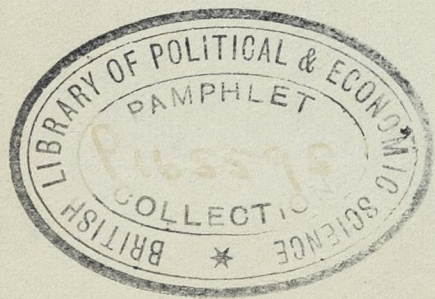


THE MARRIED WOMAN: IS SHE A PERSON?

THE PRESENT WORLD CRISIS AND WOMEN'S WORK.

The world at present is passing through a series of upheavals—crises, struggles, and disasters. It is a *cliché* to say that we live in a time of transition: that is true of all times. But looking back over the course of human history we can see at certain points a definite shaping into new patterns, a focussing of tendencies to a result. Those who at such crucial periods were shaping the results appear rarely to have seen more than parts of a whole, and to have been often unaware of certain consequences involved in the forces they set going. It is this danger which confronts us to-day. Rapid advancement in applied science, in productivity and mechanisation, together with maladjustment in working conditions, in the machinery of distribution and in the monetary system, have thrown the economic scheme of things out of gear; and one resultant happening is being overlooked, obscured by what appear as the more obvious problems of peace and war, international trade relations, widespread unemployment and the trial of supposedly new forms of government. This unrealised happening is the effect of the general upheaval on the position of women.

The intention of this pamphlet is to examine a very serious change which is being made in well-nigh every country in the world in the status and liberties of women, particularly in their economic status, and to draw conclusions as to the way in which this change affects, or is likely in the future to affect, both women and the social life of the community in which they live. In its crudest form this change in policy is seen in the general attitude to the right of the married woman to earn, and it is here proposed to deal with the reasons given for this particular line of policy as regards women's rights, and its inevitable results. But it is quite clear that this is merely the beginning of a general policy towards all women. Observe the suggestion



made by a large employer of labour—Sir Herbert Austin—that women should be removed from industry. Note the publication last year of a pamphlet in the form of an appeal to all Members of Parliament, suggesting that if a million women were removed from industry most of our unemployment problems would be solved—see page 18 for an examination of this suggestion. Such sweeping demands are seen to be at this stage impracticable, and the actual translation of the policy into practice is therefore at present for the most part confined to the work of the married woman.*

LEGAL POSITION OF THE MARRIED WOMAN.

It is easy to see why this should be so. She is of all women in the weakest and most vulnerable position. While women, whether married or unmarried, are subject to certain legal disabilities, additional disabilities are by law imposed on married women. (See Appendix, pp. 20-22, for the legal position of the married woman.)

FOUR REASONS WHY PEOPLE SEEK WORK.

In order to appreciate the extent of the change which is taking place, let us first consider the motives which actuate people, be they men or women, who go out to work for money. They are, in the main, four in number. Let us observe their operation in the case of men and of women respectively :

- (1) Need of bare livelihood.
- (2) Desire to maintain or raise the personal or family standard of living.
- (3) Ambition to make good and to do the expected thing.
- (4) Vocational urge.

* But not in all countries. See the statement made by Mr. Krier, Workers' delegate to the 18th Session of the International Labour Conference, June, 1934 (Provisional Record of the Conference, 10th Sitting, Friday, 15th June, 1934, p. 152) :

"While in certain countries, the question of the prohibition of women's work is under discussion, in Luxemburg the employment of women, married or not, has for some little time been subject to a preliminary authorisation by the Government. This regulation, embodied in a Grand Ducal Decree, is a first attack on the right to live, which is the same for men and women."

Let us take these in order and see what differentiation is made as between men and women in regard to the principle involved ; what are the results of such differentiation—to the women concerned, to male workers, and to the community in general ; and what arguments are advanced in support of such policy.

(1) The compulsion to earn one's living if no other means of livelihood is available is equally strong for both sexes, and even in Nazi Germany, where of late the movement to drive women back to the home has been so strong, such women as have no one to whom they can look for maintenance are permitted to maintain themselves by their own earnings. It should be noted, however, that general decrees, such as those automatically prohibiting the paid employment of "married women," are apt to take no account of special circumstances, e.g., of such married women as are for one reason or another not maintained by their husbands, and cases of great hardship result.

