

The Woman Worker

Edited by Mary R. Macarthur.

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The Sketch of a Personality.

By A. Neil Lyons.



III. THE GREAT ADVENTURE.

One morning—a bright spring morning—"R. B.," aged twenty, walked to the brush factory. When he got there the gates were shut. He had been guilty of a chronological inexactitude, and had arrived five minutes after six o'clock. By the rules of the factory he was shut out for a "quarter"—that is to say, he could not enter and take up his work until after the breakfast interval at nine.

Being a philosophical young gentleman, Mr. Blatchford resolved to devote the period of his forced abstention from labour to the enjoyment of natural beauties. These, he assures me, existed in the neighbourhood of Halifax thirty years ago. Perhaps he speaks comparatively. At any rate, he walked and walked until he found some water and a bridge, where he rested and ate his breakfast. After which he leaned upon the parapet of the bridge and gazed upon the chimneys and the smoke of Halifax, which lay below him. Then, shifting his view-point, he gazed upon a different scene—a scene of rustic beauty. And being a philosopher, he philosophised.

"Why," he mused, "when there are trees and fields and birds and a blue sky

like yon, should one be compelled to spend one's life in a stinking factory in a stinking town beneath a dirty pall like yon?" And, being a philosopher, he again said, "Why?" And, being a philosopher, he found the proper answer, which was: "Why?"

Having been thus prosperously delivered of an entirely sound idea, Mr. Robert Blatchford promptly acted on it. He threw away the paper which had contained his morning's stodge, waved a long farewell to Halifax, and—walked to Hull.

Thus began the great adventure.

I do not know how far Hull may be from Halifax, or what the road is like, or whether "R. B." found it pebbly, or at what time he got to Hull. I only know that he got there. And found a friend—a brushmaker like himself, who worked at a brush factory in Hull.

Wild Oats.

And now there falls to be related a fact which will give great pain to the True and Faithful: a fact which will greatly surprise the student of "R. B.'s" psychology. At Hull, "R. B." did a thing which is obviously at variance with his true character. He did an unconstitutional, unpremeditated, irregular, eccentric thing. In defiance of all the rules and customs and regulations affecting the rights of man, he went to a brush factory and secured work as a skilled hand—he being still an apprentice. (A voice: "There ye are, Bill! There's yer jolly Socialist!")

It is true that he was penniless and had a young man's appetite; but he knows that that is no excuse, and so do I; and we are both sorry. He earned enough at the factory to keep himself and to save a few shillings. And he wrote home to Halifax, and was duly reproached and forgiven.

When he had worked in the factory for two or three weeks a gentle instinct urged him to depart. He was doing a risky thing. The consequences arising from its discovery would be rather grave. He had not been found out, but the danger of being found out would be lessened by his departure, and, as he had saved a little money, he packed up a little bundle and boarded a little ship and sailed to Yarmouth. From Yarmouth onwards his adventures ceased to support an air of comedy.

He had but little money, and he wanted to go to London. So he walked to London. The distance from London to Yar-

mouth is 124 miles: he walked it in about a week, sleeping in mean inns or hiring his bed at a cottage. And at last he got to London: to the city of Desire.

That which followed is an exceedingly antiquated story: a story of disillusionment, disappointment, and despair.

I could describe "R. B.'s" adventures in London at this time in my own fashion, but I am relieved from that gloomy task by the fact that they are all set forth by "R. B." himself in "A Son of the Forge"—that spirited story of Army life which Mr. Blatchford began as a sketch in the "Clarion," and which, to his own surprise and wonder, insisted upon growing—and growing—and growing—until it finished as a full-blown novel. I am not going to discuss the book at this stage, but I am going to quote from it—from Chapter VI., which is almost pure biography.

In a Coffee-House.

"R. B." tells in this chapter how, sitting one night in a dismal coffee-house, he was touched by the misery of a little starveling boy who was in despair for want of a halfpenny to make up the price of his "doss." "R. B." befriended the boy—whom, in the book, he calls Harry Fielding—and it was this lad who first put into his head the notion of enlisting. This is how "R. B." tells the story:

" . . . The idea that he might have given the boy the halfpenny did not seem to have occurred to the waiter at all. I asked him to call the boy back and send him to me.

"Then I counted my money. I had two shillings and a penny. Unless I found work to-morrow, I should be soon destitute. But this was a cheap house, and the beds only sixpence, so that I was still rich enough to entertain a guest.

The boy came back in a minute with the waiter. His name was Harry Fielding, and he appeared to be about fourteen years of age. He was very thin and pale, and his clothes were covered with white dust. I asked him to sit down, ordered him some tea, and waited for him to tell his story.

A Boy's Story.

"He had no parents. His mother had been dead five years. His father, a soldier, discharged as unfit for service, had died in Dover workhouse a month ago. The boy, after trying to enlist for a drummer, and being rejected owing to a defect in his left hand, had lived upon the charity of the soldiers in the Shorncliffe Camp until the provost had expelled him, when he set off and tramped to London.

"He had walked twenty-five miles that day along the dusty roads without food, and had sold his waistcoat and neckerchief for fivepence to a Jew clothes-dealer. He told me, with the ghost of a smile, how he had spent an hour in fruitless efforts to persuade the Jew to give him another penny, and how the waiter in the coffee-room had sent him out to beg for the same amount. 'But,' said he, with a sigh, 'I could only get a half-penny, and he wouldn't let me in until I had sixpence.'

"He was a quiet little fellow, and I was glad of his company. We shared our coppers while they lasted, and when they were spent we foraged for food by day and slept in the streets by night. Sometimes we got a box to carry, or a horse to hold, and earned a few pence by that. But bread was dear and times were hard, and we could barely keep body and soul together.

"I could get no work. Trade was slack, many men were out of employment, and my ignorance of the city, as well as my provincial dialect, were against me. I sold my spare shirt, then my waistcoat; then I sold my new boots and bought some old ones, netting a shilling on the exchange, but at the end of a week we were at the end of our tether, and starvation stared us in the face.

"It was Friday night, wet and dismal, and after many fruitless efforts to earn the price of a crust, we stole into a court off Drury Lane, and went to sleep in a doorway, which afforded some shelter from the rain.

"When I awoke in the morning I found myself alone. Harry had gone, and had pinned to my coat his note of farewell, written on a bit of the margin of a newspaper. The note said simply:

"Good-bye; I'm off. Thank you for being so good to me. Look to yourself. I will try the road. Keep up your spirits.—Yours,

HARRY.

"P.S.—If you can't hold out, try the soldiers."

Penniless and Friendless.

"It was useless to look for him. He might be miles away by this. I walked down to the dock gates and tried for a job; but there was a crowd, and the men shouldered me out of their way, each one trying to get first, and I was too miserable to fight. Why should I? What did it matter? I left the docks and wandered about the streets till nightfall, when I made my way to the police-office to ask for a ticket for the casual ward at Clerkenwell Workhouse; for it was raining, and the wind was cold, and I was wearied out."

"R. B." goes on to relate a strange adventure which befell him outside the gates of the police-station where he waited, in company with a host of other vagrants, for the gates to open. He sat down on the pavement, close beside a miserable woman:

" . . . She was a swarthy woman, her skin tanned by long exposure to the weather. She wore no bonnet, and was smoking a short black pipe. I watched her for some time, and thought what a bold, hard, wicked face she had, and at length, more from curiosity to hear her speak than from any desire for information, I ventured to ask her a question about the tickets.

"She turned upon me with a scowl, which gradually melted away as she looked at me, and at last said, not unkindly, 'What do you want to know for, boy? You're not going to Clerkenwell, are you?'

"I said I was. She sat smoking for a few minutes, then took her pipe from her lips, and stroking her chin with her great brown hand, said, very much to

my surprise, 'You mustn't; no, you mustn't. You're only a boy, and not used to no kind o' wickedness, I can see. Don't you go, boy; don't you go.'

"I have no other place to sleep," I said.

"Sleep on the Bridges."

"She shook her head. 'Sleep in the streets; boy, sleep on the bridges; anywhere but there. It's the worst workhouse in all London. No, you mustn't go.'

"'But you are going,' I hinted. 'The woman laughed. 'Oh, me,' she said. 'It's good enough for me. But you are different. Ah, don't be stubborn. Take an old woman's advice. It's a cruel place. Don't go, don't go.'

"'I'm not a child,' I said. 'She laughed again, not pleasantly, and answered, 'You know nothin', nothin'. I know all. Been through it all.'

"Then, very earnestly, she continued, leaning closer to me: 'Be advised, now. Be told. I know these places; and I've had sons of me own. Don't go, don't go. D'ye hear?'

"I rose up wearily from the pavement. 'I will take your advice,' I said.

"She nodded, and put the pipe back in her mouth. 'Good,' she said, 'good boy. Now you're talkin' and turned her attention another way.'

But of all the queer doings of that queer time, the queerest was the final doing: that which "did" "R. B." into the Army for seven years. He relates in this chapter how he fell in with a poor girl who asked him for some bread, and who, on hearing that he was as breadless as herself, said: "Well, blood's warm, chummy; come and sit aside o' me." "R. B." sat down beside her and watched her through the night.

"Very early in the morning the market carts began to rumble over the bridge. The child-woman awoke, and looked at me with a smile.

"'We must go,' she said. 'Early risin' an' late breakfasts is the rule in this hotel.' She got up shivering, and tried to straighten her hair with her fingers.

"'Where are you going?' I asked. 'With you, if you like,' she said. 'Neither of us has nothin', and we might as well share.'

"I shook my head. 'No,' said I, 'not that. Let me see if I can get a few coppers for you.'

"'You're not going to give me the slip?' she said. 'No.'

"'I'm nothing to nobody, I ain't,' she said, her eyes filling with tears; 'but you won't leave a poor girl all alone, will you, chummy?'

"I said I would come back if I was alive."

"R. B." lived and did come back. He came back with a shilling, the "Queen's Shilling," which he gave to her. He had enlisted at Tower Gates as a soldier.

We show a picture of him as he appeared in uniform when he had barely passed the recruit stage of his service. At the time when this portrait was taken he had just celebrated his twenty-first birthday.

(To be continued.)

THE CAUSERIE.

By Julia Dawson.

This is the last number of THE WOMAN WORKER that e'er this year shall see. I come to you in my Causerie, black and white. I come to you dreaming of luxuries to-day. Of a nice warm room and a bed soft and downy, whose clean white sheets reflect a red, red fire. I can fancy lying on such a luxurious couch, locking up to a frescoed ceiling, and dreaming sweet, sweet dreams that only come to women once or twice in a lifetime.

Instead of which I have to sit down before cold white sheets of paper, and a bottle of dead black ink, to stop my sniffling and snuffling, and try to convey to you—thoughts!

Ridiculous, is it not? Why cannot we meet and walk, and talk in old-world gardens where grow rosemary and rue? Do we not love one another well enough? And what are such gardens for, if not for you and me who love?

Nothing is better, I well know,
Than love; not amber in cold sea,
Or gathered berries under snow,
This is well seen of you and me—
Or ought to be, anyhow.

Yea, black and white. Twelve days in London. In twopenny tubes where it was hot enough to undress; in cold and clammy streets. In a cab with two illustrious friends, seeing through the foggy windows lines of men and women settling themselves in night's chill grey mist on **Street Benches to Sleep.**

In a mad motor-bus, which nearly slithered and dithered me into the world after next. By a crowd outside a shop waiting to buy Christmas presents. A crowd so vast that policemen had to cut it into chunks, and let one chunk only in at a time.

Black and white. Black and white. Some men and women without a copper to hire the poorest sort of bed to sleep in. Others so eager to spend superfluous cash that they would wait the policeman's discretion for hours rather than not spend it—on a cold, foggy night.

Oh, very black and white. In those twelve days I caught just twelve colds, and am now wearing them as **Irish Beggars**

wear their hats, one top of the other. They were black and white. To-day they are mixed up into a muddy grey, and the Curer of All Ills says he must straighten them out before ever I leave my happy home again. Selah!

A pretty way to begin a Causerie for the last issue of the year. I wonder what you think of the **Black and White World?**

What of all the years we have yet to face—the millions and millions on which we must leave our mark, willy nilly? How do you feel concerning these fateful years? Like a feeble little atom, frightened at everything—or brave and strong for every battle that comes?

Do you feel, as an American has expressed it, like **Prying the Year Open**

with a liquid jemy—in which case Nemesis will surely pinch you—or battering down its barriers with a battering ram, and winning all you want?

I hope you have courage, whatever else betide, and strength. For the battle is ever to the strong. And I hope you have the pluck, if need be, to stand alone.

That, I feel seriously, will frequently be the **Fate of "The Woman Worker."**

It will not think as other papers think. Nor do as other papers do. And when it stands alone it will want to feel you near—if you can conscientiously and courageously stand near, of course.

To-day, as I write this, I have found in my postbag some letters complaining of my **Spiteful, Vindictive, and Abusive**

attack on Suffragettes.

Now, I am not spiteful. Nor vindictive. Nor abusive. I am not built that way. It is not in my blood. But I am mindful of much and serious work that women have to do; and when I see other women hindering that work I must now and then speak what is in my mind. This sort of battle is a lonely one, and, like **Old Abe Lincoln,**

I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to what light I have. And so long as space is given me in THE WOMAN WORKER I shall write right up to that light, and not fall one single ray below it.

Some say I am not fair. Well, is the truth always fair? Some say my opinions are dangerous. An opinion that is not **Dangerous to Somebody**

is a gun that is not loaded. A Socialist opinion, for instance, is dangerous to a Liberal and a Tory, as well as to a Suffragette.

But shall we who are Socialists withhold our opinions because of these dangers? What would you, my comrades, what would you? We MUST be true.

There will be plenty more Suffragette letters, and perhaps the proper place to deal with them is not here. But I stand firm by anything I have written or spoken. And I may add that the steady, sober, and staid "Hospital" also deplores the "modern tendency to defy the neurotic, and to see in every **Hysterical and Unrestrained**

woman the champion of a cause, a kind o' modern Boadicea. This hysteria is bad for the country at large. It is not a good sign in any country to have irresponsible women using dog-whips in a moment which, were they of lower social status, would secure for them the punishment meted out to brawlers."

As for the male supporters of the campaign, the "Hospital" cannot view with any satisfaction the adherence of certain individuals of the opposite sex whose function seems to be that of **Complimentary Male**

so often noticed among crustacea! Here comes a letter after my own

heart. Mary Macarthur sends it along with a memo scribbled across the corner: "This will interest you."

Dear Miss Macarthur,—We are very much interested in the question of Women's Reform Leagues, but so seldom get an opportunity of attending any of the many meetings that are held from time to time, on account of the lack of information on the subject. We should certainly have thought that notices of these meetings would appear in THE WOMAN WORKER, but so far we have been able to discover two announcements only, the one appearing yesterday giving too short a notice for anyone occupied in business and having to make special arrangements for attending. We should be so glad if you could obtain and publish notices of these meetings in fairly good time, so that the women workers who read your paper may be able to attend.

In one of this morning's papers we read an account of a meeting which took place yesterday just close by in the City (Finsbury Square), and yet we were totally unaware that the meeting was to be held. We do not know how to obtain information unless through the medium of your paper, and we feel quite sure that the leaders of the various Leagues would be only too pleased to supply you with the necessary particulars.—Yours truly,

ANNIE E. BRODERICK,
MARGUERITE A. HOGGIBOTHAM.

1, Salisbury Terrace, Long Lane,
Church End, Finchley, N.

Of course it interests me. It is the very thing to interest all women. Where are all the Women's Reform Leagues, and what reforms are they after? If they will only make their objects known in THE WOMAN WORKER, they shall have our sympathy as far as we can give it. We are most anxious that THE WOMAN WORKER should be a *vade mecum* of women's work that is worthy everywhere. We may not always agree with every reform advocated by such leagues and societies. But that is no reason why we should not give them a show. And whenever there is a **Golden Bridge**

to be built across our differences of opinion, the building will be truly pretty and graceful work. That is how we shall live and learn.

The warmest corner in our heart will always be for the Common People. And we shall always be ready to fight their foes without any fear of danger or other consequences. What woman worthy the name is not ready to face death itself for a birth? We feel the need of a new birth for the Common People. We feel special sympathy for the Common People who are set by in a class by themselves to serve others. We feel it the more because service which ought above all things to be honourable and honoured is thereby degraded. We want eventually to abolish the **Serving Class.**

And the best way to do this is to develop that spirit of love and responsibility which will stimulate all to join it. I hope you understand.

A good man called Lentz wrote: "All the good things of the world come up from the people, grow up from below, from the roots, if you please. Even God Himself with all His chemistry, all His power, all His knowledge, has never been able to fashion a great man or a noble woman, either in the palace or in the castle. When He wants a Jesus of Nazareth He goes to the manger."

I do not quite agree with that, because nowadays we can point to some few great men and noble women who live in castles. Besides, I abhor mangers, and stables, and pig-styes for humans.

(Answers to Correspondents, page 774.)

An Apology.

By the Author of "Barbara West."

Can you ever understand people's kindness to you? I cannot. It is always, to me, among the wonderful things. I wonder at it so often that I could easily feel insecure, as unhappy people get into the way of being about their lives.

But, then, I wonder at flowers, and songs, and beautiful faces, and all else that makes the world a good place to live in.

When I cease to wonder I shall wish to die. I shall be, in fact, as good as dead already.

For life is a miracle. And kindness, which is a high grace done to us by other living and conscious beings who are part of the miracle, has always a surprising and flower-like beauty. Even at Christmas, when we are all agreed to be as kind as we can, you only grow aware of this more vividly. Custom cannot stale the fact. Kindness is of such an infinite variety.

Every gift and greeting has an aura of the person who sends it, and whom we love and wonder at as a phase of the miracle: it is a facet of that eternal gem which all beautiful shows and acts and feelings make of life.

People have been kinder to me this Christmas than ever before; and yet it was an unkindness that set me on this train of thought. Unkindnesses surprise us, too; and I began by reflecting on this element of surprise in both.

Why do we feel surprise? Some surprise always. When a really happy gift or greeting comes, we do indeed say, "How like him!" or "How like her!" But we also say, "How good of him—or her!" and we feel a certain surprise.

Well, it just means that we are all a little different from each other, and none of us can think or act like any one of the rest of us. The differences are what make life so interesting, keeping us awake to the wonder of it. And just for that reason, we ought to expect unkindnesses, and admit them. I said so to myself.

What is an unkindness to me may even be a kindness to someone else. This often happens. When I can see it so I am content. "Altro"—For Others—that is the comfortable motto of a Socialist, and of everyone who values peace of mind.

So before beginning to think about New Year's gifts, I will acknowledge (with some apology) the following letter, sent on to me in due course of work by my friend Julia Dawson:

DEAR JULIA.—I do wish Keighley Snowden was not allowed to spoil our dear *WOMAN WORKER*. We had to endure "Barbara West"—I suppose for the sake of its moral—but when that sordid story came to an end, it was really too bad for "K. S." to be allowed to crop up in a whole page last week, and in it to show that he can't observe the common decency of speech which one does look for in printed matter, of whatever class the speakers are supposed to be.

A coarse allusion such as you find in that page is unpardonable in any wholesome magazine intended for public circulation.—Yours truly, REBECCA HEELEY.

Now, there you have a real and surprising difference between two persons. But is it "unpardonable"? I am sanguine, and think it may not be.

To save space, I will first make humble

petition and prayer to Rebecca Heeley that, having endured so much from me for the sake of a moral, she will turn to what I wrote "For nice-minded women" on October 2, in reviewing a Book of the Hour. Clearly she has not digested that; has perhaps not seen it.

