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"R. B."

The Sketch of a Personality.

By A. Neil Lyons.



II. BOYHOOD.

"R. B." was a very delicate child. The doctors—many and various doctors, met with in divers places during the pilgrimage of want—said that he would never live to be seven; then that he would die before he was ten, then before twelve, then before fourteen. They meant well, but, as "R. B." says, the luck was against them. The doctors, all the same, were justified of their wisdom to the extent that Robert remained a very sickly boy. He was still a sickly boy—sicklier than ever—when he joined the Army, but there, he says, they made a man of him in six months.

A Frail Child's Studies.

Well, at the useful age of eleven this frail child, as has already been recorded, was toiling and sweating and bleeding at a colour printer's. In what may perhaps be termed his leisure hours he was given all which the weary, eager, persistent mother had to give him in the way of knowledge. He had actually learned to read when he was eight years old. When the juvenile tasks which he was put to do each day at the colour printer's had been quite completed; when he had reached home and had run upon the ordinary

errands for his mother; when he had had his lesson in Scripture and arithmetic and his lecture upon filial department, and had washed up the tea-things and helped with the supper (presuming that it ran to supper), he was at leisure to follow literary pursuits. These at this time consisted in reading "The Pilgrim's Progress"—reading it and re-reading it, and then reading it over again. He also read, when he could get hold of them, stories about battles and about Nelson and Wellington. But all his juvenile reading put together did not amount to much—not, at least, in respect of variety.

This is not to be wondered at when you consider how his life was crowded with what we will describe as "other interests." It is difficult to be a good son and a hard-working lad and a schoolboy and a voracious reader all at once, at eleven years of age and on eightpence a week. Young Robert differed from any other grimy little toiler of his age and status not in respect of the number and class of books which he read, but in the fact that he was minded to read at all. His opportunities, whatever they were, did not carry him far in these days: for he has placed it on record that at sixteen he was just able to read and write.

The Mother's Problem.

I do not want you to get hold of the idea that the boy was neglected or "put upon" at home. It was not the poor mother's fault that her son went out to work before he had reached even the age at which other boys begin to learn to play: it was not her fault that he had few books to read and few spare minutes in which to read them, or that she could tell him so little concerning the things and ideas which are written about in books. His mother was a plucky, irritable, intelligent, penniless, half-Italian woman faced with an awful problem. She worked hard all day long, and during the nights as well, but all the money which her ten sore fingers could secure would not keep a woman and two boys in food and lodging.

Louisa Blatchford's actual weekly wage was eight shillings. To this sum Montague, who worked as an errand boy, contributed two shillings, and Robert, as we have seen, added another eightpence. Thus the family possessed a combined weekly income of eleven shillings and sixpence, out of which stipend five

shillings had to be deducted by way of rent for two furnished rooms. A sum of six shillings and sixpence thus remained in hand, with which to cover the week's expenditure in respect of food, light, warmth, clothing, recreation, and culture for three people. Are we to blame the little dressmaker for sending her children out to work?

Robert was not her favourite child. He was looked upon as being rather "slow"; as being unworthy of the family reputation for mental alertness. But he was her very son, and she fought and struggled for him and argued with him and corrected him and watched him and tried to instil things into him—religion, politics, and a fierce loathing for plays and players—above all that. Surely my readers can understand and like this woman? A woman with fifty little talents, fifty little graces, fifty little "corners," fifty little prejudices, and with stupendous courage, resource, and vitality. But one need not labour to explain her, for here is "R. B.'s" own picture of his mother:

A Son's Memories.

"She was a little woman, with square shoulders: slim, and light on her feet. You may see the picture of her, face and figure, at any Italian fruit stall, as you may see mine behind many an Italian organ. She had abundant black hair, hazel eyes, black eyebrows, like smears; large, white, even teeth, a heavy mouth and jaw. She had a good mezzo voice, and as a young woman sang well. In temperament she was very, very mixed and elusive—in fact, Italian. She had high spirits (when not in the dumps); was witty and bright, and had a ringing, voluminous laugh that hung on the hair trigger. She was not a good-tempered woman. Her temper was most uncertain. She would be angelic for weeks, and then the nether fires would burn up, and she was impossible for a day or so. She was 'odd,' too—had an odd, abrupt, and whimsical way distinctly suggestive of Betsy Trotwood. Her religion and politics seem to me at this day to have been weird. But I think she got them from my father, who was a Churchman and an admirer of Sir Robert Peel.

"Well, my mother was not quite an educated woman. But she was the daughter of a composer, and she had been brought up in Bohemian circles and on the stage; and she talked well, and her English was correct; and she read a good deal (mostly fiction).

"She was not a Bohemian at all, but very respectable and strict, and she did not like the stage. Her aversion to the idea of her sons being actors was very strong, and she made great sacrifices and worked very hard to keep us out of the Bohemian environment.

"She taught us her religion and her ideas of politics, and used to read and sing to us, and tell us stories. She hated humbug and snobbery, and she was

rather satirical and not at all romantic. She was compassionate and generous, and loved children and animals. She was almost like a witch with animals. Her cats followed her to church: her chickens slept on the hearthrug, and the milkman's horse would stop her in the street and ask for cakes.

"She was brave and obstinate and persevering and practical, and she wore the oddest bonnets.

"Now, can you see her? She could be delightful; but she was hard to live with, and she had a most ruthless and wounding tongue.

Wasted.

"I think she was a clever woman, but was wasted—never had a chance. She had an original gift for drawing, and had a fertile mind and a fluent flow of language. Just an impulsive, unreason-



able, clever, wilful, bad-tempered, affectionate, pleasing, exasperating, funny little Italian woman. But it would take a book and a Thackeray to paint her portrait."

This is not merely splendid writing: it is splendid biography. It presents the whole drama of "R. B.'s" childhood; it explains what one means by saying that, psychologically, "R. B." was born an orphan.

At fourteen years of age our now mature young labourer was taken from the colour-printing works and apprenticed to brush making. Louisa Blatchford had a very sound belief in the value to her sons of "a trade." She could not give them any money or much education, but she would give them a "trade." This, she argued, was the surest obtainable charm against hardships, and against that which she held to be the basis of all want and unhappiness—the damnable spell of the footlights.

"R. B." worked at brush making for twelve hours every day: from six in the morning until six at night. He says that

it was hard, dirty work in a dusty, smoky shop, conducted by ordinarily objectionable bosses. "But," he also says, "many of the men and boys and girls were very good and intelligent."

That is a queer statement, and one will, later on, proceed to deal with it in a tone of arrogant criticism. In the meantime, a man is bound to wonder what those men and boys and girls did with their intelligence while they went out making brushes from six to six.

"What did 'R. B.' do with his?" you ask. Dear babies, "R. B." took it with him to the brush works and—"R. B." "did a guy."

Going to Chapel.

But we have not yet arrived at that point. You must first of all be told that about this time "R. B." began to visit chapel. This was a very natural proceeding; for "R. B." was obviously and necessarily a lad with stuff in him, and the chapel would offer the society of other young men having stuff in them: young men with minds in embryo, with vague internal cravings for fare other than pork: young men with a vague perception of the Problem. "R. B." kept up his chapel-going until he was twenty, at which age Pato intervened; and he says that the chapel did him lots of good, and taught him to think—to criticise. The chapel planted a seed, and the seed has grown into a tree—a tree which is rather by way being a nuisance to the chapel. "R. B." does not think that at any time of his life he possessed what is called the religious instinct; he was attracted to the chapel because it was a resort of quiet and thoughtful people. It offered a change, too, from the environment of the old strolling life, which experience and his mother's constant voice had taught him to hate. It was a change to be "respectable."

There may have been another inducement to regular attendance at chapel. Amongst the workpeople at the brush factory there was a "little proud, pretty thing with flaxen hair and sharp, dark eyes." She was a chapel-goer. "R. B." fell in love with her—or became fond of her—when he was sixteen years old. When he was twenty-nine he married her.

Married.

It seems a silly thing solemnly to announce the existence of Mrs. Blatchford and the Blatchford children to readers of THE WOMAN WORKER and the "Clarion"; but a biography is a biography, and one must state facts. I have, therefore, to announce that Mrs. Blatchford is alive (and likely to remain so, so long as there is a bargain to be had at Liberty's or a stair-rod to criticise in her house), and that Mr. and Mrs. Blatchford have three children—Wimmie and Dolly and Corri. Corri is a boy, and bears the maiden name of his grandmother.

"R. B." led a hard but not unhappy life, of the vegetable kind, in Halifax until he was twenty. He worked steadily at the brush factory for six years and a few odd months and weeks and days. Then, of a sudden, on the oddest day of all, the steadiness suddenly went out of him.

This brings us to the story of the Great Adventure.

(To be continued.)

THE CAUSERIE.

By Julia Dawson.

Truly one never knows what the Fates have in store. If anyone had told me last Wednesday that this Wednesday I should sit contemplating a London court-yard spread over by a gigantic plane tree—which reminds me of the Riviera—I should have said—Rats! I should, indeed. For London, 'cos I love it best, is always and ever furthest off.

While waiting about the office this morning I picked up the MS. of a short story sent in for Christmas. A sweetly pretty story, telling how a young girl of the middle-class had started out to spend sixteen shillings in

Christmas Presents.

In the first shop she was stopped short by a pair of wistful blue eyes belonging to a hungry child gazing through the window. To make a long story short, the sixteen shillings went to help the deserted mother of the hungry child—and many more shillings to provide shoes for shoeless feet. The girl, in fact, thenceforward renounced furs, feathers, laces, sweets, pastries, and goodies, sacrificing regarding the purchase thereof as an

Unsocialistic Waste

of money. A very pretty story indeed; but, as our right down regular political friends would say, its economic basis is unsound.

The very reason why Socialists want Socialism is so that everybody can have sweets and goodies; and no Socialist regards the spending of money on these delightful little adjuncts to life as un-socialistic. Rather, it is unsocialistic not to buy them. So go and buy.

For the Fat.

Just one reader—and he a mere man, bless his heart—has made a suggestion how to persuade this too, too solid flesh (or is it fat?) to melt. He says he has always pictured me as a little diminutive, not too handsome, recluse. But with that bitter pill he sends some sweet jam in the form of one of the Roycroft Books Beautiful, and some magazines.

His advice is *chew*. "Chew your food," says he, "until you cannot keep it in your mouth any longer. Chew, chew, chew, till it is a perfect liquid. Chew soup, chew milk, chew everything."