(2) The ambition to raise the standard of living of oneself or one's family, or at least to prevent its deterioration, is regarded in a man as wholly praiseworthy. The further he raises himself and his family above the fodder basis, the more is he recognised not only as the good and responsible husband and father, but as the good citizen who is an asset to the community, increasing its well-being as he increases his own. He—unmarried or married, or in whatever family relationship—is not accused of "taking the bread out of other people's mouths" when he takes paid work, however many others may be competing against him in a crowded labour market. Why then should that which in the father is accounted a virtue be stigmatised as reprehensible in the mother? Quite often the "extra bit coming in" which results from her earning makes just the difference between "rubbing along" and effectively equipping the boys and girls in the matter of health and education to be sound and capable citizens.* Always there is, for the great mass of industrial workers—men and women—the haunting sense of insecurity, the desire and the need to have "something to

* The outcry against "pin-money" workers should be carefully examined. Women have every right to earn, whether for family betterment or for personal "pins." The charge against them of accepting sweated pay-rates overlooks the fact that the economically depressed position of married women makes effective organisation for higher rates almost impossible.

fall back on" in bad times, and this anxiety is shared to the full by the married woman. Yet against her alone the argument is raised that it is "not fair for two incomes to go into one home."

(3) When a boy leaves school, or a young man leaves college, he is expected as a matter of course to undertake some definite work as his job, trade or profession. A lad who loafs about at home making no effort to pull his weight and support himself is not regarded favourably by public opinion, and indeed the normal young fellow has no mind to adopt such a position, but reckons it as his *right* to obtain paid employment and thus to secure his independence, to make good at some job, and, if he can, to grow rich on the fruit of his labours. Why is there no such healthy opinion to support the efforts of his sister directed to the same end? Independence should be just as precious to her, but if her father can "keep" her it is still in many quarters looked on as something in the nature of a selfish indulgence on her part to take paid work: while as a *wife* continuing her paid work after marriage she is not merely discouraged but increasingly debarred from the opportunities of doing so, and told that she is "taking the bread out of other people's mouths."

Here again the objection against "two incomes into one home" is raised. The family's standard of living is sufficiently high without the wife's earnings, it is argued, and therefore she should be prohibited from taking a job which some unemployed man might have. We will consider presently this question of substitution (page 18). Let us for the moment examine the outcry about two incomes in one home.

This question of "unfairness" in the married woman earning as well as her husband involves implications which do not seem to have been squarely faced by its advocates. It is really based on the idea that subsistence level—the "fodder basis"—is an adequate standard where married women are concerned. But why stop at married women, if "fair" distribution of jobs is the desideratum? There is a vast number of homes which are enjoying two or more incomes, poor homes, and comfortable homes, and luxurious homes. Their inmates incur no condemnation. Where, in the case of a working-class family, father and sons are all earning (a common case in certain districts, notably the mining areas where there is employment) two or three

incomes are going into one home. Other examples are those of brothers or sisters living together, and maintaining a home by their joint work: of widowed mother and daughter (or son) each working independently to maintain the joint home. Indeed, to be consistent it must be admitted that any man whose income is in excess of the bare needs of his family is virtually "bringing two incomes into the home"—one, the income which suffices for necessities, the other, that which provides the amenities and luxuries.* In none of these cases, however, does anyone raise a murmur. The opprobrium is all reserved for the earning married woman. Against her alone it is pretended that she is "taking the bread out of other people's mouths" and "increasing unemployment." To her alone it is said: "You shall be in a different class; you alone in the community shall be tied to the fodder basis."

(4) In the case of women with a strong bent towards any particular type of work—the "born teacher," as we say, the doctor or minister of religion with a definite vocation for her special work—it is surely obvious that the prohibition to continue such employment after marriage means for the women themselves a cruel frustration, and for the community a most uneconomic waste in the deprivation of the services of these peculiarly efficient workers. We will consider this matter in further detail later on. For the moment we shall best appreciate the arguments of those who advocate this wasteful policy if we enquire who are those people who oppose the paid employment of married women generally.

WHO ARE THOSE WHO OPPOSE ?

The married woman as a paid worker is opposed by numerous groups of her fellow citizens :

(i.) Those who look on her as a direct competitor in a world where the number of jobs seems to be limited. Of this group there are four distinct sections :

(a) The single man who either is unemployed, or fears unemployment for himself or other men.

