

The Woman Worker

Official Organ of the National Federation of Women Workers.

Edited by MARY R. MACARTHUR (Secretary, Women's Trade Union League).

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VOL. I.—No. 6

FEBRUARY, 1908.

ONE PENNY.

BETWEEN OURSELVES.

My hearty thanks to the many readers who have sent a meed of praise and congratulation upon the last number. Many of these tributes come from working girls between whom and the *Woman Worker* an enduring friendship has already been formed. These kindly messages, together with the many favourable comments and notices in the public press, and the increasing sale of the journal, are most encouraging. They convince me that the *Woman Worker* is proving a useful auxiliary in the struggle for betterment, and, as Walter Crane puts it, "is representing the woman's side in a way never done before."

Our columns are again filled with good things. Robert Blatchford, who contributes a characteristic letter to the women workers, is a veteran soldier in the Labour and Socialist army. Nunquam's books and *Clarion* articles have directly and indirectly influenced millions of people at home and abroad. Much has recently been said about his theological or anti-theological views. Doubtless at one time he would have been burned as a heretic at the stake. To-day we are apt to attach more importance to the fact that he loves and fights for the poor; that he believes, deeply and passionately, in the religion of humanity.

Mr. Edward Cadbury, writing from the employer's standpoint, justifies and defends Trade Unionism. He is one of the heads of the cocoa factory at Bourneville, a description of which was given in last month's number. His article ought to be read, not only by the workers, but by every employer of labour. Mr. Cadbury believes in the economy of good wages and of sturdy self-reliant working men and women.

I can barely enumerate the other interesting features of the present issue. In her article, "Warp and Woof," Miss Tuckwell writes on a matter of practical value to every factory worker. Out of her first-hand knowledge of Paris, Miss Cartwright gives information that may prove valuable to some of our readers. Mr. Mallon tells the story of the Southwark strike. I also publish a welcome and helpful letter from Mr. Geo. N. Barnes, M.P. Altogether, no effort is being spared to give our readers of the very best; and when I mention that our March issue will contain articles by J. R. Clynes, M.P., George Haw, Dennis Hird, M.A., and George Lansbury,

you will understand that a high standard will be maintained in the future.

The opening month of the year has revealed our women workers in militant mood. No fewer than three industrial disputes have to be recorded in which the National Federation has been involved. The work-girls employed by Messrs. Barclay and Fry, Southwark, who struck against a reduction in wages, are to be heartily congratulated on having gained a recognised minimum wage and the recognition of the Federation. A large branch of the Federation was formed at Southwark during the dispute. Having received concrete proof of the value of organisation, the Southwark women will, I am sure, remain loyal members of the Federation, which was so largely instrumental in bringing the struggle to a successful issue.

Our Edinburgh members have again been on the war-path. They have been protesting against excessive and arbitrary reductions in piece-work rates. Only fifteen paper-bag makers were directly affected in the first instance. They were locked out for a fortnight because they had appealed to the Federation for help. No woman in Edinburgh could be found to do blackleg work, despite the unremitting efforts of the employers to secure non-Union labour. Ultimately our members resumed work on the old conditions, the firm having meantime consented to refer the proposed reductions to arbitration.

No sooner had this dispute been settled, than trouble broke out in another quarter. Messrs. Mackenzie and Mackenzie, of Edinburgh, Biscuit Makers to the King, announced a general lowering of rates, which, in the case of the biscuit icers, amounted to over 25 per cent. Although belonging to no Union, some thirty of the girls went on strike. They immediately joined the local branch of the Federation, which took up their case. I ought also to mention that the Trades Council, whose members have ever been ready to help the women workers, has rendered yeoman service throughout. It is understood that pressure has been brought to bear on the firm from high quarters, and that a speedy settlement may be looked for.

It is a cheering sign of the times that women in all parts of the country are rapidly entering the ranks of

girls as Mr. Perret. He is the concocter of the specious advertisement and—I discovered—the tenant of a small house at Maida Vale where "Nurse X" resides, in case any wary person should pay a personal visit to inspect the "54 articles elaborately tucked and trimmed."

Mr. Perret is not the originator of this brilliant scheme; that honour belongs to a more prosperous competitor,

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the wrists, and there is feathering and lace at the neck. I tell you it can't be done, Mr. Perret, for less than three-pence halfpenny. It's dirt cheap at that. It takes me four hours 'ard to do one, and then there's thread to pay for."

There's a murmur of sympathy from the waiting women behind.

"Well, three shillin's," says Mr. Perret, suavely.

He waits a moment, but the girl's passion has already waned, and he adds, "You'd better put an extra tuck on the sleeves!"

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The Simple Life - - Walt Whitman.
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Complaints and the Law.

PORTIA.

Talks with the Doctor

Dr. X.Y.Z.

Trade Union Notes

MARY R. MACARTHUR.

Women's Labour League

Mrs. J. R. MacDONALD.

Women's News of the Week.

Trade Unionism. The Women's Trade Union League is besieged with appeals for help in organising work. To extend and further the good work, the Executive of the Federation have appointed Miss Ellen Smyth, of Leeds, as organiser for Birmingham, Bournville, and district. I am certain she will succeed in winning over many new recruits.

There is, however, a class of workers—the super-sweated women workers—whom it is practically impossible under existing conditions to organise. For them the only hope is that the State should intervene, and, by legislation, raise them to that point at which combination and collective self-help become possible. For this reason I am glad to see the enormous strengthening and increasing popularity of the movement making for Wages Boards. In view of the conflicting statements that have been made as to the working-class attitude towards Wages Boards in Victoria, many of our readers will be interested to learn that Mr. Keir Hardie, M.P., during his recent visit to Australia, sent a special message to the *Woman Worker* on this subject. "As far as I have gone yet," says this veteran leader, "organised Labour opinion is practically unanimous in favour of Wages Boards."

Good Stories.

No bad work returned.

The linen workers of the North of Ireland have frequently to complain about bad material. Through no fault of their own, the workmanship is sometimes unsatisfactory, and foremen or cloth-passers will either impose heavy fines or compel them to purchase and carry off the damaged cloth. This reminds one of the story of the tailor and the doctor who met at the funeral of one of the doctor's patients.

"Oh, doctor," observed the tailor, "you must be a happy, happy man."

"Why so?" inquired the physician.

"Because none of your bad work is ever returned."

He was quite satisfied.

A new convert who has come into the Labour movement with a rush, caught with a sudden enthusiasm for the work and the cause, has written to tell us that she is getting slightly disheartened because of sparsely-attended meetings and an apparent lack of interest in her branch. There is no real reason for discouragement. From small beginnings great results accrue. Everyone has to struggle against difficulties and reverses at the start. A singer, who afterwards became famous, was once in his early days taken ill a few hours before he was due to appear at a village concert. He wired to local committee: "Ill; cannot come; give audience money back." He received the following answer: "Audience has got his money back and he is quite pleased."

A common disease.

When Trade Unionists put forward a plea for the right to work, they are almost invariably asked the question: "What would you do with the unemployable—the wot-works?" Surely the best way to discover who are not

Following the example of the Trade Union Congress, the Labour Party at its Hull Conference declared with unanimity in favour of the Sweated Industries Bill providing for the establishment of Wages Boards. The Parliamentary Labour Party have again decided to give the measure an important place in its ballot. The measure is closely identified with the name of the newly-elected chairman, Mr. Arthur Henderson, to whom we extend our sincere congratulations.

The magnificent Queen's Hall meeting, held on the 28th ult., afforded striking proof of the widespread detestation of the sweating evil, and the growing consensus of opinion as to the best line of attack. It is a happy augury for the future of the Anti-sweating movement to find men of all schools of thought, from Father Vaughan to Bernard Shaw, men of all shades of political belief, from Arthur Henderson to Lord Milner, united in a common effort to stamp out a monstrous wrong. Wages Boards and the legal minimum wage are now in the very forefront of practical politics—a fact which must be very gratifying to such early pioneers of the movement in this country as Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Sydney Webb, and Miss Gertrude Tuckwell.

willing to labour would be to give everyone the chance. After all, the wish to escape work is not confined to any particular class. "Once an Edinburgh man asked his doctor to call and see him."

"Well," said the doctor, "what is wrong?"

"Oh, there's nothing very much wrong. I'm strong in health and can eat and sleep well. But I'm anxious, doctor, because I find I've no inclination to work."

"Don't be alarmed," replied the doctor; "if that were an ailment, Edinburgh would be a plague-stricken city."

The reason why.

The need for organisation has been forced on the workers by the stern facts of the case. They have been so often cheated and wronged by commercialism that they have combined in self-defence. Bitter experience has made them well acquainted with the characteristics of capitalism, and they are no longer taking any chances.

A chronic borrower, who generally forgot to repay, met an acquaintance in the street, and said:

"Lend me a sovereign, old man."

"Sorry, old boy, but I won't do that."

"You don't doubt my character, do you?"

"No; that's why I won't lend it."

The labourer and the bishop.

Ignorance compels the workers to toil much harder and under worse conditions than they would otherwise do. Ignorance, apathy, and lack of unity are the enemies of progress and reform. Many workers are sunk in an abyss from which no influence, except organisation and legislation, can lift them. A bishop saw an old labourer turning a windlass which hauled up ore out of a shaft. That was his monotonous task for the whole long day. His hat was off, and a hot summer sun poured down on his unprotected head. Said the bishop:—

"My good man, the sun will injure your brain if you expose it in that reckless way."

The labourer wiped his brow, looked at the bishop, and said:—

"Do you think I'd be doing this all day if I had any brain?"

He went on turning the handle.

Our Portrait Gallery.

No. 6.—MISS ELIZABETH GLEN.

MISS GLEN, in the Trade Union world, stands for youth and gaiety. Whereas others prevail by concentration and persistence, Miss Glen smiles and carols her way through adversity. She is like the lady of mythology,



Miss Elizabeth Glen.

at whose gentleness the leafts that closed the path to others put off their fierceness and grew gentle themselves. This may explain in part the equable nature of her career, over which few clouds have been unkind enough to gather, and no storms sufficiently ungallant to burst.

Miss Glen is a North London lass, a native of historic Islington, whose legends she knows and loves. She was in her seventeenth year when a friend told her alluring stories of the happy life of telephone operators. Straightway Miss Glen made up her mind, and the ensuing six

months found her at the Bank Exchange rapidly acquiring those dark arts by which subscribers are confounded, and the telephone rendered a valuable instrument of spiritual discipline. With the completion of the initiatory period she and some colleagues were transferred to the Holborn Exchange.

Miss Glen has described the equipment of a telephone operator as it used to be, from which it would appear that some years ago a girl went to the telephone much as a mediæval knight would go to a tournament. She had a head shield, and a chest shield, and a chair sufficiently high (and, as the girls thought, sufficiently uncomfortable) to suggest a charger. This heavy and awkward equipment tired the girls and made their heads ache, and when evil-tempered men (all of whom, Miss Glen thinks, are on the telephone) would address to the weary operators pungent comments on her own and the company's shortcomings, life could not fail to wear a grey garb. On the other hand, the work had its attractions; the hours were fair, and though much overtime was exacted, it was paid for at a reasonable rate. Taking one consideration with another, the girls felt they were not unfortunate in their occupation. Then came a transference of the Exchange to new premises above the Birkbeck Bank. Here the armour given to the girls was even heavier than of old, the chairs were still taller, and, as it seemed to Miss Glen, the language of subscribers still more noteworthy. But worse remained behind.