By this means, he alleges, we fat ones shall enjoy our food better and be satisfied with far less. Chewing, combined with

Deep Breathing.

has rendered him immune from both indigestion and colds. Deep breathing sends him off to sleep at night and warms him if he is cold. Since he has practised deep breathing and thorough mastication, he has thrown physic to the dogs—and they, wise animals, have let it lie where it has fallen. I like him. For it has always seemed to me monstrously

Rough on Dogs

to throw them physic. All nice men like dogs. And a man who does not is never to be trusted.

But are we busy folk who have

hitherto depended on meal and breathing times for rest to accomplish both these things with *hard labour*? Upon my word it is a hard world. Nevertheless, I thank C. S. S. My heart is in his keeping; and I would have written a pretty letter to tell him so had I the ghost of an idea of his name or address.

I wish more readers had written to tell us fat ones how to grow slim. Had I asked "Clarion" readers they would have responded in hundreds—I wait with patience, even pathos, for WOMAN WORKER readers to use the pens of ready writers. Let it not be long, please, before you do, or I shall sigh for the touch of vanished hands—and sighing never was useful.

The question of

Painless Births

has caused some women to send me cuttings from the "Herald of Health." I have read them all, and they seem too good to be true. But why should they not be true? Why should not woman's agony at that great time be softened and sweetened or sent entirely away? With one exception the testimonies are third-hand, i.e., taken from books and papers. The exception is a

Wallace-ite Mother,

which I had better explain to the uninitiated means one who conforms strictly to Mrs. Wallace's rigid rules of diet. She finds bearing babies so easy that she does not care how often they come, and wishes she could bear all the babies for all the poor women in her town who suffer.

Seems positively dangerous to come to that pass in these days of starving school children, high rents, dear food and clothing, and low wages!

This lady despises doctors and all professional interference. But Mrs. Wallace wisely warns her readers against rashness, thereby admitting that, invaluable as Wallace-ite diet is, it must not be reckoned on as

A Sure Safeguard

from pain during child-birth. The other cases quoted are of Scotch and Irish women in primitive places where the simple life is enforced, and one remarkable extract from the "British Medical Journal" for October 24, telling of a girl of twenty being confined of her first baby in St. Bartholomew's Hospital during sleep.

She evidently was no food-faddist, or crank of any description. It can be done therefore. Babies may be born without pain. But how are we to learn the way? Let me beg again that if any of my readers have special experiences they will write me forthwith. We must help one another, and it is a burning question for women.

O yes, here is another letter—from a man who—as one of a family of eleven—is

Disgusted with the Prudery

which surrounds motherhood—the most important factor in human existence. He recommends that we review Mrs.

Francis Swiney's book, "The Awakening of Women"; and adds that she has written another on

How We Are Born.

If an open confession is good for the soul I must admit that I have had the first book on my shelves for years, but have been unable to read its heavy and dull-looking pages. If the latter is written more so that they who run may want to stop and read, I have not the slightest doubt but that it would be reviewed in these pages if sent.

Anti-Man Women.

Will the New Year a-coming of its mercy let us see the last of the anti-man women rushing around so wildly? The latest is that when they are shouting and screaming and using physical violence to break up meetings, the men appointed to keep order subject them to indecent assaults.

Hitherto, I have always regarded those women as plucky, even though I am strongly opposed to their purpose of limiting the franchise to certain women better off than others.

But it is the last resource of cowards to make charges of that kind without proving them.

These women who pretend to be progressive, pretend that it is their aim to gain for women the same privileges as men, are doing just the other thing. By their latest tactics they will be the means of gradually excluding women from any meetings of a higher intellectual order than

Methodist Tea Fights.

What is their object? It is not, it cannot be, votes for women. That would be too absurd.

(For Answers see page 748).

MISTLETOE AND HOLLY.

King Holly and Queen Mistletoe,
To sound of Christmas bells,
From grove and lane
Go forth to reign
In homes where true love dwells.
And she with red cheek all aglow,
And she in pearly sheen,
Are borne in state
To dedicate
The hours to joy sereno.

See him in green and gorgeous coat
Enthroned on festive board,
Acclaimed with joy
By girl and boy,
While homage all accord.
And she in sweet retirement rests,
Though much observed on high,
While half afraid,
Each dainty maid
Will shyly pass her by.

ROSE E. SHARLAND.

Life is an art, and a very fine art. One of its first necessities is that you should not have more material in it—more chairs and tables, servants, houses, lands, bank shares, friends, acquaintances, and so forth—than you can really handle. It is no good pretending that you are obliged to have them. You must cut that nonsense short. If one's life is to be expressive, one does not want lumber in it, it must not be full of things that mean nothing, or that mean the wrong thing.—EDWARD CARPENTER.

Seasonable Remarks.

By Winifrid Blatchford.

Editorial commands, like those of Royalty, must ever be respected.

That explains my appearance here. One must obey those commands or be for evermore a stranger to the Sub-Editorial smile: that kind, wise smile we all delight to see on busy "making-up" days, when printers and their "devils" rule the roost and no man loves his neighbour.

Now, personally, I would risk the displeasure of Royalty—never having felt its pleasure—by disregarding a command to a tea party under the spreading oaks of Windsor, or a Salmon Lunch at Balmoral—do they have salmon there?—I would risk all this, were I not, as at present is the case, diligently understudying Old Bill Barley to my great disgust. But to be banished for all time from that smile of genial warmth would be a punishment far too hard to bear.

Therefore, all temptations to send a deputation to the telephone—I dare not go myself—with the message "No copy" are sternly set aside with a biblical quotation.

The editorial command ran somewhat like to this: "Must have article for Christmas. Make it gay and bright!"

Ye gods!

Bright, forsooth!—with an invalid occupying every room the house does boast. Gay, good luck!—when ten thousand little devils with ten thousand little pinchers are competing as to who shall nip the largest piece out of one.

God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay.

You have never before omitted to provide these seasonable entertainments: why do so now? Besides which, it is a poor heart which never rejoices—therefore, a Merry Christmas to you all!

Why is it considered virtuous to obey orders? Why a sin to disregard them?

I obeyed orders—from an energetic secretary—when I set forth yestereve in the puddles and rain and raw night air to spend a pleasant hour with my fellow-Pioneers. I disregarded orders when I told my family I would go out, be it ever so! Am I punished now for un-filial conduct, or is my present Bill Barley-like situation one of those mysterious blessings in disguise, sent to me as reward for a duty well performed?

I know not.

But who said Christmas? Go to! Has something happened to the calendar, or "is visions about?"

By all that is spring-like and youthful, by the blue sky and gracious sun, there blooms by my bed at this very minute a pearl-tinted hedge rose! A wild hedge rose, and with him are his sisters two, and a wee baby bud holding out delicate baby fingers of bronze-green shade.

Also there is a vividly-golden, honey-scented branch of gorse, and a dainty marguerite softly bedded in a box of oak-leaves faintly turning yellow, and tender fern and mischievous prickly bramble.

Christmas? Mistletoe and holly-berries

to deck our houses before the week is out? Not a bit of it. These dears have come to tell us how wrong we are.

They came five minutes ago, just at the right moment. All the way from Plymouth they came, to wish me seasonable wishes on a cold and frosty morning. Was there ever such kindness, ever such forethought? They must have known!

In their box the treasures lie: here on my quilt, filling the room with the scents of Devon. Calling me to Babbicombe where the sea is purple, and to the moors where the rich gorse blooms.

A week to Christmas. Marry come up! it wants quite seven months to stocking night and baby watchings for Santa.

It is the month of May,
When little lambs do play—

and I and my pal, we tramp the Devon coast and eat the Devon cream.

A kind thought it was of the friend in Plymouth that made him pack the flowers up and send them here to cheer me, but kinder than he guessed: for he could not know how much I long all through our winter months for the scent of country lanes in spring and the silky touch of flower petals.

Christmas may have been a joyous season once, when the snow fell thick and great logs blazed, and coach-horns sounded their merry tan-ta-ra. But now—!

We have the greasy London pavements, the hideous motor buses, and the dun-coloured, choking, stifling "London particular." Our shopping is done in a petrol-crowded atmosphere, and the things we buy are mostly shoddy.

And we get the influenza!

They did not have the "influenza" in the Middle Ages. They do not have it in Devonshire—or, if they do, one never hears of it. They have clotted cream and junket there, and flower-laden by-ways and health-giving breezes, and sun and sun and sun.

They have the Sound at Plymouth, and Drake's memorial, and hundreds and hundreds of jolly soldiers and sailors—bless 'em! They also have the prettiest babies and the oldest men and women in the world.

In fact, there never was such a comfortable, motherly, kindly county as that of Devonshire. It smiles at one from its lowest valley to its highest hill, and one never wishes to leave it.

And this is a Christmas article. A seasonable article. An article by command—and must be light and bright and gay.

And five minutes ago I was moaning and groaning and endeavouring to "lead up" to the seasonable point, when the postman came and handed in an useable present from Devonshire, and knocked all Christmas fancies clean out of my tired head!

But to be in keeping with my surroundings, I will end my meanderings by wishing you all a Jolly Christmas, a Happy New Year, and—may I add?—a pocketful of money and a cellarful of beer!

CHRISTMAS FOR THE BIRDS.

My little daughters and I turn our garden into a birds' restaurant every winter. We save all our sunflower heads in the autumn, and directly the snow-flakes commence to fly we take one or two out and tie them to upright sticks fastened to the palings or stuck in the ground, and the greenfinches are not long in paying us a visit. One will alight on the top of a head and quietly extract seed after seed, cleverly shelling each and dropping the husk to the ground, all the while keeping a sharp look-out for the approach of any marauding cat. If a companion attempts to share the feast, the bird already in possession will at once stretch out his wings, and opening his great conical bill very wide, threaten to swallow the intruder, head, tail, legs, feet, and all.

For the Tit family generally we suspend a cocoanut with a piece sawn off either end. It is highly amusing to watch them feeding, one at either end, especially when nearly all the kernel has gone. Having to work in the dark, after a vigorous peck or two they jerk their heads out to see if anyone is coming. Often one of the birds will get scared by seeing a head bob in at the opposite end of the nut every time he attempts to take a bite, and, jumping on the top, will begin to chatter and plainly request his brother Billy to look sharp and allow him a chance at his end. As the poor blue tits had to shiver round and content themselves with an occasional grain of maize snatched from the fowl run, we had to organise an overflow table for them. We passed a piece of black cotton thread through the kernel of a Barcelona nut, and then suspended it from a stump. The little chaps seized the dangling bit of food with both feet, and then hammered away at it whilst hanging absolutely upside down.