* The man who holds one or more directorships, the man who has an income from investments, does not consider himself thereby precluded from earning another income, nor do his neighbours arrogate to themselves the right to decide whether he "needs" this or not.

(b) The employed single woman worker who imagines that the dismissal of the married woman will give a better chance of promotion for herself and other single women.

(c) The unemployed single woman worker who suffers from a double jealousy of the married woman with a job and a husband, both of which seem to her desirable assets.

(d) The unemployed man with a wife and children to support. He sees the labour market employing many young single women, but perhaps dimly appreciates that in modern conditions of industry the labour of a large number of these is inevitable. With a special bitterness, however, he sees a married woman, whose husband is in employment, holding another paid job. He does not want his own wife, even, to have such a job: he wants her to be the domestic manager while *he* earns. He is not jealous of the husband earning, though in fact that husband is much more directly his competitor than the wife, since modern industry is so organised as to make a fairly rigid demarcation between what is called "man's work" and "woman's work." But it seems intolerable to him that, when there is apparently not enough work or pay to go round, a woman, a married woman with a husband in work, should be absorbing some of that work and money which he and his family so sorely need.

(ii.) A second group consists of those who see in the married woman earner an indirect competitor. They are, for instance:

(a) The wife (or other members of the family) of the unemployed married man to whom we have just referred. In the married woman worker they see one who is attacking and undermining the earning power of the person on whom they depend.

(b) The single woman who may be working only temporarily until the time of her marriage, and sees in the married woman earner one who, by absorbing some of the available work and pay, may be affecting the possibilities of work or promotion for the man to whom she is engaged.

(iii.) There is yet another type of woman who sees in the married woman worker her enemy: who is not jealous of her, but apprehensive. This is the woman—product of the false ideas so widely held as to the status of women—who accepts as a right and with complacency the *rôle* of dependent, the woman who has always seen in marriage the possibility of avoiding any compulsion to work outside the home, and who fears that if it becomes recognised that a married woman has a *right* to earn, this may be the first step towards the recognition of a *duty*.

(iv.) In the fourth category of those who denounce the paid work of married women we find the traditionalist, the philanthropist, and the sentimentalist. There are more people than one would suppose who still have antiquated ideas about women in general, and the married woman in particular. They bring forward no special arguments to support their ideas: for them the place of all women, and especially of the married woman, is the home. Argument as to whether in fact it would be possible to have home or bread without working for it finds them impervious: the reiteration that "women ought to be in the home" is enough. Unlike the members of the three groups previously mentioned, these objectors are not actuated by naked self-interest; but some sort of emotional urge impels them, regardless of psychological or economic realities, to advocate their ideal. In a time of real progress, the feelings of such persons would be of very little account; their ideas and ideals would suffer the same extinction as the idea of the propriety of the duel, or the tradition that drinking three bottles of port a night was one of the marks of a "gentleman." But in a time such as the present their zealous propaganda is the buttress of the new "reformer," one of whose first activities—as we have already seen in Europe—is to apply his "authoritarian" state rules to women and the home.

THE CLAIM OF THE CHILD.

This last section of opponents is particularly insistent on what they regard as the paramount duty of a married woman who has children to devote her life to being their nurse, governess, housekeeper and useful companion, and they secure a large body of unthinking public opinion in support of their demand that married mothers shall not be allowed to engage in paid work outside their home. Let us therefore consider this line of opposition more closely.

Many women of good physique, brain power and character—eminently desirable as a type to perpetuate—are nevertheless singularly deficient in the qualities needed for the satisfactory *rearing* of children. It is notorious that the youngsters "mothered" by the maiden aunt often turn out far better than those brought up by their own mother. Equability, firmness, vivid imagination, tolerant sympathy, and an immense patience—these are qualities not necessarily in the possession of every woman who has borne a child. Even if they were, it may be better for the children to enjoy the higher standard of living which the mother's earnings may secure than to be deprived of comforts and even necessities, stunted in education and in outlook, merely to satisfy the sentimentalist's insistence that a mother's place is the home. Of well-to-do mothers not a few relegate the care of their children almost exclusively to paid assistants of one sort or another practically from birth, but as these women busy themselves with tennis-playing, bridge-parties, hunting, dancing, or serving on unpaid committees, no objection is raised. Indeed, it would be difficult to find any well-to-do mother who does not to some extent call in the aid of specialist care for her children, whether at home or at school. In the case of those with scantier means it is surely a gross impertinence to assume that any outsider has the right to dictate to the mother how she shall care for her family: it is for her to decide what in all the circumstances is her best course in the interest of all concerned.