But I will also make my apology.

The story complained of was about a coarse and foolish and self-centred woman, managed by a refined and public-spirited daughter. There was a humorous but coarse man in it. The coarseness was not superficial. They lacked what cultivated minds know indefinitely as good taste. There is nothing to be said for them but that they were human: that I drew portraits faithfully.

Was there anything to be said for drawing them? Nothing, I think—if I had hoped merely to amuse indulgent readers or to indulge amusing ones. But I crop up in *THE WOMAN WORKER* because certain dear folk—quite as dear to you, too, as the paper can be—have done me the surprising honour to expect rather more than that. They may not get it, or get so much. But one tries to give it.

Now, my apology is that I cannot tell stories in such a way as to make everybody see them as I do. I am sure I cannot. I have had so many opportunities of learning that no two persons ever see a story alike.

I do not know to which "allusion" Rebecca Heeley refers. I am aware of none that transgresses common decency. But, then, I did not know that "Barbara West" could be called sordid—which means dirty, filthy, foul, vile, mean, or base. As I was happily reflecting, there are differences.

Rebecca Heeley is not invited to say what "allusion" offends her. It would not be nice to have to do so. I had doubts even about making this letter public, because it incites to a prurient consideration of details, which have no business to be stared at; but there is a point to be made about it.

She is not invited, either, to define "common decency." She cannot do that. Nobody can.

No, I am going to be quite frank and non-controversial. This is an apology.

In writing that story, my modest notion was to show a girl of inherited character and promise emerging from a coarse environment in contact with a better one; and to get a laugh, perhaps, at the expense of her origins. It seemed to me a hopeful subject. I know such girls. *THE WOMAN WORKER* is their paper. And I admire them.

But *THE WOMAN WORKER* is a dear paper of Rebecca Heeley's also, and she is different from either them or me. Moreover, the subject was one that you never see handled in a common English magazine. The editor of a common English magazine would not call it a subject. He calls a plot a subject; and it must be a plot with characters moving in "hupper suckles," or sweet and beautiful characters of some conventional type. Bright and wholesome,

I do not happen to take much interest in such characters. I see wholesomeness in commoner and unconventional life; even in coarse life. What interests me most is to find the root virtues in things considered evil. Propriety is not goodness. It is concerned with appearances: which are deceitful. Propriety is a phase of English civilisation: which is cruel.

More honesty seems to me kinder. I think one is not doing much amiss to write, if he can, "the thing as he sees it for the God of Things as They Are."

THE TIMID SOULS.

"You and I are at work on the same problem," said the Young Astronomer to the Master. "I have looked into the microscope now and then, and I have seen that perpetual dancing about of minute atoms in a fluid, which you call molecular motion. Just so, when I look through my telescope I see the star-dust whirling about in the infinite expanse of ether; or, if I do not see its motion, I know that it is on account of its immeasurable distance. Matter and motion everywhere; void and rest nowhere. You ask why your restless microscopic atoms may not come together and become self-conscious and self-moving organisms. I ask why my telescopic star-dust may not come together, and grow and organise into habitable worlds. It frightens people, though, to hear the suggestion that worlds shape themselves from stardust. It does not trouble them at all to see the watery spheres that round themselves into being out of the vapours floating over us; they are nothing but rain-drops. But if a planet can grow as a rain-drop grows, why then—

"These people have always been afraid of the astronomers," said the Master. "They were shy, you know, of the Copernican system for a long while; well they might be, with an *oubliette* waiting for them if they ventured to think that the Earth moved round the Sun. Science settled that point for them, at length, and then it was all right—when there was no use in disputing the fact any longer. By and bye geology began turning up fossils that told extraordinary stories about the duration of life upon our planet. What subtrefuges were not used to get rid of their evidence! Think of a man seeing the fossilised skeleton of an animal split out of a quarry, his teeth worn down by mastication, and the remains of food still visible in his interior, and, in order to get rid of a piece of evidence contrary to the traditions he holds to, seriously maintaining that this skeleton never belonged to a living creature, but was created with just these appearances; a make-believe, a sham, a Barnum's-mermaid contrivance to amuse its Creator and impose upon His intelligent children! Ten or a dozen years ago people said, 'Sh! Sh!' if you ventured to meddle with any question supposed to involve a doubt of the generally accepted Hebrew traditions. To-day—why, you may go to a tea-party where the clergyman's wife shows her best cap and her daughters display their shining ringlets, and you will hear the company discussing the Darwinian theory of the origin of the human race as if it were as harmless a question as that of the lineage of a spinster's lap-dog."—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

TITA BRAND: An Appreciation.

By Maria Redring.



Photo by Caswell Smith.

We all have certain experiences which lift us for awhile from the ruck of everyday life—moments of insight which help us through hours of gloom. And there are men and women who are as rocks in a weedy land.

Have you ever noticed a crowd at a public meeting, or a congregation in a church or chapel, when a much-loved man is speaking? Or a much-loved man or woman who breathes an ampler air than we who sit in rows listening, gaining as much from the sunshine of the presence as from the words we hear?

An Heroic Figure.

Such a personality is Tita Brand, the actress.

She has a noble presence, is a beautiful woman in the very prime of life, built on the robust lines of an Elgin Marble, with eyes like Hera, and superb gestures; the very incarnation of a bright, joyous existence. She suggests the heroic women of the past, Homeric heroines, Spartan heroines, the women of the old Sagas.

Yet I always think of her when I read of the women of the Golden Age to come—Morris's women and such as those that Robert Blatchford talks of in "The Sorcery Shop." Whether she sat breaking bread in the humblest cottage or queening it in some superb pageant, Tita Brand would be as completely "in the picture." She seems to belong to no one class, but is sister to all humanity.

Well may we of the Socialist Movement be proud of our comrade.

I went to Miss Brand's afternoon of recitations the other day at the Eolian Hall. It was a programme of many colours. She led us down with Dante to his dread Inferno, where Paul and Francesca da Rimini tell the tale of their love, and death, and woe. Cowley—seldom heard—had a place with his "Grasshopper," prince of summer, "epicurean animal." Samuel Butler followed on the "Rights of Woman"—seventeenth century woman. A scene from "Romeo and Juliet," and Kipling's

"Boots," an episode of the South African war, showed different aspects of Tita Brand's dramatic gifts, though at the moment one forgot all save the urgency of the themes themselves.

Her beautiful warm voice, full throated, went straight to one's heart all the while.

A bright thought struck me. I would ask this happy member of the band of woman workers to tell us how she came to choose the stage as a career, and one or two other interesting things. For all who have leisure, and care for the best in our English drama, know Tita Brand to be a very fine actress.

So I sat beside her and asked her a few questions.

Childhood.

"Cleopatra's death scene and Mercutio's death scene were my lullabies," she said, smiling gently. "Always on birthdays and all festive occasions since I was tiny I have learnt something to recite."

As a child, Miss Brand told me, she used to go regularly to the Bayreuth Festival, the Festival of Wagner's music held in the summer at the great opera house he built in that little South German town. Her mother, Madame Marie Brema, is among the most famous of Wagnerian singers, and a notable operatic actress. The little daughter would attend the rehearsals, even posing sometimes in the place of some artist who was absent.

I questioned her about the widow of the great man.

"Frau Wagner is a colossal dramatic genius," cried Miss Brand. "Never on the stage herself, she was an inspiration to all the singers, but a very autocratic one," she added, smiling.

It was Dr. Howard Furness, the well-known Shakespearean scholar, who first pointed the way to the Shakespearean stage. Miss Brand mastered alone ten rôles before attempting to gain any stage experience. A bountiful education for any young person—ten plays of Shakespeare with a big part in each by heart. The intoxicating part of Rosalind, who bubbles over with life and joy, was a great favourite. Volumnia was very dear, Katherine the Shrew, and Emilia in "Othello."

Elizabethan Women.

"Do you think," said I, "that women were broader and grander in the Elizabethan Age than now? Surely we have more Ophelias, fewer Portias and Rosalinds."

But she would not have Ophelia belittled. "She was not small, for she died of love," said Tita Brand. "There are many poor fashion-scrunched women to-day, but there are grand ones, too."

I looked at her noble face and quite agreed. The devoted friendships of Shakespeare's women for each other are her special delight. She spoke of Celia's love for Rosalind, of Hero and Beatrice, of Portia and Nerissa, reminding me of Jessica's testimony to Portia's greatness (which is omitted from the acting versions of the "Merchant of Venice") and

the different character of the admiration and love which both Nerissa and Jessica bestowed upon Portia.

Miss Brand has played forty-five parts and has toured with Benson and acted with his company at Stratford-on-Avon. She has also acted in German. Soon we may hope to welcome her back to the London stage; for she is to appear at the New Theatre as Catherine in "Henry of Navarre."

But Miss Brand's energies are not confined to her beloved profession.

Social Work.

She has spoken for the rights of women (of the twentieth century), and for the underfed children. Her pet scheme—the Brema Looms, named after her mother—takes up much of her time. It does not pay yet; but some day, she hopes, it will be on a "sound commercial basis."

Readers who have been to the Handicraft Exhibitions will remember the young girls in blue overalls sitting at the loom, and the fine show of stuffs and silks, and rugs, and other beautiful things which are all hand-made and good and worthy. Eight girls work regularly at the headquarters in Lupus Street, Pimlico. Lessons in weaving can also be taken there.

Every summer since the looms were established, Miss Brand has taken her little assistants away for a holiday, Mr. W. T. Stead having sometimes lent his house on the sea coast for this gay time.

TO A FRIEND.

She has a great unbounded sympathy,
A way of sharing sorrow and delight;
Grief seems to vanish at her witchery,
And joy becomes a treasure doubly bright,

Within her eyes such tender love-beams wake—

Sweet stars that but reflect a soul as pure

As Heaven's own sunlight on a silver lake,
From outer strife and taint of ill immune.

Queen of the home!—blest home to have such sway—

Whose rule is like a summer wind's caress,

For to the common world of every-day
She brings the Heaven of her unselfishness.

But most I love her when her soft, round arms

Enfold a baby-form: 'tis then she seems

Endowed with all the heart-delighting charms

Of some Madonna of an artist's dreams:

Her large blue eyes alight with mother love,

Her curving lips soft-parted in a smile,
Or cooing baby-language to the dove

Who nestles to her mother-heart the while.

Then in my heart strange mingled feelings swell,

As though some heavenly presence lingered near;

For when I see her thus no words can tell

How fair she seemeth, or how sweet and dear!

ROSE E. SHAWLAND.

All is changed the moment you descry
Mankind as half yourself.

ROBERT BROWNING.

Free Meals and a Tragedy.

HOW FELLOWSHIP FEELS UNLIKE CHARITY.

Being a Letter to Julia Dawson.

I intended having an afternoon's nap after a busy morning at housework, but have been reading your article and have caught your troubled spirit. I can understand you so well. Your heart is big and kind, and you feel so keenly that the slowness and hardness of the powers that be ruffle and trouble you sometimes. That is just how I feel to-day.

Being so much in sympathy with you I want you to listen to what is troubling me.

A few weeks ago it suddenly occurred to me that we would dispense with Christmas for ourselves and give a feed to some poor children. I pleaded so successfully with friends that it was within "practical politics" to be able to feed 800. And I went to seek my spot and my guests in Gateshead slums.

A Socialist friend who knows took me to a set of schools, and there I found the 800, all looking as if they wanted a meal at once. The schools were warm and brightly lit, but the sight of the pinched faces was enough to make one's heart bleed. I once taught starving children myself, but none like these.

Bitter Irony.

The big girls, trained by a beautiful gifted woman, sang two part-songs divinely; but—the irony of it all! They sang "Hail, Ever Smiling Liberty," "The Angel," and "Home, Sweet Home."

I fought with myself all the time, and wondered how our dear Nunquam would have felt had he been there. I felt bad enough—but he! I thought how their school days must end (they were all near 14), with all this sweet influence gone and nothing but their one-roomed or two-roomed "homes, sweet homes," and the sordid Gateshead streets before them.

Some younger children were listening to fairy stories—just out of themselves for the time being. But I saw the contrast.

And in the infant school, where the little ones were assembled for dismissal, what do you think greeted my eyes all round the walls? Dozens of Christmas puddings on dishes—holly and all—arranged each on a tiny blackboard—drawn in chalk!! For scarcely one of those clever little artists would there be the sight of a real pudding.

They sang "Jesus, the children are calling"—I daresay you remember the

words—and I felt like going mad meanwhile.

Wasn't It Terrible?

Then they said a pretty little prayer, asking for things they will never get and others they will never want. And after the mistress had bidden them step to the music "like little fairies," their little bare feet carried them away into the cold December streets, to shift for warmth, kindness, and food as best they might.

The Council will not adopt the feeding of School Children Act, and, according to the latest returns of attendance officers, there are 5,000 children starving in Gateshead schools.

The *furce* of spending money on big, well-stocked schools, with kind, lovely teachers, and all the time starving the children's bodies!

I am going to have a good, straight talk with those teachers, and find out why they are not Socialists. They kindly offered their services during the Christmas holiday to come and help along my party; they are always spending for the children, I hear; yet to an outsider it all seems lost. So will my tea; but I was going to give it for all that, and felt so happy at the prospect that I would not have changed places with anybody.

Greetings.

I do hope that this will not weary you. It was being mistress of a school in Southampton—a school of half-fed children—that began to make me a Socialist; my husband finished it. We are both red-hot ones now!

When Nunquam was at Newcastle, I had a talk with him. Tell it not, but it was one of the few honours of my life. He told me about taking you and Margaret Bondfield from the Free Trade Hall to speak to the unemployed. It was so nice to hear it, because for the first time I felt you all as live beings.

I do hope I shall one day see you, and then shall love you all the more. That is how I feel towards dear Nunquam. He is the inspiration of my life (but I did not tell him so). In all our conversation on Socialistic matters, my husband and I feel he is our unseen companion and guest by the fireside.

Heaven bless you, and loving hearts far and near continue to cheer and help you in your splendid work! That is the sincere wish of your comrade in arms,
ROSE ELSDON.

A SCOTCH STORY.

About the beginning of the present century, the then Campbell of Combie, on Loch Awe side, in Argyleshire, was a man of extraordinary character, and of great physical strength, and such swiftness of foot that it is said he could "catch the best *tup* on the hill." He also looked upon himself as a "pretty man," though in this he was singular; also, it was more than whispered that the laird was not remarkable for his principles of honesty. There also lived in the same district a Miss MacNabb, of Bar-a'-Chastril, a lady who, before she had passed the zenith of her life, had never been remarkable for her beauty—the contrary even had passed into a proverb while she was in her teens; but, to counterbalance this defect in external qualities, Nature had endowed her with great benevolence, while she was renowned for her probity. One day the Laird of Combie, who picked himself on his *bon-mots*, was, as frequently happened, a guest of Miss MacNabb's, and after dinner—several toasts had gone round as usual. Combie addressed his hostess, and requested an especial *lumper*, insisting on all guests to fill to the brim. He then rose, and said, addressing himself to Miss MacNabb, "I propose the old Scottish toast of 'Honest men and *bonnie* lassies,'" and bowing to the hostess he resumed his seat. The lady returned his bow with her usual amiable smile, and taking up her glass replied, "Weel, Combie, I am sure *we* may drink that, for it will neither apply to *you* nor *me*."

DEAN RAMSAY.

THE SOURCE.

I know not how it is with men: For women
There is no good of life but love—but love!

What else looks good is some shade flung from love;
Love gilds it, gives it worth. Do warned by me,
Never you cheat yourself one instant! Love,
Give love, ask only love, and leave the rest!

ROBERT BROWNING.

What creates the intense pleasure of not knowing? A sense of independence, of power—from the fancy's creating a world of its own.—KEATS.

The great secret of morals is love, or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person not our own.—SHELLEY.

LAW COURT IRONY.

By Beatrice Fry.

10.30 sharp, sir.
You turn up at that hour—and here ends the sharp of it as far as you are concerned. In the morning papers you may have observed in front of your case the weirdest of names as set down for hearing, and yet you seem to be coming first. Sometimes you do not come at all.

A Strange Scene.

The Law Courts are filled with frozen mystery. Such stuffy stuff! Judges and great men sit carved in marble in the long passages; not solemn, only fearsome people—of the black cellar and the slimy toad type, who dwell where wood takes on a sickly-sweet smell of rotteness, from want of light and air. The smell that you meet at the top of a dungeon, when the lid is opened for the lantern to go down, and to show you where prisoners used to be kept. There is water at the bottom of the dungeon, which comes from a moat.

The atmosphere of the Law Courts is bad, and in imagination you can fancy week-ends at Brighton on expensive powerful motors, diamonds, emeralds, gold mines, enormous dinners, and trusts—mostly articles of pleasure and luxury which, if carried to excess, take you straight into one or other of the waiting Courts.

If you are very young, you might think on entering you were going to church. There is a dimness and a little mystery, which might mean an organ. Swinging doors, uncomfortable seats with a faint recollection of up-to-date pews, with all the kneel removed.

The court is breathless with bad air: not one chink open to the real life-giving article. Look—say 60 men? Fifty will be wearing glasses. Queer little stiff grey curled wigs; black gowns with no certainty about the shoulder. The atmosphere is sickening with the fumes of undigested whisky and hasty tobacco. Men shuffle in and out. One poor whisky-drunk or drug-habited individual, with two pink strips on his degraded face, slept in a corner of a pew all one day; and he dreamt, and started in his dream, woke, and—the pathos of it—hoped no one had seen him.

Waste of Life.

The pitiful tale of human life, of time, and of money that fritter themselves away in these Law Courts! Clever dry-brained men spinning words, quibbling. Any costermonger would give it a name, quick.

Men yawn openly and fetch and carry antediluvian books, containing cases bearing fragments on the modern case.

Men arguing in this dyspeptic atmosphere. Easily could one be lured into spending days in this atmosphere, droning away existence. To those at the back of the court it is a drone. Elocution is not necessary here.

The Judge—he is rather nice, and he wears a neat wig with a straight parting. At long intervals he smiles; he is then quite nice; but he never says "Thank

you" to the man who plies him with pages and cases.

The Judge is wise. But why in the name of justice, Judge, do you allow counsel to drone away time—time which can never return? Half the time now spent might be saved if, instead of dragging cases through, sanity and common sense were applied with some enthusiastic fervour.

Think of the ante of this case. Some "right of way in dispute," a path you may have known all your life, a path which brings to your memory golden buttercups knee deep, moon daisies; a path which leads along a mill stream, where the scent of honeysuckle lingers, and where blue forget-me-nots thrive, and *nicorhens* cluck on their island nest.

Four brown spotted eggs or bits of dark fluff. The home was made on a passing branch, which stayed sufficiently long for the pair to think it worth while to build. The brown mill stream, the kingfisher, the water wheel mounted with diamond water drops.

Now this path has got in Number So and So Court, before Mr. Justice —, just because someone has died and someone else has forgotten the beauty, lost sight of it in his heart, and of the ways of the path, the air, the birds, the loveliness, and merely wants to score off a neighbour, to get his rights.

Many Kinds of Murder.

Or is it still another Court? "The Custody of the Child."

A dear little boy or girl life that has to be taken into this atmosphere and to have all its beauty dragged out and recorded in notebooks, to become antediluvian references. A little girl with threads of golden sunshine for hair, golden as the buttercups, and loving clear brown eyes, trusting to stay with Mother all her life.