At this juncture the girls at Holborn had been working much overtime. There came to one of the directors of the company the great idea that payment for much of this would be obviated if the girls worked a longer normal day. The girls had previously worked eight hours. "Let them," said the director, waving an

almighty hand, "work ten." And so it was given out.

Now at this time Trade Unionism was not in the universe of the telephone girl. Trade Unionism for her! Had you ventured the suggestion on the 'phone, even Miss Glen would have switched you off with asperity. But this sudden onset set the girls thinking. They resolved that the attack must be resisted, and that it must be resisted unitedly. To resist it thus, was to strike. "Very well," said Miss Glen, flourishing her receiver, "let us strike." So it came to pass that the girls left the Holborn Exchange and their prejudices behind, and with decision and dignity came to the temple of Women's Trade Unionism in Clerkenwell Road.

Meanwhile, subscribers were calling for Holborn, and objections not lightly to be repeated were poured out upon that unresponsive place. The directors were untroubled. "Let girls be sent," they commented, "from other exchanges." But these other girls stoutly refused to be sent, and the wrath of the subscribers steadily rose. Then the directors reconsidered themselves. Miss Glen received intimation that if the girls would resume work, the whole matter would be discussed with them in a conciliatory spirit. Next day the shields were donned again, and the subscribers assuaged. The end was a satisfactory compromise, whereby, though the girls accepted a slightly lengthened day, they were given a shorter Saturday in compensation. Other troubles were also discussed, and arrangements made for the supply of lighter shields and more comfortable chairs. Miss Glen and her friends were well pleased with the issue of their short battle. Neither they nor their colleagues in the service missed the moral. The National Association of Telephone Operators was promptly founded, and has flourished exceedingly. Miss Glen, its first President, and now its General Secretary, tells with glee of the constant influx of members, and of its increasing power to redress their troubles. In its first year of existence it made 1,000 recruits and formed strong provincial branches, especially in Liverpool and Manchester. It was able to help to secure better payment for night operatives in London, and in Manchester to check an unpopular re-arrangement of hours. It could even exert considerable Parliamentary influence, and on its behalf many questions were asked in the House of Commons. The good work of that first year has been well maintained, and three annual reports testify to increasing usefulness, increasing membership, increasing funds.

Miss Glen and her colleagues are now firm in their faith. They have seen and they have believed. They hope soon to have all the operators in the organisation, to win other boons for themselves, and, through the Labour movement, to help their weaker brethren in other trades to win boons too.

TWO EXTRA DOCTORS.

After many years of government by orthodox Whig and Tory politicians, our social problems remain unsolved, the people perish, and the contrast between the rich and poor seems greater than ever. Remedies are proposed which lead nowhere, and, in some cases, actually aggravate the disease. A gentleman taking a quiet walk came upon the village gravedigger hard at work.

"Well, James," he said, "how's business in your line?"

"Very brisk, very brisk; 'deed, I've no reason to complain."

"Why, how's that? The season has been mild and warm."

"Oh, aye," answered the sexton, with a knowing wink; "but, you see, there's been two extra doctors here lately."

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ER

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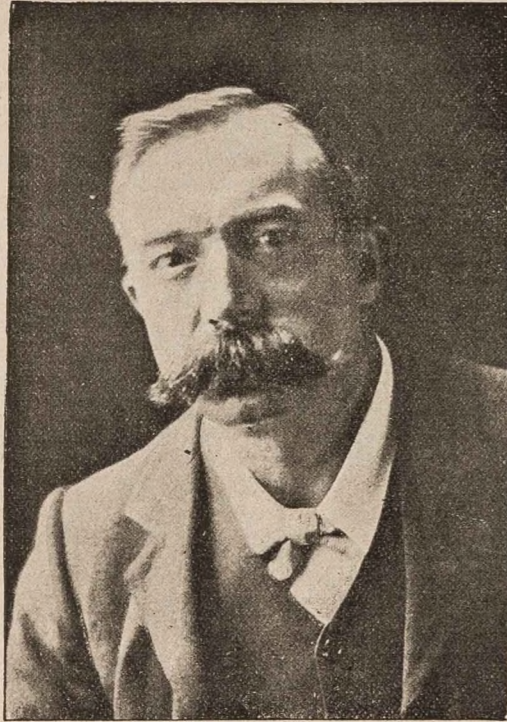
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IS IT NOTHING TO YOU? AN APPEAL TO THE WOMEN WORKERS.

By ROBERT BLATCHFORD.



Robert Blatchford.

LADIES.—It is bitter weather for hungry women and men to sleep out on the Embankment. It is bitter weather for little children to go to school without their breakfast. It is bitter weather for the unemployed. And if I were a nice mild, comfortable Christian gentleman, I should say—"God help the poor"; and then I should put another lump of coal on the fire, and stir my hot tea and sigh: a nice cultured genteel sigh. But I'm not that kind of person at all. And I know that God will not help the poor; and I have a deep and strong belief that no man, nor class of men, can help the poor, to any useful purpose, until the poor begin to help themselves. That is a hard saying, but it is true.

And why do not the poor help themselves? I think it is because they do not know how to do it. They do not understand. They have been always poor; their parents were poor, their children—!

Why should their children be poor? They need not be poor, if their parents understood. Understood what? You may ask. And I answer: Understood their own rights, and their own needs, and their own power! How to get them to understand: that is the question. Who is to do it? Well, suppose you try, ladies—you, the women workers. "Oh, we!" you may answer; and I say: "Yes; undoubtedly it is your work; and none could do it better than you."

Ladies, I have been working away for some twenty years trying to get the men to understand. Now I think sometimes I will take a leaf out of nature's book, of whom Burns said:—

"Her 'prentice han' she tried on man,
And then she made the lasses, O!"

I say I think sometimes I will hand the men over to some other philosopher, and then I will appeal to the women. And really, as I am writing a letter to the *Woman Worker*, I might as well make a beginning here and now.

Please, then, women workers of England, let me plead with you to help. You know how hard some women and girls have to work, for what little pay. You know what small share of brightness and pleasure comes into their lives. You know how uncertain is the future; how soon the prime is past. You know what heed the world pays to a woman when she is old; what mercy it shows to a woman who is down. But few of you know how different life should be and could be. You are inured to the gloom; and you have felt, perchance, the pinch of trouble; but you have not ever seen the sunshine of real happiness, or ever realised the wonderful possibilities that your children may realise—if you will help them.

Half the people of wealthy England are poor: millions of them are almost destitute. And the children! There are hundreds of thousands of little children who are not half fed, nor half clothed, nor half taught. Is it not pitiful? And may I ask you, ladies, why do you—the women workers of England, allow these things?

Oh! you cannot prevent them. You do not understand politics, and trade, and figures. No, you do not. Who does? I do not. And I do not want to. But I understand that children should be fed, and taught, and loved; and that women should be cherished and honoured; and that men should work, and should have work found for them. And I understand that there need not be a hungry or poor man, or woman, or child, in the Kingdom. And I understand that on the day when the working classes learn their power, all the shames and hardships that make life hideous for millions in this rich and Christian England to-day will be swept away. It would happen this year, if the people understood. Will you help them to understand? Ah, but if you yourselves do not understand!

You do not. That is where you are to blame. You ought to. Oh, when you understand, you can do wonders! That is why I want you to understand. To understand what? SOCIALISM!

Yes. The very best thing you can do, ladies: the best thing you ever did, the greatest service you can render your class, your country, and your children, is the thing I beg you to do—to do at once.

Get to know what Socialism means.

Yes. It is quite easy to understand Socialism. No. The subject is not dry.

To put the idea in a few words, Socialism means Britain for the British; it means that England should belong to the English—to the whole English people, and not to a few thousands of them. It means that England should be governed by the English—by the whole of the English people, and not by a few families. It means that there shall not be a poor man, nor a hungry child in the whole nation. It means that every woman shall be free, and shall be safe, and shall be honoured. I say *honoured*; not respected only, but honoured.

MR. GEORGE N. BARNES, M.P., ON THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT.

DEAR MISS MACARTHUR.—Your report of the Women's Trade Union League is duly to hand, and I am glad to know that you are making headway in the industrial betterment of women. Should dispute arise, and there is need for help, you may rely upon A.S.E. men. They have ever been ready to show practical sympathy with good causes.

Men generally are recognising the need for the organisation of women even from the point of view of self-protection. Capitalism, by its very nature, is driven by intensifying competition to seek lower and yet lower levels of wages, and therefore it is in the interests of men workers that the claim for equal pay for equal work should be sustained.

But I am glad to know that a growing number of our menfolk are actuated by a better motive. They see that, contrary to the natural order of things, women are bearing the heaviest burdens in the hurly-burly of life, and they wish to help the women to lighten these somewhat.

It can be done, is being done, by organisation. I was at Oxford during the month, and am glad to report that your movement is taking hold there. It has many good friends, including Mr. Lister and Mr. Carlyle, the vicar, as well as an increasing number of the students, who are beginning to see upon what a ghastly foundation their lives of culture and ease are based. You have some real gritty members among the white seam and printing trade workers, who form the nucleus of a strong branch, or branches, of the organisations of these trades. It did me good to see them button-holing all and sundry, making arrangements for meetings in outlying places, taking part in the Sweating Exhibition, and, generally speaking, showing themselves alive to their own interests and to the larger interests of the Labour movement as well.

Good luck to you, to them, and to your helpers everywhere! I ventured to say in my last letter to you that you would find friends, and I am glad to think this prediction is coming true. I have really been surprised to find so many. My mind dwells now, for instance, on some people at Portsmouth who are taking a warm interest in your work, and among whom is one of the bravest and simplest (they generally go together) souls that ever I met.

To enlist more on your active list you should develop the paper. Get some leaflets out and supply myself and others with them. As we go hopping about we may plant them in good soil. There is a lot of good stuff about, you know, only it is so hard to get at. The goodness in human nature is so choked up with false ideas, or so hemmed in with deadly and stupid respectability that it cannot get proper vent. But few really live contentedly in the existing morass of competitive commercialism. Many put up with it only because they have not recognised its ugliness, its brutality, its stupidity. Help them to realise all this on the woman's side, and then you will get some, at all events, to work with you in the cause of betterment. Again good luck, and with seasonal greetings, believe me, Yours sincerely,

GEO. N. BARNES.

TRADE UNION ADVERTISEMENT.

National Union of Paper Mill Workers of Great Britain and Ireland. Entry fee for women, 6d. Contributions, 2d. per week. Out-of-work (£1 per year), Accident (10/-), Funeral (£8), Victimized, Strike or Lock-out Benefits, and Legal Assistance.—*General Secretary*, Mr. Wm. Ross, 84, Bristol Street, Manchester.

But can all this be realised? Is it possible?

It is as you make it. In the old Greek legends, sung by Homer, it was the goddess, the grey-eyed Athene, who put fire into the hearts of the men, and strength into their limbs. Athene is dead, but the allegory is true; woman is not dead, and woman is still the goddess who can steel men's hearts, and turn the tide of war. So I come to you, the women workers of England, and tell you that we want all women free and honoured, and all children happy; and we want you to help the men to win a great and holy fight.