(v.) The fifth category presents a strange anomaly. It is surely a curious fact that the keenest attack on the married woman who earns comes from persons and organisations which profess to support the institution of marriage. For example, the Roman Catholic Party in Belgium seeks to have the married woman forbidden to earn outside the home. There, too, a Christian Trade Union (National Union of Commercial Employees) adopted in 1932 a resolution that "married women should not be allowed to engage in paid employment." And at a meeting held in March, 1933, the German Branch of the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions laid down a policy which included the following: "A development of the right to work and of social insurance corresponding to the natural pre-eminence of the father of the family. This new orientation of politics and social legislation should maintain the unity of the worker's home, menaced at the present time by the paid work of the married woman."

Yet they do not seem to realise that, through their interest in a specific ideal which they wish women to subserve, they are dealing a serious blow at the institution which they seek to uphold. We may see this in two aspects of the question, *viz.*: status and finance. Let us take the latter aspect first. If everything is done by the State and society to make marriage difficult (and this *is* done when it is demanded that marriage shall always, where the wife has no private means, depend on the income of the husband), there is a marked tendency to postpone marriage until the man's earnings ensure some security or comfort for the family. If the woman is to be punished in her pocket, by a prohibition to take paid work, or by being turned out of her job, when she marries, marriage must inevitably begin to seem to her a less desirable institution than formerly, and this especially so with the spread of knowledge of birth-control. Surely it is not the intention of this class of supporter of the prohibition to encourage the extra-marital union? That they are, really, doing so is shown by the fact that the recent Austrian decree turning out of work the State-employed wife of the State-employed man has had at the same time to include in the prohibition to earn the woman (State-employed) who is co-habiting with such man.

And apart from the question of money, many of the present day young women are looking on marriage in a very different light from that in which their mothers viewed it. So long as the attack on the woman earner is confined to the married woman, marriage definitely becomes a state in which there is loss of status, loss of dignity, and loss of independence. It is difficult to believe that this is what is desired by religious bodies. Do they not realise that this is the inevitable result of their attack on the institution which they profess to respect?

THE MARRIED WOMAN AS A PERSON.

The hostility shown all along this wide front arises from the fact that those who attack her do not consider that the married woman is a person. From the moment of her marriage she becomes, in their eyes, a dependent and an adjunct. Were the married woman considered as a person, a distinct human being, with the rights, liberties, responsibilities and duties of other adult human beings, marriage would be looked on as merely incidental.

We now propose to examine this question on the assumption that a married woman is a person, a complete

human being with a human being's rights and responsibilities. If we accept this premise, the objections to her right to work appear to be unjust to the woman, and highly undesirable for the community as at present organised, or for any system of communal life which the future may produce. We have already (on p. 7) touched briefly on the two-fold injury done by imposing the marriage bar upon specially gifted and highly trained women. Let us now examine on more general lines the meaning for the married woman, as an individual and a citizen, of the prohibition, partial or general, legal or customary, against her taking, when she so desires, paid work outside the home.

Such a prohibition, if general, would impose on millions of adult women a complete and compulsory dependence: an economic dependence more thorough-going than that suffered by married women before the passing of the Married Women's Property Acts: for, in spite of the fact that in those days married women's money or earnings were, by law, when received or earned, not her own but her husband's, nevertheless married women did work for money before the passing of those Acts, and, where human nature was better than the law, did often retain the fruit of their earnings.

However, people will at once say that no general prohibition is intended; and in fact any prohibition of the paid work of married women is not applied to the work of such women as actresses and authors, or again doctors or lawyers *in private practice*, or, at the other end of the scale, of women employed in unorganised and unskilled work, particularly of a domestic nature such as charring, which is so menial and so ill-paid that no one desires to take it from them. Quite so; a most interesting and important fact. If only certain married women in certain jobs are really picked out for attack the scope of our enquiry at once narrows, and moreover it should be more easy to discover and analyse the underlying motives which give rise to the attack, the jealousy or the sentimentality which accompanies it.