Ay, why not, poor mother? For a second's foolish pleasure, why run the chance of the little one coming here? The brown-headed sturdy boy—he, too, is here with his brave strong neck held high, and the two firmly planted feet. He is so proud of Daddy! Why does Daddy chance parting with the like of him? Train him, man! make his character your life work, your sport, your pleasure!

This sight, these pictures, are quite as sad as those dear huddled forms on the Embankment. It is the wrong sort of love which has come to both.

Think of running in one person more than another for murder. What is murder? Sit in the lounge of any fashionable hotel: the question will easily be answered.

Beauty, sincerity, work, time, and love are all being murdered!

Self-love, ease, mockery, no reverence, imitations, big hats, vanity—these fill the Law Courts, and allow able men to waste the ticking time.

Every reform was once a private opinion.—EMERSON.

Poverty often deprives a man of all spirit and virtue. It is hard for an empty bag to stand upright.—FRANKLIN.

THE DEAD YEAR.

We can but weep a little time for thee,
O year that brought the roses of last June!
A tiny bar wert thou from Life's sweet tune
Gone into silence—sweeter yet shall be.

Spring in her arms shall bring the singers wild,
And thou wilt lie forgotten in the grave;
There is no mortal power on earth can save
From a like fate thy dear approaching child.

Yet deem us not ungrateful: during life
We gave our hearts to thee; thy last faint breath
Makes soft our eyes with tears for this thy death—
Who gave us sun-flowers twined amongst the strife.

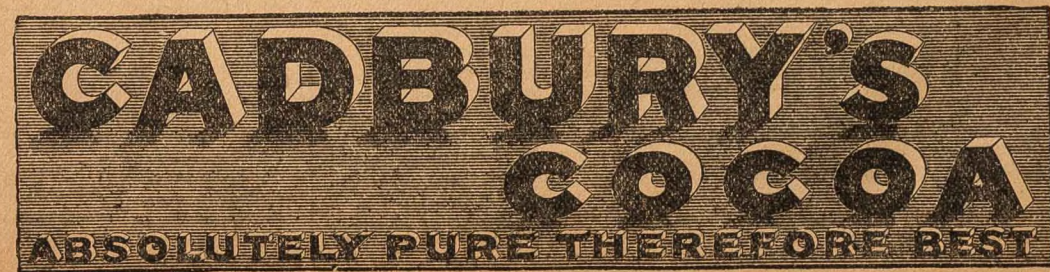
Thy starry eyes have lost their early light,
Thy amber tresses turned to dullest gray;
So we will kindly bury them away
And hide them from the hurt of scornful sight.

Is it not best to go as thou dost now—
When thy song ends to leave the world, before
They hurl thee with rude laughter from the door,
Who erstwhile loved the beauty of thy brow?

With peal of music here we lay thee down
Where thy unnumbered sisters calmly sleep:
We can no longer stay by thee to weep—
With loud hurrahs we haste the New to crown.
ETHEL CARNIE.

A BOARDING-HOUSE LANDLADY.

"Some has always been good to me—some has made it a little of a strain to me to get along. When a woman's back aches with overworking herself to keep her house in shape, and a dozen mouths are opening at her three times a day, like them little young birds that split their heads open so you can almost see into their empty stomachs, and one wants this and another wants that, and provisions is dear and rent is high, and nobody to look to—then a sharp word cuts, I tell you, and a hard look goes right to your heart. I've seen a boarder make a face at what I set before him, when I had tried to suit him just as well as I knew how, and I haven't cared to eat a thing myself all the rest of that day, and I've laid awake without a wink of sleep all night. And then when you come down the next morning all the boarders stare at you and wonder what makes you so low-spirited, and why you don't look as happy and talk as cheerful as one of them rich ladies that has dinner parties, and somebody comes and cooks their dinner, and somebody else cooks and put flowers on the table, and a lot of men dressed up like ministers come and wait on everybody as attentive as undertakers at a funeral."—O. W. HOLMES.



Misplaced Merriment.

By Keighley Snowden.

Now that it is past, I will confess that the festive season puts me in mind of Yorkshire Nonconformist weddings and the old Yorkshire burials, where they made right merry solemnly.

But for worlds I would not have had things go otherwise when my Uncle Nab died—except, perhaps, for Uncle Nab.

There was my cousin Bob Verity, for instance. The mourners wore "top hats" with extraordinary hatbands—broad ones, and so very long that, after being tied in handsome bows, they hung below the waist. At ten years of age my cousin Bob was a willing boy as ever made himself useful, and it is a happy memory that I helped him, however unskilfully, to iron the mourners' hats while they were eating and drinking. When William Murgatroyd—who was a good man—heard one of them talking afterwards about our work, he told him, I recollect, not to take the name of the Lord in vain. Then he found his own hat. He said, "Well!" and took it away and sat down and looked at it. He seemed to want not to recognise it. Anybody else, I think, might have claimed it. I remember him saying he had had it fowerteen year, and it had never looked like that afore.

What a burying it was! Old Sally, my Aunt Verity's housekeeper, said we should burn in hell for what we had done to the hat of a good man like William Murgatroyd; and I thought it probable, and watched the remaining ceremonies with the fear of death upon me.

There had been two hams and huge piles of muffins, and a tea urn, and glasses and decanters, and a roomful of black figures eating and drinking in a dreadful silence; but Bob had got me from the door, and kept me much too busy for thinking. When Sally had explained to us the frightful enormity of our mistake, and Bob was gone away somewhere, pretending not to care, and I saw William Murgatroyd sit looking at his hat so doubtfully and sadly, it seemed to me a very awful day, and I was sorry for everybody. I wondered a good deal what had become of my Uncle Nab.

I have wondered, since, what other people thought had become of him. For I call to mind scraps of conversation of dubious import. He had been everybody's friend; but he had also been his own enemy, and that is the sort of thing a dead man was punished for in those days. Still, they did him very well, I fancy.

The most perplexing things said about my Uncle Nab were dropped in the way of condolences by Martha Umpleby, who still sat with my aunt when the others were gone. They made me very uneasy.

"Eh, well," said Mrs. Umpleby—her face, I thought, shone just like the buttered muffins, she was so stout and smooth—"Eh, well, it's a mercy he deed in his bed. It is. It's a mercy. . . . It's a mercy he deed in his bed. It is that. . . . I say it's a mercy, Selina."

I took it that my Uncle Nab had been trying to get up; for he was very lively, and did unlikely things. Perhaps they had had to hold him down, I thought.

My aunt, with a handkerchief to her mouth, was looking at the table,

"I've done my part, choose how," she began to say. "I said to mysen, as soon as t' breath left his body, I said, 'Well, I'll bury him right, if it cost me thirty pounds.' How did yo' think th' ham tasted?"

"That I hed tasted vara nice," said Martha; "but I were thinkin' o' when he were young an' drave that cow into th' church. I'm seure he did that o' purpose; I can see him now, Selina. Eh, dear-a-dear!"

"Well, I gav' a shillin' a pund for 't," said my aunt, thinking of the ham.

"I knew by t' way he took his cap off. Directly I saw him I knew. I did. I said he'd never come to no good end, an' I call 't a mercy, Selina."

She stroked the front of her black silk dress down calmly, and I was fascinated, as if she were denouncing judgment on me, too. I wanted to ask her questions. But whether my aunt did not listen, or wished to forget her sorrow, or felt that there was nothing about my uncle so extraordinary as her own forbearance, this was all she let me hear about the cow or my uncle's end.

"So I hope they all hed what they wanted," said my Aunt Selina, bursting into fresh tears unexpectedly. "I were up while three o' t' clock bakin' an' cleanin', an' then I dar'n't go upstairs, I were that seure I s'd see him. Yo' knaw, he allus said," she explained, controlling herself a little, "'at he reckoned nowght o' grand buryin's; I mut ware no brass on him, he said. Yo' don't think he'll walk, do yo'?"

She was a pale little woman, anxious always about something.

"Ther's one thing," said Mrs. Umpleby, "I'm fain I wo'dn't hev him. I am that. I couldn't 'a' done w' sich a man at all. Gas-actin', an' carryin' on, an' niver at peace a minute—all pinwire."

"It's a pollar oak coffin," my aunt sobbed; "I did think it looked beautiful—an' t' best shroud they could mak', an'—an' t' nightshirt 'at he wed me in, Martha. Did yo' taste o' t' cake?"

"I niver do eyt cake, but I will say, Selina Verity," said Mrs. Umpleby at last, "yo've done your duty i' that station 'at yo' were called to. Hed yo' fowerteen coaches, or fowerteen?"

"Eh!" cried my aunt. "Bob said ther' were nineteen! Eleven empty, he said."

"I niver counted 'em, but Dick o' Sam's, at t' Green Man, he hed seventeen, an' they hardly looked to me as mony. But if yo're payin' for nineteen—"

"I'm paying for a score!"

"Well! It's a mercy," said the comforter, once more. "It is."

I never saw my Aunt Verity so little reassured. Her watery eyes came round to me in undisguised alarm, as I sat playing with a kitten.

"Did yo count 'em, barne?" she asked; and as I could not satisfy her, she jumped up—I see her quite a little woman beside the other—to go and ask Sally.

But at the same time the door opened, and the doleful figure of that good man William Murgatroyd appeared with his

hat on, introducing Bob. Bob was looking savage. He shook himself clear of the hand that pushed him in, and scowled at Martha Umpleby.

"Tell your mother what yo've done," said William Murgatroyd; who also addressed himself to this calm personage.

"Some mak' o' mischief, I'll a-warrant yo'," my aunt said sharply to us all. "Martha says ther' nobut fowerteen coaches, William! I niver heard o' sich a thing: did ta count 'em?"

William Murgatroyd answered solemnly, taking off his hat: "He's been at 'em w' watter an' a hot iron. That's what he's done."

"Eh, if iver!" snapped my aunt. "Did ta count t' coaches?"

"No!" he said. "But—"

A smack sounded through the room, and my Aunt Verity, brushing past him, had vanished from our midst. Bob stood holding his ear and grinning.

"Well!" said Mrs. Umpleby, serenely. Whether my Uncle Nab had gone to heaven or not, and what had happened about his bed, and how many coaches there had been—these things I never heard. The kitten ran after my aunt, and somehow all was over.

"Ther's been more folly, and more drink sopped, and more stuff etten to-day," said William Murgatroyd, sitting down again, "nor I've knawn sin' I bowght this hat for my awn mother. Hae yo' seed what a crowd ther' is at t' door?"

I went with Bob to look at the crowd. It strikes me now with some compunction, but I went quite joyfully, and saw two mourners laughing at each other's hats.

LITERARY LADIES.

As to the position of the body when at work, that is as you please. I generally found George Eliot doubled up on a sofa, her legs under her, a heap of robes, and a pad on her lap. I read that Mrs. Browning always wrote in bed. I know that Mrs. Wagner—Madge Morris—does; while Miss Coolbrith writes, she tells me, on her feet, going along about her affairs till her poem is complete, and then writing it down exactly as she has framed it in her mind. Harriet Prescott Spofford writes on a pad in her lap in the parlour, under the trees with a party, takes part in the talk as she writes, and is generally the brightest of the company. Lady Hardy told me she could only write with her face to the blank wall, while Mrs. Braddon, the prolific, showed me her desk bowered in her Richmond Hill garden, where she wrote to the song of birds about forty popular novels.

JOAQUIN MILLER.

GOOD AND BAD LUCK.

Good luck is the gayest of all gay girls,
Long in one place she will not stay,
Back from your brow she strokes the curls,
Kisses you quick and flies away.

But Madame Bad Luck soberly comes
And stays—no fancy has she for fitting—
Snatches of true-love songs she hums
And sits by your side, and brings her knitting.

JOHN HAY (after Heine).

I believe that Socialism will set free the soul of man.—VICTOR HUGO.

UNMARRIED MOTHERS.

A Protest Against Prudery.

DEAR JULIA DAWSON,—First let me heartily welcome you to THE WOMAN WORKER. Your page was the one thing lacking. "Now," I remarked to my neighbouring worker, "we're going straight ahead."

Second, I want to talk about Daisy Lord and Ethel Harding, and all the other girls in such extreme case that they can put out the life which has nearly cost them their own. Julia, dear, how can we stop it? I cannot bear it; I cannot; and I will not be quiet about it any longer.

This particular tragedy has formed the theme of countless poems, plays, and novels, but we have not learnt how to avert it. To-day it is as tragic as when Goethe wrote "Faust." Do you not think we married women ought to look this shameful thing fair in the face; call a spade a spade; go right down to the root of the evil and see what is the matter? It is a question for us happy, sheltered child-bearers—the case of those without the gates.

What to Say.

If women were not such tremendous hypocrites, if we were not so frightfully conventional, we should say to the poor girl before her extremity:

"My dear, do not worry; you have broken the social law, but not the laws of Nature. Society will punish you, but Nature will not; by and bye you will have that wonderful, glorious, holy thing come into your life, a human being to whom you are indispensable—more so than if you were licensed by marriage—and who will love you and work for you. You may live to bless the day, as many another has done, when you gave birth to an illegitimate child.

"You must look forward to that; your duty and your happiness are bound up in this new helpless life; and we, we married women, who understand, will help you, now and afterwards."

Do you think that, if even one woman spoke so, such poor girls would not be comforted? And what decency or morality in heaven or earth would be violated by this course?

Nearly all the people who were indignant over Daisy Lord clamoured that the man should be punished too.

Yes. But how? There are dozens of illegitimate babies born every week in this country. There are also dozens of fathers of these babies who fully recognise their responsibility and marry the mothers; yes, and many a noble lad has sacrificed his career to make amends—for very often the couple are entirely unsuited for each other. There are dozens more who, while they cannot marry, admit their responsibility and discharge their obligation. We must not forget that.

Hypocritical Morals.

But such is the hypocrisy of society that these more fortunately-placed mothers are much sooner forgiven by society and rehabilitated into "decency" than those who suffer the added wrong of desertion.

Socialists aim at the cure of evils, not merely to make evils bearable. How,

then, can we women keep out of the clutches of the seducer such girls as Daisy Lord and Ethel Harding? How can we prevent evil men—for the man who deserts the woman in this case is actuated by the basest motives—from betraying innocent girls? Surely this were better than trying the impossible task of punishing them too!

By safeguarding the girl? Yes. Who is supposed to do this nowadays? The mother—the immaculately chaste British matron, who is too supremely virtuous even to mention things of sex to her own daughter.

"Sheltered."

Oh! I have no patience with this woman. "She never tells her girls anything of that kind. Certainly not." She can let her daughter walk out a bride from her home—her "sheltered" home—without telling her of one of the vital facts of her new life.

If we wish girls to be chaste, let them be the guardians of their own virtue.

What do poor things tell lady guardians when they enter the Union to be confined? "He told me it would do me no harm"—and she believed him. Do you think she would if her mother or guardian had told her the truth? Would she accept his word against her mother's?

Doubly armed with warning and knowledge, a girl would distinguish at the outset the difference between the advances of the seducer and the love of a decent man.

Do you not think so?—Bestest love.
Yours ever,
Lincoln. CATRIONA.

A LULLABY—TO HELEN BLANCHE.

WHILE my lovely babe is sleeping,
Thro' her dreams are fairies peeping?
Do they shake their elfin locks
When the cradle mother rocks?
Hush, my baby: stay thee sleeping;
Mother loves, and watch is keeping.

How the zephyrs play about her!
They would die away without her.
Pretty stories do they whisper,
To my darling little lisper?
Hush, my baby: stay thee sleeping;
Mother loves, and watch is keeping.

When the rain is quickly falling,
Are the little sparklets calling,
As they on the window patter,
To my babe to join their chatter?
Hush, my baby: stay thee sleeping;
Mother loves, and watch is keeping.

When in sunshine she is sleeping,
And the sunbeams come a-creeping,
Do they creep beneath her lashes,
Light her dreams with golden flashes?
Hush, my baby: stay thee sleeping;
Mother loves, and watch is keeping.
MAY WESTOBY.

Numbers are every day taking more pains to be well spoken of than what would actually enable them to live so as to deserve it.—STERNE.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Before Will Fern could make the least reply, a band of music burst into the room, attended by a lot of neighbours, screaming, "A Happy New Year, Meg!" "A Happy Wedding!" "Many of 'em!" and other fragmentary wishes of that sort. The Drum (who was a private friend of Trotty's) then stepped forward and said:

"Trotty Veck, my boy, it's got about that your daughter is going to be married to-morrow. There ain't a soul that knows you that don't wish you well, or that knows her and don't wish her well, or that knows you both and don't wish you both all the happiness the New Year can bring. And here we are to play it in and dance it in accordingly."

Which was received with a general shout. The Drum was rather drunk, by-the-bye; but never mind.

"What a happiness it is, I'm sure," said Trotty, "to be so esteemed! How kind and neighbourly you are! It's all along of my dear daughter. She deserves it!"

They were ready for a dance in half a second (Meg and Richard at the top); and the Drum was on the very brink of leathering away with all his power when a combination of prodigious sounds was heard outside, and a good-humoured, comely woman of some fifty years of age or thereabouts came running in, attended by a man bearing a stone pitcher of terrific size, and closely followed by the marrowbones and cleavers, and the bells: not the bells, but a portable collection on a frame.

Trotty said, "It's Mrs. Chickenstalker!" and sat down and beat his knees again.

"Married, and not tell me, Meg!" cried the good woman. "Never! I couldn't rest on the last night of the old year without coming to wish you joy. I couldn't have done it, Meg: not if I had been bedridden. So here I am; and as it's New Year's Eve, and the eve of your wedding, too, my dear, I had a little flip made, and brought it with me."

Mrs. Chickenstalker's notion of a little flip did honour to her character. The pitcher steamed and smoked and reeked like a volcano; and the man who had carried it was faint.

"Mrs. Tugby!" said Trotty, who had been going round and round her in an ecstasy—"I should say, Chickenstalker—bless your heart and soul! A Happy New Year, and many of 'em, Mrs. Tugby!"

To the music of the band, the bells, the marrowbones and cleavers, all at once, and while the chimes were yet in lusty operation out of doors, Trotty, making Meg and Richard second couple, led off Mrs. Chickenstalker down the dance, and danced it a step unknown before or since, founded on his own peculiar trot.

So may the New Year be a happy one to you, happy to many more whose happiness depends on you! So may each year be happier than the last, and not the meanest of our brethren or sisterhood debarred their rightful share in what our great Creator formed them to enjoy.

CHARLES DICKENS.

If you form in your heart a good intention, although you may not have done any good, the good spirits follow you.—Taoist's "Book of Rewards."

A Bard at the Braes.

By Margaret McMillan.

All night the storm raged, but morning came with smiles. The sky laughed behind the thunder. And in the Bay of Portree, where three yachts had shone all night with glimmering lights, there were no boats at all, but only laughing water.

From daybreak the little town had throbbed with life and joy. There were lights in some of the houses over the cliff, and in the hotel and little inns during the dark hours. But now the streets were filled with men and women, all in their holiday best, their faces wreathed in smiles—smiles behind which there was the echo of wrath.

Everyone sympathised with the prisoners returning home. Everyone longed to greet them. And so eager was their joy that the people forgot, or postponed, their anger against the landlords and their minions.

It is strange to wait for a boat, long-expected, and bearing those who have been in sorrow or danger. Stranger to look over the wide, cruel sea and think of the warm and gallant hearts that can bring it through the storm and the reeling hills of water.