For the thrushes, blackbirds, sparrows, and robins we have a large table made of a hammock of snow, when there is any on the ground, with a hollow in the centre. In this we place soaked dog biscuits, greatly to the delight of all our feathered customers. The robins, of course, dash in in their own perky way, and commence to help themselves without any kind of ceremony. Not so the shy, suspicious old sparrows. They sit on the garden fence and chimney-pot, and talk wisely to each other about cats, traps, nets, and guns, until by-and-by along comes an old mother thrush, hopping sedately for a few yards, and then stopping to listen for several seconds, with her head cocked on one side in the most comical way. The sparrows wait until she has detached a piece and turned away to enjoy it in some quiet corner, when the artful thieves rush in, seize it, and dash away in a noisy, laughing mob, leaving the rightful owner of the tit-bit in a state of blank surprise. RICHARD KEARON.

"Happiness is like the old woman's spectacles—after searching in vain for them, high and low, she found them at last on her nose."

But is old, old, good old Christmas gone? Nothing but the hair of his good, grey, old head and beard left? Well, I will have that, seeing I cannot have more of him.—"Hue and Cry after Christmas."

PEACE—AT A PRICE.

By Norman Tiptaft.

This article has nothing at all to do with the German war scare. It is merely a short record of how I, a somewhat sentimental, and, therefore, discontented, sort of man, obtained a most beatific state of mind, altogether above the trials and troubles of this commonplace existence, at a capital expenditure of four shillings and threepence.

I had been reading the daily Press, and my sympathy had been aroused by the reports of distress from all quarters consequent on unemployment. As to the causes of the unemployment, the writers nearly all differed, from the "Daily Liar," which said we wanted Tariff Reform, to the "Red Budget," which demanded the immediate nationalisation of everything, including Mr. Burns's salary and Lord Northcliffe's title. But however they disagreed as to causes, on the urgency of the problem they were at one.

Now, how can an ordinary intelligent person read column after column describing the horrible sufferings of the starving, and then go and sit down to a seven-course dinner in comfort?

Of course, the majority of well-bred Englishmen do, but then they are neither ordinary nor intelligent. And my mind (which, I think I have mentioned before, is sentimental) revolted from it. I wanted to do something to alter it, because—well, hang it! all folks ought to have food, anyhow.

It was in this frame of mind that I chanced one day to meet Bumpus. Bumpus is a friend of mine who owns a factory. He employs about 500 men, women, and children—hands, he calls them. To him I confided the cause of my disturbed peace. Bumpus looked at me when I had finished and merely said, "Rot!"

"But, my dear Bumpus," said I, "think of it. Here in this wealthy country, according to papers of every shade of political opinion, men and women able and willing to work are actually starving—starving, Bumpus; and their children—well, read and see what the papers say about the children."

"Look here, my boy," said Bumpus, "what I said before I say again—Rot! This present whining and snivelling about the unemployed is a mere political game. If a man wants work he can always do something—sweep streets, black boots, push a barrow—anything. Why, I started life as an errand-boy on six shillings a week. Look at me now. What has done it? Hard work and nothing else. I am sick of the unemployed, sick of all this talk about poverty and distress; the men are idle—bone-idle skulkers. Most of them never did a day's work in their lives, and never will as long as they can live without—a problem which the majority of them have apparently solved successfully."

"But the papers—"

"Papers be —" Here Bumpus said something quite unfit for polite society. "You don't believe all you see in the papers. Politics, I tell you—all part of the game."

"Then you don't think—"

"Think? Of course not: I am sure. Out-of-works are won't-works, and there's an end of it. Good morning. I have an appointment."

Now, if I abominate one thing more than another it is idleness in the lower classes. And while, of course, I had been sorry to read of any distress, yet, of course, if they would not work—well, what could they expect? Undoubtedly Bumpus was right. Bumpus was always right on matters of that sort. He could not have made money if he had not been. And so I was glad to have his opinion, because it alleviated the uneasiness which I had felt.

About a week after seeing Bumpus I had reasons to go to Sunderland. (I do a little travelling occasionally for a firm I have an interest in.) I had seen several articles about Sunderland, and I was glad of having an opportunity to see for myself.

I found it was just as he had said. Hundreds of men lounging about doing nothing—and not a single bootblack to be found. Most annoying, too, because it was a beastly sort of day. And I never saw a single crossing sweeper, so I had to make my way as best as I could through the mud.

We do business with most diverse kinds of shops: that is how I happened to be going into a pawnbroker's just as a woman with certainly rather shabby clothes was coming out.

"Hello!" I said to the manager, "how's things?"

"Things? Things are—" But here he used somewhat similar language to that of Bumpus. "Did you see that woman going out? She just came to know if we would take in pledge a chest of drawers, almost the last piece of furniture they have in the house. Her husband has been out of work since March. Luckily for them they've only two children. Working people have no right to children at all these days; it's—" Here he again used most unprintable language. "They owe three weeks' rent. How she has managed to pay what she has God only knows. Yesterday she told me she was able to beg a penny. That's all the family of four have had for two days. She spent 3d. in bread and 4d. in jam; the two kids had it for their breakfast this morning. She and her husband have tasted no food at all for twenty-four hours."

"But," I said, "why doesn't her husband get work—black boots or clean streets—or something?"

He looked at me with a pitying smile, as if sorry for the depths of my ignorance.

"Did it ever strike you that even the modest equipment to start a man as a bootblack costs more than a penny, which in this case is the two days' income of that particular family? As for sweeping the streets, the Corporation is employing as many men as it can—and we are getting more money from private charity than if we levied an extra poor rate.

Men, women, and children are simply starving to death, all the same."

I left Sunderland for the West Coast, and arrived at Workington.

Perhaps you never heard of Workington. There are a few thousand people there who wish they never had. Workington depends on the iron and steel works, and they have been closed this year. I had read about it in the papers, but I didn't know what it meant. I know now.

In the High Street a woman stopped me. She had a baby in her arms and she looked like a ghost. She asked me for the love of God to help her. Her husband had done no work this year. They had five children, and—her face grew even more haggard as she said it—"they are all slowly dying from starvation."

In Manchester the next day I heard from a child of nine how father had died two years ago, and how mother had managed by sewing to keep a roof over seven children all under ten years of age. Only now mother was ill and—but it was too horrible.

That night I reckoned up the cases I had met since I left home on the Monday.

There was that woman in Sunderland, the one in Workington, the child in Manchester, and several casual beggars. I had given away in charity four shillings and threepence, and as each coin left me I had experienced that beautiful smug comfortable feeling I told of at the beginning of this article. I felt myself a real true-hearted philanthropist: a noble, unselfish specimen of what humanity could be if it would.

I had purchased peace—at a price.

I am only an ordinary common or garden man, and, like any other, I detest people to be miserable in my presence. If they want to be miserable, or if they must be miserable, then for heaven's sake let them hide their misery in some back slum.

To the credit of the submerged be it said, they usually do. That is why we can all buy peace so cheaply. If Slumland only paraded its horribleness, there would be no more peace for us until our humanity had triumphed over our brutal callousness, and in an England which we term free, and above all Christian, we had made it impossible to have one starving child, one homeless woman, one unemployed man.

But until it be so, would it not be better to substitute for our prayer of "Give us this day our daily bread"—"God forgive us, to eat while any starve"?

IN CARELESS DAYS.

Come, bring with a noise,
My merrie, merrie boys,
The Christmas log to the firing;
While my good dame, she
Bids ye all be free,
And drink to your hearts' desiring.
HERMICK.

There are some people who ride all through the journey of life with their backs to the horses. They are always looking into the past. All the worth of things is there. They are for ever talking about the good old times, and how different things were when they were young. There is no romance in the world now, and no heroism!—BROOKE HERFORD

"A Bowl of Roses."

By Edith Turner.

THEY were lovely roses. The basin was full of them, crowded; the blue earthenware was hidden under the blossoms and leaves. When Miss Breid did not look at them she could smell them, and she was not accustomed to taking her eyes from her work. She had sat by that window many years. When she was a little girl it was the custom to carry a tiny posy to chapel—the smell of ladslove always made her feel a child again—but it was the first time she had had flowers given to her, a lot of flowers—and roses; and it was Christmas! The faintest pink colour spread over her cheeks, and once she took off her spectacles to wipe them; her tears had made them misty and magnified her cotton.

Miss Breid had never lived in any other cottage; she was born there. When her sisters left their home, one by one, and when the father and mother she had cared for so long moved at last—to their last resting place—she was glad that the new tenants, being young people, could spare her two rooms out of the five.

Gedling was a thriving village in her young days; now it was a dirty little town. A dressmaker was expected to be poor, genteelly poor, and Miss Breid was no qualified needlewoman. She worked conscientiously and uncomplainingly at the coarse, poor material her customers brought her, knowing she was not clever enough for anything better.

Miss Breid, sitting sewing, had weaved romances round herself since early girlhood, and nobody knew it. She had had no time to seek the lover who filled her dreams; she could count on her fingers the little outings she had enjoyed.

Long ago, a young man had asked her if she could go to the fair with him, but one of her sisters was ill at the time, and she never saw him again. She thought of him often; he became one of her day dreams.

The few suitors who had come their way had been appropriated by her sisters; her work lay at home; no prince was likely to look through that little window.

Long after she knew he could never come, she made pretty stories of what might have been.

And now these roses were nearer to the realisation of her dreams than anything she had ever known. It was because the reality was so far from the dream that her faded face looked sad, and her eyes filled with tears.

A man's figure passed the window; she stopped sewing the print, and as the man knocked she blushed; a faint blush, and her eyes looked timid as a girl's.

The man entered without hearing her soft "Come in," an elderly man, short and broad.

"Good afternoon, Miss Breid; you got my roses, I see?"

"Yes, thank you"; her voice sounded refined, merely because it was soft and low.

The man sat down without being invited. He was quite at ease, but Miss Breid's fingers trembled a little as she tried to resume her work.

"Happen you know what I've come to see you for," he said, as though about to confer a boon upon her.

"No—at least, I guessed," she faltered.