Who, then, are these women to whom a compulsory dependence is recommended, and even threatened, as the one proper way of living? Are they so essentially different from the rest of married women that they personally, and the State of which they are citizens, will benefit from their being denied any outlet for their varying natures, save in the domestic service of the family and the home?

They are—not “teachers,” but such teachers as are in the employment of certain Local Authorities; not “doctors,” but such doctors as are employed by the State or certain Local Authorities. Similarly, though Society admires the married woman who *gives* a part of her leisure to care for the poor, the mental defective, the blind, or the child, the State, which raises taxation on a wide scale to remedy the social evils, and to care for the youth of the nation, encourages the dismissal of the employed woman Health Visitor who marries. Yet Society has found that it had much to gain from the work of similar women in private practice. Marriage does not debar a woman doctor from private practice. Some of the most successful, such as Dr. Mary Scharlieb, have been married women with families, and their patients have felt that their full life has added to their knowledge and efficiency in their professional practice.

Let us therefore concentrate our attention upon the women just mentioned, so as to test the truth of our statement that a prohibition to do paid work for the State is unjust to the women, and contrary to the well-being of the community which refuses to employ them. For a Local Authority to dismiss a woman Health Visitor on the ground of marriage is to deny to that woman exercise of gifts which she has trained, work for which she probably feels a true sense of vocation, and economic independence, and to deny to those whom she visited the benefit of her training and experience; and this in a profession in which marriage, surely, must act as a desirable addition to professional training. Similarly, to forbid the employment of a teacher in the State-aided schools because she is leading a full life when at home, and to confine the rising generation of young people to the example and influence of single women only, although a large proportion of those children will themselves in the future be married men and women, is to ensure that the education given in these schools will be one-sided. To suggest that the woman who in private practice is able to get together a practice, in competition with other doctors, is to be forbidden to use her ability for the children in the State-aided school, and that the School Medical Officer and the Medical Officer of Health are to be drawn from the ranks of the unmarried only, where women are concerned, is to limit the field of choice, and so to make it probable that the State and the children are not getting the best person for the post, and this merely on the irrelevant intrusion of

such considerations as the private marital status of some of the candidates for the post. This is not to suggest that the work and services of the unmarried woman are always worth less than those of the married, but in certain cases they may be, and in any case the point of value is the worth of the individual, which is independent of her marital status. Is not the case of the actress, too, very interesting? Never for an instant has it been suggested that marriage is to end *her* individual career in the profession of her choice. Why? Because the public want her; she has given them pleasure, she has clothed many parts with reality, and they want her to continue to do so. Her unquestioning acceptance by the public puts the coping-stone to our indictment. We arrive at this position: a married woman may work for pay in war time, because the country needs her work; she may work when her husband is ill or unemployed, because he or the family needs her money; the married actress may work because the public needs her individual artistic skill. But as a worker to fulfil *her own need*, whether economic or self-expressive, the married woman is met with disapproval and prohibition.

The harm done goes far beyond the actual women who either do not get appointed to certain posts, or are dismissed from them on marriage. Such action creates a situation which discourages a desire on the part of the young women and their parents for a wide and useful education such as would enable the individual to give something of her own personality to the community; and this is disastrous to the women, and impoverishing to the community. The decrease in the number of candidates among highly educated women for the higher posts in the Civil Service is a matter of much recent comment, and the suggestion made in the Press has been that this proves the realisation by women that they have not the intellectual capacity to pass the stiffest of examinations. But, in view of the examinations which women have passed and the admitted attainments of women in research and science, the reason is much more probably an instinctive revulsion from a situation which might arise when they have passed the same examinations as the men candidates, namely that while in responsible work they will receive less pay, and that they may be faced with an alternative of work or marriage, a choice which their male colleagues are not obliged to make. Preparation for a competitive examination which takes several years is beginning to cease to seem worth while, when the rewards of success are so much less

for the woman candidate than for the man. This is a very serious thing for women, parents, and the community—that there should arise this sense of “not-worth-while-ness” for the highest public work; and this feeling affects not merely the married, but all women, for many of the girls may never marry, but the penalty to be paid if they do marry may permanently affect alike the careers of those who eventually do and those who do not.