You will—when you understand. You can—when you understand. It is easy. You have only to read one little book, to think one little bit. I had to find it all out for myself. I had to hammer out the chain of thought with my own wits, to make it link by link. Now it is easy for you.

It is bitter weather. For how many years shall hungry and desperate men tramp the wind-swept wintry streets in search—vain search—of work? For how many years shall the little children go hungry to their lessons, go hungry and cold to bed? Is it nothing to you? Aye, I know it is much to you. Then help us to help others. Find out where the wrong is: find out the remedy. Get to understand. Come to the rescue of your sisters, come to the rescue of the children, come now. We cannot win without you.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT BLATCHFORD.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD.

THERE'S a phrase that I heard in my dear childhood's days—

Oh, I've heard it full often since then;
'Tis a plea that a school of philosophers raise
For the grossest shortcomings of men.

Then it rang in my ears with an alien sound,
And I pondered it well in my mind;

I forsook all my toys with a face most profound,
But no reason within it could find.

I've grown older, and wiser, and sadder meanwhile,
And the gauntlet I often have hurled

In the face of those men who proclaim with a smile—
"My friend, 'tis the way of the world."

'Tis the way of the world that the strongest should crush
And should fetter the limbs of the weak;

Whilst their cheek for the outrage knows never a blush—
And of Honour and Virtue they speak.

They say Life's a panic, and each one must fight
To get out with the most in the end;

That we cannot be bothered to think if it's right,
But may trample down lover or friend.

'Tis the way of the world to count money as wealth,
And to wear out their souls in the strife;

Yea, dearer than childhood and women and health,
And often-times dearer than Life.

'Tis the way of the world when the end draweth nigh,
And the lusts of the heart have grown cold,

To worship where dim lights stream in from the sky,
And to dream of a heaven of gold.

And to cry that this life isn't anything worth,
But at best like a Dervishes' dance—

(But in some way they stand 'twixt the heaven and the earth,
With their eye on the very best chance).

If the way of the world is to murder and rob,
And to trample and lie and betray,

And to turn a deaf ear to the trampled one's sob,
Then it's time the world got a fresh way.

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The Parable of the Bashful Wooer.

By MARY R. MACARTHUR.

Do you remember the story of Miles Standish? Miles, a gruff old warrior, fell in love with a beautiful young girl called Priscilla. Though famed in the arts of war, he knew nothing of the arts of love. He could not screw up courage to speak to the maiden, to ask the vital question. So he deputed his love-making to John Alden, a young and handsome gallant. John faithfully carried out his duties. He eloquently pleaded his friend's cause. He praised Miles in the maiden's ear—spoke of his courage, his devotion, his goodness.

Priscilla listened with a quiet smile. When John had finished, she said softly, with a look half-shy, half-roguish, "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" And John spoke for himself and won, and doubtless lived happy ever after. Poor old timid, brave Miles Standish! He had entrusted his love affairs to another, and was left a sadder and wiser man.

Now Longfellow's poem contains a lesson which is constantly on the lips of Trade Unionists: "If you want a thing well done, do it yourselves." And the lesson can be applied, not in one direction only, but all round. Of course, all Trade Unionists do not yet see the need for giving the moral so wide a meaning. Let me take a case in point. The National Union of Clerks has just launched a monthly magazine—a bright and promising little journal. In the first number, Mr. Elvin, the General Secretary, earnestly advises the members not to discuss politics at branch meetings. Keep out all "isms," he pleads—Liberalism, Toryism, and Socialism. Mr. Elvin appears to act on the principle that you cannot be too careful. He thinks, perhaps, that political debates will cause strife and trouble. If politics merely consisted of estimating the relative merits of orthodox parties, Liberal or Tory, I should quite agree that it was a waste of time to consider the matter inside the branch—or outside. But politics involves something greater than this, and I should like to make the issue clear to you. Mr. Elvin is a leading official of his Union, and an earnest and sincere worker. He sees that little or nothing will be done for the clerks until they can effectively "speak for themselves" to employers. He sees that they cannot do that without a strong organisation. But that is not the conclusion of the whole matter; it is only the beginning.

If, as wage-earners, we find it necessary to take steps to protect ourselves against employers, should we, as citizens, leave our interests unprotected in their hands? If we cannot trust employers in regard to hours, wages, and conditions, surely we cannot trust them in the making of laws which closely affect our welfare and happiness. Up to the present the employing classes have made the laws. If we do not discuss politics, if we do not take an interest in politics, they will go on making them. But they will frame laws in their own interest, not in ours—in favour of the rich and against the poor.

"What do you consider the object of legislation, Mr. Hume?" Lord Russell once asked.

"The greatest good to the greatest number," replied Mr. Hume.

"What do you consider the greatest number?"

"Number One."

Employers have acted on that principle; hence the darkened lives of so many of the workers.

Just think for a minute what important things Parliament has power to decide. I will mention but a few:

(1) How long we shall work each day. (2) What we shall be paid for our work (3) The heat, light, and cubic

space of workrooms. (4) What compensation shall be paid in case of accident. (5) Whether employers shall be allowed to fine us and make deductions from our wages. (6) What kind of education our children shall receive, and whether hungry school-children shall be fed. (7) Whether the workers shall have decent homes to live in. (8) Whether the unemployed shall get work and the aged poor a pension.

All these questions can be settled by Parliament. All these questions are a part of "politics." Yet Mr. Elvin seriously assures us that it is wrong to discuss such things at our branch meetings.

For what do Trade Unions exist? To fight against wrong, to improve conditions, to place within reach of all the chance to live clean, happy lives. If we cannot discuss politics, we might as well have no Trade Unions. Trade Unionists are beginning to realise this; that is why they have built up a Labour Party over a million strong. In politics, as elsewhere, Mr. Elvin, we must learn to speak for ourselves. In politics, as elsewhere, the voice of Labour will be heard and obeyed, just in proportion as it is strong, determined, and united.

Let me show you how the matter strikes me. You have heard of the trouble (now fortunately settled) between Messrs. Barclay and Fry and their Tin Box Makers. The girls worked hard and got scant wages. Their hands were often maimed and sore. Just before Christmas their wages were reduced, the second reduction within three months. They revolted, and struck work. Suppose that just then there had been a bye-election in Southwark. Suppose that two of the directors of Messrs. Barclay and Fry had entered the field respectively as Liberal and Tory candidates. Suppose that a third candidate, Tom Jones, bricklayer and Labour man, had also taken the field—one who had been fighting all his life to increase the wages and brighten the lives of the workers. What would you have said if the fathers, brothers, and sweethearts of these over-driven, underpaid girls had rushed to the poll to vote for one or other of the well-groomed directors, and against the Labour man?

Yet that is what constantly happens at Parliamentary and municipal elections. Liberal and Tory employers will victimise and lock out their employees; force down wages and impose hard conditions. But in the heat and hurry of elections all these wrongs are too often forgotten, and working men are foolish enough to send employers to govern them. Some day—may it be soon—working women will themselves have a right to vote and to help to shape the laws. Let us hope they will make a wiser use of the franchise than many of the men have done.

Meantime, speak to others about this important matter, to father, brother, sweetheart—to husband, if you have one. Ask them whether they will vote next election for an employer's candidate or a Labour candidate. Tell them that a wise use of political power will mean clean, glad homes, more food and clothing, better education, higher wages for the sweated work-woman, an old-age pension, a juster share of the nation's wealth. Tell them to "speak for themselves" in politics.

In an address on "Sweating," delivered at Leicester, Miss Clementine Black quoted an instance of a London workwoman who does beautiful needlework, and has made garments for a princess, and yet receives a wage which works out at 2d. per hour.

OUR EDUCATIONAL PAGE.

Edited by Meredith Atkinson, Keble College, Oxford.

No. 3.—OUR FOOD.

(ARTICLE I.)

WHEN we consider the enormous number of different kinds of foods that exist, it would seem impossible, at first, to find any simple way of arranging them. Yet, in spite of this great variety, we can say that they are all built up of three different kinds of material. These three kinds of foodstuffs are called:—

- (1) Proteins; (2) Sugars; (3) Fats.

Lean meat, which is really the muscles of an animal, consists almost entirely of the first class of foodstuffs. The white of an egg is also made up of this, and, similarly, a large part of the seeds of plants, such as peas and beans.

Most of these proteins become hard when heated. This is what happens when an egg is boiled. A good cook always has the water boiling before attempting to cook anything in it, because on placing the meat in this, a thin film of proteid is formed on the outside, and this prevents the juices inside from getting out.

The "sugars" include all the various kinds of sugar, such as grape-sugar or glucose, cane-sugar, and starch also. Fat, of course, requires no further explanation.

Let us see what happens to these when they are eaten. Everyone knows that when we chew our food it becomes mixed with saliva. This is manufactured by special parts of the body, called the salivary glands. We have three of these glands; one between the eye and ear, another beneath the tongue, and the third beneath the lower jaw.

The first one sometimes becomes swollen and inflamed, and the patient is said to have the "mumps." These glands are connected with the mouth by small tubes, and the saliva can thus be conducted to the mouth when we feed. The working of these glands is under the control of the brain, so that whenever we think of food a message, as it were, is sent from the brain to start the machinery, and then the saliva is poured into the mouth. That is why the mouth "waters" whenever we see food that we like very much, or even think about it.

The saliva becomes mixed with the food during chewing, and serves to moisten it; also its slimy nature makes the food easier to swallow. Some people chew their food very rapidly, and then swallow it by taking a gulp of water. This is bad, because the food is then in an unsuitable condition for its digestion.

The digestive juices can act better on many small pieces than on a large one, since it can then become more thoroughly mixed with them.

We may compare these juices to the lime, and the food to the sand, which a mason uses in making mortar for building. In this case we are building our body. You know it would be very bad mortar if pebbles were used instead of fine sand, and similarly our "vital mortar," so to speak, is bad if it is in large lumps instead of small ones.

Another important duty of saliva is to turn starch into sugar. You may test this by placing a piece of starch on the back of the tongue after moistening it with saliva. In a few seconds it becomes sweet, this being due to the sugar that is formed. It should be placed on the back of the tongue, because there we taste things.

Look at the back of your tongue and you will notice a lot of small round places on it. By means of these we are able to taste. Starchy food, therefore, like bread,

rice, or potatoes, ought to be well chewed, so as to convert the starch in them into sugar, which is much more easily digested.

The tongue moves the food about during chewing, and thus enables the teeth to do their work. Then the tongue forms the food into a lump, which is seized by the muscles of the throat. All the openings at the back of the throat are then closed, except that leading to the throat. One of these openings leads to the lungs through the windpipe, and closes when we swallow. You can see this by watching "Adam's apple," which moves upwards and outwards when we swallow, closing the passage to the lungs. We are forced to stop breathing while swallowing, and thus close up the passage to the windpipe. But if we try to talk at the same time, the food is apt to "go down the wrong way." That is why we teach children it is rude to speak while eating, for they may choke.