The Islesmen mariners have surely little to learn about the sea and its anger. Their coasts are sewn with underground rocks and riddled with whirlpools. Why, then, do they look with keen eyes and lean from the landing-stage with anxious glances? It seems as though they could not wait for the little steamboat that is carrying the crofters home—the steamboat that rolls and pitches so that the tourists are half-terrified, but which offers but a tame way of travelling to the fishers of the Isles.

At last they catch sight of it. A dim, swirl of grey and a red point that grows bigger. Then a white gleam below.

It is the little "Staffa," and a deep chorus of greeting sweeps down from the shore. Women in tartan shawls, and wearing the crest and thistle brooches, stand quiet in the streets, and two beautiful girls from the Braes wipe the bright tears from their faces. Their father is coming home. But through the hush comes from afar the sound of bagpipes—far, far away over the water, very faint, but sweet and strange as the kiss of the long-lost and half-forgotten. A surge of emotion goes through the crowd, and the cheering is hoarse with half-strangled tears.

But the little "Staffa" breasts the waves now as if encouraged. Up the blue water hills she mounts, casting her silver trail wider behind her, and her smoke streams wide now, like a brave pennon. Nearer and nearer comes the pipe-music, faster and faster grows the pace of it. Everyone in Skye must know that only Colin can make such music.

Now they can see the prisoners, standing all together in the prow and waving their hands. And close by them is Mairi of the Songs, with her kerchief flying.

With what a swing the men at the landing sent the stepping ladder over to grip the "Staffa"! And when, in single file, the prisoners stepped ashore,

what a shout there was! There was much behind its joy, and yet this crowd postponed everything else to a feeling of happiness.

A band of young men drew up, raised the prisoners to their shoulders, and carried them to the hotel where Prince Charles, once a fugitive, sheltered, waiting for the boat that would take him to Raasey.

Where brave Flora MacDonald went to find him, a lover and, perhaps, as brave a Flora entered now, and welcomed her father home!

Mairi was received with no less enthusiasm than the prisoners.

She looked so joyful that it was impossible to think she had any misgivings. But perhaps she had misgivings, for Genius can see far. It is full of strange intuitions. No matter; Mairi sang lovely songs, and told tales from that day such as she had never before imagined.

The Crofters Bill was soon passed, to be sure, after these grave doings. If you go now to the Braes you will learn that Benlee is the grazing-ground of the townspeople, and that their right to it is not at all likely to be disputed.

If you enter one of the little homes you may see girls of bewildering beauty who speak in low, soft voices and treat every stranger with infinite tact and gentleness. The walls are plastered, but not, perhaps, the ceiling. The mud floor is not very even, and the peat fire throws its warm glow on everything. There is meal in the great wooden kist near the fire, and there may be scones on the girdle.

The girls are in service in Glasgow, perhaps. They have taken an amazed glance at the extraordinary luxury of the mainland, without as yet losing their own manners, and they help with their parents, stinting themselves to give them comforts.

And, close by, there are poorer neighbours—very poor, very wretched. In Scionscer, across the water, typhoid breaks out now and again. Pale, ghostly people come to the smoke-filled opening which they call a door, and you creep, if you do not suffocate easily, into a smoky hole, over which the wild, strong heather and grasses wave as if in triumph.

The rickety boats are the only hope of the people; for the men go out in them and catch fish at times. They have no mackerel or herring nets, but they catch little fish sometimes, and they live somehow.

The Government has given land to some of the crofters, but the terms are a little difficult.

"After many years our sons or grandsons may be peasant proprietors," says a fisherman crofter settled in one of these holdings. "Meantime the rent and taxes are heavy. I am in debt. And will the young people want to stop here?"

The young people do not always wish to stop there—though they love home and kinsmen.

"I would like to go away," the young man says. "I could always be a soldier."

And the girls go away to be servants. It is a national waste, for they are fitted, by reason of their early environment, for the highest and best kind of intellectual work. But, as yet, no one has solved, or even come near solving, the land question (which is at the root of all the other "social" questions).

The land question was raised in Scotland through the religious rising of the Disruption. It was solved in so far as churches are concerned, but not in so far as homes and labour is concerned. Perhaps the women workers will help to solve it. Mairi did not solve it.

LIFE-CHANGE.

For three thousand years two blocks of white marble have juxtaposed their white dreams against the background of the Attic heaven. Congealed in the same naçre, tears of those waves which weep for Venus, two pearls deep-plunged in ocean's gulf have uttered secret words to each other. Blooming in the cool Generalife, beneath the spray of the everweeping fountain, two roses in Boabdil's time spoke to each other with whisper of leaves. Upon the cupolas of Venice two white doves, rosy-footed, perched one May-time evening on the nest where Love makes itself eternal.

Marble, pearl, rose, and Love all dissolve, all pass away: the pearl melts, the marble falls, the rose fades, the bird takes flight. Leaving each other, all atoms seek the deep crucible, to thicken that universal paste formed of the shapes that are melted by God. By slow metamorphosis, the white marble changes to white-flesh and the rosy flowers into rosy lips, remoulding themselves into many fair bodies. Again do the white doves coo within the hearts of young lovers, and the rare pearls reform into teeth for the jewel-casket of woman's smile.

And hence those sympathies, imperiously sweet, whereby in all places souls are gently warmed to know each other for sisters. Thus, docile to the summons of an aroma, a sunbeam, a colour, the atom flies to the atom as to the flower the bee. Then dream memories return, of long reveries in white temple pediments, or reveries in the deeps of the sea, of blossom-talk beside the clear-watered fountain, and kisses and quivering of wings upon the domes that are tipped with balls of gold; and the faithful molecules seek one another and know the clinging of love once more.

Again love awakens from its slumber of oblivion, vaguely the past is reborn. The perfume of the flower exhales and knows itself again in the sweetness of the pink mouth; in that mother-of-pearl which glimmers in a laugh the pearl recognises its own whiteness; upon the smooth skin of a young girl the marble, with emotion, recognises its own coolness; the dove finds in a sweet voice the echo of its own plaint—resistance becomes blunted and the stranger becomes the lover. And those before whom I tremble and burn—what ocean billow, what temple-front, what rose-tree, what dome of old knew us together? What pearl or marble, what flower or dove?

THEOPHILE GAUTIER
(Lafcadio Hearn's translation).

The world is not governed by ideas, but by feelings, to which ideas serve only as guides.—HERBERT SPENCER.

A BOOK OF THE HOUR.

The Elf-Boy of Selma Lagerlöf.*

Selma Lagerlöf is Sweden's greatest writer now. She is not well known in England, but she soon will be. By the time you have heard something about her latest book, I think you will be ready to believe this, and eager to read "The Wonderful Adventures of Nils."

Myself, I was well prejudiced to give this modern fairy-book a welcome. We northerners have a dialect inherited partly from Norse forefathers; and, besides, I am intolerant of fairy-tales that came to us with a bad old civilisation. They do more than most people realise to spoil young minds incurably for democracy and freedom. What do we want with all that glittering Eastern rubbish of jewels and princesses? There is nothing much more immoral in English literature than some of it. I should like to put Cinderella's prince in the kitchen and strange Morgiana.

But I can set prejudice aside, and see that the story of Nils is going to live by its merits.

This is not because it was written as a school reader, on a commission from the Swedish National Teachers' Association, but because it has rare imaginative quality and a beautiful sympathy with living things. Nils is another kind of Mowgli, a better kind; his adventures throw him with the weak things against the strong ones. And instead of the Jungle, he is made free of the mountain tarns and skerries. Folk-lore is woven in with bird-lore, too; Nils never long forgets his people.

What happened to him was this. (He was fourteen years old, long and loose-jointed and tow-headed, and he was not good for much—just a healthy young animal of a farmer's boy, whose chief delights were to eat and sleep, and after that to make mischief.) Being left at home one Sunday to read Luther's Commentary, he had the luck to spy the family elf sitting on an old oak chest, and the rashness to go for him with a butterfly net. The elf gave him a box on the ear at last, and it settled him. It made an elf of him in a twinkling, and a farmyard gander flew away with him to join a flock of wild geese on the spring flight to Lapland.

As you may understand, this rather put him on his good behaviour. He had to make himself useful or he might have been dropped anywhere. It was not difficult, because he had elf-sight, whereas the geese were obliged to sleep o' nights in the safest places they could find; and because they had an anxious time of it with Smirre Fox. There were things a human boy could do, though only as big as your hand. When Nils was cold the gander tucked him under his wing.

He could understand and talk the bird-talk and the animal-talk, and so he got some new ideas.

Selma Lagerlöf spent three years at Nature-study, travelling all over Sweden to see things for herself; and the story is

* "The Wonderful Adventures of Nils," by Selma Lagerlöf. Translated by Valma Swanson Howard. 6s. London: Arthur F. Bird.

just what Richard Kearton might have written if he had been a scer and a literary genius as well as a warm-hearted and passionate observer.

There is not space to show that very well here—to follow the geese and Nils into wild places, and fascinate you with their perils and pleasures, and deeply interest you in the way they managed to live and do great things. I can only give you a taste of the book's quality as a fairy-tale; and, with this very limited purpose—for it is packed with indirect teaching of all sorts—I have chosen a story that comes quite early, before the migrants got away far north.

It is about a thing that happened in Skoané, at a farm where they had caught a she squirrel and put her in a pretty revolving cage.

The squirrel was uneasy. She never turned the wheel, and she touched no food; and every now and again she uttered a shrill cry.

"It's probably because she's frightened," said the farmer-folk. "To-morrow, when she feels more at home, she will both eat and play."

Meanwhile, the women were making preparations for a feast. But there was an old grandma in the house who was too feeble to take a hand in the baking. She felt rather down-hearted, and for this reason she did not go to bed, but seated herself by the window and looked out.

They had opened the kitchen door on account of the heat, and through it a clear ray of light streamed out on the yard; and it became so well lighted out there that the old woman could see all the cracks and holes in the plastering on the wall opposite. She also saw the squirrel cage, which hung just where the light fell clearest. She thought it was a strange sort of unrest that had come over the animal; but she believed, of course, that the strong light kept her awake.

As the night wore on, the old grandma saw a tiny creature no bigger than a hand's-breadth cautiously steal his way through the carriage-gate. He was dressed in leather breeches and wooden shoes, like any other working man. The old grandma knew at once that it was the elf, although she had never seen him before; and an elf, to be sure, brought good luck wherever he appeared.

As soon as the elf came into the stone-paved yard, he ran right up to the squirrel-cage. And since it hung so high that he could not reach it, he went over to the storehouse after a rod, placed it against the cage, and swung himself up—in the same way that a sailor climbs a rope. When he had reached the cage, he shook the door as if he wanted to open it; but the old grandma did not move, for she knew that the children had put a padlock on the door. The lady squirrel then came out to the wire-wheel, and the boy and she held a long conference there. And when he had listened to all that the imprisoned animal had to say to him, he slid down the rod to the ground, and ran out through the carriage-gate.

The old woman did not expect to see him again that night; but he came back and made himself very busy. He had something in each hand, and, carrying up the rod with him one of these things at a time, he kicked so hard on the glass of the cage with his wooden shoes that he broke it and put them in through the hole. Then he was off again.

But now it was the old grandma who could no longer sit still in the cottage; but who, very slowly, went out to the backyard and stationed herself in the shadow of the pump to await the elf's return. And there was one

other who had also seen him and had become curious. This was the house cat. He crept along slyly and stopped close to the wall, just two steps away from the stream of light.

They both stood and waited long and patiently, and the old woman was just beginning to think about going in again when she heard a clatter on the pavement, and saw the little mite of an elf come trotting along once more, with a burden in each hand as before. That which he bore squealed and squirmed; and now a light dawned on the old grandma. She understood that the elf had hurried down to the hazel-grove and brought back the lady squirrel's babies, so they should not starve to death.

The old grandma stood very still, and it did not look as if the elf had noticed her. He was just going to lay one of the babies on the ground, so that he could swing himself up to the cage with the other one—when he saw the house-cat's green eyes glisten close beside him. He stood there, bewildered, with a young one in each hand.

Then he became aware of the old grandma's presence. Then he did not hesitate long, but walked forward and stretched his arms as high as he could reach, for her to take one of the baby squirrels. . . . until he came back for it.

How she was laughed at next day when she told the tale, you will understand. But she made them look into the squirrel-cage, and the four young ones appeared certainly to be some days old.

When the farmer himself saw them, he said, "Be it as it may with this; but one thing is certain, we on this farm have behaved in such a manner that we are ashamed before both animals and human beings." And thereupon he took the mother squirrel and all her young ones from the cage, and laid them in the old grandma's lap. "Go thou out to the hazel-grove with them," said he, "and let them have their freedom back again."

I say that that story is enough to make the book lovable. A fig for Cinderella!

How Nils helped the old black rats to make another stand against the brown rats, and rid the sheep on Little Karl's Island of three ravenous foxes, and saw the storks' dance and the city at the bottom of the sea, and did and underwent many other unusual things, you must get the book to learn.

Judging her on this book, my personal preference is for Selma Lagerlöf over Hans Christian Andersen. That is much to say; but it seems to me that a boy who was to know only one or the other would have enough with Nils, and would grow to be a better citizen than all those humorous fancies of Andersen's could make him, that have no such intimate relation to life and no such humanistic spirit.

KEIGHLEY SNOWDEN.

THE DEAN'S WISH.

Stella this day is thirty-four
(We shan't dispute a year or more).
However, Stella, be not troubled,
Although thy size and years are doubled
Since first I saw thee at sixteen,
The brightest virgin on the green;
So little is thy form declined,
Made up so largely in thy mind
O, would it please the gods to split
Thy beauty, size, and years, and wit!
No age could furnish out a pair
Of nymphs so graceful, wise, and fair;
With half the lustre of your eyes,
With half your wit, your years, and size.
And then, before it grew too late,
How should I beg of gentle Fate
(That either nymph might have her swain)
To split my worship, too, in twain?

DEAN SWIFT.

An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy.—South Country Proverb.

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A Family Problem.

Mr. Newly-Wed (indignantly).—"I told you to send everything to the laundry. What's the use of getting your hands in that condition? You'll be old before your time!"

Mrs. Newly-Wed.—Yes, I know George, but we can't afford it, and I might just as well do some of the lighter things myself."

Anty Druidge—"What foolishness! Use Fels-Naptha soap and do them all at home. Take Anty's advice. It's putting your hands in hot water that chaps them, and the everlasting rubbing on the washboard that causes them to swell."

Fels-Naptha soap purifies the clothes, which alone is reason enough why you should wash with Fels-Naptha. Everybody knows that water may look perfectly clear, yet contain countless disease germs. Likewise, it is true that fabrics may be washed till they look perfectly clean, yet not be purified.

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THE WOMAN WORKER.

DECEMBER 30, 1908.

The circulation of "The Woman Worker" last week was 28,000 copies.

The Last Word.

The Select Committee of the House of Commons which has been considering the question of the admission of strangers to the Galleries with a view to the alteration of the regulations has made one recommendation that will be welcomed by all women interested in Parliamentary proceedings. That is the suggestion that the ordinary Galleries should be opened to women as well as men.

It is the beginning of the end. Should the House endorse the unanimous finding of its Committee, it is certain that the historic Grille will eventually disappear.

I remember that, commenting in these notes at the time on the exploit of the Women's Freedom League, which led to the closing of the Galleries and the consequent appointment of the Special Committee, I remarked that the compulsory removal

of portions of the Grille on that memorable occasion was perhaps prophetic.

But I did not then expect the prophecy to be fulfilled so soon.

Irreverent and Irrelevant.

The anxiety of the scientific world to periodically spring strange and surprising discoveries upon a startled world is becoming—like the famous cow which was always falling through the roof—a trifle monotonous.

It seems but the other day that appendicitis was invented, and we learned with horror that the only cure was the ruthless cutting away of an unnecessary part of our anatomy.

Nature, it appeared, had made a mistake.

Now it seems likely to appear that the mistake was not Nature's after all. It has just been discovered in experimenting at a London hospital that the much-abused vermiform appendix has its definite uses, and medical science will doubtless proceed to define them.

This may be all very well for the scientists, but I wonder what Keir Hardie and the King and all the other victims think of it.

Place for the Professor. However, it was not appendicitis, but "suffragitis," that I started out to write about—which just shows how easily one may be led away, and with what disastrous consequences!

To return to our muttens. Professor A. E. Shipley, Reader in Zoology of Cambridge University, writes to the "Times" to announce another scientific discovery of great importance. The militant Suffragists, it appears, are victims of "tarantism," and in their present agitation we are witnessing a revival of the dancing mania of the Middle Ages—that is, "a revival of these recondite mental disorders which afflicted so many western countries from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century."

Fancy that, now! I had no idea that zoology could be so interesting, or the "Times" either, for that matter.

All Explained by Zoology. But let us pursue this most edifying subject. I do not mean the Professor—the Fates forbend!

The disease, we are told, has certain unmistakable symptoms, such as "howling, screaming, and jumping"—there is an infant in this railway carriage who is evidently a victim—"a marked preference for certain colours"—can this explain, dear Winifrid, your penchant for green?—"the persistent, monotonous, and rhythmical utterance of a word or short sentence, and the abandonment of self-control."

At last we understand the problem of man's conduct at election times.

CURRENT EVENTS.

At last the mystic cry of "Tompkins for Tooting" is explained.

Professor of Zoology at Cambridge, our thanks!

Exit the Editor.

Next week is the first in the New Year, and next week THE WOMAN WORKER will appear under a new Editor. It is to one who is an old friend of my own—and, indeed, of most of us—to no other than Mistress Julia Dawson, that I right gladly hand over the chains of office.

And I must add, dear Julia (for far be it from me to deceive you), that they are, of a surety, chains—chains that have riveted me oft-time to my desk when I would fain have been a-fighting in the open field.

The Reason Why.

Strange as it may sound, it is because the woman worker calls me so loudly, so insistently, because she will no longer be denied, that I must give up THE WOMAN WORKER.

One cannot be agitator and editor at the same time—and I—well! It is not that I choose to be, but I am agitator first.

Au Revoir.

But, dear people, it is not good-bye. We women workers in mill, factory, workshop, or office are to have our special corner in this paper, where we may meet each other and voice our many grievous wrongs and plan how they may be righted.

But no more shall letters to the Editor of undeserved praise and well-deserved blame—or, worst of all, of problems so perplexing that only a Solomon could grapple with them—bring early grey hairs to my unhappy head.

These, dear Julia, be thy portion evermore.

And so a Good New Year to one and all of us.

MARY R. MACARTHUR.

The eight-year old child of a Bethnal Green wood carver named Peters was burned to death last week through wearing a flannelette frock.

DAY OF PUBLICATION.

Every week "THE WOMAN WORKER" is now published so as to reach all newsagents on

WEDNESDAY.

Readers who find that they have to wait until later in the week for it should show this notice.

There are thousands of little children in London alone who want boots. Last Christmas 27,664 pairs were distributed by one organisation to the bare-footed mites, and this year as many were needed. Mere babies may be seen in the muddy streets with their feet wrapped in sodden rags, or wearing old twisted skeletons of shoes that evidently belong to their mothers.

A widow who works as a blouse-maker at Limehouse has to keep herself and four children, her weekly earnings being seven shillings. Is it any wonder that her little ones want boots, and that she herself wears out her shoes walking to and fro daily to the warehouse to fetch work?

It is interesting to note, however, that certain fashionable ladies in the "smart set" now display

A Girdlet of Gems

on the heels of their dainty shoes, and that for each of her silk stockings the up-to-date woman keeps a tiny scent sachet of silk to match, which she folds into the toes when the hose come back from the laundry. The same perfume is repeated in the case of her shoes. The blouse-maker has evidently made a mistake in not belonging to the "smart set."