He leaned back in his chair. "You see, I've been a bit lonely since Keziah died, and my lad got married; the old linen's beginning to smell fusty, and the place wants a good cleaning down, so I want a wife. I'd like somebody to look after me a bit. I'm not a bad sort. Trade isn't as good as it might be, but I've a nice bit o' money in t' bank; you might do worse than 'ave me."

He paused; she found no words to reply. The mere thought of living with him frightened the lonely, elderly spinster, and she was slightly amused at her unfitness for the position he offered her. That he did not recognise it was almost a compliment. She found herself wondering if she had any personal attraction for him.

"You'd like to think about it, 'appen," he said, with a little surprise; he was thinking of the many women who would have jumped at the chance.

"You are very kind," she began, "but I've been single so long—"

"It must be lonely for you—living by yourself," he interrupted.

"I have my work, I'm not unhappy, and I have my—" she hesitated a moment, "my thoughts."

"That wouldn't satisfy me," he said. "Come, Miss Breid, you'd be a'most a lady. If you liked I'd pay for a wench to do t' hardest cleaning."

"You are very good," she replied, gracefully; "I'm very much obliged to you, I can't tell you how much obliged I am." There was the sound of tears in her voice. "But I've made up my mind never to marry." Her eyes dropped.

"I've never had the chance before," she admitted truthfully.

"You don't say so!" he exclaimed. His voice sounded so very coarse after hers. "Well, I'm jiggered." He rose. "I think I'll be stepping."

"I'm very sorry," she stammered.

"So am I," he replied, with some concern. His vanity was piqued by this unexpected opposition. "Alter your mind. It's no good us two keeping up two 'omes."

She could not explain to him that her dream of loving, and being loved in return, was more to her than the certainty of the humdrum marriage he offered, even though it brought security and freedom from want. She must be true to her dreams.

"I shall never alter," she said, gently.

"Then it's no good me wasting my time." He spoke with some irritation. He gave one look at the roses. Perhaps he regretted having bought them for her now they had failed in their errand. He closed the door without further notice of the shrinking little dressmaker.

She did not stir. She had had an offer of marriage at last. She felt exquisite joy and thankfulness. This, too, would become part of her dreaming. Her starved nature was brimming over with gratitude. She sat still and happy, till the wintry light faded; then she got up and softly kissed the roses.

THE GREATNESS OF OUR TIME.

Every age, through being beheld too close, is ill-discerned

By those who have not lived past it.

We'll suppose Mount Athos carved, as Persian Xerxes schemed,

To some colossal statue of a man:

The peasants, gathering brushwood in his ear,

Had guessed as little of any human form

Up there as would a flock of browsing goats.

They'd have, in fact, to travel ten miles off

Or ere the giant image broke on them,

Full human profile, nose and chin distinct,

Mouth muttering rhythms of silence up the sky,

And fed at evening with the blood of suns;

Grand torso,—hand, that flung perpetually

The largesse of a silver river down

To all the country pastures. 'Tis even thus

With times we live in,—evermore too great

To be apprehended near.

ROBERT BROWNING.

WAITING: A CHRISTMAS PARABLE.

By Jessie Farmer.

In every case where a plant flowers very early, you may be sure that it is really rather a case of delayed than of very early flowering.—GRANT ALLEN in "The Story of the Plants."

The garden was all very quiet.

Those bright, flaunting summer beauties that gardeners call "annuals"—the butterflies of the plant-world—had died when the sharp testing of frost came, early in October. Most of the other garden folk were sleeping, hugging close and tight their one treasure—life. The big trees and shrubs had fastened it away inside their strong, hard bark, not a bud yet breaking through to be a victim to the cold.

Smaller, weaker plants had drawn their precious germ of life safely under the ground, and showed nothing above but the withered remains of last summer's joy. To the coverlet of earth and of snow was given the keeping of next year's blossom.

In the brown earth, too, were hiding other feeble folk. In a bank against the hedge the old "hedger and ditcher" would sometimes find a soft, fluffy ball of wrens, several of them cuddled up together for warmth, as they slept away half the winter. Mice had retired to little sheltered holes; so had toads, taking with them a substantial larder—inside! They would come forth in spring as emaciated as a besieged garrison.

Then, too, there were the chrysalis, the grub, and the spider, either underground or in a cosy corner against fence and shed. Up in the hollow beech trees were squirrels, sleeping till March. Snakes had sought the warmth of the old cucumber frame. Everywhere the garden had become just one big, quiet dormitory—"not death, but plenitude of peace."

I have said that most of the garden folk were sleeping. But not all.

There was nothing yet to show it, but some were watching and waiting, life in them growing stronger and fuller every hour. They had been waiting for months, even while the roses reddened and the tall daisies made a patch of moonlit glory every evening. They had waited. Sunshine had called to them, the winds had beckoned, the sweet rain refreshed them, and yet they had never answered since the spring. They had been too busy to think of blossoming. Through May and June the sunshine had fed them, and their poor, fading leaves had worked almost as hard as the ants and the hive bees, their neighbours. Then even these withered yellow leaves had been cut off by the gardener.

Most of them were bulbs—crocuses and snowdrops and tulips and daffodils—ugly little brown bulbs, with scaly, dead-looking coats; yet, if you could have looked there, you would have found that each one bore at its heart the faint, dim, golden promise of a flower. It was for that they had forgone the summer's brightness, just to feed and cherish that new coming life.

When the summer flowers died, a whisper had gone round among the bulbs and their kindred: "Is it not time that all we patient ones should give up our flowers?"

And the earth answered: "Not yet; cling closer to me first!"

So they clung closer, sending out white roots like many fingers to clutch at the ground. They never slept through the rain and the frost, as their companions, the roses, were doing. They were secretly growing, and clinging, and waiting.

So the winter had brought sleep and waiting with it rather than death.

Nor is in field or garden anything

But, duly look'd into, contains serene

The substance of things hoped for in the spring,

And evidence of summer not yet seen.

The December days got darker and colder; the nights were very long; but the brave little bulbs knew nothing of it in their dark home underground.

There comes a time, though, as the year draws to its close, when the long, vain struggle of day against night is over; darkness begins to be pushed back to its own bounds again: it is the winter solstice, the turning-point.

It always seems, somehow, as if the earth knew that this turning-point was passed. For if you go into the woods, be it ever so soon after, you will find little signs of distant spring among the undergrowth—perhaps a stray violet or primrose out of due time; perhaps a bit of honeysuckle spray trying to break into leaf. Even at Christmas it is so, very often.

Though not a whisper of her voice he hear, The buried bulb does know

The signals of the year,

And hails far Summer with his lifted spear.

Little sharp points of green show among

Dead grass or on the borders to tell us

Where there will be snowdrops and crocuses before many weeks have gone.

The winter solstice was what all these bulbs and their kin, the patient ones, were waiting for. It was, truly and literally, their "signal of the year." Now, one by one they will begin to put forth leaf and blossom. Their waiting time will soon be over.

Most of the flowers that come first to gladden us with the promise of spring are those that worked all summer, and have been looking and longing for their chance. Most of them have bulbs, as we call the treasure stored up to nourish the life of the flower; but some have only thick, knotted roots, like the anemone or the primrose. It is one of these clumsy-looking roots which is generally the first of all to come into its reward of flowers. For there, when the Christmas snow lies white and pure, and when the Christmas bells are telling out their glad message of Peace and Goodwill, there, through the snow, has come the miracle of a Christmas rose!

And we say: "How early it has blossomed!"

But the Earth is wiser, and says: "How long it has waited!"

How long have you waited, O patient humankind, workers and toilers in the dark! It is winter with you, too; but the turn of the year has come, and it is your signal.

Now and then, some gifted child of the people, a solitary flower, breaks out into a miracle of early music; he is a child-wonder, and they say:

"How early he has blossomed!"

But I answer:

"How long they have waited!"

How long the plain, rough, patient folk have toiled and watched and denied themselves before this miracle could be! He is a forerunner—a Christmas rose.

There are others, too, who bear unnoticed in their hearts the "white flower of a blameless life" in earth's darkest places. We have room and to spare for the crowd of commoner flowers, less rare and less precious, perhaps, than those which have come out of the wintry cold, but with their own special brightness and joy, all the same. We shall have a welcome for the brave, gentle snowdrop lives, for the bold gladness and radiance of the crocus, for unnumbered dancing daffodils, for shy, sweet lilies and wind-braving anemones.

In the world's great human garden, all these have their likeness. How long they have waited to blossom! How rough and plain seem their poor brown bulbs, hugging so close and tight the golden promise of a flower to be born some day or other, when winter has turned! How the rich, gay roses could belittle them, by contrast, all the summer through!

Take heart, O patient lives; cling closer to the firm ground of love, which is as the earth under your feet; bear up through storms and snow, for your joy is only waiting.

Look! Among you already there are Christmas roses to mark the turn of the year!

YULETIDE BELLS.

Nay, peal no more, ye silvery bells! Let there be silence awed and deep; The winds go barren of your chimes Along the fells from woodland steep.

Hush! Would ye ring across the snow To mock the millions pale with woe?

Ye sing of peace when it is not, Shedding your music o'er the plain, And hail the birth of Christ, whilst Man Made in His form is subtly slain. Muffle your tones, O joyous bells; Or, if you ring, toll funeral knells.

The golden lights trail out across The street and lane from cosy rooms Of those whose hands are fragrant with The plucking of Life's thornless blooms: These hear your mellow melodies, With hearts aglow with memories.

With song and dance they chase the hours;

With holly red, pale mistletoe, They lure old Christmas to his grave,

Plucking his white beard as they go, Singing, "Sleep sound, thou gay old King!"

For these the happy bells may ring.

But mock not those, Oh, heartless bells, Who only know by added cold,

By shroud-like robes of silvery mist, That the sad year is now grown old;

And scarcely dare to nurse a hope That the New one will kinder ope.

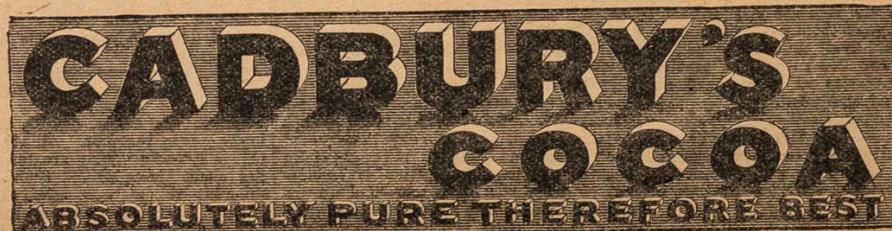
Oh, smite them not! Their hearts are sore

With missiles Poverty has flung Remorselessly, day in, day out!