The way to the mouth is, of course, closed by the tongue, and that to the nostrils by muscles at the roof of the mouth. All these things are done at once, and the result is that the food is shot down the throat—the only passage left open—rather like an air-gun. Some idea of the speed with which the food is shot down may be gained by watching a cow chewing the cud. The cow will be seen to stop chewing, and then a sort of wave passes down the throat, and, on watching further, a similar wave is seen to travel back towards the mouth. This last only occurs with animals that chew the cud, and shows the passage of food from one of its stomachs—for a cow has several—back to the mouth to be thoroughly chewed again and re-swallowed. Then it goes to another stomach, where it is digested. Thus our food does not fall down the throat, but is pushed down; and this is why we can eat lying down, and the juggler can drink a glass of water when standing on his head. It is much easier to swallow a fair amount of stuff than a very small quantity, for the tongue cannot get hold of small things. Many people cannot swallow a small pill without either washing it down with water, or eating a piece of bread to make a larger and softer mass, which the tongue can get to the back of the mouth and send down the throat.

In the stomach the food undergoes further changes, through the action of a liquid called the "gastric juice," which the stomach pours over it from all its surface. It acts only on the proteins of our food, not on the fats or sugars. It also curdles milk, making a sort of junket. Now there is much difference in the size of the curd obtained from human milk and from cow's milk. With human milk no large curds are formed, but a lot of small ones instead. It is thus much wiser to feed young children on the food nature has provided for them than to go to the cow, because the curd formed in cow's milk is often so large as to interfere with the digestion. Even some grown-ups cannot take cow's milk for this reason.

We have seen that saliva flows whenever we think of food. The same is true of gastric juice, and a certain Russian scientist made the vastly important discovery that the amount of this juice depends on the appetite and desire for food. Thus, the better our appetite, the more gastric juice will flow, and the more easily will our food digest. It shows the necessity for good cooking and the value of serving up food so as to make it appetising. The mere fact that we can take pleasure in eating it means that the work of digestion is almost half-done for us already. W. B.

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Women's Labour League Mrs. J. R. MacDONALD.

Women's News of the Week.

girls as Mr. Perret. He is the concocter of the specious advertisement and—I discovered—the tenant of a small house at Maida Vale where "Nurse X" resides, in case any wary person should pay a personal visit to inspect the "54 articles elaborately tucked and trimmed."

Mr. Perret is not the originator of this brilliant scheme; that honour belongs to a more prosperous competitor,

* N.B.—The facts contained in this article are vouched for. Names are, of course, fictitious.—Ed.

WARP AND WOOF. By Gertrude M. Tuckwell.

SOME four or five years ago a play called "Warp and Woop," written by Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, was put on the stage of one of the London theatres. It did not run very long, and I am afraid that none of the readers of the *Woman Worker* may have seen it, but it was a play that all ought to have seen. It was the story of two girls in a London work-room.

First there was the great show-room of the smart establishment, with the ladies coming in to buy, the girls, who showed the dresses to customers, moving about in costly toilets, the fitters hurrying backwards and forwards to the rooms where the trying on of dresses was going on. It was a scene of luxury, where smart idle women came to gossip and to spend enormous sums on decking themselves out.

In the next scene we were in the workroom where these costly clothes were made. Over the long rows of tables the girls were stitching early and late. A new order from a smart lady, who had given it so late that additional overtime had to be worked to get the dress ready for a ball, spread consternation among the girls. They had been up all the night before, they had been promised an evening off to rest and sleep, and now, with only the inducement of a supper at midnight, they found the long night's work had to be again repeated. Some of them made the best of it, but there was one little sickly, anæmic girl, such as you often see in a London workroom, to whom the news came as a terrible blow. She could not stand the strain of these long hours, and a few moments afterwards her fainting-fit caused a diversion of work, and all the girls crowded round the poor little figure. They were hurried back to their places, and the fainting girl was encouraged and pressed to take up her work again.

The next change in the scene was the advent of the Woman Factory Inspector, who, arriving unexpectedly in the middle of the workroom, called on the girls to give the hours which they had worked the night before, and to explain their presence at midnight on that day. Perhaps my readers may know that there is a heavy fine which can be imposed by the Factory and Workshop Law on anyone who does not tell the truth to Factory Inspectors, but, in spite of this, the girls' fear of their employer and desire to conciliate her was such that no one would tell the truth. One after the other stated that she had never worked late before, and that on this particular occasion she was making a dress for herself, and had stayed for her own pleasure. At last the Factory Inspector came to the girl who had fainted, and she, terrified at her situation, but not daring to tell a lie, told the truth. The Factory Inspector took the names and addresses of the girls and left the workroom with the intention of prosecuting the firm for overworking their employees. Then followed a scene such as we know happens from time to time in factory or workshop. "Madame," the employer of the girls, who had stood by powerless while the whole story was told, gives in the play an instant dismissal to the offending girl and to her sister, who had stood by her and supported her; and the girls, without wages in lieu of notice, with the prospect of being blacklisted by their employer so that they will not find other work, are turned out of the workroom to fare as best they may.

In the last scene the sick girl dies. Now, you may think that this is an exaggerated story, and, so far as the death of the workgirl goes, no doubt it may be; but, all the same, the main facts of the case are true. Over and over again there come to our know-

ledge stories of girls who have had the courage to tell the truth, and who have been turned from factory, workshop, or shop at a moment's notice. Now, just think what telling the truth under such circumstances means. No one of you unaided is able to protect herself against unfair exactions and bad conditions; and for this reason the State—that is to say, all of us as citizens—have created laws which give to all who work the right to claim limited hours, proper conditions of employment, and to protest against unfair fines and deductions. If these laws are really to give the protection for which they were intended, every workgirl as a citizen ought to help to put them into force. She ought to know what protection she can claim; to study the abstract of the Factory and Workshop Law which hangs up in her workroom; and when she sees that the law is being broken, to communicate with the Women's Trade Union League, so that the matter may be put right.

Here you may say that this is all very well, but that it is difficult for a girl who, perhaps, has relations depending upon her, to sacrifice her work in order to uphold her rights, as she may do if she is suspected of having sent in complaints and brought the Factory Inspector. Loss of work and blacklisting by an employer may be followed by week after week of useless search for work, while the small earnings that have been put aside gradually ebb away, and starvation stares you in the face. Well, I am thankful to say that this dreadful alternative does not now present itself. There is a fund by which all those who lose their work by telling the truth to a Factory Inspector are supported until they can find fresh work, and are helped in finding it. Two such cases, not long ago, came to us from the Federation of Women Workers; one of them having now got fresh work "off the fund," the other is still being indemnified. There are some girls who feel that they do not like to take anything, even from such a fund as this; but I want to point out to you that I think, however proud and however self-respecting you may be, this is a fund of which you may gladly make use. It is a wrong state of society in which it is possible for people to suffer severely for having done their duty, and it is right that there should be some means of helping them over a difficult time. There is no charity in such a fund as this. Case after case came to our knowledge before this fund existed in which girls were high-minded and honest enough to tell the truth and suffer; now they need not suffer, and may feel they have a right to our help. Tell everyone you meet that, in case injustice such as I have described should ever happen to them, Miss Macarthur can put them in touch with the Society which administers the Indemnity Fund.

NONE TO RENOUNCE.

A member of the London Chamber of Commerce has just stated that when a man joins his Trade Union he gives up his individual liberty and freedom. When one remembers the long hours low wages, and broken lives of the workers, one wonders what and where is the precious liberty, the sacred freedom, about which this employer is so much concerned. Once a deputation of Scotch Calvinists called upon their minister to complain that his views were not strictly orthodox.

"What do I say that's wrong?" asked the minister.
 "Oh, you never tell us to renounce our righteousness."
 "No, I never did that," replied the minister. "I never noticed that you had any to renounce."

A FACTORY SINGER.

MISS ETHEL CARNIE, textile operative and poetess, is not unknown to readers of the *Woman Worker*. This factory girl who sings at her work is among the contributors to our pages. We are glad to see that a second and enlarged edition of her "Rhymes from the Factory" has just been published. Miss Carnie makes no excessive claim for her verses. Modestly yet proudly she lays them before us, asking us only to remember the circumstances under which they were written.

"From a child," she says, "I found myself expressing my thoughts in rhythmic forms, and deriving great pleasure from so doing, accompanied though it was with a sense of constraint that I must do so. It was just as a tune that one has once heard and liked seems to haunt the mind and will not be dismissed until entirely mastered. I went on 'half-time' at eleven as a reacher in the Delph Road Mill at Great Harwood, after which I became a winder at the St. Lawrence Mill in the same town. I was a winder for some six years. It was in this period that I wrote 'The Bookworm,' which seems to have attracted the most attention of any of my writings. It was really composed one morning, whilst working at my frame. I think it is no exaggeration to say that all my poems come into my head at the mill. It might be, as Miss Marianne Farningham said of me in an article in the *Christian World*, that my occupation had something to do with the rhythmic forms into which my thoughts shaped themselves."

From the point of view of literary perfection, the verses have, of course, many flaws. But it cannot be disputed that Miss Carnie is richly endowed with genuine poetic feeling. She hears "the low sad music of humanity." This Lancashire factory lass sings of the mysticism of Carlyle, the music of Mozart, the mythical legend of Daphne. She sings her hatred of the god of Gold, her love of children, her pity of the desolate and oppressed. She tunes her harp to themes which have stirred many singers: Friendship, Youth, Beauty, Night, Love, Hope, and Time.

One or two verses from "The Bookworm" will serve to illustrate her style:—

The world of books—how broad, how grand!
 Within its volumes, dark and old,
 What priceless gems of living thought
 Their beauties to the mind unfold.

On wintry nights, when howls the wind,
 And earth lies 'neath a shroud of snow,
 I draw the blind and light the lamp
 And in the world of books I go.

I read of glorious Italy—
 Around her name what memories throng;
 The land of beauty and of art,
 The land of laughter, love, and song;

Until methinks I hear the oars
 Cleaving the bright Venetian tide,
 Inhale the scent of southern flowers,
 And see the gay gondolas glide!

"Rhymes from the Factory" is published at 1s., and may be obtained direct from the author, 76, Windsor Road, Great Harwood.

A CHARMING BOOK.

The Dolly Ballads, by Robert Blatchford (price 3s. 6d. net, the Clarion Press), is a book that will fill the hearts of children with delight. The ballads consist of the delightfully inconsequent stories which Dolly tells, perched on her mother's knees at bedtime. She has much amusing prattle about "bishumps" and "croumdiles" and Blue-

beards, and princesses and grisly bears. All the tales are strictly accurate, and are given on the authority of Winnie, who told them "comin' froo a wood." The book is a charming portrayal of the imaginative child—true to the life. Its value is greatly enhanced by the beautiful illustrations—the last work, unhappily, of Frank Chesworth. We can heartily recommend the book as an ideal gift to all children, to all who love children, to all whose hearts are still young. An idea of Dolly's method of telling her stories may be gathered from the opening of the fourth ballad.

If you hide into the bracken,
 When the daisies is asleep,
 An' hold your hands before your face
 An' peep, an' peep, an' peep;
 An' never talk, nor wiggle,
 An' don't do anysing:
 You'll see the likkle fairies come
 An' make a fairy ring,
 An' when the ring's made proper,
 Don't make the least of noise,
 An' you'll see the fairies dancing
 Like likkle gels an' boys.

TO MY FIRST LOVE.

I remember
 Meeting you
 In September,
 'Sixty-two.
 We were eating,
 Both of us,
 And the meeting
 Happened thus:
 Accidental,
 On the road;
 (Sentimental
 Episode.)
 I was gushing,
 You were shy;
 You were blushing,
 So was I.
 I was smitten,
 So were you;
 (All that's written
 Here is true.)
 Any money?
 Not a bit.
 Rather funny,
 Wasn't it?
 Vows we plighted,
 Happy pair!
 How delighted
 People were!
 But your father,
 To be sure,
 Thought it rather
 Premature;
 And your mother,
 Strange to say,
 Was another
 In the way.
 What a heaven
 Vanished then!
 (You were seven,
 I was ten.)
 That was many
 Years ago—
 Don't let any
 Body know.

