

The Woman Worker

Edited by Mary R. Macarthur.

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ONE PENNY.

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THE STRAIN.

By Marianne Lad.

In the hope of relieving poverty and distress, Nurse White offers to interview a number of workmen of all trades on Thursday, December 3, at 11 a.m.

Nurse White is well acquainted with Surrey and its many wealthy inhabitants, and she sincerely hopes to be able to find work for a number of men for the whole of the winter months.

The interview will take place at Godstone, Surrey.

A circular in these words was distributed freely in the neighbourhood of Croydon and Lewisham last week. When the crowd of unemployed men came together they found their would-be benefactor a wan and careworn young woman, whose plan was that they should call upon three wealthy people and demand work.

"If you had only had a handful of my courage," said Nurse White, "you would have done it already."

The "Star," in which I found this incident of a nightmare winter, adds that three weeks ago the sister was "plump and nice-looking," and that, on being taken aside kindly by a police superintendent, she went away with him and accepted a meal.

I do not know the history of Nurse White, except that her claim to be well known in Surrey is evidently not unfounded, and that she is said to have done professional duties at Bletchingley. But nothing can alter the significance of that weird incident.

A haggard Englishwoman in want of a meal spends money in printing circulars—at some sacrifice that is to be guessed, if one has a little imagination—in the vain hope of bringing encouragement and help to men in her own plight. She is either this kind of woman or that; the people of Surrey will explain her as they can, and the best of them will pity her: the gloss their little additional knowledge puts upon her case can make no real difference to this item of English daily news.

Here is an educated woman with a good heart feeling the strain of life. In spite of the police—who, it seems, had done what they could to discredit her circular—she collects 120 men who are feeling the strain, too. And there is nothing for them. She is weak and hungry herself, and a police superintendent represents the true situation to her gently, and persuades her to eat.

Does anyone suppose that this kindly intervention met the case?

There need be no such thing as the strain of life. There should be no such thing. It is this strain, felt in a thousand ways and with very many effects, that the intelligent ideal of government

called Socialism aims to banish from life.

Nurse White may be pitied, and she may be helped. Socialists pity with a difference. When they help, it is with the feeling that help should not be a flattering unction to skin and film the ulcerous place. They do not throw a sop to Cerberus conscience. They know that prevention is better than cure, and that prevention is possible.

Does it satisfy any person of decent feeling that Nurse White was given a meal, and that 120 men eager to work were not allowed to make their anxiety and want—their right to a livelihood—unpleasantly known to a few rich people? Is it not a part of decent feeling to wish that one could be sure they were permanently provided for? To wish that they had never wanted? To imagine the strain a little—the strain felt in some degree by every one of these men, as well as Nurse White of the finer temperament, and by their wives and families?

Of course it is. That queer incident will make a good many people uneasy. However wealthy and happy, they, too, are liable to feel something of the strain.

It spoils life. To escape the pull of it, one must be not only successful, or dependent upon the success of others, but unsympathetic and therefore limited. And to be sympathetic but helpless, or sympathetic but wary, or sympathetic but cowardly—as we all in some sort are obliged to be at every turn—is to be demeaned, and less happy than we might be.

This is why the case of Nurse White leaves us uneasy. She tried to do more than she could do, or we can any of us do, and yet she rebukes us.

There is only one way of easing the strain, for either those who suffer or those who sympathise. You must realise that it is unnecessary. Thereupon it becomes possible to entertain decent feeling freely, and not with miserable reserves.

THE MAN ASS.

To his sweet lute Apollo sang the motions of the spheres,
The wondrous order of the stars whose course divides the years,
And all the mysteries above.

But none of these could Midas move:
Which purchased him his ass's ears.

CAMPION.

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE:

LIFE OF ROBERT BLATCHFORD

See Announcement on Page 693.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE Promised Land Society.

Special "Woman Worker" Report.

Mr. Blatchford appeared as the painful incident reported last week ended. He looked at the Lord Mayor, who thereupon retired apologising.

His Lordship said it seemed that he was again labouring under a slight misapprehension. So far as the City was concerned, he had regarded it as so manifestly and satisfactorily a Promised Land *in esse* that, until he caught sight a moment ago of a gentleman whom he thought contrary to public policy to name, the idea of another Promised Land *in posse* had not occurred to him. However, he was not feeling well, and as that gentleman

Loud and menacing cheers drowned the conclusion of this tactful little speech; and Mr. Blatchford, proceeding to take the chair, gave an order that the turtles kept on their backs in the cellar should be turned over and conducted to the Indian Ocean by Mr. Eustace Miles.