Relent, good bells—be never rung Till Freedom like a babe is come,

To make the People's earth her home.

ETHEL CARNIE.



The Goose.

By Keighley Snowden.

"Aw'm takkin' this gooise," called out Weasel at the shop door. "And thank yo'."

When a man talks like that to a shopkeeper without previous consultation or arrangement, and is seen with the bird tucked under his arm, moving off, all the Christmas good will in the world may fail to make the shopkeeper easy in his mind. But, seeing that it was Weasel, Jack o' Mary's answered hopefully: "Here! None o' thi marlakes."

Weasel came into the shop. He was a light-built little man of forty, wearing a puce neckerchief, a weather-stained velvet coat, trousers of corduroy, and clogs. However, as he advanced Jack o' Mary's took notice of nothing but his look. Weasel had bright brown eyes in a whimsical hard-bitten face, and they were fixed upon him with a sort of wary challenge.

"It'll be 7s. 6d. if ta want it," said Jack, after a certain pause.

"Wha, but aw care not what it be," said Weasel, quietly.

Now, you must understand that, between two Yorkshiremen who know each other well, it is tacitly agreed that, if one of them behaves at all strangely when they meet, the other is to guess his motive. It is a play of humour. But Jack o' Mary's was a beefy young man with no very lively mind in business hours. He declined the riddle.

"What's ta mean bi that?" he asked at once.

"Wha, it's deead," Weasel said, in an off-hand way. "Aw've ta'en lots o' birds alive."

Which was another poser.

This is a Christmas story of "the hungry 'forties"; and at Cragside, where Jack o' Mary's had his shop, there was only one person who could afford to buy a goose that Christmas. So there were only two geese in the shop. And not to beat about the holly bush, Weasel's notions of property were known very well to be unorthodox. Was he joking? His practical jokes had a way of putting folk in mind of the fact that he had never been convicted of poaching.

"Thou'll not tak that," said Jack o' Mary's, with some confidence. "Give 't here."

He held his hand out, but Weasel stood unmoved to parley.

"Nah, Jack," he said, persuasively, "thou knaws o' folk 'at needs this more nor thee. Ther's lots on 'em. An' it is deead. It's plucked."

Jack walked round from behind the counter. Joking came to earnest.

"Stop a minute," said Weasel, and his eyes shone. "Down t' road a piece, Aw looked in at a house where ther's a nice young woman wi' three childer. Aw were passin' by, an' Aw heard one say, 'Mammy, Aw'm hungry.' That kept on sayin' so; but t' others is younger, they did nought but roar."

"Gie's that gooise," said Jack, flushing. "Witta listen?" Weasel threw his head up.

I have it on the good authority that

enables me to write this tale two generations later that people did listen to Weasel at unlikely times. The goose was Jack o' Mary's: the law allowed it and the poacher conceded it: yet he was asked to hear this wild man's reasons for taking it from him under his nose.

"Aw'm fond o' childer," said Weasel, brazenly, but still gently. "Thou sees, they've no say; they are here. An' they've little bellies 'at will be filled—or else it hurts 'em. Stand wheere ta art. . . . Aw went into this young woman's house, an' she were laid o' t' bed. She worn't deead, but fearful white, an' her een were shut. . . . What did ta hae for thi breakfast?"

"Gie's that gooise!" said Jack, shortly. "Aw've a customer for 't."

"Did ta hae some porridge?"

"If ta doesn't Aw'll lame the'!"

They looked at one another for a good while; and I think it must have seemed to Jack o' Mary's that Weasel did not believe him.

"Aw'd porridge mysen," said Weasel. "A good basinful. But this young woman hed nought. Aw made her tell me. She's niver hed bite nor sup sin' Sunda', an' Aw think she's just about done. However, lad, ther's three little uns," said Weasel, cheerfully; "an' Aw judge they've as mich reight i' t' world as thee or me. Doesn't ta think soa?"

"Damn thi impidence!" cried Jack, and pushed past him to shut the door with a clatter. "Thou doesn't git out o' this shop wi' t, choose how," and he pushed the bolts in, top and bottom, noisily.

When he turned round, Weasel had put down the goose upon the counter behind him, and stood with his hands in his trousers pockets.

"Now witta listen?" he said. "Tha's nought to do, better."

"Tha ma' talk thi head off, for me," said Jack. "Tha'll niver talk that gooise down t' road."

"It seems soa," he admitted. "It does. But, then, tha'll miss part trade."

"That's my business."

"Ea, it is. And soa's this young woman, lad. Happen thou's hasty."

What did bring Jack to think that there was "something in it," some honest answer to the riddle, I do not know; but I think it was this mild indifference to his proceedings on the part of a man who could fight. He stood to listen, after all—looking stupid.

"As Aw were sayin'," said Weasel, his eyes wandering round the little shop, "she'd one i' bed wi' her, screamin' at her brecast; an' ther' another might be two year owd, wi' nought on it but a little shift, standin' perished at t' bed-side, tryin' to touch her face an' wakken her. Ea. But, tha sees, she were to' far goane."

"Who's ta talkin' about?" said Jack, at last.

"Nay, it matters nought, does 't? But, howiver: Aw'll tell the'. Aw looked in an' saw she were livin'; her e'elid stirred, an' some'at trickled on to t' bowster. So Aw managed to put some

cloas on t' little un, an' fand some kinnlin' at Hullah farm, an' made her a fire. An' fatched a soop o' milk; but t' cow wo'dn't stand fairly. Aw'd to feed t' babby mysen. She couldn't."

Weasel took his hands from his pockets, and moved just a step nearer—I suppose for emphasis.

"Who is she? says ta. She's akin to both on us, an' to-morn's Cursemas Day. Aw mean she's a Cragside lass."

Then he waited.

"Does ta mean Liz o' Kizah's?" said Jack.

"Aw do."

"She's nought akin to me."

"Is she n't?"

"Nou!"

"Wha, but Aw think we're all akin. Tha can reckon 'at Aw'm her father, lad."

Weasel's reputation was such that it might be so or not.

"Well, Aw'll charge the' six shillin'," said Jack. "It cost me that wi' feathers on."

"Come!" said Weasel, as if content. "Thou's noane so hard; oppen t' door."

And as there was some one rattling at it, Jack o' Mary's did so. A boy came in wanting two pennyworth of meal. Weasel gave the goose to him.

"Tak this down to Liz o' Kizah's an' say Aw'm comin' after 't," he said.

As the boy departed, Weasel turned in the doorway to explain his tactics.

"Thou knaws, Jack," he drawled, "it's i' this way. Aw've nought, an' thou's a fair shopful. But if Aw'm to be lamed, Aw'd like the' to lame me out i' t' road."

Jack o' Mary's mouth came open.

"Tha doesn't mean to pay me?"

"Y—ay, Aw do," said Weasel. "Witta hev it now or wait while ta gits it?"

What Jack o' Mary's answer was I have not faithfully been told. But he waited.

AS IT USED TO BE.

Lo! now is come our joyful'st feast:
Let every man be jolly!

Each room with ivy-leaves is dressed,
And every post with holly;

Now all our neighbours' chimneys smoke,
And Christmas blocks are burning;

Their ovens they with baked meats choke,
And all their spits are turning.

Without the door let sorrow lie,
And if, for cold, it hap to die,
We'll bury 't in a Christmas pie,
And evermore be merry.

GEORGE WITHER.

Here is the dear, long-lost note of our race—humanness as distinct from mere soaring heroism. Our best of fairies is Robin Goodfellow, and our Robin Hood might change names with him and still be the same man.—WHITEING.

Everything seemed to have grown old and grey. The roads, the trees, thatched roofs of cottages, and homesteads, the ricks in farmers' yards. Outdoor work was abandoned, horse-troughs at roadside inns were frozen hard, no stragglers lounged about, doors were close shut, little turnpike houses had blazing fires inside, and children rubbed the frost from the little panes of glass with their chubby arms, that their bright eyes might catch a glimpse of the solitary coach going by.—"The Holly Tree."

A BOOK OF THE HOUR.

A Child's Prattle.*

"I hate Christmas!" said a good woman I know. And I have heard her say that she hates work, too.

These sentiments are considered improper. They shock our staunchest virtues. But she happens to be one of the hardest workers and most generous souls in Christendom.

Upon my word, I think there is nowadays nothing easier than to work until you forget how to play. That I have not forgotten myself, I do not understand, for nearly all the journalists of my acquaintance are in that dismal case. Out the papers have to come, looking jolly and warm, and sympathetic, and chirpy with the season's greetings—produced by many a poor devil who must go without his Christmas dinner and work as hard as usual, while other people do the pleasant rites.

That is apt to be the way of the world for housewives too. I have observed that some women are not so good at Christmas romps as men, accordingly.

But when my friend said that she hated Christmas she meant that Christmas is a mockery. It shows us how the world should go—shows this to those who enjoy it, or find it a happy and gracious time—and then betrays us to the grim New Year. Besides, there are those who keep it as the hypocrites keep Sunday, or the Haworth man was said to take his annual wash at Blackpool.

To write this page two days earlier than it should be asked for puts me—even me—in a grumpy state of mind. Or did when I thought of it. But, just when I had got to the point of saying "I hate Christmas"—in the quiet room where I grumped alone, a small child's voice piped up quite plainly in some telephone:

Once there was upon a time, Ma—
Let me kneel up on your knees.

How can a robin sleep, Ma,

When a wind shakes all his trees?

Bless the child! said I; I'll think about robins. And I have been liking Christmas ever since.

Also I looked again at "The Dolly Ballads" where the happy child's dear fancies are set down *literatim* in verse, and she and they are pictured with the sprightliest of quaint humour by Frank Chesworth's pencil.

The Fairy made it so, Ma,
Acos she was so good.

I have a feeling that by this time everybody knows "The Dolly Ballads" backwards; but I must have my say about them. They are for Christmas, they were written by a man who knows how to play, and there is nothing quite like them; whereupon everybody who cares for children and has to write about books is free, I trust, at this time of year to put his friends in mind of them.

You will not deny that there is a difference between writing about books

* "The Dolly Ballads." by Robert Blatchford. Illustrated by Frank Chesworth. 3s. 9d. post free.

and writing books. Very well. It has always seemed to me that there is much the same difference between writing about children—or even writing for children—and writing children.