["Overheard by the little Bird" and Federation Branch Reports held over until next issue.]

For

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Our . . .
New . . .
Serial.

"PARTNERS"

By
CONSTANCE HINTON-SMITH.

All Rights Reserved.

CHAPTER IV.

HESTER'S stately exit was no true expression of her feelings, which were in a condition of most undignified tumult. But she had not spent several years in Johnson and Farmer's showroom, attending on customers who were occasionally rude, and frequently silly, without learning the lesson of self-control under provocation; and her experience stood her in good stead on the present trying occasion. She did not even quicken her pace on the stairs; but, once in her bedroom, she caught up her hat and pinned it on hastily, mastered by an overwhelming desire to get out of the house in which she had had to submit in silence to remarks so humiliating to her self-esteem.

Once she had closed the front door—quietly and carefully, for she was bent on avoiding all action which might pass for an exhibition of temper—she let her feet carry her rapidly away from Widdrington Place, down the hill, past the reservoir, and through the network of quiet roads, occupied for the most part by small semi-detached houses, which connect the business quarters of Ilchester with its municipal park. At five o'clock on a summer Saturday afternoon, when all those of her friends who had not gone on an excursion would be at tea, she felt pretty safe in making the park a refuge for her hot



Hester sat still and grew less angry.

cheeks and angry heart. She would meet nobody there—a delightful reflection at a moment when the thought of having to smile and answer commonplace questions was intolerable. Aunt Lucy's gibe had gone very deep; Hester

writhed mentally under the smart of it. Was this what everyone said, or thought, if they had the good manners not to utter their thoughts aloud? Had all her world written her down a hypocrite, a loose pretender to sympathies with causes for which, in reality, she cared not a farthing, except as they afforded her an excuse for attracting a man's attention? Was it the lot of every unhappy girl who tried to be of some use to her fellows to be so misunderstood? Must ribbons and flirtations be for ever supposed to be the only possible interests of a girl's existence? Did Aunt Lucy indeed represent public opinion in general: the opinion of all ordinary men and women—perhaps even of those who were not ordinary—Rose, Mr. Gregory, even Hillyard himself? That last was a dreadful thought. Hester flew on faster, heedless of the warmth of the dusty roads and the sun beating down on her aching head. That Hillyard should suspect her of insincerity, of playing a comedy for his benefit, would be beyond bearing. And yet, how make her motives clear? Were they, indeed, absolutely unmixed? Had not Hillyard's personality, influence, counted for something in her conversion?

She sank down on a bench—she had got well within the precincts of the park before her self-questionings reached their desperate stage—and stared miserably before her. Always she had been so sure of herself; but now for a moment the bands of her self-confidence were loosened. Why, if Hillyard were merely her leader and teacher, should his good opinion be of such supreme importance to her in this hour, outweighing that of friends much older, far more tried? She realised suddenly so long as he retained full faith in her honesty of purpose, the others might doubt it as they would. No, it was not the Aunt Lucy's and the Florrie Browne's who had power to hurt her. Her real torment lay in the fear that their judgment might be his likewise.

Our heroine, you perceive, was very young; she took things tragically. A few hours back she had thought the world a delightful place. Now, in the shadow which a few ill-considered words had thrown across it, it had become a place of gloom, in which was no place for justice, no hope scarcely of mercy. Natures, highly strung as was this girl's, sensitive to the waves of finer feeling, the touch of the noble emotions, are often inclined to these mental exaggerations of their own distresses. And, as we have already remarked, Hester was very young; and youth despairs readily.

She sat still on her bench, which was set at some little distance from the nearest path, on a plot of grass under a group of beeches, and reviewed all that had happened since the memorable day of the Morison Concert. Perhaps her recollections were reassuring; perhaps the quiet and

calm of her surroundings were not without their soothing effect, for gradually her flushed cheeks cooled, her self-communings grew less bitter and more hopeful. It was, perhaps, unnecessary to make sure that he had credited her with silly, self-advertising motives, especially as much of his conduct went rather to show a different opinion.

Nobody came Hester's way for a long time. She had entered the park by a small side-gate, too narrow to admit perambulators, therefore well off the beat of nursemaids, and had stopped short in her walk before she reached the point where its line might be intersected with that of returning cricketers from the pitch a good half-mile away. It was a singularly informal park, this of Ilchester; little more than the remains of what had been a great beech-wood, through which rides and walks had been cut seemingly almost haphazard, where the tall trees threw their shadows on long lines of unbroken turf. The voices of children at play were heard now and again, sounding faint in the distance; now and then a sleepy bird twittered in the branches. Hester sat still and grew less angry. When, far away, the clock of St. Dunstan's struck seven, and she got up, with a sigh, to go home—for it would not do to miss Aunt Clara's regular supper-hour of eight—her mood had become almost reasonable. Only she hoped, very fervently, that Aunt Lucy would be gone to the station before she herself reached Widdrington Place.

It was too late to have recourse to the side-gate and the network of roads outside; she must take a more direct route. She made her way towards the East Gate, keeping under the trees, and wishing that dusk would fall, for she still felt an irrational shrinking from meeting her acquaintance. But the days were yet long and the evenings light; and she had not gone more than halfway to the gate before she saw a figure advancing from the opposite direction, and, after a moment of anxious scrutiny, knew it for Hillyard's.

She had an intense desire to run away. For a moment it seemed as though the record of the little scene in Miss Fay's sitting-room, to say nothing of all her heart-searchings during the past two hours, must be written large on her face for the man to read. Of course she mastered the foolish impulse almost as soon as it arose. It is only in badly-acted drama that people stand transfixed into immobility at the appearance of a lover or an enemy; in real life they walk forward and shake hands as convention bids. Hester, sustained by convention, walked forward and prepared to shake hands, if required to do so.

At the same time she said to herself—"I shall merely say good evening and hurry on. I'll take care to give him no chance of suspecting, thinking—"

But Hillyard had evidently no notion of permitting her to hurry on. He planted himself decidedly in the way, saying cheerfully, if rather nervously—"So you were in the park after all!"

Hester rejoined, rather stiffly, that she had been in the park for some time.

"You hid yourself very well," Hillyard observed, with a smile. "I had almost given up hope of finding you. But little Cissy Meakin was sure she had seen you go by, and it didn't seem likely you would take the way by Gilston Road except to go to the park."

"I didn't see Cissy," Hester did not explain that, at the moment of passing the Meakin's house, she had forgotten that such a family existed. "That child is always at the window," she added, severely.

"Well, there's plenty of time to cure the bad habit," Hillyard seemed determined not to be put off by his companion's tone. "How old is she? Eight? And I'm grateful to her habit just for this once, for I wanted to meet you particularly; I've something to say. Won't you sit down for a minute or two?"

"I can't, I'm afraid. My aunt keeps early hours; and, besides, I've some letters to answer this evening, and a heap of Branch notices to send out. We've been particularly busy at the shop lately, and the work has had to suffer."

"I do believe"—Hillyard spoke in an aggrieved voice—"that you care for nothing in the world except to work!" There was no mistaking his tone; it expressed genuine annoyance. Hester's heart gave a bound of satisfaction; he *did* believe in her, then!

"You should be the last person to reproach me for that," she responded, demurely. "But it isn't like that, really. I like—lots of other things."

"Well, then, prove it—prove you can take an interest in something else—by stopping to hear my news. I received a big piece of news this morning."

Hester's eyes lighted up. "I believe I can guess!"

She checked herself, but not before the thrill in her voice had brought a glow to Hillyard's bronzed face.

"There's going to be a by-election at Bletchingham. They've asked me to be the Labour candidate. Was that what you thought?"

"Yes. Oh, I am glad, Mr. Hillyard!"

"Thank you," rather gruffly. A pause. "I only knew, for certain, this forenoon. Else I should have told you sooner."

Hester protested that it was "very good" of him to tell her so soon.

"No, it isn't. I haven't told you just for your



"I can't stand uncertainty any longer," said Hillyard.

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girls as Mr. Perret. He is the concocter of the specious advertisement and—I discovered—the tenant of a small house at Maida Vale where "Nurse X" resides, in case any wary person should pay a personal visit to inspect the "54 articles elaborately tucked and trimmed."

Mr. Perret is not the originator of this brilliant scheme; that honour belongs to a more prosperous competitor,

* N.B.—The facts contained in this article are vouched for. Names are, of course, fictitious.—Ed.

pleasure, but because I want something of you, that I can ask for now. Weeks ago I had reason to think this was coming. If it had come last summer—well, I shouldn't have looked beyond it. It would have been enough for me, you understand. I shouldn't have looked beyond it. Do you understand?" He was getting pale now under his bronze. "Do you?"

Hester's little movement of the head might mean either Yes or No; it was so vague. Hillyard went on—

"Last year I made up my mind that, as soon as this came, I must get to know the truth about you. Till I know, I can't put any heart into the work. If there's anyone else—and sometimes I've thought there was—tell me at once, and I'll just go away and do the best I can. Only I can't stand uncertainty any longer."

"There is no one else," said Hester, and the sound of her own voice filled her with astonishment. It seemed a miracle that she could speak at all.

"If you'd let me love you—if you'd promise to marry me—"

Hillyard suggested, stretching out a big trembling hand. He, who could plead so eloquently on occasion, had no words for his own cause. But to the girl his broken phrases were eloquent enough.

Now, of course, had she been a true heroine of romance, was the moment for executing a self-denying ordinance. Bent on proving her devotion to "the cause," she should have rejected him, lest her future action might be swayed, henceforward, by the motives of a dangerous strong personal affection. No such dream of heroism crossed her brain. She forgot, as though they had never been, the misgivings of an earlier hour. And when she laid her hand into that stretched out to claim it, and looked up into her lover's eyes, there fell upon the earth, for Hester, a glory above that of the sunset reddening through the beech boughs and making golden the turf where she and Hillyard stood together.

(To be continued.)

ENGLISH GIRLS IN PARIS.

By ETHEL CARTWRIGHT.

I HAVE been asked so often about the chances for English girls to find work in Paris, that I think perhaps a few remarks on this point may be of general interest. I am not in a position to speak with authority of prospects in other branches of employment than those of governesses and office workers, but as it is more especially to these that a knowledge of foreign languages is desirable, there may be a good many to whom my experience would be of some service.

First of all, let no girl come to Paris to work and think she is going to "pick up" French with very little effort on her own part. It is so difficult—and so expensive—to get board and lodging in a French family that most of us are driven sooner or later to taking a room and getting our meals, except breakfast, out. Many girls find this sort of life very lonely; and, in any case, whether you are of the sociable kind or not, this is not the way to learn French. With the best intentions in the world, many of those who come over expecting in a year or so to "speak like a native" find that at the end of that time they are only just about capable of making themselves understood. This is especially the case with governesses and nurses, who are expected always to speak English with their charges, and who very often scarcely hear half a dozen French sentences in the day.