Sir F. Carruthers Gould, who wore a large green tie with an emerald pin to match, and said he was in a very bad temper, objected vigorously. What was to become of Art if every ancient custom disappeared at the whim of a man who was pretending they were all dead? Or of natural history, for that matter? Socialism was all very well—interpreted, of course, by responsible Ministers—but in some hands it would simply eclipse the gaiety of nations.

What about the Walrus and the Carpenter? Did anyone suppose they would submit to be eaten by the oysters? What about the Common Council itself? In view of their tenderness for hungry children, he appealed to every fair-minded man—he didn't say fair-minded woman, because there was no such thing nowadays.

The speaker, who had been quietly surrounded by a band of lady stewards in expectation of irrelevances, was thereupon thrown out among the pigeons in the courtyard, together with Mr. Clement Shorter, who attempted a rescue. He bit Miss Maloney's hand severely.

Lord Lansdowne, who had disclosed himself behind a sliding panel in the wall, asked if it was proposed compulsorily to substitute oysters and champagne for whisky and cigars. In that case, he simply begged to announce that the proceedings of the Society would be continued behind the panel, its members being left outside as non-shareholders of plebeian extraction.

Some consternation followed, but the panel was destroyed and the secret chamber invaded by a body of Clarion Scouts, whose rage, as they failed to find any whisky and cigars to wreck, restored the meeting to a normal pitch of cheerfulness.

The chairman, who had smoked three calabash pipes while order was being obtained by general consent, then said that he thought their recent meetings had enabled them to thresh the subject out. Selah. There was nothing to prevent the Promised Land being declared forthwith—if they meant to have it. But did they?

Cries of "Down with the House of Lords!" "Where's Asquith?" "What about payment of members?" "Who makes out the agenda?"

Rising near the door, with his hat in one hand and a rather nervous manner, Mr. Balfour was allowed to explain that he did not desire to commit himself by any expression of opinion, except in so far as to hint that he saw objections to everything, or, rather, a possibility of objections being raised if it were proposed to disturb in any way the existing state of things without reference to the usual expedient of directing preliminary discussion to a half-sheet of note-paper carried about in some one's pocket—he really did not mind if it were Mr. Chamberlain's pocket, now—and not produced. Did he understand that there was really any serious proposal to take notice of unpleasant topics? Because, if so, he seemed to remember—

The Chairman (quietly): "Sit down." Mr. Balfour hesitated, evidently surprised.

The Chairman (severely, but still more quietly): "Sit down, sir, sit down."

Mr. Balfour sat down.
At this point a distressing groan from the Editor of the "Pall Mall Gazette" sent cold shivers down the backs of all the ladies present, and Sir Douglas Straight was supplied with several smelling-bottles. He blushed becomingly.

Resuming, the Chairman said they would not expect a speech from him. The truth was that he had generally enough to do in avoiding the provocation to make such a thing. But as they all seemed to have done talking—

"No, no!" and a general clamour, Mr. Bonar Law being conspicuous in a vain attempt to attract the Chairman's attention.

—as they all seemed to have done talking, said Mr. Blatchford with his kindest manner of severe repetition, he would suggest that they should now repair to the bosoms of their respective families, if they had any, and think. He wished them a Merry Christmas.

Mr. Blatchford then put his pipe in his pocket.

"See what you can do for Tiny Tim," he said, and left the platform amid a preternatural silence, broken by a sob from Mr. Carnegie.

It afterwards transpired that this gentleman had wished to read the chapter on Socialist immorality from his new booklet. Miss Murrell Marris is understood to have nursed him very acceptably on the journey home to Skibo.

The Society dispersed in a chastened mood for the Christmas holidays.

J. S.

We should be all life and mettle and vigour and love to everything, and that would please us.—TRAHERNE.

The government of the world I live in was not framed, like that of Britain, in after-dinner conversations over the wine.—THOREAU.

IN STORMY DAYS.

There is a deep and sacred joy in living,
Not only through the calm and sunny days,
But when the heart in trembling drops is giving
Red blood-dew, as deep sorrow's pallid haze
Lies thick athwart the sighing shores of life,
And we reel back, half-fainting in the strife:

Half-beaten, till Hope comes with balm-tipped fingers
To send us nerved again unto the fray;
With souls in which her lightest murmur lingers,
To rise once more unawed. Not just when May
Unfolds its snow-white banners to warm air
We say unto ourselves that life is fair.

Tho' blustering winds sink 'neath despair's black ocean
Our fragile dreams with roses round each prow—
Dreams rising 'bove the heart's sad, wild emotion,
Above the agony of the mad blow—
When tides recede we search along the shore,
Building from wrecks more nobly than before.

When through stripped woods we roam where, lately cooing,
Soft doves had nested in the branches green,
And silence echoes now the wild wind's sighing,
We feel that, locked within the mournful scene,
Are cowslips, violets, that shall laughing bring
Their fragrant baskets with the birth of Spring.