"The Dolly Ballads" are Dolly, and that I take to be their chief merit. They are simply Dolly telling her mother stories, and prattling asides in the process. If it is a tale about fearsome things, say the lion and the crocodile, you are aware of Dolly's wide eyes and the little tremor at her heart as she breaks off:

They isn't any lions
In Winnie's wood, Ma, eh?
'Cos if they was, a pleeceman
Would fighten 'em away.

If onct when I was paddlin'
They's crocudiles about,
My Dada'd come and catch 'em,
An' turn 'em inside out.

Writing children should come easier to mothers than to fathers, and I want to see more of it. I do not know of many better things that any of us can do than to think and feel with a child. To me it seems that the problem of civilisation is exactly to keep fresh and available the sweet instincts we are born with, to find them liberty and give them play; and, unless I am deceived in life altogether, this is why none of us would give a row of pins for the man or the woman who does not feel that to talk with a child, or to play with a child, or to watch a child doing things happily, is a beautiful experience and a good thing.

Of course it is! And observe: it is the same experience in kind, though very much keener and dearer, as to watch the birds, wild animals at liberty, the growth of flowers, or any play of Nature's gentler forces.

The plain moral is, Get back to Mother Nature; trust her.

There is nothing quite new in this; but it is still the practice of an old-world education to ignore the truth as it is in Froebel when children reach the age of seven or eight.

They must be altered for a world ordered upon a wise non-natural plan—disciplined for it, pruned and clipped and Dutch-trimmed for it. Childhood may be happy, but we have arranged that life shall not be so. And that is why so many children's books are still old-fashioned. The authors go to work with some Dutch plan in their heads, and a pair of garden shears, and wooden shoes on.

Give me wild-flower Dolly before their finest bulbs, and let her tell a tale about a Bishump:

An' while a lion springed, Ma,
A crocudile was float,
An' a lion m'essed a bishump
An' jumped right down his frote;

An' a crocudile lay down, Ma,
On his likkle river-bed,
An' a lion was inside him,
An' bofe of them was dead;
An' a bishump brushed his gaiters,
An' wumbled home to tea,
An' now, sing me a song, Ma,
About a Sands of Dee.

I never met Frank Chesworth. It is one of my griefs. I should have liked to meet Frank Chesworth and Louis Stevenson.

But they did their best for all strangers, and Chesworth's best, though small in quantity, is in this Dolly book. I think as well of him as of Arthur Rackham, and that is saying a great deal. He was less fantastic, less opulent of detail, but he was funnier, freer, and just as charming. There is an immense and happy fertility of design in these pages—a page design for every verse—and there is not an instance in which the design fails to heighten the drollness or the delightfulness of the passage. Many of the cleverest things are pure effects of line drawing, and the design-sense of balance is absolute.

It was a fortunate collaboration, and Chesworth's early death is one of the sad things best left out of mind. Let us be glad of what he did for us.

Besides, it is Christmas, and the gates of the kingdom of fancy stand wide open; young and old, and rich and poor, may enter or may peep. It should be more than a peep, and one day shall be; but meantime learn from Dolly. She is at another time of the year; no matter:

If you hide into the bracken,
When the daisies is asleep,
An' hold your hands before your face,
An' peep, an' peep, an' peep,
An' never talk, nor wiggle,
An' don't do anysing;
You'll see the likkle fairies come
An' make a fairy ring.

Don't you be afraid, Ma,
Acos dey's berry good.
It's true, Ma; Winnie told me so
Comin' froo a wood.

Why, so it is. I have seen fairies through the holly and the mistletoe—when I was not wiggling.

KEIGHLEY SNOWDEN.

FAIRIES IN PANTOMIME.

Let us protest against the violent anti-fairy attitude of the average theatrical manager, pantomime writer, and pantomime actor and actress. The most serious feature of this crime is that it is performed under the guise of homage. Christmas after Christmas these reckless persons seize upon immortal stories, the gifts of the fairies, distort and mangle them, remove all the beauty and poetry from them, and present them in a form in which they become entirely unrecognisable. They offer us as fairies figures no more like fairies than they are like cricket-bats. They say and sing words which a fairy would never have sanctioned, and do things at the mere thought of which a fairy would open her wings and fly away.

Is it not high time to put in a plea for fair play to the fairies? Can we expect them to be good to us if we treat their gifts in such a fashion? All that is wanted is loyalty to them. A sylph one day, all unseen, hid herself behind Mr. Barrie's ear and whispered the story of "Peter Pan" to him, and he has been loyal to that sylph, and thousands of children have blessed him. Let our other writers of pantomime follow his example, and they also will prosper even as he prospered.—H. M. WATERLOO, in the "Pall Mall Magazine."

"THE VERY THING," Or Princess Poppetta's Christmas Eve.

By Peg.

Brilliantly lighted and magnificently decorated was the Royal Palace of the Land of Otherwhere one Christmas Eve in a year of long ago. In the Presence Chamber was a gorgeous Christmas tree laden with costly treasures, while floor and tables were littered with a priceless store.

Yet were no signs of Yuletide merry-making. The Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chamberlain, and the Lords-in-Waiting were all gathered together *blithering*—which means, of course, that they were Lords, talking over affairs of State. And all the knights, and squires, and pages, and servitors were in the Courtyard *dithering* as they saddled their steeds for riding out into the darkness on what they *knew* was a hopeless quest. And on her silken couch in the Royal Bedchamber, to which she had been carried in strong hysterics, lay Her All-Serene High-Mitiness Poppetta, Reigning Princess of Otherwhere, attended by twelve Court Leeches, twenty Ladies, and forty Maids-in-Waiting.

What was it all about? Well, the orphan Princess Poppetta had been ruler of Otherwhere from babyhood. And the evil guidance of Servilio, her Lord Chancellor (who for his own purposes encouraged in her selfishness and arrogance, and in the belief that she was The One Important Person in the Universe), the possession of unlimited power over her subjects, and the flattery of cringing courtiers, had developed all that was worst in her. And Her All-Serene High-Mitiness had a mighty temper and had never been known to be quite All-Serene. Follio, the Court fool, often sang—though *not* in her presence:

Oh! Mighty Mite! so pale and frail,
Yet with hand to smite and tongue to rail,
'Neath which thy lordliest subjects quail—
No cause too slight to raise a gale;
Then—'tis "Off with their heads!" or "Pop
'em in gaol."
Not truth we tell but a flattering tale,
When as the "All-Serene" we hail
Our petulant Poppetta!

On this particular Christmas Eve her courtiers had outworn themselves in vain attempts to give her pleasure, while she sat on her golden throne, lowering and glowering in a most aggravatankerous manner. Then it suddenly occurred to her that she would *not* wait until morning to see her Christmas presents. And immediately all was hurry and scurry and flurry, hundreds of Servitors bearing into the Presence Chamber wonderful and costly gifts, offerings from loyal subjects, or from foreign monarchs, anyone of which would have sent an ordinary child frantic with delight.

But the unhappy Poppetta was frantic with weariness and vexation. Jewels! Gorgeous garments! Had she not coffers and presses full of them?—priceless treasures from all corners of the globe she looked on. And all the while the storm-cloud on her brow grew blacker and blacker, and each moment her cowering courtiers expected to hear, "Off with his head!" and wondered whose first.

At last the Princess jumped up in a

"right-down, regular, royal" rage. Now a family peculiarity of the Reigning House of Otherwhere was the breaking out into rhyme in moments of excitement. And when Poppetta had a bad fit of that kind she gave her subjects fits also.

She stamped her small foot furiously, and sang:

Oh, worthless minions as ye be,
The Thing I want not here I see!
Haste, now I bid you—seek no rest,
Go North and South and East and West,
The Torrid Zone, the North Pole visit,
And bring me—bring—Alack! What is it?

And here she burst into tears, while the courtiers shook dolefully the heads they were likely to lose if they could not answer that conundrum correctly. She went on:

Haste, haste, I say, your task pursue,
A bitter fate awaiteth you,
If ye should fail—some—hear and weep—
Of want shall die in dungeon deep,
Some from the battlements shall swing,
Unless you bring—

Here she hesitated—"bring—bring—
The Very Thing!"

Follio, the Fool, the only person who dared to ascend the dais on which the throne was placed, capering around, jingling his bells, chanted:

Wise men may heed though a fool may sing,
On a wild-goose chase would ye take wing;
What our Princess craveth none may bring,
Herself must find The Very Thing!

And the Princess gave him a buffet on the ear, which, as he was pirouetting on one foot, sent him sprawling down the steps of the dais. Then—shrieking, "The Very Thing! and by to-morrow morning!" she "went off" in violent hysterics.

Which brings us to the point where we began, with the dithering and blithering in the Council Chamber, the hithering and thithering from the Courtyard; and the leeches and screeches upstairs.

Worn out by her own violence, at last the Princess slept; and, with the exception of those on night duty, the ladies and maids trooped downstairs to assist the Lords in their bewailing.

When about midnight the Princess awoke, a strange pale-green light suffused the room, and no watchers were visible. Sitting up and looking curiously around she saw a crowd of wee, wee creatures dressed in what seemed like green pine-tassels all a-glitter with frost-diamonds. She guessed at once that here were the Little People of the Pine Woods, of whom she had heard her Maids speak, as being strongly believed in by the country folk around. And before she could ask them imperiously, as she intended, how they *dared* enter her Royal Chamber uninvited, they floated upwards, and she felt herself gently pushed from the bed into a kind of nest formed by the compact mass of Little People clinging closely together.

How they got through the Palace walls she did not know. But they sailed somehow out of a dazzling radiance into the darkness of a starless night. And the

pine-tassel garments of the fairies seemed to have all turned to needles, piercing painfully Poppetta's tender flesh.

Suddenly she felt that they were swooping down—down—down, through the darkness, then—there was a glare of light, and as her carriers detached themselves she flopped—in a *very* undignified position for a Princess—on an extremely hard floor.

The enormous room, or cavern, thus entered was crowded with strange creatures all tremendously busy. Elves and sprites were decking Christmas trees, and weaving evergreen garlands. A band of musicians and an angel choir were practising carols. Santa Claus was giving instructions as to the packing of immense sacks with the toys strewn all around him to eager Brownies stumbling and tumbling and rolling over each other in their excitement. Father Christmas, with a cook's cap and apron, assisted by other Brownies, was busily engaged at a huge cooking-stove. And when the Pine Fairies dispersed themselves and something big fell to the ground with a bump and a flump, all these busy people gave a jump and exclaimed, "Goodness—gracious ME! What is it?"