A procession of hungry-looking, gaunt men is passing the window. They look dispirited and disheartened, and there is nothing picturesque about them. The banners stating that they are "Unemployed" and that they "Want Work" are dirty and weather-stained, and hardly merit a glance from the passer-by.

A number of men belonging to the St. Pancras unemployed were summoned recently for taking a collection in the streets. Their leader, a man named Mutch, said none of the men had asked anyone for money. It was given to them quite voluntarily, and altogether they had collected £8 odd, each man receiving 2s. 9½d. Several of the defendants were old soldiers, and all of them were

Willing to Work.

These misguided men are not mindful of their privileges. At least, they are not prevented from voting by sex disability. They should remember that they have not the right to demand work to provide bread for themselves and their families. When the Suffragettes organise a procession they deck themselves in purple, white, and green, making

A Bright Little Patch of Colour

in the middle of the thoroughfare. Hundreds of dainty flags are unfurled, and they march to the music of a band. Their leaders are borne in triumphal chariots drawn by white horses, and are accompanied by lady riders on fiery steeds. Apparently they want nothing so little as money, but when a collection is taken at one of their meetings, the contributions amount to nearly £300. Why do not the unemployed take a leaf out of their book?

The Lord Mayor is still appealing for funds to avoid the necessity of using the rates for feeding the necessitous children of London.

One grave objection to using the rates, the appeal states, is the danger of driving away voluntary workers, together with the absolute certainty of setting up a vast army of officials. The cost of administration would be enormously increased without providing for any more necessitous children, and to prevent this "huge waste of public money" the appeal for funds is made.

Lest the City Corporation should be suspected of meanness, we hasten to state that £1,802 0s. 9d. was spent on entertaining the King and Queen of Sweden at the Guildhall during their recent visit. But they, of course, are not necessitous.

Croydon Town Council decided, to a chorus of hisses and cries of "Shame!" from the public gallery, to reject the proposal that a sum not exceeding £1,000 should be provided out of the borough funds in providing food for insufficiently-fed children in the elementary schools.

The shops are full of good things, poultry, game, and luxuries of all kinds.

A Ton Weight of Strasburg Pies

was landed from a single boat at Dover, and many tons were imported at Christmas, while the special import of champagne for the season was valued at £20,000. The little ones, however, are too ignorant to appreciate such fare. They want quite simple dishes, such as hot soup, jam roll, and plum pudding. Some of them would be more than satisfied with plenty of plain bread and butter. Perhaps if their palates were more highly educated it would be easier to cater for them.

Mr. Lloyd George states that a person disqualified for an old age pension through having received poor relief during 1908 will (even if not receiving relief during 1909) not be eligible for a pension till after December 31, 1910.

A poor old widow of eighty, who fifty-four years ago was

A Young Nurse in the Crimean War

with Florence Nightingale, is ineligible for an old age pension on account of having received parish relief. She has not been thrifty enough to keep herself off the rates. She might learn a lesson from the Duke of Westminster, who, although he inherited about £14,000,000 from his grandfather, and owns more than 30,000 acres of land, does not neglect small economies. It is stated that he has permitted his land agent to give notice to estate pensioners over seventy years of age, advising them to apply for Government pensions, as the Duke's weekly allowance will not be paid after December 31.

Long queues of famished women and

(Continued on next page.)

children may be seen any day outside the doors of restaurants waiting for the scraps of food that fall from the rich man's tables. They are sold cheap or even given away, and for hours eager applicants will stand in the cold on the chance of a share of the spoils! It is gratifying to know that two thousand guests will assemble for supper at the Savoy on

New Year's Eve.

Supper at Claridge's that night will be, as usual, only half a guinea, so it is to be hoped that there will be plenty of pieces for the poor on New Year's Day.

A doctor in Southwark said at an inquest on a baby the other day that high rents were the cause of more misery and misfortune than drink, and, moreover, were the cause of drink to a large extent. The father of the child had been out of regular work for a twelve month, the mother earned 5s. 6d. weekly at charring, their joint income being 14s. 6d., out of which 8s. 4d. was paid for rent.

A correspondent in an evening paper urges that the

City Churches

should be thrown open for the housing of the destitute poor. But landlords everywhere are complaining of houses being empty, and there are plenty of vacant sites on which to build dwellings for those who cannot afford to pay exorbitant rents. Miss Sybella Gurney stated at a public meeting last week that there was as much land in Surrey claimed by the owners to be building land as would house the whole population of England and Wales.

"Per foot" and "per rod," for land made by God. For places to work, sleep, and feed in. Thousands of acres, by man's foot and hand, for foxes and pheasants to breed in.

An elderly woman, named Mary Ann Owen, died last week at Islington Infirmary. A police-constable found her seated on a doorstep in Eden Grove, Holloway, ill and helpless. She said she had "no home, friends, or money." The constable knew her as a hawk of lavender, some packets of which she carried in a small basket. She expired nine hours after her admission into the infirmary from pneumonia, due to exposure and neglect.

If there is

Little Demand for Sweet Lavender

we may take comfort from the thought that a brilliant tiara formed of graduated sprays of foliage with buds of brilliants was sold at Christie's last week for £1,580.

There is really no scarcity of money (although Mary Ann Owen had none), for Mr. Wertheimer at a recent sale gave 7,000 guineas for two settees and twelve chairs covered with rich old Gobelin tapestry, and more than three thousand pounds for a smaller suite.

The Premier Diamond Mine at Kimberley showed a slight decrease in values this year owing to the falling off in prices of low-class diamonds, but the chairman of the De Beers Company was able to state that their

Resources were Infinite,

and the future was very hopeful. The diamonds in the hands of the company were valued at £1,500,000, and another yield of £8,000,000 was anticipated after washing expenses had been paid.

HUSBANDS WHO DO HOUSEWORK.

Servant Problem in New York.

An American professor of political economy recently propounded the maxim that no family with an income of less than £1,000 a year ought to indulge in the luxury of keeping a domestic servant. Add that nobody is to have more than £1,000 a year, and there would be no "problem."

As to the problem in America, the New York correspondent of the "Daily Mail" tells an interesting story of people with incomes of from £400 to £600, more than one-quarter of which they spend on rent. "The men of the households could be seen before breakfast staggering beneath ash barrels and garbage cans which it was their duty to deposit on the pavement ready for the dustman. Occasionally they would seize a spade and clear some of the heaped mud and filth from the gutter which the street scavengers habitually neglected; and in the winter their matutinal tasks would include the sweeping of the snow from the doorstep and the section of the pavement immediately in front of their residence. "Then they would march cheerfully to the elevated railway, take their places in a train crammed tight as the Black Hole of Calcutta with passengers, and at the end of their journey spend tenpence for a shave and sixpence in having their boots polished before appearing spick and span in their business offices.

"The American of this class is a domesticated creature. His day's work in the office at an end, he does not consider himself entitled to rest from his labours until he has consoled his wife for the dearth of servants by himself taking a hand in the kitchen at washing and drying plates.

"Naturally, this is a function which becomes wearisome at times, and then the husband takes his wife to a restaurant to dine, and spends a day's earnings on the meal. Occasionally, too, he visits a theatre, buying tickets for six or eight shillings apiece."

INSPECTION OF CHILDREN.

Respecting the question as to how parents' objections to the medical inspection of their children under the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act are to be met, the Board of Education have answered an inquiry of the Ilford education authority.

The Board, while not expressing any opinion on the general question, advise local education authorities to refrain from pressing the matter in any case where a parent objects, unless it is found that the child is in a condition detrimental to the other scholars.

When the advantages of medical inspection become better known, it is hoped that objections will become less numerous.

"Meanwhile, the authorities and medical officers should adopt an attitude of conciliation towards the susceptibilities of parents, which method will probably secure a more speedy, and in the long run a more universal, acceptance of the system of medical inspection than by the use of stricter means towards prejudiced persons. Particulars of exceptional cases are to be reported to the Board."

THE GOLDEN YEAR.

We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move,
The sun flies forward to his brother sun;
The dark earth follows wheeled in her eclipse;
And human things returning on themselves
Move onward, leading up the golden year.

Ah, tho' the times when some new thought can bud
Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,
Yet seas, that daily gain upon the shore,
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,
And slow and sure comes up the golden year.

When wealth no more shall rest in mounted heaps,
But smit with freer light shall slowly melt
In many streams to fatten lower lands,
The light shall spread, and man be liker man
Thro' all the seasons of the golden year.

Fly happy, happy sails and bear the Press;
Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;
Knit land to land, and, blowing heavenward,
With silks and fruits and spices clear of toll
Enrich the markets of the golden year.

But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal peace
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
Through all the circle of the golden year?
TENNYSON.

FRENCH MANNERS.

The art of society is, without doubt, perfectly comprehended and completely practised in the bright metropolis of France. An Englishman cannot enter a salon without instantly feeling he is among a race more social than his compatriots. What, for example, is more consummate than the manner in which a French lady receives her guests? She unites graceful repose and unaffected dignity with the most amiable regard for others. She sees every one; she speaks to every one; she sees them at the right moment; she says the right thing; it is utterly impossible to detect any difference in the position of her guests by the spirit in which she welcomes them. There is, indeed, throughout every circle of Parisian society, from the chateau to the cabaret, a sincere homage to intellect. In England, when a new character appears in our circles, the first question always is, "Who is he?" In France it is, "What is he?" In England, "How much a-year?" In France, "What has he done?"—DISRAELI.

If there is anything that can't stand free discussion, let it crack.—WENDELL PHILLIPS.

There is no doubt that we are all brothers in grief; but we shall never again be brothers in life and fact till we are once more brothers in fun and farce.—G. K. CHESTERTON.

CRISP CORRESPONDENCE.

Communications intended for the paper should not be addressed to any individual by name, but only to the Sub-Editor; the individual may be absent, the official is always present.

Readers who have anything to say to the writers of articles should, on the other hand, address them personally. They will encourage the writers and lighten the Editorial labours. Letters are most likely to obtain publication when brief.

Personal and sharply controversial letters can rarely be inserted. They lead to long replies and rejoinders, for which we cannot spare the space.

The publication of letters in this column is not to be understood as implying that the Editor is in sympathy with what may be said by the writers.

LORNA.—Equally besmirched if she had married Varley? Keighley Snowden thinks so. Don't you?

T. H. D.—We do not criticise verses offered to us; there are such demands on our space already!

J. P.—Good of you. The news about Dr. Wright is very sad.

G. H. J.—Held over.

F. W.—Yes, there seem to have been Socialists at unawares since the world began; and that is a fact full of hope.

Fellowship and Soup.

Dear Madam,—How is it that some Socialists, though we are always running the soup kitchen down, copy their methods? For instance, it is always pea soup.

If I were starving, I do not think I should always care for the same thing. Why not give the poor creatures a change, such as rice, barley, haricot beans—which are all so very nourishing? It is no more trouble to cook them.

A WOMAN SOCIALIST.

"In Bradford the meals are scientifically prepared, so as to give the greatest amount of nourishment required; they are varied, so that the same meal only reappears after twenty-one days; and they are pleasantly served."

The Vote for All Women.

Dear Madam,—I am sorry there should be so much mistrust among writers for your paper concerning the attitude of the Women's Suffrage societies towards women workers. I am sure no one who was present at the meeting of the Women's Freedom League at St. James' Hall could have a doubt as to the sincerity of that society in wanting to remove the evils surrounding us on all sides. They do care about the conditions of working women, and the wrongs under which women and children suffer.

The present Franchise Laws may be bad, they are as men have made them; women, however, are not prevented from voting because the Franchise Laws are bad, but because they are women, and when this injustice has been removed, then will be the time to work for the right of all adult men and women to have a voice in the government of the country.

It is true that if Mr. Stanger's Bill became law, giving women the vote on the same terms as men, the majority of married women would still be debarred from voting, but—and I am sorry to say it—I believe it is the majority of married women who are not interested in the question.

I think motherhood and the care of the home constitute the highest claim to the vote; yet I believe that more harm than good would be done if these women voted, because their votes would simply go to swell the forces of reaction.

If only some women (municipal voters, lodgers, etc.) were enfranchised at first, I feel sure that the women who are now indifferent would be roused to enthusiasm, and Adult Suffrage would soon be won.

Of course, it is rather hard on the married women who are not indifferent, and who really care about the things that matter, and I should like to hear what others of your readers think about this.—Yours faithfully,
FRANCES E. THOMAS.

74, Revelstoke Road, Southfields, S.W.

Dear Julia.—We are told by the partisans of the franchise movement that it is a much deeper and broader question than mere electoral reform, and that the "Votes for Women" cry is only a symbol of this more serious matter.

If this be so, it would interest many if some woman (preferably an official speaking with authority) would state categorically what it is that they want. We have heard and read plenty of flowery language, but we have not yet had any definite, business-like statement of their aspirations.

If you could get such a statement, in plain language—a charter, reciting their demands, with a 1, 2, 3—it would clear the air, and we should know where we were.—Yours faithfully,
EUGENE WRAYBURN.

"Have You Cleaned the Front?"

Did Mrs. Bowerbank realise the extent of her offence in canvassing for votes when she was greeted with "Have you cleaned the front this morning?" Did she know the depth of degradation to which she had sunk, if she could not answer, "Yes"?

If not, I can tell her.

Go down Suburbia any morning, and you will find mistresses, maids, and dirty little step-girls at the same job—doing the fronts. The fronts must be done.

Why are women such idiots? A woman may gossip away her neighbour's character; at night while she goes to a music-hall or other entertainment; a wife may run into utterly needless extravagances. But, if she regularly cleans the front, it is all right, and Suburbia smiles on her; the more time she wastes over it, the more approbation she receives.

A clever, industrious woman, an ideal mother, an exemplary wife, who omits to "clean the front," is sneered at and ostracised at once.

I know a woman (a woman worker) who will not clean the front. She refuses to have a brass step, but the knocker belongs to the landlord, and as dirty brass is ugly, she cleans it; but the steps, tiles, etc., she brushes with a yard brush and pails of water.

How much cleaner! Her precious hands are protected by strong gloves, and the dirt is sent swimming down the channel, instead of being wiped up into a cloth which contaminates the hands, with the filth of any or everybody's boots. Ugh! It sickens me.

Why is that done? Because women are sheep. Bah! Ba-a!

ELIZABETH.

Servants and the Social Problem.

Madam,—It is only a few weeks since I made the acquaintance of THE WOMAN WORKER, and although not professing to be a Socialist, I find much to interest me therein.

I have thought often and seriously on this vexed question, and I have come to the conclusion that mistresses are more responsible for the difficulties of the situation than are the maids. I do not mean the mistresses of the present day only, but the class of women who for centuries past have had other women to wait on them. It is they who are responsible for domestic service being looked upon as a degrading occupation, for have they not, from time immemorial, considered those who served as being of a different species from themselves? Long centuries of repression are bound to tell, and to-day, when all women are striving to break bonds of one kind or another, can we expect one class to remain passive?

We have arrived at the stage of a little knowledge being a dangerous thing; but as time goes on I believe the working girl will gradually realise that domestic work is healthier, and in the long run better paid, than factory work, so that when the education given to the masses becomes sounder and more sensible, the servant difficulty will solve itself. But the mistress class must be educated up to the idea that all the work connected with the household is skilled work, and must be paid for as such.

Why is a general not worth as much as a cook or a housemaid? A good "general" is expected to do the work of both the other two, but because in some households she is "helped

out," she has not the same market value as either cook or housemaid.

I cannot think that a time will ever come when there will be no domestic servants, not even when Socialism reigns in the land; for we have to reckon with human nature. Class distinctions may become less apparent, but so long as this world lasts there will be people in it who will command the service of others, just as there will always be people who cannot stand alone, who therefore will be bound to serve.

MISTRESS OF TWO.

Servants an Anachronism.

Dear Madam,—I was glad to see Douglas Hurn's letter.

To my mind your correspondent is decidedly in the right when he says the badge of servitude must be abolished, hours and holidays fixed, and the industry put on an entirely different footing.

I do not know any form of housework so degrading that the worker must be termed a servant or menial, and considered in a lower or more servile position than other workers. The whole system has been justly called an anachronism, and I hope the time may soon come when the domestic servant will follow the chattel slave and the serf of the soil into oblivion.
J.A.M.

How to Spread the Cause.

Dear Mrs. Dawson,—I have long wanted to write to you. Some words of yours with regard to things "driving people to Socialism, whether they would or not," came as a timely warning, because the mistake you spoke of was exactly one I was making with three young men of my acquaintance.

Thanks to you, I just said enough to make them interested, supplied them with plenty of literature, and then let them reason it out for themselves. Now, I am glad to say, two of them are good workers in our branch and the other is getting over his doubts.

I live in a slum part of Manchester, and you know I get quite downhearted sometimes to see the squalor in which the people live, and wonder how long it will last. Until this winter, when I have been to I.L.P. meetings at the Grand, I used to go to church or chapel, but I have got so sick of ministers (who are getting £6 to £10 a week) telling poor people to be contented with their lot, however humble it be, and that they should have a place on high, that I do not wonder we have Robert Blatchfords.

I do not believe in a religion that keeps people in subjection, and blinds them to their own interest. My sister and I are doing our best to advertise THE WOMAN WORKER. We gave away about 200 specimen copies in Blackley after Mary MacArthur had been lecturing there, and I believe it is going splendidly now. I am going to try to get some to give to girls leaving their workshops.

Wishing you success to your A. A. page.—I am, yours very sincerely,
EDITH WILLIAMSON.

Rochdale Road, Manchester.

Asylum Scandals.

Dear Madam,—Will you tell me whether there is any action to be taken in the matter of "A Grave Asylum Scandal," in your issue of December 16, and how the facts are to be substantiated?

"What do you mean by your remark at the end of 'Police scandal' the origin of the case?"

—Yours faithfully,
C. T. HERRINGHAM.

40, Wimpole Street, London, W.

[The footnote was our correspondent's. What action will be taken we cannot say.—Ed.]

"I hereby certify that my wife, while peacefully employed in her own home, was forcibly taken from it on March 18 and consigned to the Aberdeen Royal Asylum on the representations of the Chief Constable."

"Personal and written application for her release failed to effect it until she had been detained for four months; her release being made conditional to her signing a document, which she refused to do."

"As the doctor repeatedly declined to let her go, the Home Secretary was communicated with on May 7, but gave no assistance; and she was only released in July, when legal action was threatened."
GEORGE COURTS.

OUR PRIZE PAGE.

Favourite Doll: Its History.

"Too Sacred!" Some one ventured "Too sacred for publication."

Well, that is for you yourselves to decide. If you feel you really cannot tell the history of your doll of dolls, the beloved of your childhood, then do not write that history; but should you think the telling will give joy to you who write and to us who read, then send us 200 words of appreciation. Tell us what that doll meant to you. Its appearance, its temperament—for dolls have temperaments. Tell us its beginning and its end. A short biography, in fact, is what we want; a sketch of a doll's life.

The prize will be one guinea. Send no later than Tuesday to the Prize Editor, Utopia Press, Worship Street, E.C.

LARKS!

Really, to us, these seem somewhat tame. We feel you need a few lessons in the gentle art of larking. Why, we could lark you at larks until your very eyeballs would bounce in your heads with delight. We could tell you of—but no matter; we will attend to our business and present

THE PRIZE LETTER.

The crossing was crowded. Keeping a sharp lookout, I stepped lightly off the pavement on my way across.