We have assumed that woman is a person, but by this creation in her of the feeling of “what’s the use?” we are stifling in her those impulses which we seek to encourage in other persons—the desire for independence, the desire to raise the standard of living of the family—laudable ambition to personal service by the best exercise of one’s gifts. The sentimentalist cries that the best use of all the gifts of every woman, once married, can be obtained only in one environment, in one occupation. How can it be that, in this world of diversity, half the citizens can, without harm to themselves or to the community, be pressed into one mould? Our sentimentalist is a true Procrustes, seeking to force all women to fit the same bed. Yet women have as great a diversity of gifts, tastes, capabilities and powers, as men.

WOMEN IN INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE.

So far we may have seemed to confine ourselves to the professional woman worker. But all that has been said applies with equal force to industrial women, and those engaged in commerce. It is true that there are no regulations in industry forbidding the paid employment of the married woman, but it is notorious that many employers discharge their women employees on marriage. This habit is of disastrous consequence for industry. It creates one arc of a vicious circle of undercutting. One of the most frequent complaints in industry is that employment in these times is passing from the hands of the skilled workman to those of the unskilled repetitive worker, and that this worker tends more and more to be the female young person. “Women” it is said, “do not take their work in industry seriously. They look on it as stop-gap employment, to fill in the time between leaving school and marriage. They will not combine, because they do not think it worth doing so for an occupation which they expect to leave as soon as they are grown-up. They will accept contemptible rates of pay, since they often are not self-supporting, but merely

make a contribution towards their keep by their parents until they have found a man to keep them. And it is not worth while training them to do better work, since they are liable to leave at any time, and the time spent on training them is wasted." Yet many of those who argue in this way are themselves creating, by their attitude to their women employees, just the situation with which they reproach those employees. It is the feeling that the employer and the community do not regard women's work as serious which fosters in the minds of the young women workers that sense of impermanence from which these other results spring. What man would take his job seriously, if he knew that no matter how well he learned his job he would never be promoted to responsible posts, would always be paid a lower rate than other workers with equal or less ability, and on marriage would be turned out of his chosen means of gaining his independence? It is quite true that large numbers of young women do look on their work as stop-gap, and it is not they alone who suffer by such a state of things. The practical disadvantages of such conditions fall upon the male worker, for in a time of dispute or crisis the married women who have been turned out of industry are available as a pool of cheap labour, and help to keep the men's wages down; and the employer who employs the women because they are cheap but who sacks them as soon as they marry is ensuring for himself that he gets as little as possible for the wages he pays. It is remarkable to note how many large employers, who spend time and money on "scientific management," encourage a state of affairs under which, in their pseudo-scientifically managed firms, a large part of the personnel is denied what the pseudo-scientists themselves recognise elsewhere as one of the best incentives to good work—the incentive of a fair deal and a chance of promotion.

THE UNEMPLOYMENT BUGBEAR.

Our examination of the whole question has established the fact of the injury done by this wide-spread attack on the married woman's right to earn—injury to her, to all women and girls psychologically, educationally, economically, and to the community as a whole, by the loss of the contribution which specially well-qualified or experienced workers could give. But it may still be said by some opponents: "Yes, we grant you all that, but we feel that in

a time of world-wide unemployment on the present unprecedented scale we must choose the lesser evil, and forbid the labour market so far as possible to the women who do not need to work." This is the tragic blunder of to-day, to accept—and even to speed on its way—the lie that it is a "lesser evil" to do a gross injustice to a whole section of the community (and that a peculiarly defenceless one) rather than face up to the implications of doing even-handed justice.

There cannot, surely, be a clearer instance of the folly of regarding a woman as something less than a person. To turn out of work the married woman, and fill her place with a man, merely leaves us with a woman out of work and a man in work. We have shifted the incidence of unemployment, and in some cases actually *widened the field*. For we must not forget that in many cases the turning out of work of a woman does not stop with the woman herself. She will be driven to attempt many unpaid tasks for which she has not been trained, but for which she can no longer afford to pay expert help. She will try to make her own clothes, to do her own housework, to dye her family's dresses, to do her house decoration. She may do none of these things very well, but at least those skilled workers, such as the dyer, the painter, the dressmaker, and the domestic servant, who would have found employment as the result of the paid work of the woman, will now be the poorer by the loss of the employment which she would have given them.*

THE SUBSTITUTION QUESTION.