"That's what *we* want to know," said one of the Pine Fairies. "We brought her here to see if any of you can tell us. She thinks she is The Important Person for Whom the World was Made. The Voice which alone should Command—"

At the word "voice" the musicians came hurrying round, and the moment they saw the frowning face on the floor all their hands went at once to their ears. "A jarring note!" they cried. "A discord that will ruin our Christmas harmony! She must be dropped out of silence, or there can be no concert of peace and goodwill."

Father Christmas now came up with an egg-whisk in his hand.

"Dear, dear!" he said, shaking his head disapprovingly as he looked at the scowling Princess. "A bad egg! A *very* bad egg! Quite too bad to be beaten. One like that would spoil all my Christmas cheer. She must be thrown away—or—perhaps you might exchange her."

Then Santa Claus came forward. "H'm! A damaged mechanical toy. She has always been wound up the wrong way. She should be run down and wound up quite differently."

The Pine Fairies nodded their wee heads, and began forming themselves once more into a compact mass. Poppetta saw them advancing toward her; then—she knew nothing until she woke to find herself in bed. *Not* the kind of bed to which she had been accustomed, but hard and lumpy and coarsely covered. Opening her eyes, she saw a bare, comfortless room, and, seated by a wooden table, a pale, thin woman stitching busily.

Poppetta felt somehow *compelled* to close her eyes and pretend sleep as the woman rose and came to the bedside. "My poor little Minette," said a soft voice, "I have but little to put in thy stocking, and for that little have had to go some days dinnerless"; and on Poppetta's cheek dropped at the same time a kiss and a tear. And the next moment there was dropped into the stocking hanging at the foot of the bed a common wooden doll, and a few sweets.

Poppetta wished to cry out that she was a Princess and *not* the child of a poor sewing-woman. But she could not speak. Ah! she had been *silenced*, as the musi-

cians had suggested. Also—she had been exchanged! No doubt her silken bed in the Palace was occupied by the little Minette, who would have all those beautiful gifts in the morning! For what she had despised now seemed beautiful and desirable.

Despite her fear of what dreadful things might further befall her, and the hardness of the bed, being utterly weary she soon slept. When she awoke it was morning, and the pale woman was preparing breakfast.

"A merry Christmas, my Minette," she said, smiling. "See, this morning we have butter!"

Poppetta found that now she could speak, but only as Minette. She kissed the woman and admired the ugly wooden doll, when she *meant* to explain that she was a Princess who must be taken back to her Palace at once.

"Ah!" she thought, "I have been wound up differently, as Santa Claus said."

This one day Margot could put on her table butter and a few other dainties, Christmas cheer sent by kind neighbours. But the next and the next (for days went by and still the Princess remained under the fairy spell) saw less and less in the larder, until one morning, having given Poppetta the last remaining crust, Margot had to go out breakfastless to try to collect a little money owing to her. Poppetta stood watching for her on the door-step, late in the day, weeping with hunger, when a neighbour boy who played the flute in the streets came up, taking a bite out of a piece of bread.

"What's the matter, Minette?" he asked.

"Oh, I'm so hungry," wailed Poppetta. "I've had nothing since morning."

"Pouf!" said Beppo. "I've had nothing since yesterday until a kind neighbour gave me this. However, you shall have half."

Now Poppetta began to think.

That a mother should go without dinner that she might buy her child's Christmas present had not seemed much to a Princess who had never known hunger. But as a poor sewing-woman's child, seldom fully fed, and for the last few days half-starving, she realised the sacrifice. That of Beppo, too, who had fasted longer than she, yet would give up to her half his scanty meal.

"Why did you go without dinners to buy me a doll?" she asked of Margot that night.

"Because I loved you, my wee one. Are you not all I have?"

Poppetta thought and thought. The people in the Palace, who themselves lacked nothing, did much for her, because they were paid, and also through fear. But here were people who denied themselves what they badly needed, for love's sake. Even the little flute-player on whom she had not the claim she was supposed to have on Margot.

The spell still held her dumb when she would have said that she was not Minette, but Poppetta, Princess of Otherwhere. But she found now that when she kissed and caressed Margot, it was not *only* because of the spell. She, who before had cared only for herself, was really beginning to love the weary sewing-woman who always gave up to her the warmest wrappings and the best of their scanty food.

She had been wicked when she had all good things! Therefore had she lost

them. Well, if she were to be always Margot's little girl, she must make the best of it, and perhaps she could learn to help, and they would not be so poor.

She consulted Beppo, who took her round the streets to sing while he played his flute. In spite of cold and hunger she felt a happiness she had never known before when she took home to Margot, who had known nothing, the money earned on her first day. She was no longer angry at being compelled to *profess* gladness for poor pleasures, and love for a common work-woman, for now she truly felt both. And as time went on it seemed that she must be really Minette, and that Poppetta, the Princess, was but a dream-fancy.

One night, after a long day's tramping with Beppo, she went to bed, painfully weary, but glad in the thought that she had brought home more than ever before. She fell asleep while Margot was still busily sewing by the dim candle-light. A dazzling radiance awoke her, and, raising herself, she saw once more the Little People of the Pine Woods, as she had seen them in what she had grown to think a dream.

As they gathered together and enfolded her as before, she shrank, fearing the piercing needles. But the floating nest was now of downy softness, so warm and "comfy" that the moment she was borne into the outer darkness of the night she fell fast asleep with a regretful thought, at the last moment, of dear Margot and Beppo, whom she would perhaps never see again.

And when next she awoke she was lying on her own silken-draped couch in the Royal Bedchamber. As her Ladies-in-Waiting came forward, bowing low, she saw that they were all tearful-eyed and downcast. She rubbed her own eyes, feeling somewhat confused after her long absence.

"What is wrong?" she asked. "Has something dreadful happened?"

And instantly all the Ladies-in-Waiting flopped on their knees, and—well—only one very ugly word fits—"blubbered."

"Oh, may it please Your All-Serene High-Mitiness," they wailed, "it's the dreadful things that are *going* to happen. Is it not to-day that we are all to be from the battlements swung, or in dungeon flung—"

"And—and—I so young!" sobbed the oldest Lady-in-Waiting.

"Swung! Flung! I should just like to know who says so!" exclaimed the Princess.

"Why—Your All-Serene High-Mitiness yourself declared it last night!"

"Last night!" gasped Poppetta, for she had gone through so much that she had thought it must be at least a year since the Pine Fairies had whisked her out of the Royal Chamber.

"Ye—ye—yes!" moaned the First Lady, "last night. 'Some shall starve and some shall swing, unless we bring The Very Thing!' And what The Very Thing may be none knoweth, and though many have scoured the earth during the night, yet hath none brought back anything more precious or beautiful than the gifts you despised. Boo—hoo—hoo-hee!"

And now to the Princess came recollection and understanding. So all that long year of cold and hunger, and suffering, yet also of truly *living*, and learning, and loving, had been but one single night of faery glamour.

"Put on my dressing-gown, please,"

she said, "and call hither my Courtiers at once."

And the Ladies feared something even more dreadful than they had expected must be going to happen, for never before had the Princess *requested* with a "please." It had been always, "My dressing-gown!" "My slippers!" with an imperious wave of the hand.

The wide folding-doors of the next room were thrown open, and into it crept and crawled a shaking, quaking crew of Courtiers, who all, on sight of the Princess, threw themselves face downward, expecting to hear some dreadful doom pronounced.

Then said Poppetta: "Good friends, be merry this Christmas morn. For you seeking I thank you, but I have found for myself The Very Thing, which as Follio said ye would ever have sought vainly. Seeing, then, that the Fool hath been wisest among you, him do I appoint my Lord Chancellor." Then—her newly-found wisdom showing her how wickedly and unwisely she had been guided by Servilio, wishing to affright him a little she said, "And the place the Fool leaves vacant may Servilio fill."

Then the Courtiers rose up and bowed themselves backward out of the Chamber, so overwhelmed with delight at their good fortune that they went on bowing, and moving backward with no thought of the stair; and for a few minutes there was a bewildering and exciting acrobatic performance. But, thinking of what might have been, who could bewail a few bruises? They disentangled and straightened themselves out at the foot, and immediately began to make merry as the Princess desired.

All but Servilio, who went dolefully from one to the other of the rollicking, frolicking crew, seeking sympathy and finding none, for his haughtiness and tyranny when in power left him friendless in his fall.

Even the First Lady-in-Waiting, of whom he *had* hopes, failed him.

"Have you no gratitude, then, for your escape from the much worse that might have befallen you?" she snapped. "Is not a Fool with a head on his shoulders in better case than a Lord Chancellor *without*?"

But on this first day of her new reign Poppetta did not wish that any should be unhappy. She conferred therefore upon Servilio a title which gave him importance without power for harm. And that Christmas Day was the happiest ever known in the Court of Otherwhere.

Which I hope *this* will be for all my children of *Here*. And may Santa Claus bring you all The Very Thing you most desire. But—it will turn out The Other Thing, my dears, if you have not already found for yourselves

THE VERY THING

which no other may find for you.

TO SANTA CLAUS.

One moment, my dear friend!
You may be Santa Claus as you pretend.
You look it, somewhat; but as Santa
Claus

You are no nearer than Poseidon was
To the true Christmas spirit.

W. D. HOWELLS.

You, whose fault it is, do not deserve
a merry Christmas—have no right to be
merry at all until you have done your
duty.—ROBERT BLATCHFORD.

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But if you get started wrong with Fels-Naptha, if you boil the clothes and use Fels-Naptha soap in hot water, you'll say it's no better than other soaps.

Of course, it's hard to believe, if you have always washed with hot water.

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Fels = Naptha

will do it. Isn't it worth trying?

THE WOMAN WORKER.

DECEMBER 23, 1908.

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

The Last Word.

Pioneering par Excellence. Our doughty Pioneers assembled in full force at the Food Reform Restaurant last Wednesday, and many and varied were the plans discussed for pushing our paper.

Miss Garnier, who is, perhaps, the most wildly enthusiastic of all our Pioneers, rather took our breath away by some of her proposals. Miss Garnier, indeed, would seem to subordinate her whole life to the one purpose of making THE WOMAN WORKER more widely known.