The bonnet of a huge motor car, travelling slowly, brushed past me. The chauffeur was its sole occupant. How inviting looked the broad white footboard—the luxurious seats, the well—one instant—I stood on that footboard; the next, the door had opened and closed without a sound, and I was comfortably seated inside! My heart beat high, my only anxiety—had the chauffeur seen?

No! busy with the steering wheel, he had not the slightest suspicion of my entry.

Admiring glances were directed from the street to the car and its apparent owner.

Presently we had left the town and were approaching the country—the movement was glorious! But where were we going to, and how should I get out? Various more or less desperate schemes presented themselves to me.

At last, as we passed through a village some seven miles from the city, I called loudly for the car to stop. Never was such surprise shown in a single look as when the chauffeur turned and saw me. The brakes were applied, but before the car stopped I was out and away!—Tom Gilbert, 107, Rumford Street, S.E. Manchester.

Pride of Processions.

On Suffrage Saturday I experienced the greatest happiness but one of my life. Marching in the procession beneath a modest banner a series of very gratifying emotions came over me. The pride of carrying a small banner that bore no legend until I pinned to it the front page of THE WOMAN WORKER; then the swollen conceit with which I showed the curious mob what I stood for in addition to the vote! The scorn one did not look at the winking policemen and frivolous onlookers, while the bared heads and kind words of wise and chivalrous gentlemen thrilled one with pleasure! The lordly condescension of waving back to the enthusiastic ladies at the swell clubs we passed, and the gracious smiles we were pleased to bestow upon the dignified sympathisers in the crowd! Never were my features relaxed in such aristocratic beamings and gleamings, nor my blood so perilously nigh to turning blue! It was, indeed, a princely time! The crowning point was ecstasy—not the vote, but my lover, with a gentle countenance, waiting for me at the Albert Hall!—FELICIA.

Auntie from Birmingham.

A friend of the writer's, who has since become world famous as a "character actor," once played a remarkably sensational "lark" at a Christmas gathering.

The gentleman in question was wonderfully clever at "make up," and decided to go as an old lady. He first let the host into the secret, and asked him to introduce "her" to the guests as Aunt Annie from Birmingham. Everything was arranged 'twixt host and "Auntie," and whilst the party were fore-gathering in the drawing-room, a cab drew up at the front door. Answering the "rat-tat-tat," the genial host admitted the "Aunt" and introduced her.

The rushing old dame shook hands effusively with each guest, planting a smacking kiss on the cheek of every lady. One or two were taken aback, but all admitted what a handsome, affectionate old soul she was. Presently "she" sat down. Horror! Ladies blushed and half fainted. In raising "her" dress "she" had unwittingly displayed a pair of trousers! The secret was out: host and "Auntie" were pounced upon and received a "splendid" rough handling, beating a hurried retreat amidst shrieks of excitement.—J. H. WHEELER, Forest Gate.

Maids Were Deceivers Ever!

I really ought to be ashamed to write about it, but as it happened nearly a quarter of a century ago—when quite a "tiny"—I think I may be forgiven!

It was in this wise: One afternoon, when walking out with my "twin," just as we passed a "sweetie" shop, I picked up—oh, what luck!—a whole threepenny piece! The twin rejoiced with me over the find, and led me to the shop window to decide between the merits of "brandy balls" and "lucky turn-overs"—but—"the maid was odourate"! I had other plans for this threepenny! The next day was Sunday! I dragged the twin reluctantly away from the shop, and we resumed our walk.

Sunday came, and with it school. Oh, the joy! The missionary box was passed round, and as it neared me I pulled out my handkerchief, and with great and elaborate care unrolled the threepenny, and with arm outstretched dropped it majestically into the box! The class stared with looks of awe, and my joy was complete when one little girl said, in loud tones, "O-o-oh! She's put in a six-pence!"

Very ignoble, I know, but, to my small mind, it was, well—er—ripping!—A. HUME, Clapton.

Larks with Father.

Last night Father played "Blind Man's Buff"; he ripped his sleeve, broke the arm of the easy-chair, and damaged the fender by jumping on it in a frantic effort to escape the "blind man." And the children shrieked with delight. After this, he had them throwing dice for Barcelona nuts; and when his turn came

He rattled high, he rattled low, He also rattled round about him—for nearly ten minutes, and threw three ones—the lowest possible. And the children slid off their chairs with laughing.

This morning Father swung Tom and "Buffer" on the five-barred gate. And, of course, he must have a swing. But, instead of standing on the bottom bar, he climbed to the top bar but one; and those boys swung the gate to with all their force.

Father came down head first on soft earth, and twiddled his legs a little, seeming undecided whether to bring his feet down towards the "taking-off" side, or away from it. He had quite a long struggle before he got his hat off; his head was wedged in it. And those boys—would you believe it?—were helpless—with laughing—they are now! They cannot eat for laughing.—A. M., Liverpool.

A FAMOUS BLUE-STOCKING.

As for my disposition, it is more inclining to be melancholy than merry, but not crabbed or peevishly melancholy; and I am apt to weep rather than laugh; not that I do often either of them; also I am tender-natured, for it troubles my conscience to kill a fly, and the groans of a dying beast strike my soul. Also where I place a particular affection, I love extraordinarily and constantly, yet not fondly, but soberly and observingly, not to hang about them as a trouble, but to wait upon them as a servant; but this affection will take no root, but where I think or find merit, and have leave both from Divine and Morall laws; yet I find this passion so troublesome as it is the only torment of my life, for fear any evil misfortune or accident, or sickness, or death should come unto them, inasmuch as I am never freely at rest.

Also in some cases I am naturally a coward, and in other cases very valiant; as for example, if any of my nearest friends were in danger I should never consider my life in striving to help them, though I were sure to do them no good, and would willingly, nay cheerfully, resign my life for their sakes: likewise I should not spare my life, if honour bid me dy; but in a danger where my friend or my honour is not concerned or engaged, but only my life to be unprofitably lost, I am the veriest coward in Nature, as upon the sea, or any dangerous places, or of thieves or fire, or the like; nay, the shooting of a gun, although but a pop-gun, will make me start, and stop my hearing, much less have I courage to discharge one; or if a sword should be held against me, although but in jest, I am afraid.

MADGE NEWCASTLE.

Let Nature be your teacher:
Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things.
We murder to dissect—
Enough of Science and of Art,
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

WORDSWORTH.

If to have good sense and good humour, mixed with a strong power of observing and an equally strong one of expressing—if of this result must be "blue," she shall be as blue as they will. Such cant is the refuge of fools that fear those who can turn them into ridicule.—SCOTT.

Note.—Miss Violet Lancaster has our full permission to criticise our prize page. We would beg her at the same time to glance at last week's competition letters and to remember that one never knows!

A HAPPY SEASIDE HOME,

Together with a sound general education, including conversational French and German, offered to a few children under twelve. Closer care and more effective tuition for backward or delicate children than in large schools. Home comforts and perfect family life. Plenty of outdoor exercise in a climate strongly recommended by doctors. Entire charge of children from abroad. Terms moderate. References to parents of former and present pupils; also to the "Clarion" Board.—Miss C. M. THOMPSON, Lightburne Avenue, St. Annes-on-Sea, near Blackpool.

HOME NOTES.

By Dorothy Worrall.

I always feel glad and sorry when the children's party season begins. What with having frocks fitted, new shoes tried on, hair crimped, and other worries, the little ones have no peace. I think I shall have to begin a series of

Don'ts for Mothers.

and head the list with "Don't give your children so many instructions before they set out for the party."

They cannot enjoy themselves and obey. It was really laughable at one children's party where I was helping. Two little girls came with very prim frocks and faces, and behaved likewise. The others were romping about and having a fine time, but they sat still.

I thought at tea-time they would surely enjoy themselves, the table looked so gay with flowers and holly and bonbons, not to mention all the other good things piled up on high. But no, they did not. For, when going round the table I could hear these two keeping up a kind of broken duet.

"Mother says I must have a piece of bread and butter first."

"Mother says I mustn't have any rich cake."

"No, thank you, mother says I must only have one helping of jelly."

I have said it was laughable, but I do not think I laughed much. I felt too sorry for them.

A great many people are too fashionable now to give "parties." They have whist drives, musical evenings, progressive games, etc. But to my mind the old-fashioned Christmas party,

Without Any Stuck-upishness, beats all these new-fangled and frosty notions. Plenty of games and songs, and a good dance round to finish up with.

Talking of games, have you ever played "Spoons"? It is a sort of second cousin to Blind Man's Buff, but the one blindfolded is armed with a pair of table-spoons and can only touch people with these weapons, not use his hands at all.

The rest of the company sit about the room waiting for the blind man to poke about till he knows whom he touches. It really is good fun. I remember two old people who fell in love with the game so much that they said they would play it by themselves when they got home.

Another very funny game is

The Winking Game.

We played last year till we were too tired to laugh any more. This is how you do it.

The ladies sit in a circle and a gentleman stands behind each lady's chair, all except one poor unfortunate who stands behind an empty chair. He looks round the circle and winks at one particular lady. She tries to get to his chair. Her guardian immediately puts his hand on her shoulder and stops her; but the first man must go on winking at different people until he gets a partner, then it is the other man's turn. When the gentlemen are tired of winking, it is the ladies' turn to

Stand Behind and Wink.

I do not know which part is the funniest. You try it and see.

After a few games like these, people are generally thirsty, if not hungry. But I am not talking about eating. I will only tell you one thing. Fill three or four of the mince-pies with cotton wool and give these special ones to some of the men folk. If the girls are let into the secret they will see some fun.

And now we really must be serious, and think once more of our

Hints and Recipes.

I have been asked for a cure for bronchitis. Several have been sent in, so I will give two of them instead of one of my own recipes. If the reader who asked for the cure will send her address again, I shall be pleased to send her the remainder of the recipes.

BRONCHITIS MIXTURE.—2 drams ipecacuanha wine, 2 drams spirits of nitre, 2 drams syrup of squills, 12 grains bicarbonate of potash, 3oz aqua pura. Cost not more than 6d. A teaspoonful three or four times a day is quite safe—even for a very small baby.—ANNIE PERRY.

RECIPE FOR BRONCHITIS.—A certain cure if followed up and given and rubbed whilst the complaint is on: 2d. worth of glycerine, 2d. worth of paregoric, 2d. worth of squills. One teaspoonful when the cough is either troublesome or tight. Outward application: 2d. worth oil of amber, 2d. worth camphorated oil, 2d. worth oil of cloves. Rub well back and front.—MRS. LEMON.

No. 37 has obtained the most votes this week. So the 5s. prize goes to Mrs. J. Davies, 12, Marlbro Grove, Blenheim Walk, Leeds.

As so many people wish for cake recipes now, I am putting in some more. Please vote for the best of the following. I do not get as many votes as I should like. This is a hint.

MACARON BISCUITS.—½lb flour, 6oz castor sugar, 2oz butter, 1 teaspoonful baking powder, 1 egg, 1 teaspoonful almond flavoured, a few blanched almonds. Make into a stiff dough. Form into small balls the size of a walnut: dip into cold water and roll them into a little castor sugar. Place on a tin two inches apart, with half an almond on each, and bake in moderate oven for 10 to 15 minutes. Do not let them get too brown. There should be 30 biscuits, costing 7½d.—No. 44.

COCONUT CAKE.—½lb butter, 1 teacupful sugar, 1 egg, 2 teacupful flour, 1 teacupful desiccated coconut, 1 teacupful milk, 1 teaspoonful baking powder. Beat butter and sugar, add beaten egg and milk, then the flour and coconut. Beat well; lastly, add baking powder. Cook for an hour and a quarter in a slow oven. I find it best to have the gas full on for five minutes after putting cake in, and then turn it very low.—No. 45.

ORANGE CAKE.—The weight of two eggs in butter, sugar, and flour. Beat butter and sugar to a cream, add eggs one by one, but do not beat, add them whole, and then beat with the mixture. Next add flour, the juice and rind (grated) of half an orange, and 1 teaspoonful baking powder. Mix well, and bake twenty minutes.—No. 46.

GOOD WINTER CAKE.—This cake does not require eggs. Take 1lb flour and mix well with it a small teaspoonful of carbonate of soda; rub into the flour 4oz good beef dripping (or mutton, or similar fat), 4oz sugar, ½lb currants, and 1oz finely chopped peel. Mix all with half-a-pint of milk, and lastly, add a tablespoonful of vinegar to mixture, just before putting in the oven. The cake may be flavoured with ground ginger, mixed spice, etc., to taste. Bake this novel cake in a slow oven from one-and-a-half to two hours.—No. 47.

FEATHER CAKE.—½lb flour, 4oz sugar, 1oz lard, 1 egg, ½ pint sweet milk, ½ teaspoonful baking powder, ½ teaspoonful carbonate of soda, 1 teaspoonful cream of tartar. Mix lard into flour with all the powders, beat egg and add to milk. Mix all thoroughly together, and pour into a deep greased tin. Bake half-an-hour in moderate oven. When cold cut into squares. This cake is very light and will keep.—No. 43.

QUEEN CAKES.—½lb butter, ½lb castor sugar, ½lb flour, ½lb currants, a little essence of lemon, a little sal volatile, 5 eggs. Beat the sugar and butter until soft and creamy with a wooden spoon. Then beat the eggs in one after the other. After giving a good beating, add the other ingredients one after the other, flour, currants, and flavouring. Melt a little butter, and have a little brush to grease queer cake tins. Bake in a good oven.—No. 49.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MRS. BELL.—Thanks for your interesting letter. Your dog must be clever. I should like to make her acquaintance. I shall write about the "house beautiful" soon, as several readers have asked me to do so. Send in plenty of recipes, but why do you not vote for those already inserted?

A REGULAR READER.—Thanks for your appreciation of the paper. I hope everybody will think that "there is not a dull page nor a dull corner in it," as you do. I will show Mother your letter.

MABEL.—If you have "just turned seventeen" now is the time to do things, and one of them is to get as many readers as you can for THE WOMAN WORKER. Miss MacArthur will be glad to know that so many people like the paper. The more the merrier!

N. CLARK.—See reply to Mrs. Bell.

BILLIE'S MUMMIE.—What a bright little boy you have! I can quite understand how perplexing it is to know what is the right thing to do. Pray tell me more about him. I will refer to your letter later.

RE TOMATO PASTE.—When the tomato and onion have cooked until tender, then add the egg and stir till thick.

J. D. PRINCE.—I want to make the recipe competition as easy as possible, so send in any kind. I always have plenty to choose from each week. Don't you worry. I will do that.

A prize of 5s. is given weekly to the sender of the recipe which obtains the most votes. Recipes and votes should be sent to DOROTHY WORRALL, Office of THE WOMAN WORKER, Utopia Press, Worship Street, London, and should reach the office not later than Monday morning.

For the Children



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MEETING OF THE PIONEERS.

The advance guard of the Pioneers met fourteen days ago at the Food Reform Restaurant. That a report of their doings does not appear till now is due to the fact of last week's paper being rushed through some days in advance of its date, as a precaution against the delays of the Christmas holiday. The energetic secretaries have sent the following account of the meeting:

Pioneer James Mallon presided, and amongst others present were Mary MacArthur, Julia Dawson, and Winifrid Blatchford.

Pioneer Greta Garnier gave the meeting some valuable suggestions as to the best way of increasing Pioneer work, and Pioneers Mallon and Fletcher added others. These suggestions were debated at much length, and it was resolved as follows:

"Wherever possible a group of Pioneers shall be established. This group might be brought into existence by letters addressed to Labour and Socialist organisations in the district

"Upon the establishment of such a group, instructions from the National Secretaries shall be forwarded. These instructions will suggest work upon the following lines:

"The Local Secretary shall make from time to time a list of forthcoming meetings at which THE WOMAN WORKER should be on sale. He shall estimate the number of copies necessary for the supply of such meetings, and shall inform the National Secretaries as soon as may be of the number required. On receipt of copies, he should arrange to have them offered for sale at these meetings by the Pioneers who live in closest proximity to the places where the meetings are held.

"Copies of the paper might also be offered for sale at the doors of theatres and other places of amusement.

"The local Pioneers should systematically endeavour to get THE WOMAN WORKER stocked and advertised by the local newsgagents. They might do this by concertedly ordering a given number of copies from selected newsgagents on condition that these exhibited a WOMAN WORKER bill.

"Letters should be written to the local Libraries Committees asking for the inclusion of THE WOMAN WORKER among the papers taken.

"The National Secretaries should be asked to supply back numbers for free distribution outside factories and shops, etc., and for small ornamental WOMAN WORKER bills, which might be exhibited in the windows of private houses.

"Letters should be written to the local paper *à propos* of anything contained in THE WOMAN WORKER, care being taken, of course, to mention the paper as many times as possible.

"All local Labour and Socialist organisations should be induced to sell the paper, and free copies should be obtained from the National Secretaries

[Communications should be addressed to the Secretaries, 108, Storks Road, Bermondsey, S.E.]

for the reading-rooms of living-in establishments, workmen's clubs, etc."

Pioneer R. B. Fletcher, 64, Ronver Road, Lee, would like to hear from readers in the district of South-East London, with the idea of forming a branch.

Pioneer Mrs. M. Grest, 64, Courtland Avenue, Ilford, is desirous of forming a branch in Ilford. Will readers living in and about Ilford "line up"?

By the end of January we hope to have branches going all over London, and in the meantime will readers in the provinces who would like to form branches please communicate with the National Secretaries? We must raise the circulation by thousands—so pull together, Pioneers!—GRETTA PARK, HENRY G. PERRY, Secretaries.

THE WOMEN'S WORKROOMS.

Reply to Mr. Chance.

Mr. J. H. Harley, vice-chairman of the Women's Work Committee, has replied to the wild criticisms of Mr. W. Chance in the "Times." He says:

"Mr. Chance assumes that these workrooms were started with the design of making them a commercial success. How could that be? The women admitted were of all ages, a few young, but most in the eventide of life, and during 16 weeks a great many of them had actually to be taught how to use the needle.

"I well remember a letter from the forewoman of the Camberwell workroom pleading to be allowed to keep on some women beyond the 16 weeks who had made themselves particularly expert. The Poplar contract was on hand and she wished to retain her most skilful hands at the work. To this appeal necessary from the commercial point of view, we were obliged to say 'No.' There were unemployed women wanting to get in, and we were obliged to give them their chance of training and livelihood during the bitter winter weeks. What commercial man would have been placed in such a plight? But then your correspondent 'W. Chance' never looks at the question from a human point of view!

"Another point on which your correspondent's letter needs correction is his history of the relations between the workrooms and the Local Government Board. He has evidently made some study of the documents relating thereto, but he has either not seen or overlooked the letter of March 20, 1908, in which the President of the Local Government Board refused to allow the workrooms to tender for contracts with boards of guardians.

"At that time our committee had obtained the Poplar contract and had every reason to believe that another would also be obtained in open competition. The market for emigration outfits had been taken away from us, but another market was lying open to our hands. At this critical stage of our history the Local Government Board stepped in with its damaging restriction."

THE DROWNED KITTENS.

Caroline sat at the open window, her back turned to the room, her hot forehead pressed against the woodwork of the lifted sash. Teddy, glancing towards her, noticed a suspicious movement of the shoulders.

"I b—believe she's crying again," he said, remorsefully. "P—poor little thing! Hadn't I better speak to her, Aubrey?"

Aubrey considered. "If it's about the kittens, we can't help it," he said. "The coachman drowned the tortoise-shell one with the rest; it was just like that silly cook to promise it to her, and I don't suppose you'll be able to comfort her now. To-morrow she won't feel so bad about it; one never feels so bad about anything the next morning—at least, I don't."

