deptford has a lot to be proud of in our Mrs. Coombes, for it doesn't matter, early or late, she is always ready to take our complaints and do her best for us.—Yours sincerely,

L. WHARFE.

A WORD OF THANKS.

Chelsea No. 3 Branch.

Dear Editor,—We, as members of the Chelsea No. 3 Branch, desire to thank Miss Bromhall for the splendid way she fought for our increase in money at the British Sure Seal. They repeatedly promised to pay us, but failed to do so time after time. But Miss Bromhall was not to be put off. Time after time she fought for us, and eventually she cracked the hard nuts, and they reluctantly paid us. We as a branch tender Miss Bromhall our heartiest thanks.

A WORKER.

THE TIN BOX SUCCESS.

Dear Editor,—How to thank you we hardly know, so I think by putting a little note in next month's "Woman Worker" will be the best way to spread the good news about the tin box success. I am sure we all appreciate the splendid success for tin box workers very much. We only hope our fellow-workers in other firms and different trades will meet with as good a success as our tin box workers, and I'm sure if they do they will be highly pleased and grateful to Miss Symons and our Federation, who have been our best friends all the time, but we are only just beginning to realise the true friends they are to us.—From

ONCE A TIN BOX WORKER.

A GOOD SETTLEMENT.

Dear Editor,—I am pleased to tell you that my case is now settled with £15.

I am sure I thank Mr. Woollacott and others very much indeed for what you have done for me. I never thought that the Federation could do so much, I can assure you that I shall stick to the Union so long as ever I can and get others to join too.

Yours sincerely,

ELSIE DOVEY.



THE Care of the Child

NOW more than ever, the welfare of Baby is of great importance to the Country and Empire. While nine soldiers died every hour in 1915, twelve babies died at home. This appalling loss of child life which is so regular a feature of the mortality returns is not entirely unavoidable. The infant's welfare depends primarily upon his food and this is safeguarded when the 'Allenburys' Foods are his nourishment.

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HOW WE PLAY

Very Much Alive.

No, it is not true that the Putney Branch is defunct. As a visitor remarked on Thursday, February 27th, it appears to be very much alive. Thanks to the kindness of Miss Burfoot and Miss Bromhall, the members present sat down to a first-rate tea, which was followed by dancing, singing, and serious talk. Everyone was very sorry when the time arrived to go home.

On Thursday, March 13th, we had another social evening, and our friend Mrs. Weller presented us with some delicious home-made cakes. On this occasion we gave one another useful assistance in blouse-making, knitting, etc.

It is our intention to run these social evenings every alternate Thursday, so those who cannot attend the business meetings should endeavour to be present at our social gatherings. We feel sure that there is a big future in store for us if we only pull together. We are also arranging for some kind friends to come down and speak for us at our meetings. Who said we shall soon have to look out for a larger hall?

A Ball at Swindon.

On Thursday, March 6th, a large company attended a dance which took place in the Mechanics' Institute under the auspices of the Swindon Branch of the National Federation of Women Workers. This affair would have taken place the previous week but the organisers postponed it so that the fancy dress dance and whist drive in aid of the St. Dunstan's Hostel should have the first call on public support.

The dance was a great success, and the committee, to whom Mrs. Eyres acted as hon. secretary, are to be congratulated upon the enjoyable way in which the evening passed off. Mr. Trevor Matthews' orchestra played delightful music, and the duties of M.C. were efficiently carried out by Mr. F. H. Howard.

The Swindon Branch of the Federation is doing good work for the women workers in the district in many ways. In Mrs. Eyres the Federation has an enthusiastic secretary.

Meetings are to be held on the third Thursday of each month, and every girl who desires to become a trade unionist will be cordially welcomed.

Another Dance.

A social and dance was held at the Co-operative Hall on Saturday, March 8th, in aid of the sick members of the Southall Branch of the National Federation of Women Workers. The Labour Party Choral Society, Trades Council, and various friends kindly gave their support. Two baby Wrightons (old age pensioners) gave a really delightful song,

entitled, "How Would You Like to be a Baby Girl," to the great amusement of every one present.

Later in the evening we had the splendid announcement of our Comrade James Culley's great victory—a majority of 1,084 against the others. That was all that was needed to make the evening perfect.

After all expenses were paid, four sick members had a gift of 10s. each, and there is still a little balance.

Another social and dance will be arranged shortly, when we hope our friend, Mr. James Culley, will kindly be chairman. He is a very busy man, always doing good for others, and has really no spare time, but we hope we can secure him for that special evening. We should be very pleased to meet any members of other branches at any of these socials and dances, and we hope every girl will stick to her Federation, not only for what they can get out of it, but so that they in turn can help others.

Two members presented the branch with a banner, "Southall Branch, N.F.W.W.," and the shield very cleverly worked in silks on it, for which we thank them very much indeed.