Moreover, even the imagined economic gain which it is sought to achieve by the injustice of turning married women

* Even the solace of these unpaid occupations will not be available to the woman of the poorest class, who has gone to work not in the exercise of a skilled profession but at any job by which she could bring in a little help to supply the family's needs. It is a delusion to think that the very poor woman has her hands full with housework. She cannot spend her time cooking—she has very little to cook. She cannot spend her time washing—there is little to wash, and money spent on soap means so much less for the family food. She cannot dressmake—materials are too dear. She cannot knit—wool is less necessary than food. What is she to do? Exercise wears out shoes, all amusements cost money, and the result of her unemployment is atrophy of all her gifts, friction, and unhappiness. And this is accepted in the sacred name of the family!

out of their employment to make room for men would amount to almost nothing, in face of the vast numbers of male unemployed and the almost insignificant proportion of them who could by that means be absorbed into employment, for, in the common though artificial division in the labour market of men's work from women's work, men at the present time largely compete with men, women with women, and both are suffering from the introduction of the modern machine and the competition of the young person in the tending of that machine. And, in fact, in the present condition of industry, as has been well brought out by Madame Thibert, in her articles in the *International Labour Review* of April and May, 1933*, if every woman, single as well as married, in the country were thrown out of work, the unemployment problem would remain almost as far from solution as ever. You cannot replace a domestic servant by an unemployed coalheaver. You cannot put an out-of-work dock hand to fine weaving. We repeat that the divisions between men's work and women's work are artificial, but they exist, and the field in which men unemployed in certain trades could be absorbed in occupations now pursued by women is so small as to be unworthy of serious attention. It is true, as we have said (p. 15), that the modern tendency is increasingly for lower paid labour to oust the better paid, and, under rationalisation, for women, untrained or semi-trained, to replace men and to be in fact interchangeable with them if the unequal wage-rate consideration did not operate. But the problem of unemployment is far too large and complicated to be solved or even appreciably lessened by such piecemeal tinkering as changing its incidence here and there from men to women. It involves far-reaching modifications in the generally accepted economic systems of the world, and thus it challenges our statesmanship, and will sooner or later compel us to reckon with it on a comprehensive basis. It is futile and indefensible to postpone that duty by such pretended palliatives as the denial to married women of their human right to work for pay.

Whatever plan or state of society emerges from the present maladjustments and distress, that plan or state will have everything to gain, and nothing to lose by securing to

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all women—including the married ones—their just and right position of equality with men, in the economic sphere as in others. If it is the family that is looked on as the bedrock of the State, the family is not well served by the mother being in an inferior position, personal or economic. If the individual is the bedrock and individual effort and initiative are the fundamental need, it is useless and even dangerous to have a mass of individuals, in the persons of the married women, with their initiative sapped and their efforts thwarted and blunted. And if motherhood is to be respected and encouraged it can be so only if the woman who is to be the mother is recognised as possessing—to the full and in every sphere—the rights of a human being.

APPENDIX.

LEGAL POSITION OF THE MARRIED WOMAN.

Certain legal disabilities, as, for instance, special restrictions under the Factory Acts, minimum wages fixed by Trade Boards lower than the minima for men, lower sickness and unemployment insurance benefits for not-so-much lower contributions, refusal of employment in the Consular and Diplomatic Services and of seats in the House of Lords, are imposed on all women, married or unmarried. Certain additional disabilities are by law imposed on the married woman alone. Some of these are the residue of the old Common Law doctrine of coverture, under which the personality of the woman was merged in that of her husband. Others have been introduced in recent times by statute.

Many of the disabilities arising out of coverture have, fortunately, been abolished. The married woman can now enter into a contract. She can sue or be sued personally. She controls her own property and earnings. She can make a will. But because the amendment of this legal custom has been done piecemeal, and because the underlying idea that the married woman is merely an adjunct of her husband has not been completely swept away, there still remain a few disabilities attaching to a woman because she is married. For instance, she is responsible on her contracts and torts only to the extent of her separate property and not personally. Legal judgments are not enforceable against her in the same way as they are against a man. She has no domicile of her own but must take that of her husband. Then, too, there may be imposed on her property by its donor a restraint on anticipation, which means, in general, that a married woman can spend the income of such part of her property as has actually come into her hands, but that she cannot bind her future income, for example, by guarantee or contract; and this may make a married woman troublesome as a partner. She cannot be made a bankrupt unless she is a trader. These restrictions are said to be for her good. But the underlying assumption is that she is to be treated as a subordinate who is not to have the same freedom and rights as others, and this naturally lowers her, not only in the estimation of those who deal with her, but in her own. It takes away a sense of responsibility and encourages in her a feeling of inferiority.