"Oh, I'm not sure of that," said Teddy; it d—depends on what sort of a morning it is. Suppose it rains hard, and we have to stop in all day: she won't feel any better *then*. Tell you what, I'll go and fetch my stamp-album."

Caroline had not moved. Aubrey, to whose consolations she turned a deaf ear and opposing shoulder, had withdrawn into a distant corner of the room, and her little figure, outlined against the window-space, looked pathetically remote and desolate. Outside the birds had ceased to sing; within the gas flared forlornly.

Teddy sat down on the window-ledge and laid the book upon Caroline's lap. "There's my stamp-album," he said. "Don't you want to l—look at it? And I say, Caroline, 't isn't your fault you came to-day; l—let's be friends again, will you?"

Caroline hesitated. Her dignity had been outraged, and she felt very deeply the loss of the tortoise-shell kitten, but she was lonely and homesick, and Teddy was her idol. He teased, slighted, or ignored her as he pleased, yet always when he held out the olive-branch she accepted it thankfully. With the perversity of her sex she preferred his favour, unstable and capricious, to the more constant, less dazzling attentions of Aubrey, who never blew hot and cold, and who might invariably be relied upon.

"There's no use in q—quarrelling," said Teddy, wisely. "P'raps we can make a dam in the wood to-morrow."

The prospect was alluring. Caroline turned her tear-stained face from the window and looked at him gravely. He held out a grimy hand, and she put her little fingers into it.

"T—that's all right," said he.
MRS. MURRAY HICKSON.

A BOWL OF ROSES.

It was a bowl of roses:

There in the light they lay,
Languishing, glorying, glowing
Their life away.

And the soul of them rose like a presence,
Into me crept and grew,
And filled me with something—some one—
Oh, was it you? W. E. HENLEY.

A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another, and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own.—SHELLEY.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

Father Time and Tommy.

Really, my dears, I had been seriously considering the advisability of presenting a petition to Father Time. He *does* hustle along in a way scarcely to be expected of a venerable personage who has been entitled "Old" ever since I can remember.

Flustration.

Why! It seems but yesterday that I soothed your sorrowing that summer holidays so swiftly sped, with the thought that Time the Taker was also Time the Bringer, and would soon be introducing to you Father Christmas and Santa Claus, with their "joys and toys for girls and boys." And now—he has whisked them on the scene, and whizzed them off again, in such flustrating fashion that one fears they *cannot* have got through their business properly.

So it occurred to me that I might draw up a petition.

Now, petitions, and manifestoes, and ultimatums, and all such dismal documents always begin "WHEREAS!" And they usually contain a great many "hereinafters" and "aforesaid," for which extra charge is made. Those I have omitted. But I thought we must have WHEREAS—or the Venerable Personage "aforesaid" might send back our petition "to be drafted in proper legal form." Here it is, then:

Protestation.

WHEREAS the "Festive Season" is short beyond all reason,
May it not be counted treason if we venture to protest.

Father Christmas bring you yearly,
Santa Claus, whom bairns love dearly—
Sir, a little longer merely would we keep each welcome guest.

Poor old Christmas all a-hurry,
Skurry-flurry, it must worry,
In the midst of his "good cheer"—ing to be hustled off by you.

Santa Claus! It's truly shocking,
While suspended stockings stooking
To be swooped upon and snatched away before he's half got through.

So—the case we lay before you,
Father Time, and would implore you
That our cherished annual visitors may somewhat longer stay.

If by but one week's addition
You should answer our petition,
Then we, Sir, your petitioners, will ever, ever pray—Etc.

And here you say, my dears, "Pray what? Why do you put etc.?"

Well! The copy of petition I had glanced over ended, "and your petitioners will ever pray, etc.," so I suppose that is the correct form. It *may* mean that, the petition being granted, petitioners will ever pray that good health and prosperity may gladden the granter. Or it *might* signify that, one prayer answered, they will go on praying for the next thing, and the next "world without end, Amen."

Father Time.

Oh, you need not begin worrying about the *next thing*, my dears. I know it is no use presenting our petition, since I had a few words with Father Time.

"It *does* seem to me," I said, "that your present arrangements must cause much disappointment. Is it possible that

Father Christmas can make sure of his 'good cheer' reaching everybody, or that Santa Claus can fill all the stockings awaiting him, in the time you allow? They should surely have at least a month."

"Allow me, being Time," he said, severely, "to know best how I must dispose of myself. Do you suppose I should not be glad of a breathing space occasionally? Have I not to keep the seasons in proper marching order, and all the festivals to fit in? And to see that my hour-glass is reversed at the exact moment? And, as if all that were not enough, here his voice was deep and solemn, "is not my scythe always kept busy?"

Mowing and Sowing.

Ah, my dears! The end of the year brings to those from whom long ago Time snatched their childhood, sorrowful thoughts of fair and fragrant flowers—always those they most craved to keep—mown down by that merciless scythe.

Yet, Time the Taker, the Mower, is also the Bringer, the Sower of seed which may spring up into fairer blossoming than any he has destroyed. And he has carried away for ever many vile and hateful things, as history's pages show. And if Time's changes, his mowing and sowing, make of the world a happier and better home for mankind, one must not complain if now and again he snatches a treasured jewel from one's own little casket, or cuts down a cherished flower.

"Still A-Flying!"

And not for you, *yet*, dears, mournful musing at the departure of the old year. Yours should be all eager expectation of the new.

But I must get on with my interview, for while I am "a-thynkyng" Time is waiting! Of course *what* must be taken as a "figure of speech" only. "For though we sleep, or wake, or roam, or ride, Aye fleeth Time, for no man will abide!" So says old Chaucer, whom Time carried away, and all his Canterbury Pilgrims with him, more than 500 years ago.

He was hastening on as we talked. "You see, I must do things in proper order," he said. "And the Old Year's guests must be seen out before the arrival of the New."

Whys.

"But *why*!"

Father Time shook his head. Only when and how he pleases does he answer our "Whys." Some he never answers, but carries us away still questioning and wondering.

"One reason I may give you," he said, after a pause. "If Father Christmas and Santa Claus remained with you a month, as you suggest, you mortals would be all too much engaged in feasting and merry-making to attend to the business that *should* occupy you at this period."

Seeing my mystification, he explained. "For many centuries of my flight, the interval between the departure of Christmas and the arrival of the New Year has been spent by the wisest and most

thoughtful among you in the making of New Year resolutions."

Well, it was not for me to contradict Father Time, my dears.

And Otherwise.

But many of us who have travelled long with him learn to doubt the wisdom of making New Year resolutions. And his words put me on a train of thought which carried me a long way back. Truly, if one must go back it *should* be in a train; or, better still, in an air-ship. It would be a very painful road on which to *walk*, so thickly strewn would most of us find it with broken resolutions.

Yet, according to one story I have heard, the poor cripples we leave behind us do not remain on the road. What happens to them? Well! To answer that I must tell you what happened to Tommy one New Year's Eve.

He was sitting alone before the fire in a room which had no other light, having a quiet time before the arrival of the evening guests, for whom his mother and sisters were making great preparation. For the first time Tommy was to be allowed to sit up to "watch the Old Year out," and an Important Person, hearing this, had patted his head and asked, "Well, my little man! With what good resolutions are you going to begin the New Year?"

The Shadow-Elf.

So, of course, he *must* do the proper thing. He gazed into the fire, thinking out "resolutions." And suddenly out of the shadow popped a queer little figure, which Tommy could never really describe, because it did not seem to be quite the same two minutes together. It—or he—had come out of the shadows, you see, and was changeful as they.

He waved his hand imperiously toward Tommy, and snapped out, "Stop it! Stop it at once!"

"Stop what?" said Tommy. "I'm doing nothing."

"Well, *don't* do it! Oh, don't tell me! I know you *are*. And our hospitals are over-crowded already."

"Well! I can't help that, can I?" said Tommy, sulkily. He did not at all approve the Shadow-Elf's overbearing manner.

"You've done your share at filling them, anyhow."

Tommy drew himself up, imitating his father's stately manner. "Perhaps," he said, "you will kindly explain yourself, if you *do* know what you are talking about. I've had nothing to do with filling hospitals!"

Here and There.

"Ah, well! You shall see!" said the Shadow-Elf. And suddenly the fire, which had been smouldering, flamed up, filling the room with a glare which, after the semi-darkness, dazzled Tommy's eyes. And what happened in that one second he never knew. But when the glare died down he was There.

Where is There? you ask, my dears. Well, all Tommy could say when one inquired was "Er—well! It isn't *Here*!" Which as a satisfactory answer is neither Here nor There.

And—dear! dear! We are *Here*! Which is the end of the "Page," my dears. And we shall have to leave Tommy There until next week.

Peg's Wish.

And for all joy which the Old Year carries away, may the New bring you double measure, dears. PEG.

THE EMPLOYMENT BUREAU.

Conducted by Pandora.

SECRETARIAL WORK.

Every week correspondents write and ask me how they are to become secretaries. They seem to think the work is delightful—no drudgery, short hours, good pay. Here is an extract from one letter:

"My friends all tell me I should make an excellent secretary, as I write a good letter and am quick at understanding other people's ideas. They say I ought to earn £100 to £150 easily. I have had a good high-school education, and get on well with people. Will you tell me how to set about getting such work?"

I have many letters in this strain, and I am sorry to damp the hopes of any beginner; but it really is a mistake to think that nowadays a post bringing in £2 to £3 weekly can be had on such easy terms as my correspondents seem to imagine.

First of all, there is considerable drudgery in the ordinary secretary's work, for much of it is purely clerical. The secretary of a society has to answer all letters, enter them in a book, and keep the minutes of the committee meetings; if it is a small society the secretary is expected to keep the accounts. Of course, if a girl gets a post as secretary to a literary man or M.P., her work is very different; but it is only fair to say that such posts are the "plums," and are very seldom obtained without some kind of social influence.

Training and Qualifications.

It is quite vain for a girl who has just left school and has had the ordinary education to think she will get a good secretarial post at once. *She will not*, except by a stroke of luck. She must get at least one year's training at some well-known bureau or institute. Here she must thoroughly master typewriting and shorthand, office routine, and book-keeping if possible; and she must continue the study of one modern language—French, preferably. Above all, she must have a good handwriting and be able to write a good letter. There are so many well-qualified women to-day who are seeking secretarial work that, unless she is really well equipped, she will never get a post worth having, and by that I mean one that offers her a living wage—£120 or more.

Last week, in one of the women's papers, there was published a list of secretaries seeking work, and all—some twenty or more—had the very highest qualifications.

Besides this intellectual equipment the would-be secretary should be adaptable, pleasant in manner, and willing and able to "rise to the occasion." In many cases social gifts are also a most valuable asset, as much of the work of a club or society secretary requires tactful dealing with all sorts and conditions of men.

Salary and Prospects.

In a few cases a really good secretary may command a high salary.

I know at this moment of a lady who has £250 a year as secretary to a political society. But this is most unusual. A careful study of advertisements and an investigation into the actual salaries paid

to secretaries lead me to the conclusion that the average salary is about £100 a year; and this means, of course, that many secretaries are getting perhaps £80, while a few rise as high as £150.

Here is a true record of a secretary's life and work. Miss A, well known to me, has been secretary for over ten years to the wife of an M.P. She started with £100 a year, and has now reached £150, which, she tells me, she believes to be the maximum. Her hours are 10 to 5 daily, and 10 to 1 on Saturdays. She describes her work as monotonous in the extreme, but in nowise harassing, as she has no responsibility. She is chiefly engaged in writing business letters and in entering stocks and shares, etc., into account books, as her employer owns much property and is a thorough woman of business. The work is as secure as most women's work is, but, of course, if her employer died she might lose her post.

Competition is Severe.

This is a *good post*, and no beginner could hope to get anything beyond about £80 a year; but if she is quick to learn, and knows how to make herself useful, she may become indispensable either to a single employer or to an institution, and may, therefore, be practically certain of a permanency.

I do *not* advise any large number of girls training for this work at present, as during the last few years there has been a great rush for posts, and, owing to the fact that here and there girls have obtained very good work because they were exceptionally qualified, a very large number of unsuitable people have trained, and have, naturally, got poor posts. There is little demand at this moment for secretaries of quite ordinary abilities, though, as in most professions, there is still room at the top.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

HORTICULTURAL TRAINING (M. K. S.).—I do not think there is much money to be made in horticulture, but if you are content, as you say, to live very quietly in a little cottage, and take boarders during the summer, you *must* be properly trained—at the Horticultural College, Swanley, or at Studley Castle, Warwickshire, would be best.

TRAINING AS LADY'S NURSE (D. D.).—The address is Norland Institute, 10, Pembroke Square, W. The course is two years, and I feel sure you would get a post at the end of it.

[Remainder of Answers next week.]

A Woman's Nerve.

At an inquest on a railway worker killed at Sunderland, it was stated that the engine-driver, finding he had run over his mate, collapsed. Another man, appealed to for help by a person who was passing, ran away; and eventually a woman helped to put the injured man on an engine for conveyance to the infirmary.

A girl who is totally blind and another who is partially so are to be given six months' trial as typists at the chief office of the London County Council.

Talks with the Doctor.

ANXIOUS MOTHER.—There is no special cause for anxiety with regard to your daughter if her general health is good. No special treatment is necessary—all that is required is that the girl should be kept well. For your own complaint it is no use continuing to apply the remedy you mention. If the condition is inconvenient, you would get relief from a surgical appliance, worn as a support, or from a not severe surgical operation.

HOPE.—Expensive instruments or treatments would in all probability prove waste of money. You should be very careful about your diet. Avoid soups, tea, coffee, cocoa, and all stimulants. Take meat only once a day. Eat no food for at least three hours before going to bed at night. A change of air to a quite different locality frequently gives great relief. The change is the great thing; a town is as well worth trying as a country place. Does your skin act well? That is very important. Keep the bowels freely open.

C. H. C.—One egg three or four times a week should be enough, and the special recipes you refer to should be as simple as possible. Milk powder, in its various forms, is not always easily digested. Examine again to see if (as there are worms) the motion contains any appreciable amount of jellyish mucus. Otherwise you cannot do better than endeavour by kindness and gentleness to soothe the child's fears until they pass away naturally.

EAR TROUBLE.—It is worth your while consulting a specialist privately if your prejudice against hospitals does not admit of your attending one. If, however, you attended the London Hospital, you would, I believe, find yourself treated well, and with probably considerable benefit. Syringing the nose with "my" lotion, gargling with the same, and syringing the ear with boric acid lotion are the best palliatives. After syringing the ear, dry the ear and insert a fresh piece of dry, clean, cotton wool. The condition is in all probability due to perforation and chronic middle ear trouble, but that is curable.

WORRIED.—The experiences you have gone through are enough to have "worried" anybody. You should put the matter out of your mind as far as possible. It was a very grave mistake to do as you did, but it is one often made in ignorance of its harmfulness. But you have already suffered too much for it. No doubt you will now get better, but not at once. Rest, careful good feeding, cheerfulness and a determination not to make similar unhygienic (to put it that way) mistakes again ought to pull you through. The stomach pain can best be relieved by applying a flannel wrung out of a quart of boiling water to which a tablespoonful of turpentine has been added. You do not say if you are married.

Dr. X. Y. Z.

The Belgian Chamber has passed a Bill giving women the right to vote for, and be members of, joint conferences of employers and employed.

The President of the National Union of Women Workers appeals for a fund to enable delegates to attend the quinquennial meeting of the International Council of Women at Toronto next year.

Dr. J. Collis Browne's CHLORODYNE

Used by Doctors and the Public for over half a century.

The BEST REMEDY KNOWN for
COUGHS, COLDS,
ASTHMA, BRONCHITIS, DIARRHŒA,
NEURALGIA, RHEUMATISM, GOUT,
TOOTHACHE.

Convincing Medical Testimony with each bottle. Refuse imitations. Every Bottle of Genuine Chlorodyne bears on the stamp the name of the Inventor.

Dr. J. COLLIS BROWNE.
Of all Chemists, 1/3, 2/6, 4/6.

RUSSIAN WOMEN IN CONGRESS.

The Story of Mme. Filosofoff.

At last, Russian women have been allowed to hold a meeting and discuss the claims of their sex and its disabilities. In Russia this means little new freedom, and will almost certainly mean persecution. But the event makes history.

It is a triumph in her old age for Mme. Filosofoff, the first Russian advocate of women's rights. When the Congress opened last Wednesday, in St. Petersburg, she was present, and the women gave her great applause.

Mme. Filosofoff is an aunt of the former Russian Minister of Commerce of that name. Now 82 years of age, she initiated in the 'seventies, together with the late Nadezhda Stasoff, the movement for the higher education of women in Russia, and established, much against the wishes of the Government, and under the patronage of Prince Peter of Oldenburg, the first university courses for women. Later on, thanks to her efforts as well as those of Baroness Ixkul, the first medical school for women was opened.

Nearly 1,000 delegates from all parts of Russia were present, including peasants, Poles, Armenians, and Lithuanians.

The aim of the Congress was said to be to sink political differences, avoid useless phraseology, and to co-operate in the improvement of the social, moral, legal, and political condition of women. The motto on the badges is "Equal duties, equal rights."

All the announcements and precautions which had preceded the Congress were, however, intended to put the party of real working women in the wrong. This party refused to co-operate with the delegates of the bourgeoisie, declaring that they are bound by the decisions of the Social Democratic Congress at Stuttgart.

At a meeting of the section which deals with the employment of women in factories, it was stated that the wages in factories ranged from six to twenty roubles (12s. to £2) a month, while the rate of infantile mortality among the children of female factory hands averaged 60 per cent. The position of the peasantry was declared to be even worse.

The Hunger Marchers.

Mr. Stewart Gray is taking a band of Hunger Marchers through Wales, where there are backward bodies of working men.

Asked by one of these hostile critics at Merthyr what work he did himself, Mr. Gray said that he was giving up £2,000 a year to the cause of the starving children—120,000 of them. Any man who did not go into the question of how the State was to save them was a murderer and a robber.

The "Lancashire Post" says: "We have become nowadays so used to advertisement that unless a clamour is made we almost refuse to believe that out-of-the-way misery exists. We almost expect it to come out into the public highway, to lie Lazarus-like at the rich man's gate, to expose its social sores, and in this way to compel pity and the relief that pity engenders."

HOME WORK IN LIVERPOOL.

Researches and Results.

At a meeting of the Liverpool Economic and Statistical Society, held in the University, it was reported that visits had been paid to, and reports obtained from, 216 home workers and 51 contractors. The home workers visited included one or more workers for nearly all the Liverpool employers who give out work.

Home work in Liverpool is confined, with few exceptions, to needlework (clothing) trades, but within these trades there are great differences as regards skill, earnings, and social status, the best paid being probably the vestmakers.

The general conclusion came to was that the standard of cleanliness and respectability is very high on the whole, and the committee came away from the inquiry with a feeling of strong respect, almost amounting to admiration, for the Liverpool home workers as a body.

It was undeniable that piece rates had decreased, and were decreasing. The two causes suggested were—(1) Excessive competition for the work, this enabling the employers to beat down rates to the lowest subsistent standard; and (2) the competition of factories in which power machines are used.

The committee, however, seemed to think that the practical difficulties would be too great to allow wages boards to draw up piece rates for garments varying so infinitely and endlessly as the innumerable small articles of children's clothing, ladies' dresses, blouses, and underclothing.

SOCIALISM AND THE SUFFRAGE.