Birmingham Booming.

Miss Scarrott writes:—

"We have had letters of thanks from members in all parts of Birmingham thanking us for getting the 5s. and back pay. The members are delighted. There are a number of firms who have not paid, and in these factories the women are getting restless, but we hope to have all settled satisfactorily. We would like to thank head office for the help they have given us, a letter with our General Secretary's name seems to work magic.

"Miss Walton has organised Pitman's Health Food Factory. The highest wage paid was 19s., including bonus. A letter was sent to the Trade Board, and the result is that all women are now receiving the Trade Board rate. Miss Harris helped again; she is splendid for Trade Board work.

"We have had a further call from the Ministry of Labour for members for the Courts of Referees. The girls are getting fine experience, and enjoy being able to do good for others. In some cases, where the chairman is strict and a good fighting member of the Federation is sitting, some lively discussions ensue.

"More good times are coming. The Town Hall is booked for May 3rd; members make a note of the date. It will be a whist drive and dance. It is the Birmingham Branch Victory Ball to celebrate the victories we have won and the victories to come, especially in the rubber trade.

"At our last branch meeting resolutions were passed protesting against night work and overtime, especially at the present, when so many are unemployed."

The Quest of the Red Flower

By MOIRA MARJORIBANKS

[In our last number we broke off where Dick is watching the prisoners led to execution.]

CHAPTER XXV.—Continued.

I waited till I judged they were close to the storehouse. Then, with a word to the others, I ran forward swiftly. Montalban had his back to us. He was speaking sharply to the soldiers, whose line was ragged, whose faces were gloomy. When he spun round and saw us we were between the soldiers and the condemned, and each of us had a revolver levelled.

Montalban strode forward. To do him bare justice he was no coward.

"By what right do you interfere, Señor Englishman?" His fat, smooth face was leaden with anger. "You and your hired assassins? You meddled in our justice once before, but I am going to shoot your little girl-faced Miguel this time."

"You are not," I said. "Keep your hand away from your revolver, please. In fact, you'd better put both above your head. That's better. I pushed him with my gun suggestively. "You are not going to shoot anybody just now. Teddy, explain to these men."

Teddy did so. His explanation was punctuated with the sharp crack of rifles, and as he finished by announcing (though prematurely) that the greater part of the town was in the hands of the insurrectos and the fact (for which he had absolutely no warrant) that Velasquez, with five hundred picked men, was marching on the barracks from the upper town, we heard the first rattle of the machine guns, and the panic-stricken rush of footsteps under the barrack wall. The Plaza was being emptied, by whom we did not know, but Teddy made his bold guess, and cried: "Listen! We've got the Plaza already!"

I had not dared to look behind me. My business was with Montalban. As the soldiers shuffled and looked at each other, he flung round upon them and, cursing them roundly, bade them fire. I followed him and brought him to face me again.

"I don't want to shoot you, Captain Montalban," I said. "But I will, if you aren't quiet. Your game's up. Teddy, have you anything with which to tie the captain's hands?"

Teddy had. He left Luis to keep an eye on the soldiers—the negligent way in which Luis demonstrated with his revolver was all those sloppy warriors needed—and in ten seconds he had got Montalban bound and almost foaming at the mouth. There is an instructive instance of Florianian army discipline in the fact that when the soldiers saw their officer spluttering curses with his hands tied, they broke into a shout of laughter, and leaned on their rifles to watch the rest of the game. One of them made a sign to Luis to lower his gun, and cried out:

"Put away the little tin-pot, friend. We're all good fellows here."

"Watch them, though," I muttered to Teddy, who nodded reassuringly. Then and not till then did I turn to the men who stood in the shadow of the storehouse. They were all standing quite still, each one a pace or two from the other. Calderon was smiling a little fixedly. Rivas held his head low and the tears ran down his face. Olivares watched affairs as if lightly amused by the turn they had taken. Don Miguel stared at me, but so piteously, so strangely, that I sprang forward, with entire forgetfulness of all else, and hid the white face against me.

"They said—they said—" It was a husky, strained voice from which the life had gone. "Muy amigo mio—is it you?"

"It's me," I told her roundly, with other things that need not be put down. I freed her hands. I held her, with a look over my shoulder for chances. She was shivering heavily every few seconds, and the dead look in her eyes did not lift.

"Señor," said Olivares, politely, "if you are kind enough to do for me what you have done for Don Miguel—saving, of course, the embraces—and if you have a second revolver—"

I signed to Teddy, who cut the cord that tied Olivares' wrists, and did the same service to the other two. We each had a spare revolver, so that now we were six armed men. El Verdugo had prudently kept in the shelter of the storehouse.