Of recently introduced disabilities there is the statutory provision, dating only from 1870, which deprives of her British nationality, with a few recently introduced exceptions, the British woman who marries a foreigner, and turns her into an alien. Before 1870 such women remained British. Again, under the Income Tax Acts, a wife's income is deemed to be that of her husband. She is not separately taxed. The first such Act dates from the time before the Married Woman's Property Acts, when, in fact, the income of the wife did belong to her husband and was controlled by him. And still to-day the incomes of husband and wife are added together for the purposes of income tax and called his. The result is that the wife's abatements are paid to the husband, and, in very many cases, the marriage abatement is not sufficient to prevent a heavy money penalty being imposed on husband and wife for no other reason than that they are married.

These are discriminations which indirectly tend to depress the economic position of the married woman, but there are others which directly affect her status as a worker. There is the regulation requiring women, with a few exceptions, to resign from the Civil Service on marriage. There is the present widely growing practice on the part of Local Authorities of dismissing women on account of marriage.* And there is the woman's position in social insurance. Within the last twenty-three years the *employed* person has been brought, and by compulsion, within national schemes for sickness and in many occupations for unemployment insurance. Under these every "insured person" is compelled to pay certain weekly contributions and receives certain benefits while sick or unemployed.† Besides the several discriminations against women in these schemes, before 1931 there was one against the married

* It is by no means certain that this practice is founded on good law. The first section of the Sex Disqualification Removal Act of 1919 provides that "a person shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage . . . from being appointed to or holding any civil or judicial office or post, or from entering or assuming or carrying on any civil profession or vocation." It is true that the decisions, one of which was favourable to the women in the court of first instance, went against them in the Court of Appeal in certain cases raised by women (married) teachers, but the question has not been dealt with on appeal to the House of Lords, which alone can give a final decision.

† This does not refer to widows' pensions or wives' allowances, which are benefits not of the insured woman, but of the insured man.

woman as such, that she could not be a voluntary contributor. When in the recent inquiry into sickness insurance finance it was found that women, and especially married women, were a heavier charge on the fund than men, their benefits were cut down—the sickness benefit of married women from 12/- to 10/- and their invalidity benefit from 7/6 to 5/-. On the other hand, when the figures produced before the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance showed that the men were a much heavier charge on the fund than women, no proposal was made for cutting down the men's or raising the women's benefits. On the contrary, the discrimination effected by the Unemployment Insurance (No. 3) Act of 1931 was continued.* Regulations made under this Act require married women to satisfy more onerous conditions than men or single women before they can qualify for benefit, and in certain cases to pay additional contributions. These regulations have resulted in excluding from benefit more than 230,000 married women. Nothing has so seriously undermined the status of the married woman as earner since the Married Women's Property Acts first gave her the right to earn on her own behalf. Part of the earnings of workers come to them in the form of unemployment benefit, and to make it more difficult for the married woman to receive unemployment benefit is to put her at a disadvantage as an earner. It is taking so much of her contributions and giving them to other workers who are given benefits on easier terms, in what purports to be a national insurance scheme for all workers. It is pressing the married woman into a state of dependence on others.

* The following information is given in the Minority Report of the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance. That men are a heavier charge on the fund in proportion to their numbers than women: at September, 1932, 26.5% of male insured persons as against 13.6% of female insured persons were unemployed (p. 478, par. 211). Males receive a higher percentage of transitional payments, the percentages for insured persons being for males 42.2 and for females 18.1. Women get proportionately less for their contributions than men. In the three years 1929-1931 men (aged 21-64) paid into the fund 3½ times as much as women, and drew out 6 times as much, leaving out of account what they drew for their dependents, for whom men drew £49,450,000 and women £207,000 (pp. 479 and 480, par. 195). The number of married women denied benefit under the anomalies regulation affecting them between October, 1931 and September, 1932 was 179,888 (p. 407, par. 195). The number disallowed has since increased to more than 230,000.

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