Those who come as clerks are in a somewhat more favourable position from this point of view, if they have the good fortune to get into a French firm where all their colleagues are French; still more so if they start

with a really good theoretical knowledge of the language, and are thus able from the first to undertake translations, and some of the French work, when opportunity offers, of the office.

It is very rarely possible to get a post here from England, and it is not wise to come over on chance, unless one is in a position to live for some weeks without earning anything, and can afford to take the risk of having to return after all without having found work.

Another important point is that of board and lodging. Those who come to Paris expecting to be able to live at the same rate as in London are doomed to disappointment. A girl who is really anxious to learn a language is prepared to make sacrifices and to rough it a little for a time, and she calculates on how little she can manage; but too often she bases her calculation on her own previous experience, not knowing that the expenditure of £1 a week, which she considers a very liberal allowance to make for actual living expenses, and which will in London secure a very fair degree of comfort, will only just, with very strict economy, cover such expenses in Paris; indeed, I doubt whether it can be done on that, if one is to have any real comfort, in winter, when fire and lights form such a heavy item in one's expenditure.

Cases have come within my personal experience where girls, either sent out from England, or newly arrived here, have accepted a salary equivalent to about 30s. a week, imagining that they would be able to live on about 12s. or 15s., and that they would therefore have quite enough over to amply supply all their personal needs; and they have been quite aggrieved to find that their 30s. did not go nearly as far here as at home; they would not have come if they had known, and feel that somebody ought to have told them.

Not only living, but also one's personal expenses, are very considerably higher than in England, as almost everything in the way of clothes is very dear; a costume that could be had for two guineas in London would probably cost about £4 in Paris.

There is a home here, in connection with the Y.W.C.A., where girls can live at a moderate rate—moderate for Paris—until they are able to make suitable arrangements and know enough French to manage for themselves. The same Association has lunch rooms, where the midday and evening meals are nicely served at low prices; and there are also French clubs for working women which provide cheap and wholesome meals. The ordinary restaurant is too dear for the wage-earning girl, and the cheap one is decidedly unappetising, at any rate, to English ideas. Such places as Lyons' and the A.B.C. do not exist in Paris, and dairies, where one can have eggs, bread, and tea, coffee, or milk, for one franc (10d.) are not very plentiful.

I have occasionally heard French people complain that living is dear in London, and it may be that we find it dear here because we do not know the best way to set about providing; but whatever the reason may be, the fact remains that every English girl *does* find it necessary to spend much more here than at home. Salaries seem to run, for good typists, between 150 and 250 francs (30s. to £2 a week, as nearly as possible); but generally some knowledge of French is required, and, to get the latter sum, a good knowledge, and, in many cases, ability to take dictation in French, for which Pitman's shorthand is easily adapted.

LABOUR TROUBLES IN FRANCE.

From figures issued by the French Ministry of Labour we learn that 1,309 strikes occurred in France during last year affecting 31,331 women. The strikes were largely in connection with the movement for a reduction of the hours of labour.



THE Editor invites brief letters on subjects of general interest. Correspondents should write on one side of the paper only. Letters should be sent in not later than the 20th day of each month, and should be addressed:—Editor, *Woman Worker*, Club Union Buildings, Clerkenwell Road, London E.C. 4.

WHAT OUR READERS THINK.

TO THE EDITOR, THE "WOMAN WORKER."

DEAR EDITOR,—Are we to infer from the short story by Pett Ridge, "The Reward," in a recent issue, that it was Elsie's duty to forego all thought of marriage and stay at home with her mother? If so, it seems rather hard lines for her. Surely we mothers have our "reward" in the joy and pleasure of working for and loving our children. There is an old Norwegian saying—"The fruit is not for the tree." I wonder what other mothers and daughters think of it?—With best wishes, yours sincerely,

FLORENCE HUMPHREYS.

Birmingham.

Looking forward to each issue.

TO THE EDITOR, THE "WOMAN WORKER."

DEAR EDITOR,—I look forward with pleasure to each issue of the *Woman Worker*. It is the best women's paper I have ever seen, and a credit to all concerned in its production. All good wishes for its success.

MRS. J. ELLIOT.

45, Beechville Avenue, Scarborough.

Quite fond of the "Woman Worker."

DEAR EDITOR,—May I express my pleasure at having been awarded the prize for the letter competition this month? I am particularly proud to have obtained my first literary success at the hand of the *Woman Worker*—our own paper. I am already quite fond of the *Woman Worker*, and am most impatient for its arrival each month. Where I can I will make it known, for I wish it great success.

MONICA POULBOISE.

90, Southfield Road, Chiswick, W.

PRESS OPINIONS.

Our January Issue.

Our last number was widely mentioned in the London and provincial press. Extracts from one or other of our articles—chiefly those written by the Bishop of Birmingham and Mr. Victor Grayson, M.P.—were quoted in the *Daily Chronicle*, *Daily News*, *Daily Graphic*, *Evening News*, *Morning Post*, *British Journal of Nursing*, *Manchester Chronicle*, *Edinburgh Dispatch*, *Bristol Echo*, *York News*, *Newcastle Chronicle*, to mention but a few. "The *Woman Worker*," says the *Pall Mall Gazette*, "is a strenuous and highly articulate new penny monthly." The *Methodist Times* remarks that "the *Woman Worker* should be supported by the woman who is a wage earner; she will find it useful, and by the woman who is not a wage earner it will give her new subjects for thought." "I don't know how you have managed it," remarks Mr. Geo. Barnes, M.P., "but I find the *Woman Worker* is already known wherever I go."

For

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OUR DEBATING COLUMN. THE "WOMAN WORKER" FORUM.

[A prize of 5s. will be awarded each month to the writer of the best letter to our debating column. You may either raise a fresh issue, or may reply to a subject discussed in the previous numbers. All letters must be in by the 24th of each month. The Editor is not necessarily identified with the opinions expressed.]

Sweating and Penny Bazaars.

TO THE EDITOR, THE "WOMAN WORKER."

DEAR EDITOR,—I think it would be a good plan for women and girls who read the *Woman Worker*, to put their heads together—or their pens to paper—to discuss what can be done to abolish sweating. Of course, the surest and best ways are through the spread of Trade Unionism and the steady advance towards Socialism; but, in the meantime, are there not some little things we can do to help? In London, for instance, there are a great many Penny Bazaars where you can get many useful articles; and I think there can hardly be any doubt that most of these things are sweated, or they could not be sold so cheaply. Perhaps some good might be done if those who understand would determine not to patronise those places. Good would also follow if readers would inform the *Woman Worker* of those firms who pay their employees a scandalously low wage, and of those firms who pay a better wage, so that those of us who think would know whom to support and whom to avoid. Naturally the very poorest of the people cannot help buying the very cheapest articles, but there are hundreds of women who could easily avoid buying sweated goods if they knew how to go about it.

B. K.

111, Lollard Street, Kennington Road, S.E.

Can Women be awakened?

TO THE EDITOR, THE "WOMAN WORKER."

DEAR EDITOR,—The letter I am writing is hardly the kind you ask for in January's *Woman Worker*, yet, looking through the titles of the suitable subjects you give us, the thought which comes to my mind is this: *How* are we to get the vast number of indifferent working women to take any interest in these questions—Trade Unionism, Sweating, etc.?

Some of us know that we are quite as important as the "man" part of the community, and want to be recognised as such, and take our share in the duties of citizenship. We believe we can, in many ways, do our share to bring nearer the time when oppression and all ugly things will be a thing of the past. After attending a woman's or any other political meeting, we notice the growing number of women present, and feel encouraged; but to those who work in large works, the apathy is striking; there is no shutting our eyes to the fact that there are multitudes of young women who have no interest beyond love, courtship, and marriage in the columns of

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girls as Mr. Perret. He is the concocter of the specious advertisement and—I discovered—the tenant of a small house at Maida Vale where "Nurse X" resides, in case any wary person should pay a personal visit to inspect the "54 articles elaborately tucked and trimmed."

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various periodicals. At our Trade Union meetings nearly everyone tells the same: girls will not join a club mostly because they expect to get married; and here, I think, is the chief evil, girls ought not to be brought up with the idea that marriage is the first aim and end of their existence. Whether a girl gets married or not, she should take her part in social questions. If the fates have in store for her "single blessedness," ought she not to be vitally interested in every woman having a good wage, shorter hours, and some provision made for her old age? And if she should marry, is she not likely to make a better companion to her husband than one who has no interest beyond herself? Most of all, should not every woman do her best to make better conditions, remembering that her own children will have to face the world in their turn. Perhaps all have not yet heard of the duty expected of us—the duty towards our neighbours. Thinking of the work yet to be done, how then can we arouse the interest, sympathy, and co-operation of more of our sex? Perhaps readers of the *Woman Worker* with abler pens than mine will offer a few suggestions. G. W. Salford.

Married Women as Workers.

TO THE EDITOR, THE "WOMAN WORKER."
DEAR EDITOR.—All who read the first number of the *Woman Worker* will have a vivid recollection, I am sure, of the picture entitled "Sacred Motherhood." It was a true representation of the home life of many families where the mother is an industrial worker. It epitomised the pathos and tragedy of the life of the married home worker. In how many spheres of labour is the married woman found. Owing to married women working, young girls are often shut out of occupations. If this evil is to be overcome, the married woman must be kept from working outside her home. Then room would be found for the single woman. This is a necessary first step towards the mitigation and ultimate removal of unjust social conditions. A woman, once married, should merge her own individuality in that of her husband. She should work only in the home, not outside. Ruskin says that "Men by their nature are prone to fight; they will fight for any cause or for none. It is for woman to choose their cause for them, and to forbid them when there is no cause. Man's work in the home is to secure its maintenance, progress, and defence; the woman's is to secure its order, comfort, and loveliness." Ruskin did not mean that women should not take an interest in outside affairs, but that these should come second to her home. It is necessary that she should become interested in the world around her because in this way she is able to influence her husband to do right. The influence of the married woman should be exerted indirectly, rather than in trying to compete with men in the active pursuits of life, industrial and political. In fact, woman's influence loses its peculiar potency and charm the moment it obtrudes into the active spheres of male activity, whether in the field, or market place, or university, or senate.

Jarrow.

GRACE LLOYD.

WOMAN'S INFLUENCE.

"If we wish to know the political and moral condition of a state, we must ask what rank women hold in it. Their influence embraces the whole of life. A wife! a mother!—two magical words comprising the sweetest source of man's felicity. There is a reign of beauty, of love, of reason—always a reign. A man takes counsel with his wife, he obeys his mother; he obeys her long after she has ceased to live; and the ideas which he has received from her become principles stronger even than his passions."—AIME MARTIN.

HOME HINTS.

Many excellent recipes and household hints have been sent in this month. The prize is divided between Mrs. HUMPHREYS, 17, Hillaries Road, Gravelly Hill, near Birmingham, and Mrs. T. E. ABELL, Station House, Branston, near Burton-on-Trent.

German Pound Cake.

10 ozs. flour, 8 ozs. fresh butter, 8 ozs. castor sugar, 4 ozs. peel, 1 lemon, ½ lb. sultanas, 5 eggs. Beat butter and sugar to a cream, add flour, sifted by degrees, and the eggs one at a time; beat all well together. Now add sultanas with candied peel and the grated rind of the lemon. Mix all well together with a spoon, line a cake in with buttered paper, pour in mixture, and bake for two hours.—Mrs. Abell.

Barley Soup.