A little space defeat and dearth may crush us,
But, buoyant riding o'er a flood of tears,
The heart soars up; hopes once again glad flush us;
And, gazing with clear eyes o'er all the years,
We see that storms bring strength, and through the veins
Exquisite gladness triumphs o'er our pains.

The feet unmoled that must march behind us
We feel will stumble less that we have trod
The thorns before them; and the chains that bind us
Do hang less heavily in that the sod
Has drunk our blood in weary marching hours—
For richly 'neath their feet shall spring the flowers.

ETHEL CARNIE.

Many a blessed woman, who dies unused and unremembered, has given out more of the real vital heat that keeps the life in human souls, without a spark fitting through her humble chimney to tell the world about it, than would set a dozen theories smoking or a hundred odes simmering in the brains of so many men of genius.—The Professor at the Breakfast Table.

THE CAUSERIE.

By Julia Dawson.

On Growing Fat.

We are feeling quite at home with one another now. To all readers, therefore, greeting! Except two of the masculine persuasion, on whom I turn my back. We had not met for three years, and they told me bluntly I was getting fat. Now, no woman need mind growing old, because lots of other good things besides women improve with keeping. But every woman has a perfect right to object to growing fat, and she does.

Have you any sovereign remedy, my beloveds? Something quite easy, which we women who have not money to squander on phiziculture classes nor time to indulge in violent exercises and cranky dieting can try? It must be something as easy and simple as slipping your foot into an old shoe, or else it is no use to women workers.

No Corsets.

Cassell's latest volume, "Women of all Nations," says Congo women have beautiful figures. They wear no corsets and seldom is seen such embonpoint as calls for the use of the "straight-fronted" devices of civilised women. "Devices" is delicate. But how do they keep their sylph-like figures? Do not shudder; it is not by cannibalism, for only men indulge in that particular dainty; and what is more, women are seldom cooked and eaten in the Congo, being considered too expensive.

Instead of which, in civilised England, women's whole lives can be bought for less than a penny an hour. They are cheaper than calves and sheep.

No Votes for Women.

"The Woman of Ireland" is the translation of an impossible Gaelic title given to a new paper. Number One consists of eight pages. The paper is to be guided by an editorial committee by whom each month the responsible editor will be elected. That is very democratic, and I predict a lively career for a journal suffering from a fresh editor every issue.

It is a monthly, so that is what it amounts to. Editor Number One says the women of Ireland do not want votes because Ireland has no Parliament. If Editor Number Two is an Englishwoman she will have a fine opportunity for a sparring match and answering A. M. Thompson's question, "What's the use of an English Parliament?"

Honour Among Women.

The dear, gentle, chivalrous Sir Oliver Lodge would never tell a woman to her face that she was getting fat. But in the nicest, kindest way, he has told her that she resorts to underhand tricks which are mean, no matter how good her motives may be. He does not approve, for instance, of Suffragettes getting into meetings with forged tickets. But how can Free Man know Fettered Woman's cruel temptations? If he were one of the hungry unemployed, I believe he would do anything at all to get into the House of Commons and demand something much more satisfying than votes. I know I would. Those poor unfortunate folk find

votes most miserable substitutes for food. Anyone would be willing to sell his franchise for a loaf of bread.

Rank Socialism.

Sir Oliver, as I have said, is a gentle and chivalrous knight. But that he carries a mailed fist beneath a velvet glove was apparent on this same occasion when he was talking in a ladies' school. "Disease," said he, looking those young ladies straight in the face, "is parasitical life. If any section of Society is parasitical, reaps without sowing, lives only for luxury, without regard to service and duty, then that section is depraved and ugly and diseased."

Which, of course, is rank Socialism as ever was preached from a Clarion Van.

Theoretical Men.

Several more letters about servants. I must talk to Pandora, and try to persuade her to set on foot a scheme I have had in mind for years. The most virile letters are from those who have never been servants and never kept them. Two travelling actresses and several more men among them. The actresses are both too young and pretty ever to have known anything of dull domesticities. And the men. Well, bless them, they are always beautiful in theory! One growls at the immoral basis of compulsory personal service for mere money gain. But why single out personal service? Surely that is less degrading than many other kinds? He cannot imagine the state of mind which allows a person to sit in the drawing-room enjoying ease and comfort, culture and refinement, while knowing that down in the kitchen another woman is cleaning boots, washing dishes, cooking food, and, strangest of all, nursing the luxurious woman's children.

Neither can I. I cannot imagine any woman sitting anywhere in luxury and doing nothing, while other women are starving in the streets, and doing many worse things than washing dishes and cooking food in comfortable kitchens.