At the last meeting of the Willesden Branch, S.D.P., the following resolution was adopted:

"That this branch enters its emphatic protest against the action of Comrade E. Belfort Bax in associating himself with some of the worst enemies of the working classes for the reactionary purpose of blocking the way of the political emancipation of the women of Great Britain. This branch considers that Comrade Bax's activity in this direction is not only a repudiation of an essential point of the S.D.P. programme, and, indeed, of the programmes of all Socialist parties all over the world, but also a violation of the best and noblest feelings of the working classes, and a serious damage to their immediate and future interests.

"It further considers that such an attitude on the part of a leading member of the S.D.P. must tend to alienate English working men and women from social democracy."

THE COTTON TRADE.

The Executive of the Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton Spinners resolved on Saturday to accept the invitation of the President of the Board of Trade to a conference with the Cardroom Workers and Master Cotton Spinners, with a view to the adoption of a scheme for the automatic regulation of wages in the cotton spinning trade. The Master Spinners and Cardroom Workers had already accepted the invitation. The conference will be held in London early in the New Year.

THE CHRISTMAS POVERTY OF LONDON.

At this Christmas season 130,543 persons in London—or more than 27 out of every 1,000—are in receipt of Poor Law relief.

In ten years London has added 26,000 units to its pauper army. The total number has not been higher for thirty-eight years; and we must go back to 1874 to find a higher ratio of paupers to population.

The annual review of "The Legal Poor of London" in the "Times" admits, on analysing the figures, that the increase is confined to a few unions, whilst in more than half there has been a decrease. The Poplar Union alone is responsible for 41 per cent. of the increase in East End pauperism, and Islington for almost all the increase in the North.

ORIGIN OF THE GRILLE.

In his newly-published evidence before the Committee on the Admission of Strangers, the Speaker says:

"I believe ladies were admitted to the body of the House until a certain lady would not withdraw when notice was taken that strangers were present, and it took three hours to clear her out. She was a very celebrated professional beauty of the name of Mrs. Musters, and members crowded round her and protected her for three hours. After that they determined they would not let any more ladies in again.

"The only place the ladies had to view the proceedings in the old Chamber was through the ventilating shaft at the top of the old St. Stephen's Hall. There was a sort of balcony where they sat or stood; they could hear the debate, and just catch sight of the members' heads below."

This continued up to the fire of 1834. The incident of Mrs. Musters seems to have taken place in 1778.

The Committee now propose that, subject to strict regulations, the ordinary public galleries shall be open to men and women alike.

BIRKBECK BANK

ESTABLISHED 1851.

SOUTHAMPTON BUILDINGS,
HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.

2½ PER CENT. INTEREST

allowed on Deposit Accounts
repayable on Demand.

2 PER CENT. INTEREST

on Drawing Accounts with
Cheque Book.

All General Banking Business Transacted.

Almanack with full particulars,
POST FREE.

F. C. RAVENSCROFT, Secretary.

Julia Dawson's Answers.

B. WALLACE.—That little error was not worth the paper it was printed on. So glad the friend is supplying you with such lovely books to read.

O. N. B. asks for the address of some orphanage or school with small premium, suitable for boys 9 and 11. Will readers oblige?

M. A. S.—I am quite sure that if you send your one act play to Hilda Thompson, "Clarion" Office, 44, Worship Street, London, E.C., she will gladly give you the benefit of her advice. Then, if she happens to give a favourable opinion, you might bring your bigger gun to bear later. I like the idea of those pea-hens, and would like to share a laugh with Hilda when she reads. Nothing will give her greater joy than to help you if she can. You see, I have known her since she wore short frocks, and seen her grow up, and she is one of the very best. Thank you for your support of my view of the W.S.P.U. But let it pass, as all things must.

SARAH.—My child, do not be so sad. A good man who preferred to be known as the Boulder once wrote that every properly constituted person must laugh or perish; and were it not for the grotesque incongruities, we should become duller than the fat weed. I do not know what the fat weed is, but I am sure you must not grow like it. Would it not be wise sometimes for you to go outside your comfortable home, where the table is always spread, and see what real misery is like where there is no food? You never can be happy by thinking of nobody's troubles but your own.

THE MERRY PEZZER CYNIC.—I gladly print the Socialist grace which your children sing before meals:

Let my way of life be pure,

Let my daily bread be earned,

Let my every step be sure,

Let my thoughts be rightwards turned.

I do hope the cloud which stands between you and the sunshine now will soon pass away.

G. G.—You want to find somebody to adopt a sweet little girl of 2½ years, the child of a poor mother who cannot keep her. And you want to start a Bread Committee at work in the Paddington district. I will keep your name and address should any one write to cooperate. I hope many bodies will. It would be good if all our readers had some of your enthusiasm. Was delighted to make your acquaintance at the re-union.

A. MATEY.—Passed on your letter re W. chairs to the secretary of the Manchester Clarion Handicraft Guild, Mr. T. Gordon, 23, Highfield Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy. Let me hear again if you cannot get what you want.

OLD AGE PENSIONS (M. W. G., Liverpool).—As the incident about which you write is of general interest, I repeat it. Two women went to you stating they had been asked to provide 3s. 6d. each for birth certificates. One borrowed the money and got hers. The other could not borrow it; had no friends; so she went to the nearest post office, stated her case fully, and shortly after got a paper stating that she was entitled to the pension!

A. G.—May I give your name and address for the help you need?

A TRAMP.—Of course you have my sympathy. Anything more soul-destroying than the calling of a commercial traveller I cannot conceive. The few who fight against the curse and win, as you do, are geniuses of the highest order. For the benefit of others, I gladly give the address of the secretary of the Commercial Travellers' Socialist Society, C. F. Foyle, Stonehenge, Cambridge Road, King's Heath, Birmingham. Are you a member?

A FRIEND.—Glady print your recipe for pickled apples, though it ought really to go in Dorothy Worrall's department: 1 quart best vinegar, 3lb lump sugar, 4oz cloves. Boil vinegar and sugar together with the cloves. When boiling, drop in apples, previously peeled and cored. Fill the bottles and pour the vinegar over them. This quantity of vinegar will do two gallons of apples. Where I live apples are sold by the pound, but I hope other readers will know how to estimate them by the gallon.

Complaints and the Law.

It seems that, owing to the mischance of Christmas Day falling on a Friday this year, women workers are to lose half a holiday, because Bank Holiday coincides with a day which would anyhow have been a half holiday. The law makes no provision for meeting this little difficulty. It is hard lines, and there is an end.

Some people, I am told, are going to be allowed a half holiday on Thursday. But all are not so fortunate, and the law cannot enforce this arrangement universally.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

DAISY.—See above. It is indeed very annoying for you that your cousin should get a half-holiday on Thursday, while you will have to work till 8 o'clock. I am so sorry, but I can see no remedy.

SLATE CLUB.—You ought not to have been made to join the club. Membership of benefit clubs in connection with works of any kind cannot be made compulsory, except in the case of registered clubs. But the club you describe cannot have been registered, as the funds were (I suppose) periodically divided out, and the law does not allow such clubs to be registered. Please send full address and a copy of the rules of the club, if possible. Then I will have the matter looked into.

ANXIOUS.—You could claim compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act for the bite of a dog, if you could prove that the injury "arose out of" your employment. You do not say whose dog it is, or how it comes to be "about the place." If the dog is a watch-dog belonging to the firm, you could probably claim if he bit you. But I should want full details of all the circumstances before advising definitely. PORTIA.

BUMBLEDOM.

Incredible Harshness at Wandsworth.

Funny how slow some people are to understand that the day of red-tape inhumanities is past!

Mr. de Grey, the South-Western police magistrate, has been at real pains to bring this home to the Wandsworth Guardians. A respectable old couple were brought before him for begging in the streets. He is a man, and was ashamed; and he found that they had only taken to begging because if they went into the workhouse they would be separated.

The magistrate did not punish them. He made a humane suggestion to the officious "guardians of the poor."

Last week a Mr. Haggis, one of their officials, attended his court to say that the Guardians wished they could accept it, but the old couple had given their ages inaccurately! Mr. de Grey seems to have been staggered—as well he might be. And his conversation with Mr. Haggis (whom "Weel faur thy honest souse face" would have staggered no less, we suppose; for let us do all men justice) was as follows:

"You mean that the Guardians have refused to adopt my suggestion?"

"They have not refused."

"But they have done nothing to assist the couple to spend their last days together."

"You see—they gave incorrect ages."

"That is nothing to do with it," said the magistrate. "They are respectable old people, and in my opinion deserving of pity. I thought it was a case in which the Guardians should exercise their discretion. That is all I have to say."

But something more should be said, when the time comes, by the decent electors of Wandsworth. We hope they will even cut this story out and paste it up somewhere—lest they forget.

THE MILITANT PROGRAMME.

The new year, which may possibly see a Manhood Suffrage Bill introduced in the Commons and the question of Adult Suffrage carried to division, dawns hopefully for women suffragists of all the parties.

Miss Pankhurst has announced that the militant campaign will be widened actively. At the breakfast on her release she stated that the W.S.P.U. "were going to cover the country with organisers so that there wouldn't be a spot, not even in Scotland, where a Cabinet Minister could show his face. The Government had passed a Bill making their conduct at meetings unlawful as well as unpleasant, in the vain hope they were going to get more peace. The Union would not, however, be in the least deterred. They were going to have a campaign against the Government that would eclipse the Government's campaign against the Lords, and it would not be difficult."

After prison, travel. With Mr. and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, Mrs. Pankhurst and Miss Christabel Pankhurst left Charing Cross on Wednesday last for Cheshire, in Switzerland.

They are to be home again on January 4.

One of Florence Nightingale's nurses is ineligible for an old age pension, having received poor relief.

ATTRACTIVE ADVERTISEMENTS.

In order to meet a want long felt by readers of THE WOMAN WORKER, this page in future will be devoted to attractive advertisements. That is to say, we shall insert in it such advertisements as will attract readers by their usefulness.

May I appeal very specially to women to help to make this page useful by using it? Whether you want to buy or sell or hire, or make inquiries of any sort, use this page.

The charges for these advertisements are: 20 words for 9d., or three insertions 2s. All such advertisements must be purely personal, and not of a business nature. That is to say, that whilst we shall gladly accept advertisements from men and women wanting to buy, sell, or exchange articles, business firms so advertising can have space on the ordinary advertisement pages, or else pay 5d. per line on this.

Though we cannot accept responsibility for any transaction through this page, or guarantee the good faith of every advertiser, we shall take every care that none but advertisements of a reliable nature are inserted.

Cross your postal orders "WOMAN WORKER," and endorse your envelope "A. A." (Attractive Advertisement), WOMAN WORKER Office, Worship Street, London, E.C. Friday in each week is the latest day for receiving advertisements for the following issue.

JULIA DAWSON.

SITUATIONS WANTED.

MARRIED COUPLE, Socialists, Abstinents, no children, seek Situation as Caretakers or Domestic helps. Willing to do entire work, but preferably no cooking. Well educated and domesticated.—WARDE, Hillcroft, Woking.

YOUNG WOMAN requires situation as Nurse to one or two children or as Housemaid in small family.—C. W. 220, Peckham Rye, S.E.

WANTED.—Situation as Housekeeper by respectable Woman to working people; Blackburn or Accrington district; good references.—Address: Miss BAKER, 20, St. Cecilia Street, Great Harwood.

APARTMENTS.

CHESHIRE.—Comfortable Rooms to Let, permanent station and park; bath, etc. Moderate terms.—HORDALE, 26, North Road, West Kirby.

DEVON.—PENLE, Nr. DARTMOUTH.—Home for Rest and Recreation. Sunny, romantic cliff situation. Vegetarian. Every home comfort. Sea bathing. Christmas Party.—Mrs. MIDDLETON, 34, Shandon Road.

LONDON.—CLAPHAM PARK, S.W.—Board-Residence on reasonable terms; near trams and tube to all parts; piano and bath.—Mrs. MIDDLETON, 34, Shandon Road.

LONDON.—PECKHAM RYE, S.E.—Comfortable Home offered Lady or Two Friends. Moderate terms. Board optional. Near trams and park.—11, Cruden Road.

LONDON, N.—Comfortable home offered to com. rate. Piano, bath, every convenience, easy access to city.—22, Hornsey Park Road, Hornsey.

TWO INVALIDS.—A vacancy occurs in the home of a Trained Nurse for delicate or aged lady or gentleman. Bracing part, Surrey. Terms, moderate.—BETA, c/o WOMAN WORKER OFFICE, 44, Worship Street, E.C.

CLOTHING.

BLACK CASHMERE SKIRT FOR SALE.—Front length 36 inches. Also blouses and short coat (lined). Advertiser leaving off mourning.—London, 27.

ORIGINAL DESIGNS FOR EMBROIDERY put on dresses, etc., from 2s. 6d.—FIRTH AND MARSDEN, 16, John Dalton Street, Manchester.

MISCELLANEOUS.

BOOKS WANTED by Bernard Shaw, Wm. Morris, Carpenter, Robert Owen. Anything on Socialism before 1845.—TURNER 50, Preston Street, Brighton.

FRENCH LADY, experienced, gives FRENCH LESSONS; reading and conversation a speciality. Pupils visited and received.—Miss AURIA, 29, Romola Road, Norwood Road, Herne Hill.

HAIR FALLING OFF.—Lady, who lost nearly all hers, has now strong, heavy growth, will send particulars to anyone enclosing stamped envelope.—Miss W. O. FIELD, Gientower, Fanklin.

WILL EXCHANGE Elderly Woman's Outdoor Garments for Early-hatched Pullers, Ducks, of Geese.—Address: C., Rose Cottage, Chawston, St. Neots.

FOR SALE.

ANTIQUA CHEST (OAK) DRAWERS.—Bugle Clock. Also Dower Chest for immediate disposal.—X. Y. Z., c/o WOMAN WORKER OFFICE, 44, Worship Street, London, E.C.

FOR SALE.—Rough-Coated Shetland Male Collie nine months. Gentle, obedient.—Apply, Shetland, 28.

CENTURY THERMAL BATH CABINET (unused). Cost 45s.; sell 20s., or exchange hanging lamp, wickless stove, or article of furniture. Birmingham, 22.

20,000 yards Nottingham Lace Given Away.—5 yards Free with assorted 1½, 2/6 parcels.—TAYLOR, Lace Merchant, Ilkeston.

Those who have cast-off or misfit clothing to sell should use this page well. It should be also an Exchange and Mart for furniture, books, china, etc.

Replies to above must be addressed according to number indicated, c/o WOMAN WORKER, Utopia Press, Worship Street, E.C., and accompanied by extra stamp for forwarding.

WOMEN'S LABOUR LEAGUE.

Edited by Mrs. J. R. MacDonald.

Unemployed Women.

The discussion aroused by our letter to the Premier goes on apace. (By the way, in THE WOMAN WORKER for December 16, the summary of our final answer to Mr. Asquith was put by mistake before his reply to our first letter, so that it looked as if he had had the last word, and not we.)

Sir William Chance—that embodiment of the Charity Organisation Society's way of looking at the poor, as if they were quite a different set of beings from those who have never known the pinch of want—wrote to the Press about the "dead failure" of the workrooms, winding up cheerfully, "I am glad that the application of the W.L.L. has been refused." Mrs. Tennant and Mr. J. H. Harley, who are respectively chairman and vice-chairman of the Women's Work Committee, have both written good answers to Sir W. Chance, pointing out that the workrooms cannot possibly be commercially profitable, but that if given more scope by the Local Government Board, they could do even better work than at present.

Premier Not to Close Workrooms.

At any rate the present rooms are not to be closed, as Mr. Asquith promised this in answer to a question put by J. R. MacDonald in the House on the subject of the Premier's letter to the W.L.L.

But Mr. Asquith added that the proportion of women who had got employment out of those registered was higher than that of the men. As up to December 7 only 10.5 of every hundred men and 25.5 of every hundred women registered had obtained employment, there is nothing to be proud of in either case; but if the percentage of women who are out of work, but do not register, could be ascertained, it would make a great difference in these figures.

In many districts, where anyone with the slightest knowledge of industrial conditions knows that there are hundreds of women and girls out of work, only half-a-dozen or so have given in their names to the Distress Committees. This is not wonderful, for most of them have no idea that they have any claim upon the Act, as it is almost always talked about in connection with men's employment, and then if by chance they do apply, nothing comes of it except a number of harassing inquiries and they have no good news of work obtained to pass on to their neighbours to induce them to apply also.

Public Opinion Must Be Roused.

This is why we have to use every means in our power to get the women to realise their claims on the one hand, and to get the authorities to deal with them adequately on the other hand. Our Memorial Hall demonstration on Thursday evening, January 21, will need many helpers in order to make it a great success.

Anyone who is willing to distribute handbills or otherwise help to make the demonstration known is asked to write to Mrs. J. R. MacDonald, 3, Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.

Sweating Exhibition at Benwell.

The Benwell I.L.P. and W.L.L. held a sale of work and exhibition on Saturday, Decem-

ber 19, and there was a large attendance of buyers, and children (in search of fun, of which there was a good store). Mrs. W. E. Moll, of Newcastle W.L.L., opened the sale, and in congratulating the workers on the fine show of useful and fancy goods, urged them to keep the flag of Socialism flying in the district. An exhibition of "sweated goods" was held in a class-room, and a constant stream of visitors passed round the tables examining the goods, and deploring the conditions which allow such underpaid work in the so-called homes of England. The now famous "Gibson" costume was quite a centre of attraction, and I noticed that many men and women were given food for serious thought as they realised what unwritten history was told by that smart costume. Several young women who work in wholesale factories in Newcastle, and whose work is by no means easy or overpaid, were horror-stricken at the prices of some of the articles on show, and some were heard to vow that every moment of their spare time would henceforth be devoted to an effort to make this condition of affairs a thing of the past. "We have read of this kind of thing, but to see it is awful—one cannot forget," so said some of the women, and they gazed sadly on the "Sacred Motherhood" picture (which came out with THE WOMAN WORKER), and felt that it was only too true.

Blyth Supplies Vice-President to L.R.C.

The Blyth Women's Labour League have helped to form the new Morpeth Division L.R.C., and Mrs. Brown, president of the W.L.L., is appointed vice-president. Glasgow branch, the nearest neighbour going North, must look to its laurels, for Blyth is very much alive. They are expecting Miss Margaret Bondfield and a rousing public meeting in the early part of the New Year.

Note.—The mention of a North-Eastern District Conference of Women's Labour Leagues in the issue of December 16 should have read February, instead of January.

THE RIGHT TO LIVE IN ITALY.

There is famine in the province of Apulia. The cellars are full of wine that has been harvested by the hungry peasantry, but flour is taxed at 1s. 5½d. a stone, and there is nothing for them to eat but Polenta chestnuts. Troops guard the bakeries, for there have been bread riots.

In these tragical straits the priests themselves have abandoned the pretence that it is "wicked" to steal food. They are telling the starving people that it is lawful to help themselves to bread, and that they can do so with a clear conscience, provided they do not carry off more than is requisite for their immediate needs.

A BOOK FOR LADIES.

The information contained in this book ought to be known by every married woman, and it will not harm the unmarried to read. No book is written which goes so thoroughly into matters relating to married women. Some may think too much is told; such can scarcely be the case, for knowledge is power and the means of attaining happiness. The book can be had in envelope, from Dr. T. R. ALLINSON, 152, Room 4, Spanish Place, Manchester Square, London, W., in return for a postal order for 1s. 3d.

THE LATEST FOUNTAIN PEN (1909 Model).

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