Half cup pearly barley, 3 tomatoes, 3 carrots, 3 onions, 1 potato, 1 teaspoonful brown sugar. Wash barley, put in saucepan with the sugar, with the tomatoes peeled and cut into small bits, and cover well with water. Stew gently five hours, adding water if necessary. Cut into small dice the carrots and onions and potatoes, fry a nice golden brown, and add to soup about half an hour before serving. Cheap and nourishing.—Mrs. Humphrey.

Mrs. T. Elliot, 45, Beechville Avenue, Scarborough, sends us the following seasonable recipe for

Orange Marmalade.

6 bitter oranges, 1 sweet one, 1 lemon, 6 lbs. loaf sugar, 6 pints water. Cut fruit into fine shreds and soak over-night in the water. Next day put it in pre-serving pan and bring to the boil, let simmer gently for two hours, then add sugar; stir until it is dissolved, and boil another hour. Try a little on a saucer; if it stiffens quickly it is done, if not, boil a little longer. The pips must be soaked in a gill of water by themselves, and boiled in small saucepan about half an hour; then strain all the liquid from them into the boiling marmalade before sugar is added, and throw pips away. The latter end of February is the best time for making marmalade. This is a simple way of making, the flavour is delicious, and the cost not more than 1½d. per lb.

Mrs. G. Durston, 161, St. John Street, Bridgwater, Somerset, writes:—"It is said that the most nauseous physic may be given to children without trouble by previously letting them take a peppermint lozenge, a piece of alum, or a bit of orange-peel. Many people make the mistake of giving a sweet afterwards to take away the disagreeable taste. It is far better to destroy it in the first instance."

She also sends the following recipe for

Furniture Polish.

A cheap cleaning and polishing cream for furniture may be made up as follows: Shred half an ounce of white wax and two ounces of bees' wax into half a pint of turpentine, let it dissolve in a warm place; then pour into this a mixture made as follows: An ounce of pure white soap, a piece of resin the size of a nutmeg, and half a pint of water boiled together until melted. Mix the whole thoroughly together and keep in a bottle.

Mrs. Herbert Holt, 28, Jackson Street, Cheshire, writes:—"If 'Irish Molly' will wash and boil her husband's ink-stained linen until the stain looks like iron-mould, then put a little warm water in a saucer and place the stain in it, and when wet rub a little salt of lemon on the stain while in the water, and let it stand about thirty minutes, it will remove the stain. I have used this recipe very much myself, as I am a laundress, and often get things marked this way. The salts won't remove marking ink; it only removes the stains from ordinary ink."

TRADE UNIONS FROM AN EMPLOYER'S POINT OF VIEW.

By Edward Cadbury.

THE consideration of Trade Unions from an employer's point of view raises at once the problem of efficiency and discipline. It is urged by the employer who objects to Trade Unions that such organisations tend to interfere with the discipline and internal management of his factory. As a director having nearly three thousand girls under my management, it is my duty to see that the departments in my charge should be as efficient as possible; and it is just from this point of view that I advocate the formation of Trade Unions amongst them. The reasons for this attitude may be of interest.

The first requisite of efficient management is an adequate supply of intelligent workers who are content with their conditions of work and the remuneration received. This satisfaction with, and interest in, their work is an indispensable condition of proper organisation, without which efficiency is impossible. It is generally admitted by enlightened employers of labour to be a fact—although as yet the belief is far too seldom acted upon—that intelligent and contented labour, in a well-organised manufactory, will always compete successfully, both in quality of work and cost of output, with labour which is underpaid, dissatisfied, and physically inefficient.

The relation of efficiency with regard to rate of wages and conditions of work will be admitted by all who have given the matter careful consideration. It is necessary for all workers, and for girls and women in particular, that work-rooms should be well-ventilated and well-constructed, and that adequate sanitary arrangements should be provided. Wages are obviously the foundation of efficiency, as the amount of food, clothing, and house room must depend upon the individual worker receiving an adequate remuneration. It is my own experience that eight hours of strenuous labour is a long enough working day for an average girl. If she works longer hours than this, in a few weeks' time she begins to flag, and her output tends to fall back to its previous level.

If good discipline is to be obtained, there must be justice without favouritism, a high moral tone, a sense of self-respect, and *esprit de corps* among the workers.

Now in order to obtain these last two factors some kind of independent organisation such as a Trade Union is exceedingly helpful, and the question of hours, wages, just treatment, etc., should not be left to the whim of an employer or manager however good his intentions; and if the workers are to maintain their rights, a well-managed organisation composed of a large majority of employees is necessary. The educational effect of an organisation for common ends in developing a spirit of independence, foresight, and fellowship cannot be over-estimated. Anyone coming into contact with work-girls will always admire the heroic efforts made by many to preserve their self-respect, often in spite of great temptations; and whoever cares for his fellow men and women will welcome an organisation such as a Trade Union, which helps to foster this spirit. One must repudiate the idea which is sometimes found, that employers find the work and wages for their employees, that all the favours are received on one side, and that it is nothing less than impertinence for the women to desire any voice in regulating the conditions of their work or the remuneration they receive. In the case of a department having any grievance as to hours, pay, discipline, etc., just as an employer is entitled to be assisted by his staff in the consideration of the matter, so also it is only just that

the employees should have the most skilled assistance they can command in order adequately to state their case; otherwise they are unfairly handicapped in dealing with an employer who is so assisted.

Another point to be remembered is that a trade organisation does away with the friction due to petty complaints and prevents ill-considered strikes, since grievances can be discussed and remedied. The difficulty with unorganised girls is that they often act on impulse, and stop work without the slightest deliberation, without recognising the seriousness of the step they are taking or the damage they may do to themselves or their employer.

Amongst many philanthropic employers there is a development of what is known as welfare work. Social workers are introduced who are not ordinary employees, but who act as an intermediary between the employers and employed, especially with the idea of looking after the interest of the workers and of organising various social institutions for their benefit. But a damaging criticism has been levelled at this method of assisting the employees, to the effect that it is liable to undermine their independence. The best way to combat this danger is for the workers in factories where this welfare work is carried on to thoroughly organise themselves in Trade Unions, so that the benefits they receive may in no way undermine their strength of character or detach them from their fellow-workers who may not be so unfortunate.

I am delighted to note the progress that women's organisations are making, and I earnestly appeal to all classes of women workers to join their trade organisations, not only as a means of helping themselves, but as a duty they owe to their fellow-workers.

PRIZE OFFERS. NO ENTRANCE FEE.

All communications should be addressed Prize Editor, *Woman Worker*, Club Union Buildings, Clerkenwell Road, London, E.C., and should reach this office not later than February 24th, 1908. The Editor reserves the right to publish any communication.

How to Improve "The Woman Worker." Prize, Two copies "The Dolly Ballads."

We want your help and suggestions in improving the *Woman Worker*. Tell us what features of the magazine you like best. Tell us how you think it might be improved and made still more popular. A copy of the "Dolly Ballads" will be sent to each of the two readers who write the best letters, not exceeding three hundred words, on this subject.

Cooking Recipe Prize, 5s.

We again offer a prize of 5s. for the best cooking recipe or home hint sent in.

Debating Column Prize, 5s.

In our correspondence columns you will find several letters expressing views you may disagree with. For the best reply to one of these letters, or for the best letter opening up some fresh subject of discussion, we offer a prize of 5s. Communications must not exceed four hundred words in length.

PRIZE AWARDS.

Last month the Debating Column prize was awarded to "G. W.," Salford; the "Strangest Experience" prize to M. H. Bates, 106, Matcham Road, Leytonstone. The cookery prize award is given in the Home Hints column.

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the wrists, and there is feathering and lace at the neck. I tell you it can't be done, Mr. Perret, for less than threepence halfpenny. It's dirt cheap at that. It takes me four hours 'ard to do one, and then there's thread to pay for."

There's a murmur of sympathy from the waiting women behind. "Well, three shillin's," says Mr. Perret, suavely.

He waits a moment, but the girl's passion has already waned, and he adds, "You'd better put an extra tuck on the sleeves!"

The Simple Life - - - - Walt Whitman.
The True Atheism - - - - Russell Lowell.

Complaints and the Law.

PORTIA.

Talks with the Doctor

Dr. X.Y.Z.

Trade Union Notes

MARY R. MACARTHUR.

Women's Labour League

Mrs. J. R. MacDONALD.

Women's News of the Week.

girls as Mr. Perret. He is the concocter of the specious advertisement and—I discovered—the tenant of a small house at Maida Vale where "Nurse X" resides, in case any wary person should pay a personal visit to inspect the "54 articles elaborately tucked and trimmed."

Mr. Perret is not the originator of this brilliant scheme; that honour belongs to a more prosperous competitor,

* N.B.—The facts contained in this article are vouched for. Names are, of course, fictitious.—Ed.

The Box-Makers' Battle. *By J. J. MALLON.*

"THE work," said the foreman, "is unskilled. Any number of girls will undertake it eagerly at the new rates. Why should we concern ourselves about these?" Why, indeed! The hundred poor lassies without the factory, pulling their thin shawls round them in the cold, grey morning and chattering in their helpless, incessant way, must not look for a copper above their market price. How should they? Is box-making become an almsgiving? For their part the girls urged that they did not seek more than their work, and they reeled off the names of many firms who paid better wages than this one. If the listeners were sceptical, they called on one another for corroboration which came unflinchingly from Maggie, who had worked there, or Sarah Ellen, who would have done so, only she "took ill with the fever, and 'ad to go to the 'orspital."

Secondary arguments were based upon length and quality of service. "I've worked for the bloomin' firm ever since I was a kid," said one; "and I've worked 'ard." She coughed as she spoke, and a bright spot in her cheek suggested that perhaps her hard work was nearly over. Then a dozen voices broke in, each with a tale of long service and poor requital. One aspect of the dispute roused the deepest anger. There had been "speeding up" to complete Christmas orders, and the girls had responded, well-pleased with the thought of the additional shillings they would win. For Christmas this and that jollity had been planned. Then, a week before the feast, came the drear news of the reduced rates, and the vision of plenty—a full board, finery, a visit to the theatre with 'im—fled away. The girls almost wept over their lost carnival; they came to it again and again with a keen perception of the callousness that had shattered it. "W'y couldn't they w'ite till the New Year," one would say. "Ow'd they like to 'ave to pawn to git their Christmas dinner?" And in quick chorus would come the certain answer—"Not 'arf."

When we got to facts and figures, the girls were hazy. To a workgirl of this type statistics are "shadows, not substantial things." She will tell you the wages of a given week, but not "average" wages. It appeared tolerably clear, however, that for most of the girls the average weekly payment, taking the whole year into calculation, would be less than ten shillings. The reductions, by general agreement, would lessen this sum by a third. It is fair to state that the firm do not admit that there would have been reduction, but while one notes the denial, one is forced to believe that the girls would not be likely to face hunger and cold for an imaginary evil. Many girls were sure they would not be able to earn more than 6s. 6d. at the new rates, and, as one of them said at the meeting—"Girls in Southwark can't live proper on less than 'ite shillings."