Shades of Mrs. Jellyby and Mrs. Pardiggle—but the world might be better if the New Woman did revert to an Old One again, and sit in her drawing-room doing nothing, instead of fussing about silly things and doing more harm than good. Scare a woman in high society now but has some palliative or other for the present, though seldom the ghost of an idea of a cure for the future.

If THE WOMAN WORKER would lend her ear to some of these ladies and learn from them first hand how much better the world would really be if they got all they wanted, it would provide interesting and enlightening reading. I wish they would help us to solve the servant problem by working to abolish a system which says any woman is good enough to be another's mistress so long as she has the money, and any man to be another's master so long as he can pay.

A White List.

Good old White List. I knew it would come round. A sweet soul whose heart

aches for underpaid workers in our industrial system wants THE WOMAN WORKER to give a White List of such shops as women may buy goods from with a clear conscience. Being thoroughly in earnest, she has also taken the trouble to give me a list of shops and stores where women may get practically everything they need for personal and household use, and rest content with the knowledge that they are helping, to the best of their purchasing power, the cause of co-operation.

But if I were to name those shops here, would that be useful? Nobody at all might read the "Causerie" that week! But if they were named every week in our advertisement columns, gradually everybody would see them, and they would gain 28,000 new customers. I have said.

But,

Spare Me, Please.

the task of deciding which shops are white and which black. Might not one indeed as well ask for the moon as a pure white shop? You cannot grow grapes on thistles, and there is not a shop in the universe which escapes from the thistle-prick of commercialism entirely. How can it?

Also, spare me from asking a poor woman, whose every shilling has to buy the worth of two, to pay 5s. for a blouse in one shop which she can get at 3s. 11½d. in another. It is not certain that anyone would benefit if she did, and her own family would decidedly suffer. The lowest-priced things are by no means always the worst paid in manufacture. I do not mind confessing that I have been horribly teased by folk who laugh at my

Advertisement Craze.

They see the notice on another page in this paper *re* Attractive Advertisements and say, "Dear me! What a come down!" or something elegant like that. To the which I smile my superior smile, and call it a Come Up! Advertisements are useful. Women like them. Advertisements of the right sort are as attractive in a woman's paper as shop-windows in a street—more attractive, because they can be seen round the fire of nights without the trouble of going out. Women who have to shop and want to get good value for their money have a perfect right to demand that their favourite paper should tell them where to shop. Also, if women want

Labour-Saving Hints.

they should have nothing else to do than look in our advertisement column to find them. I am quite mad that no books are advertised in our paper for Christmas presents! And that sane people despise advertisements.

Mistress Grace McDonnell—you are a genius for the suggestion. I love you. There is a great work for women and men to make, not only a few shops, but our whole industrial system white.

Instead of which the

Women's Free-Trade Union,

whatever that is, is going to make a "bold experiment." Do not faint. It is going to produce a small "Free Trade" play, entitled "Tried and True." Will have produced it two days before you read this, at the Westminster Palace Hotel. I do not know what it will be like; the title sounds dull enough. And—

But why in the world "bold"?

(Answers to Correspondents, page 700.)

SWEET LAVENDER.

Down the long street she slowly came,
Who'll buy my lavender?
The East wind stabbed her and smote her
frame;
Lavender, sweet lavender!
In hands that shrank from the snarl of
death
She held the summer's eternal breath;
Bartering just for a penny a spray
The glamour of gardens far away.
Sweet, sweet lavender!

The odour of summer she had to sell,
Lavender, sweet lavender!
Her heart atwilt with the pangs of hell;
Who'll buy my lavender?
For hell is not as the ancients said,
Hell is in hunger and hunger's dread,
In the shivering, homeless vagrant's eyes,
And the famine-tortured children's cries.
Sweet, sweet lavender!

A little one ran to her tiny store,
Lavender, sweet lavender!
And her mother smiled as she flew to
the door.
A baby buys my lavender!
O hopeless, hunted eyes that wept
As she turned away, and slowly crept
From house to house along the street—
Once she had run with as eager feet.
Sweet, sweet lavender!

Once she had been as that little child,
Lavender, sweet lavender!
With sunshine, home, and a mother who
smiled,
Who'll buy my lavender?

As the home and the garden wherein she
played,
So was the world to the little maid;
And at night, in fragrant, sweet surmise,
She dreamt of flowers and her mother's
eyes.
Sweet, sweet lavender!

I had a vision that winter day—
Such magic is in lavender—
Of a summer-time hidden not far away,
Who'll buy my lavender?
When the hopeless shuffle of homeless feet
Shall pass, and the hearts of men shall
beat
At one with the joy in the children's eyes,
And the garden flowers and the starry
skies.
Sweet, sweet lavender!