"We came through yonder door, gentlemen," I said, pointing to it. "You will find a friend of ours there, who will know your best way to safety. Or, if you wish, you can help us hold this place for the insurrectos. We are Velasquez' men, we three. Luis, make the soldiers lay down their rifles under the wall there."

Luis obeyed. Grinning, the soldiers threw down their arms, with a jest or so of the roughest. It was plain that they were relieved by the turn of affairs.

"Now—" I addressed myself to one who looked the most relieved. "You go into the barracks and tell your friends the game's up. Tell them we've taken them in the rear, and every man who comes out of the door yonder will be shot down, unless he surrenders. Will you go with him, Captain Rivas, and you, Teddy? Luis and I will keep the door for you, and Señor Calderon and Señor Olivares will stay there, just beyond the storehouse."

They assented, each with a ready nod. Calderon and Olivares had already moved to take up their post, and I was still holding Tony, who clung to me with that dumb vague look, when Don Diego came quickly out of the barracks and strode across the parade ground towards us. He had been wounded, though slightly. His head was bound with a blood-stained cloth, under which his face looked sick and white. But he moved with his light, rather womanish grace, and he held his head high

as he walked right up to Carlos Montalban. The rest of us he disregarded wholly.

"May I ask why you took upon yourself to disobey me? Your private quarrels have little importance, Captain Montalban, at any time. None, when the authority left to us by General de Castilla is threatened. How dare you order the execution of those men without my consent?"

The insolence of it was superb, the courage splendid. As he glanced round upon us with a concentrated haughtiness he could hear the slogan of the revolutionaries in the street below, and he could see his disarmed soldiers huddled sheepishly under the wall. I signed to Rivas and Teddy to take their man and go about the business of clearing the barracks. It seemed to me that I should deal with Don Diego myself.

"You, too, have interfered!" He met me with that peculiar shrunken look in his face that was his betrayal of passion. "Once too often, señor. I mean to kill you now, if I die for it."

I loosed myself from Tony gently, and faced him. We both had our hands on our revolvers, and it was a question who would shoot first. Suddenly he threw up his hand, and tossed the revolver over his head. The gesture was theatrically insolent, but his hatred was genuine enough to give it a sort of dignity.

"I do not shoot you. I kill you as I have always killed my enemy. Guard yourself if you can."

With the spring of a wild cat he was upon me, and I saw the gleam of his knife almost as he reached me. It was by a fraction of time that I caught his wrist and held it in a grip that has the respect of our north country wrestlers. Like a flash, he changed the knife to his left hand and struck upwards. I jumped aside and closed with him before he could lift his arm again.

Then began the stiffest bout I have ever known, though I have been brought up in the dales and have been shown many a famous hold and throw by men whose names are household words among us north countrymen. He was lithe as a panther, and though his methods were not those of a panther, they were hard enough to counter. He twisted from under my hands. He sprang from my reach and then flung himself upon me with a fury that was silent and a strength that was the outcome of fury. His lips were drawn back a little, so that I saw his white teeth: neat, gleaming white teeth, like an animal's. I had not my full strength. My shoulder had begun to bleed. I could feel the weakness growing. But if I had been at the top of my form that would still have been a stark fight.

I had almost got him under me when a shot rang out from somewhere near at hand. I don't know why I was mad enough to let him go. But I did so. I flung him from me, and as he fell I glanced round, and saw what I had known, somehow, I should see.

I had left Doña Antonia leaning against the wall, dazed and white. I could do no other when the Spaniard sprang upon me. As that shot went by I looked back at her, and saw her slipping slowly to the ground, with her two hands against her breast.

Don Diego saw it, too. For a moment we stood almost side by side. It was together that we ran

to her, and while I lifted her he caught passionately at her hand and kissed it once. Then he stood up and walked quickly to Carlos Montalban.

Montalban lay where Teddy had left him, near the pile of rifles which the soldiers had flung down. While Luis watched my fight with Don Diego he had writhed his hands free, and, taking one of the rifles, he had got in his shot at "young Miguel." His puffy face was still lit with triumph when Don Diego stood over him. The smile was hardly gone before the Spaniard picked up the nearest rifle and shot him as he lay.

My Doña Antonia moved her hands against her breast, where a red stain grew and spread. It was like a big grotesque red flower over her heart, where her hands lay still upon it. There was no breath between her lips that I could feel, no warmth in her face. I laid her down gently, and stood up.

The sound of running feet below the barrack wall was louder. It was like the rushing of wind through an empty house. It was hollow and incessant and dull. There were cries piercing through it—yells of encouragement, curses, and one shrill, unceasing wail of a woman, who had, perhaps, seen her man fall. Behind the tumult was another sound, steady, insistent—the sound of marching men, moving at the word of command.

Luis was standing on the broad top of the wall. He had run up the little stairway that reached this point of observation, to see who came. Two or three of the soldiers were with him, gesticulating to the crowd below.

(To be continued.)

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