The statement may be accepted without question. In the bleak, inconsequent streets of Southwark rents are very high. Proper life, even with the whole of a weekly eight shillings, must be somewhat difficult of attainment. It was a weakness that, of the 400 girls affected, some 300 were frightened by dread of starvation into submission, and that the unaffected departments held aloof. That this was so was no fault of the strikers, who tried by unwearied picketing and fierce argument to broaden the battle. "W'at do you git?" said a picket to a wretchedly thin girl from an unaffected room; "not more'n nine shillin', I know." "I don't git nine shillin'," retorted the girl, indignantly. "Then w'y don't you come out?" said the picket. She added a leading

question for the enlightenment of listeners—"You've got to work 'ard, haven't you?" " 'Ard?"—the girl interrogated turned in quick wrath—" 'Ard?"—she made an expressive gesture—"I'm tired now; I'm tired of me bloomin' life." Then she vanished and the gates closed.

The girls on strike went in the first instance to the office of the *Star* newspaper, whence they were sent to the headquarters of the Women's Trade Union League, in Clerkenwell Road. In the absence of Miss Macarthur, Miss Hedges, Secretary of the National Federation of Women Workers, gave them leadership and help, arranging meetings, raising money by appeal to Trade Unions, and getting the Press to give adequate notice of the dispute. Some of the girls had sustained severe injury from the machines at which they worked, and photos of their wounded hands were shown in the illustrated papers. This publicity doubtless affected the firm, and when Miss Macarthur returned to London she was able to secure access to the directors. Her negotiations paved the way to peace, which was definitely concluded at last between the directors on the one hand and Miss Macarthur and Mr. MacDonell, of the Southwark Trades Council, on the other. The girls are to resume at piece rates based upon a minimum weekly wage in each grade which the firm guarantee. They are not to be "victimised," and the branch of the Federation they have formed is to be recognised and its officials received by the directors. So the girls are back at work, and may enjoy the "proper" life defined by the girl who spoke at the meeting. Some day, maybe, "proper" will get an ampler definition.

HE WASN'T AN OPERA SINGER.

It does not ultimately pay employers to overwork and underpay their employees. Workmen who are haunted by a constant sense of injustice go sullenly about their task, taking little interest or pleasure in it. Work degenerates into drudgery, from which they are always glad to escape, and the quality of the work suffers.

A fur-coated gentleman in a first-class compartment signalled to a porter who was calling out the name of a wayside station.

"I wish you wouldn't bawl like that," said the traveller, "your voice jars on me—gets on my nerves, so to speak. You have a harsh, disagreeable, mechanical voice."

Glancing the gentleman up and down the porter retorted:—

"You can't get a blooming prima-donna opera-singer for seventeen bob a week."

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PAUL STREET, FINSBURY, LONDON, E.C.
M. GREGORY, Managing Director.

AN OLD ESTABLISHED TRADE UNION. Its Formation and Progress.

DEAR EDITOR,—The Liverpool Upholstresses Union has just celebrated its seventeenth birthday at the annual meeting held on January 6th. Our career as a Trade Union began in November, 1890. More than the usual share of difficulties and obstacles had to be surmounted. After much effort, Miss Owen and Mr. Tiplady got together twenty-six members, and the new influence began gradually to spread to others. The men's Union also rendered very valuable aid, and proved real friends in time of need.

Since the Union for women was formed, the conditions of labour have improved, both employer and employee being gainers. When members are out of work, they sign a book each morning at the Club-room. Employers send for lists of our unemployed members. In this way the former practice of advertising in local newspapers is abolished, and the employer knows he will be furnished with reliable employees. The Union pays out-of-work, sick, and funeral benefits. Association at the Club-room develops comradeship, and makes a girl feel less strange when she enters a fresh shop.

Quarterly meetings are held, at which many questions are discussed, including the financial statement and the progress of the Union. Nor do we forget the social side. The annual ball, which takes place in November, is usually a great success.

Since our formation we have had several advances in wages, and the hours of labour have been reduced. In May, 1892, we affiliated with the Women's Trade Union League, and since then have had regular visits from various organisers and the worthy secretary. These have enlightened us by contrasting the conditions in organised and unorganised trades. Thus we are enabled to better appreciate the value of unity.

I am sure that if in other trades, similar to ours, where women are employed at certain processes, the men who are Trade Unionists would lend a hand in organising the women (as the Upholstresses did in our case), they would hasten the day when the lot of all working men and women would be brightened by better conditions of labour.

I am glad that your energy and zeal have found another outlet in the Editorship of the *Woman Worker*. The magazine increases in value each month. It should be carefully read by every working woman. It will, I am sure, have the effect of inspiring all who have not yet joined a Trade Union to do so. A branch of the National Federation of Women Workers is badly needed in Liverpool. Dressmakers, etc., work long hours, receive low wages, and are subjected to unfair conditions even in the first-class shops.

From Liverpool we send kind greetings to the *Woman Worker*, and wish the magazine every success.

MARGARET E. SINCLAIR
(Secretary Liverpool Upholstresses' Union).

MEN AND WOMEN.

"I have found that the men who are really the most fond of the ladies—who cherish for them the highest respect—are seldom the most popular with the sex. Men of great assurance, whose tongues are lightly hung—who make words supply the places of ideas, and place compliment in the room of sentiment—are their favourites. A due respect for women leads to respectful action towards them, and respect is mistaken by them for neglect or want of love."—ADDISON.

WOMEN'S LABOUR LEAGUE. The Annual Conference.

THE position of the League has been very much strengthened as the result of the proceedings at Hull, at the time of the Labour Party Conference. This has come about in two ways. First the League delegates themselves met in conference, and such meetings help to give suggestions and inspiration to the members, and to show the outsider what our aims are. Secondly, the Labour Party agreed unanimously to the recommendation of its Executive that the Constitution should be altered so as to allow of the affiliation of the League. As the Labour Party has hitherto only admitted Trade Unions, Socialist Societies, Trades Councils, and Co-operative Societies, and as the League is none of these, we have only been able to help as an outside organisation; but we have in the short year and a half of our existence proved our organisation so useful and so capable of development that now a special provision has been made by which we can affiliate, and have our own resolutions and delegates at the next Annual Conference.

As the Executive of the Labour Party is elected by organisations, it is not proposed to give us a representative on the Executive; but we are so comparatively small and young that we can hardly claim this special privilege as yet. Mrs. Wilson, of Halifax, protested at our Conference against this limitation as a sex disability; but it was clearly pointed out that it was as a society, not as women, that we were not enfranchised, and that both sexes have always been on an absolute equality constitutionally in the Labour Party. Many of the readers of the *Woman Worker*, no doubt, are paying members of the Party through their Trade Unions or Socialist societies; women or men delegates can sit and vote with equal powers, and the Executive is perfectly open to women candidates, though none have stood up to the present. The Editor of the *Woman Worker* is now, I believe, more "plurally" represented in the Party than any other member, since she is affiliated through her Trade Union, Trades Council, Independent Labour Party, Fabian Society, and now through the Women's Labour League in addition.

But, in spite of these possibilities, women are still far from taking their full share in the political work of the Party, and it is to persuade and enable them to do this work that the Women's Labour League exists.

The Conference of the League was presided over by Mrs. Bruce Glasier, and attended by about thirty delegates, representing most of the branches which are now scattered about the country. Though last year's Conference in London and the inaugural Conference at Leicester were both full of go and enthusiasm, I think we can say that this year there was a still further improvement. The discussions were more general and more businesslike, and, indeed, the women received many compliments that they wasted less time and spoke more uniformly to the point than the delegates to the Labour Party Conferences.

Mrs. Glasier's address as chairman laid down both the practical and ideal nature of our aims, and emphasised the need for the union of workers of every sort in the League.

After the chairman's address came greetings from fraternal delegates. Mr. Robinson, of the Textile Workers, conveyed good wishes from the Executive of the Labour Party; Miss Macarthur from the Women's Trade Union League; Mrs. Macpherson from the Railway Women's Guild; and, later, we had a fraternal delegate from the Women's Co-operative Guild. Then came the reports of the National Executive and the branches, followed by a

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Mr. Perret is not the originator of
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longs to a more prosperous competitor,

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very useful discussion on the national and local work of the League, in which almost all those present took some part. Educational work, Trade Union work, election work, peaceful persuasion of town councils and other local bodies on matters affecting the interests of women and children, social gatherings, and last but not least the best methods of interesting the wives and daughters of Labour men who have not yet felt the absorbing call of our movement; these all engaged attention, and each of us learnt new possibilities of usefulness, and felt inspired to fresh efforts.

Then followed the first resolution, by which societies of women, such as the Railway Women's Guild or Women's Co-operative Guild, which are not eligible for direct affiliation to the Labour Party, may affiliate to the League if they are in agreement with its objects. Women's Trade Unions, of course, can affiliate with the Labour Party, so their members will continue to join us, only as individuals. That concluded a busy Saturday afternoon, and the rest of the resolutions were adjourned till Monday morning. On Saturday evening the League made itself even better known amongst the Labour Party delegates by inviting them to a reception, an invitation to which they very cordially responded. The local women undertook the arrangements for refreshment, and all went off most pleasantly. By the way, we have to congratulate the local League on having cleared nearly £30 by its bazaar, and so paid off its debts over the Guardians' Election and secured a nice little nest egg to help in future work.

On Monday we were at it again by ten o'clock, and discussed and passed resolutions on the most pressing social problems of the day. Unemployment, Old Age Pensions, Abolition of the Poor Law, Child Labour, Sweating, Feeding of School Children, the Living-in System, Women and Local Government, all were discussed from the special point of view of women with Labour sympathies. On the burning question of Suffrage we amicably agreed "That this Conference re-affirms its resolution of last year to leave individual members and branches free to work for Women's Suffrage on whatever lines they think best, subject to loyalty to the Constitution of the League." Some discussion took place as to the position of members of the Women's Social and Political Union, who take part in elections where a Labour candidate is running without definitely supporting that candidate; and Mrs. Glasier from the chair made her opinion clear that such political work was not in agreement with the constitution of the League.

We showed our international sentiment by sending greetings to the Labour women of Australia and of the International Socialist movement, and many of us followed up our labours at the League Conference by attending the meetings of the Labour Party.

At this Conference, the largest ever held, out of the 410 delegates only four were women, in spite of their full eligibility to attend. Two of these were from the Trade Union section: Miss Mabel Hope and Miss Gore Booth; whilst Mrs. Glasier and myself were amongst the Independent Labour Party representatives. No subject dealing specially with women came forward except the suffrage, on which the Adult Suffragist resolution was again carried by a large majority. But naturally men and women questions can be divided by no hard and fast lines, and all the industrial and social problems discussed are in reality of special interest to women. Next year we shall be able to send in resolutions and amendments from the Women's Labour League, and our Executive is instructed to make arrangements for consulting the branches on these matters. The new Executive is already preparing to make use of the additional opportunities for organising local Leagues, which we hope will follow from our official recognition in the Labour Party. Money and workers will both be needed for this, but with so much to do we have faith that both these will be forthcoming. At any rate, we are going to try, and we hope that we shall get help in our efforts from the readers of the *Woman Worker*.

MARGARET E. MACDONALD.

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SOME SPECIAL FEATURES IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:—

"MY EARLY DAYS in the FACTORY,"
by J. R. Clynes, M.P.

"HALF FARES FOR WOMEN,"
by Dennis Hird, M.A., Ruskin College, Oxford.

"PREJUDICES ABOUT PARLOURS,"
by George Haw.

"OUR WIVES,"
by George Lansbury.

TRADE UNION PARABLE,
by the Editor.