And then I beheld this woman's plight,
Lavender, sweet lavender!
Hungry and homeless, day and night—
Who'll buy my lavender?
Hopelessly knocking at close-shut doors.
Lazarus even, with all his sores,
Could claim the crumbs from the rich
man's feasts:
To-day they are saved for his hounds and
beasts.
Sweet, sweet lavender!

Is it the voice of Christ who died
Crying—not "sweet lavender"—
This sister of mine ye have crucified:
Who'll buy her lavender?
She was hungry. Ye spurned her, and
turned away,
And "What does it matter to us?" ye
say;

"They would pester us all from our
hearths and homes."
Ah! woe for your homes when the Judg-
ment comes!
Sweet, sweet lavender.

For the end shall come as it always came—
Lavender, sweet lavender!
To parasite growths the consuming flame;
Who'll buy my lavender?
And man on the ruins of crime shall build
The open Pleasure-House God once
willed.
Then shall the Garden be sweet again.
With the breath of children, and mothers,
and men.
And sweet, sweet lavender.

JOSEPH WHITTAKER.

It takes a very true man to be a
fitting companion for a woman of genius,
but not a very great one.—WENDELL
HOLMES.

We don't pretend to be better than
our betters; our humble plea is that a
good time is a good thing. Never have
we all been so eager for our interlude of
high jinks on the way to the crema-
torium.—RICHARD WHITEING.

"Now, Mr. Tapley," said Mark,
giving himself a tremendous blow in the
chest by way of reviver, "just you attend
to what I've got to say. Things is look-
ing about as bad as they can look, young
man. You'll not have such another oppor-
tunity for showing your jolly disposition,
my fine fellow, as long as you live. And,
therefore, Tapley, Now's your time to
come out strong, or Never."

TEACHING MOTHERHOOD.

And What the Race Might Be.

By Ellen Preston.

There is a great amount of money, time,
and care expended upon the daughters of
the upper and middle classes in fitting
them to become charming and accom-
plished ladies.

Now, I have no fault to find with this
expenditure. Rather would I have more
spent. But it should be spent on a wider
basis and for all classes. You cannot
have your girls too well educated—pro-
viding their education is to make them
wise, not conceited, as, alas! so much of
our modern education does make them.

Let them have at least a good founda-
tion laid in the study of the arts and
sciences, mental and physical; let them be
as accomplished as you wish in everything
that adds to their grace and charm. But
when you have given them all this, you
have left out the most vital part of their
education, and failed in your duty to-
wards them, unless you have trained them
not only for ladyhood, but for mother-
hood.

Taboo.

How much of training and education
do we give to fit them for that highest
and noblest office which it is their
destiny to fulfil?

Among many well-to-do families the
subject is never mentioned. In fact, the
young girl is, as far as possible, kept
in total ignorance of everything relating
to her special function, in the foolish
notion that she is thereby kept in purity
—as if any of Nature's laws, when
rightly taught and rightly understood,
could be impure.

The girl of the lower classes early, and
often through her own experience, learns
things concerning the mysteries of her
own and others' natures; but, alas! how
frequently this knowledge is of the baser
sort!—half truths which are only a
danger to her.

Is it not time we faced this question?

Why not take the subject of mother-
hood openly in our schools and let com-
petent teachers give girls the full knowl-
edge of their being on the highest moral
and physiological plane? Why not tell
them why God made them women, and for
what end He made them, and how great a
part they play in His creative work?
Shall we not teach them to regard their
bodies as sacred shrines, wherein God
says: "Let us make man," and for this
end to be kept pure, and clean, and
healthy, and not to be bartered away for
gold, nor position, nor any lesser thing,
but only to be given in return for a love
that is clean and holy?

Soul-Flowers.

Let them be taught that through
the purity of their souls will come
the purity of the world; that
through the loving strength of their
hearts will come the beauty and strength
of a noble race of men and women.
Teach them to strive for the highest and
best, to guard against the base within
and the base without; so that they may
become fit mothers of clear-eyed, sweet-
minded children.

Let them know also that a mother's
duty is towards her children; that if she
fail or neglect them, none other can fill
her place—for they are hers; little seeds
given into her care to foster and tend,
and make fit flowers for the garden of
earth and of heaven. Let her therefore
not pass them over to another's keeping.

Ah! but, you say, some mothers are
obliged to do so.

Yes, I admit some mothers are. A
great many more do who are not obliged.
For the sake of selfish pleasure, or at the
call of an empty but fashionable society,
they give their precious charge into the
hands of strangers. The true mother will
very reluctantly forgo the crown of her
womanhood.

Greece and England.

And now I come to another aspect, that
of the duty of society towards the
mothers—or shall I call it the Mother-
hood of Society and her responsibility
to her children?

The Greeks of ancient time recognised
the power of pre-natal influences, and
therefore surrounded their pregnant
women with objects of beauty and grace.
Thus the constant sight by the mother
of lovely things moulded unconsciously
the unborn child in the form of beauty,
so that the grace and loveliness of that
famous race are still held to be the
highest the world has known.

What has society got to say for itself
in regard to the surroundings it compels
thousands of mothers to live in to-day?

What of the wretched, monotonous rows
after rows of small, dingy, unhealthy
cottages and flats in our great cities,
where the average working man's wife
must spend her days and nights? What
of the filthy tenements without decency
or privacy of any kind, where men,
women, and children are huddled to-
gether worse than cattle?

No wonder our reformers find it so
hard a task to waken even the desire for
better things in the souls of these
neglected of society. The deadening,
soul-blighting influences have been at
work so long!

The State's Duty.

How long shall they still have sway?
When will society realise that, before it
can save and uplift men, it must save the
mother of the unborn child?

Society must begin a child's education
before it is born by protecting, educat-
ing, and in every way caring for the
mother. Nature works on certain lines:
give her fair conditions and she will bring
forth fair flowers and fruits. She will
not grow roses in a damp, dark cellar,
nor good wheat in sour soil.

Oh, age that boasts of science, when
will you teach and proclaim from the
housetops this most important and simple
fact—that we must have fair conditions
before we can have a fair and healthy
race, a race that shall be the nation's
true strength and wealth?

We have had a long spell of the Social
Father—the far-reaching, fighting, am-

bitious father—and we have not a vast
Empire, a great Army and Navy, a proud
name. It is now time the Social Mother
came forth. In the day when we allow
the sanctity of motherhood, when we
realise the importance of race-bearing,
and regard it as it should be regarded;
when, instead of letting the future man
come into the world haphazard, we train
our mothers, give them beautiful sur-
roundings and free them from anxiety—
in that day we may begin to pull down
or turn to other uses our prisons and
asylums.

Vision of the Future.

I am no believer in the inherent
wickedness of man. Rather have I great
faith in his inherent goodness. Even
now, in the darkest places we find bright
pure souls, rays of sunlight that steal
through the chinks of closely-barred
shutters, revealing the brightness and
glory we shut out. If we could but
realise how much we are losing! If we
would but take down the shutters!

What a fair and beautiful world we
should find! What noble arts would be
developed; what sweet music would thrill
the air!

If we could but hear for an hour the
joyous laughter of the children, see the
kingly bearing of the men, and the sweet
faces of the women—all waiting to come
upon the earth when we have "prepared
the way," and made "the path
straight"!

Awake, Social Mother!—mother of the
great race that is to be. The dim future
calls thee. It is time to be up and
doing.

LULLABY.

Sleep, sleep, beauty bright,
Dreaming in the joys of night;
Sleep, sleep; in thy sleep
Little sorrows sit and weep.
Sweet babe, in thy face
Soft desires I can trace,
Secret joys and secret smiles,
Little pretty infant wiles.

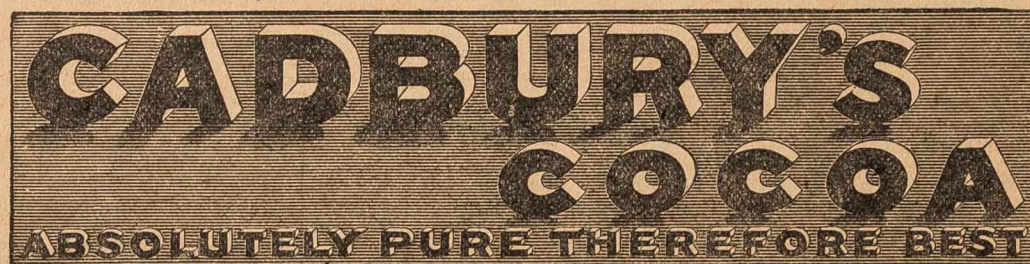
As thy softest limbs I feel,
Smiles as of the morning steal
O'er thy cheek, and o'er thy breast,
Where thy little heart doth rest.
Oh, the cunning wiles that creep
In thy little heart asleep.

W. BLAKE.

CONFIDENCE.

People have generally three epochs in
their confidence in man. In the first they
believe him to be everything that is good,
and they are lavish with their friendship
and confidence. In the next, they have
had experience, which has smitten down
their confidence, and they then have to
be careful not to mistrust every one, and
to put the worst construction upon every-
thing. Later in life, they learn that the
greater number of men have much more
good in them than bad, and that, even
when there is cause to blame, there is
more reason to pity than condemn; and
then a spirit of confidence again awakens
within them.—MISS BREMER.

It is much more easy to accuse the one
sex than to excuse the other.—MONTAIGNE.



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ADVERTISEMENT: NEXT WEEK! Do not miss the first chapters of the LIFE OF ROBERT BLATCHFORD in the "WOMAN WORKER." Mr. A. NEIL LYONS will commence his very interesting monograph on Robert Blatchford.

ADVERTISEMENT: CIVIL SERVICE SOCIALIST SOCIETY (BIRMINGHAM BRANCH) will speak in MISS MARGARET BONDFIELD at INGE ST. MISSION HALL (Off Hurst St.), BIRMINGHAM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1908, at 8 p.m.

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The Disappearing Undershirt.

Mr. Brown—"What have you done to this undershirt, Mary? Look at it! 'Tisn't half as big as it was the last time I wore it."

Mrs. Brown—"Woollens will shrink, my dear, no matter how carefully you wash them."

Anty Drudge—"Nonsense! Try the Fels-Naptha way. It will bring the dirt out in a jiffy. Not even a single rub on the washboard is necessary. Just a few rinsings and a loose wringing by hand. The woollens won't shrink or roughen either."

Fels-Naptha is more than a different kind of soap—it is a different way of washing. You don't boil the clothes; you don't even use hot water.

You simply wet the clothes, rub the Fels-Naptha soap on them, then put the pieces in the tub with just enough lukewarm or cold water to cover them.

Why not let Fels-Naptha do it?

Fels = Naptha

will do it. Isn't it worth trying?

THE WOMAN WORKER.

DECEMBER 9, 1908.

The Last Word.

The Guildhall Conference. Quite the most important event of last week was the great National Conference at the Guildhall which was convened by the Right to Work Council to focus public attention upon suggestions for dealing with unemployment.

I was glad to note that on this occasion there was no tendency to push the special claims of women into the background. There was a large attendance of women delegates—most of them with a heavy record of valuable social and industrial work behind them—and the concise and forcible expression of their view-point did much to illuminate the debates.

During the discussion on A Valuable Suggestion. the feeding of school children, for instance, Miss Margaret Bondfield made a very valuable suggestion, which I hope will be adopted by many of the authorities concerned.

She pointed out that at present the purveying of such meals was often done by provision contractors, and quoted one special case—Hull, I think—where the children were provided with tickets entitling them to food from local shops.

Miss Bondfield pertinently suggested that here was a field for a number of unemployed women.

And why, indeed, should they not be engaged on the useful work of preparing and serving wholesome food for the hungry little ones?

The quite unnecessary profits of the contractor might be saved and the quality of the food improved at the same time.

State Factories.

Another very important proposal which was embodied in a resolution originated also, I believe, in the active brain of a woman—Mrs. H. J. Tennant, who, as chairman of the Women's Committee of the Central Unemployed Body for London, has rendered yeoman service to the cause of workless women.

This was to request the Local Government Board not only to provide ample funds for the establishment throughout the country of women's workrooms on the lines of those already established in London, but to sanction arrangements whereby suitable women trained in such workrooms could be drafted into Government and municipal workshops for the manufacture of clothing needed either in national or municipal departments.

An Obvious Advantage.

John Burns and his school will, of course, characterise this scheme as a mere shifting of labour. But surely the advantage to the whole community of having such work done in airy, up-to-date State or municipal factories at a standard rate of wages rather than in the sweating dens of the victims of the sub-sub-contractor at 1½d. or 1d. an hour is sufficiently obvious!

A Standing Disgrace.

The Fair Wages Clause is nearly always a mockery where women are concerned, and the conditions under which policemen or tramway men's clothing is made for many municipalities is a standing disgrace.

A Narrow Spirit.

I cannot leave the subject of the Guildhall Conference without a reference to the narrow and parochial spirit evinced by some of the delegates. At such times we ought to forget that we are butchers, bakers, or candlestick-makers, and remember only that we are citizens with all the responsibilities and obligations of citizenship.

What is a Child?

On more than one occasion woman's wit helped to clear the air of the Conference. One resolution, rather loosely drafted, suggested the regulation of boy and girl labour so as to end the scandal of young people being turned adrift on an overstocked labour market without any useful training in any trade or calling.

Mr. Quelch moved an amendment—excellent in spirit—that child labour should be prohibited and the regulation of labour proposal apply to young persons. Asked for a definition of "child" and "young person," Mr. Quelch referred to the interpretation of the Factory Act, and it was left to Mrs. Tennant and Miss Gertrude Tuckwell to point

out that under the Factory Act childhood might in certain cases be considered to end at 13. The Conference thereupon decided to define a child as a boy or girl under 16, and a young person as a boy or girl under 18.

Women to the Fore.

Mrs. MacDonald carried a useful amendment to ensure that agricultural training should apply to women as well as men. And certainly there is a wide and very suitable field for women's labour in connection with poultry and dairy produce, bee-keeping, and kindred pursuits.

Then Miss Millicent Murby, of the Fabian Society, made an amazingly lucid and logical speech on the very difficult question of equal payment for women, pointing out that the lower standard is a constant bar to that efficiency which, rather than cheapness, should be the determining factor in the employment of labour.

The Right to Live.

Quite the most striking feature of the Conference was the adoption with only three dissentients of the recommendation that legislation should be immediately undertaken to establish the principle that every man and woman is entitled to be provided with either useful and remunerative employment or healthy maintenance.

The principle of the right to live is not one that any civilised community can deny, but to affirm it in practical legislation is another matter.

Logic of Men.

When the Superannuation Scheme for Sanitary Inspectors was recently under consideration by the Westminster City Council, a suggestion was made that women officials should be pensioned at sixty instead of at sixty-five years, as in the case of men.

The Ubiquitous Clerks.

The clerks were the worst offenders. I say this more freely as I am myself a member of their National Union. At one moment the weighty question of engaging unemployed clerks to assist old age pension officers would be forced upon a justifiably impatient Conference. The next moment it would be asked to consider the clerical work of labour bureaux or polling stations.

The Logic of Men.

When the Superannuation Scheme for Sanitary Inspectors was recently under consideration by the Westminster City Council, a suggestion was made that women officials should be pensioned at sixty instead of at sixty-five years, as in the case of men.

The Council rejected the proposal on the grounds that no such distinction could be made between the sexes, which "must be treated alike."

The Conference ended on a harmonious note. While? A vote of thanks, moved to the hard-working Secretary, Mr. Frank Smith, by the Chairman, Mr. Keir Hardie, was seconded by a member of the London Corporation and supported in a few graceful words by Mr. Hyndman, who had been in unruly and militant mood most of the day.

"Was it worth while?" asked a pessimistic friend of mine, as we left the Guildhall.

On the whole, I think it was.

Deadly Christmas Cards.

Canon Scott Holland (Chairman) and Miss Ethel Beaumont (Secretary), of the London Branch of the Christian Social Union, have written to the Press to appeal to the purchasers of Christmas cards and booklets to see that they do not bear lettering or ornamentation in gold or silver.

Few people realise that the affectionate greetings so inscribed on a dainty Christmas card may have been the means of permanently undermining the health of some young girl.

Yet the taste for gold and silver printing is largely responsible for the ill-health caused to workers in the process known as "bronzing." Nor does the indictment apply only to Christmas cards, the gilded show cards, used by tobacconists, drapers, and, indeed, tradesmen of all kinds, funeral and wedding cards, and illuminated texts, are equally objectionable.

Cheap Human Machines.

It is said that a machine invented in 1904 reduces the risk of ill-health to a minimum, but, alas! machinery is dear and flesh and blood are cheap.

The Logic of Men.

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the Westminster City Council any more logical.

Face to Face.

On more than one occasion I have commented in these columns on the unsatisfactory nature of the replies given by Ministers to questions about legislation in connection with sweated industries.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Asquith will give a definite and satisfactory answer to the uniquely representative deputation which will wait on him next Monday to urge the appointment of wages boards. Dignitaries of all the Churches, leading members of all the political parties, and a number of distinguished public men and women will comprise the deputation, which will thus denote a public concern so universal as to demand explicit statement.

OUR LIFE OF

ROBERT BLATCHFORD.

Mr. A. M. Thompson writes in the "Clarion":

"I am exceedingly pleased to learn that our gifted young friend Neil Lyons has undertaken to write what he calls 'a monograph of Robert Blatchford.'"

Lyons knows Blatchford intimately—few men better—and he brings to his task a marvellously shrewd intuition of character together with a positive genius of expression. Moreover, the value of his view of Blatchford will be much enhanced by the fact that he does not by any means see eye to eye with Blatchford, but regards our Editor's opinions and temperament very critically. Therefore I look forward not only to instruction, but to fun, and I genially advise 'Clarion' readers to do likewise.

The series is to begin in THE WOMAN WORKER of the 16th inst., and as there will certainly be a much increased demand for the paper on that date, Clarionettes who intend to read the articles must order THE WOMAN WORKER from their newsvendors now.

"This is imperative.

"Most retail agents derive supplies from wholesalers, and these again from the publishers; and the process of transmission from producer to consumer is exceptionally slow in the case of newspapers, because the smallness of each individual commission naturally delays transmission of orders until these have reached substantial and remunerative volume.

"Therefore, to make sure of the paper on December 16, it is absolutely essential that orders should be placed with newsagents at once."

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