This is Pioneering par excellence, but we cannot all be Miss Garniers. Still, we can do our best, and last Wednesday's gathering helped to show us how to do it.

The indomitable Gretta Park and Harry Perry were again well to the fore. It is an inspiration to see them work.

Our business was tempered by music, song, and refreshments, but the really *bonne bouche* of the evening was the unexpected and very welcome appearance of Mistress Julia Dawson, who, happening to be in London, lent her radiating presence to our festival.

A Deputation Liberal banquet, or perhaps one ought to say the funeral ceremony, held in connection with the late lamented Education Bill, the other day, the Prime Minister referred to his "Deputation habit."

He said that when he first took up office he rather chafed at the number of deputations he was expected to receive, but that now if an afternoon were to pass without one he would feel almost as desolate as if he had been deprived of 5 o'clock tea.

If all the deputations to Mr. Asquith resemble the two of which I was privileged to be a member last week, I am not surprised that he should regard them in this way.

A Representative Gathering.

The first was, perhaps, the most representative gathering which has ever waited upon a Prime Minister. It was introduced by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and included many other Bishops, leading Nonconformist divines, noble lords, and prominent politicians, as well as a few common garden folk like blunt George Barnes and myself.

The deputation asked for immediate legislation to insure the fixing of a legal minimum wage for sweated workers, and Mr. Asquith's reply was of the kind which is known as "sympathetic."

Out of a conglomeration—verbally perfect—of "ifs" and "mights," "buts," "neverthelesses," and "howevers" one extracted the information that the Premier personally was on our side, but there was no trace of any pledge of immediate, or indeed of any, action.

Our Minimum Demand.

I was rather disappointed, by the way, that the speakers for the deputation did not more fully emphasise the point that no legislation will be satisfactory if its scope is limited to the sweated workers in the home. I think the point requires to be emphasised because this limitation was the one blot upon the recommendations of the Select Committee, in whose report it was inserted, despite a bold fight by Mr. Arthur Henderson and Mr. Chiozza Money, by the narrow majority of two votes.

It is not because the plight of the sweated factory worker is as bad as that of her sister who toils in the home that we insist upon her inclusion. We quite recognise that the experiment must be made gradually, but we do want the first experiment to be such as will justify the extension of the principle. Therefore we say that whilst we will accept, as a beginning, a Wages Board, even if it be limited to one trade, we do demand that in that one trade no arbitrary distinctions should be made between people doing the same work under different circumstances.

Were it otherwise the experiment would be foredoomed to failure.

The "Leicester Post," an Unsatisfactory Reply, states that although Mr. Asquith was unable to give any definite pledge, his reply was considered satisfactory. It would be interesting to know where the "Leicester Post" gets its information.

Mr. Asquith's reply may satisfy the Bishops, although I do not believe it did,

but it will not satisfy the sweated workers, nor will it satisfy those trade unionists and Socialists who have made the cause of the sweated worker their own.

A Moral Obligation.

The Sweated Industries Bill passed its second reading in the House of Commons without a division. It was referred to a Committee who reported unanimously in favour of the principle. The Government is morally bound to give the measure a place in their legislative proposals for next year—if, indeed, the Government ever does admit a moral obligation. If the Bill is shelved many people will want to know the reason why. Meantime, we shall not let the grass grow under our feet.

A Case Badly Put.

The other deputation of which I formed a member was from the Guildhall Conference on Unemployment. I regret to have to say that the case for the unemployed was very badly put. Indeed, I am inclined to agree with a critic who said that the whole value of the Guildhall Conference was discounted by the speeches of its representatives on this occasion. This was probably because the speakers were chosen rather hurriedly and somewhat at random.

The Rev. Russell Wakefield, who is the chairman of the Central Unemployed Body for London, made a good opening, but the Mayor of Swansea, the Councillor from Bristol, and the Distress Committee member from Sheffield seemed quite incapable of putting the national aspect of the question, and contented themselves with weakly alluding to purely parochial matters.

The Women's Claims.

As Mrs. Tennant, who in her work for the unemployed women of London has made this question her own, was expected to speak on the succeeding deputation, from the Central Unemployed Body for London, I undertook to put the case for the unemployed women nationally.

Within the limit of the five minutes allowed the speakers it was only possible to urge briefly a few of our main points. That special relief works should be started, at least in all the principal industrial centres, for women; that the restrictions on the three workrooms at present in existence in London should be removed; and that new workrooms should be started, and should not be cramped for want of funds. I urged also the absurdity of the rigid regulation which only permits the employment of women in existing workrooms for sixteen weeks, and turns them adrift at the very moment when they are trained and are capable of useful work.

Dangerously Near a Pledge.

Our further suggestion, however, that such women, if suitable, should be drafted into permanent State or municipal factories for the manufacture of clothing for public servants was received with a disapproving shrug from both Mr. Asquith and Mr. John Burns.

They listened more favourably to the request for experimental farms to provide agricultural training for women, especially in such pursuits as poultry-

rearing, bee-keeping, and general dairy work, and our request that the promised legislation towards a "permanent solution" should give special consideration to the special needs and special position of women workers drew from Mr. Asquith, in his reply, something dangerously near a pledge that the proposed legislation should give prominence to the special claims and difficulties of unemployed women.

Workless Women Must Agitate.

I understand that the deputation which followed ours, from the Central Unemployed Body, made out a better case against the administration of the existing law, but it was extremely unfortunate that owing to some misunderstanding Mrs. H. J. Tennant, who is so well qualified to speak for the women's point of view, was not called upon.

This is especially regrettable as so excellent an opportunity to give expression to her indictment of the Local Government Board's administration so far as women are concerned is not likely to recur.

I am convinced that in order to secure fair treatment for the existing workrooms, to say nothing of an increase in their number, a definite and immediate public agitation is essential, and in this connection I welcome the decision of the Executive of the Women's Labour League to hold a special meeting of protest against the neglect of the claims of unemployed women early in January.

Efforts are being made to secure one of the largest halls in London, and, needless to say, the platform will be a thoroughly representative one.

A Tardy Capitulation.

The few stalwarts who in season and out of season have fought the battle of the hungry school children on the London County Council are to be congratulated upon having forced its capitulation on the question of feeding the children.

After many months' cruel delay, during which frantic and futile appeals were made to private charity, it has been decided to put Section 3 of the Provision of Meals Act into force, and to spend £10,000 out of the rates for this purpose.

A Common Sense Course.

The West Ham Education Committee have taken the only course which ordinary common sense could dictate in deciding to sanction the opening of centres during the Christmas holidays, at the same days and hours as at present, for the distribution of food to children who are discovered to be in needy circumstances prior to the closing of the schools.

It would indeed be the height of absurdity to feed these children during the school session, and leave them to starve in the holidays.

Mr. Bury, ex-Chairman of the Care Committee, however, declared that this action was a step forward to State maintenance, and he wanted to know whether they were drifting. With uplifted hands he declared that soon they would have to feed the children on Saturdays and Sundays.

And why not?

How would Mr. Bury like to fast on two days of the week?

Dr. Salter, who was a member of the special L.C.C. Committee on the physical condition of the children, made an appalling statement at Chandos Hall the other evening.

In addition to the 60,000 children who have less than one-third of normal vision, there are 100,000 more who require glasses and treatment if they are to become efficient citizens. Seven thousand are suffering from tuberculosis, ten thousand suffer from discharging ears, and require daily skilled attention; whilst as to teeth, there are only 40 dental chairs in London to deal with 900,000 children, at least 600,000 of whom require immediate attention in this respect.

A Terrible Burden.

And yet, when it is proposed to make proper provision for medical treatment at public expense, there are those who talk of "undermining parental responsibility" and the "undesirability of placing a terrible burden upon the community."

The terrible burden is there already. We want to remove it.

And it will not be removed by the subsidising of London medical charities, as some of our civic rulers have had the effrontery to suggest.

MARY R. MACARTHUR.

WE WANT SNAP-SHOTS.

Every week we want to give a photograph in our paper of some interesting event. Carry your camera always, and when you can catch any public person unawares, catch him, or her, and send the result to us.

Catch all sorts of other things, too, besides public persons, as they happen.

Write the title of your picture on the back of your photo, and your own name and address, and

A Prize of 10s. 6d.

will be given to the owner of every picture we reproduce.

Photos to be endorsed "Snap-Shots," and sent to the Editor, WOMAN WORKER, Worship Street, London, E.C.

GOOD WISHES.

Whate'er delight
Can make Day's forehead bright,
Or give down to the wings of Night.

Soft silken showers,
Open suns, shady bowers,
'Bove all, nothing within that lowers.

Days that need borrow
No part of their good morrow
From a fore-spent night of sorrow.

Days that, in spite
Of darkness, by the light
Of a clear mind are day all night.

Life that dares send
A challenge to his end,
And when it comes say, "Welcome,
friend."
RICHARD CRASHAW.

The majority of our people do not know how to enjoy themselves. They have only learnt to worry and to work.—"The Sorcery Shop."

CURRENT EVENTS.

In the whole of London there are but three workrooms for unemployed women. Hundreds do not register their names because it is no use.

Yet the Right Hon. John Burns can see no justification for more workrooms because there is no demand for things the women make.

No demand! The "things" are garments suited to the season, warm woollen and cloth fabrics of all kinds. Boys' and men's shirts and suits; women's coats, dresses, and underclothing, jerseys, cardigan jackets, etc. And the writer of these comments saw a

Woman's Bare Thigh

through her rags yesterday in Tottenham Court Road. Had she been tall enough she would have rubbed shoulders with the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, who was passing at the same time. The poor are always too short or too tall to be properly seen.

There is no "demand" for the warm clothing made by London's poor. But it is gratifying to learn that the black opal is not exorbitantly priced, and is in great demand by the fashionable woman.

Black pearls, unfortunately, are too costly for any but the wealthy. £500 is considered quite a low figure for a pair of perfectly matched earrings.

There are 50,000 starving children going to school every day in London.

A labourer named Henry Hayes was charged last Tuesday with stealing bread for his starving wife and four children. A detective found no food in his scrupulously clean home, and the only furniture was a table, chair, and bed with single coverlet. He went out and bought food, which they ate ravenously.

But to save the situation (!) and to prove that there is still corn in Egypt, the Suffragettes are going to present Mrs. Pankhurst with a necklace of

Diamonds, Amethysts, and Green Agates.

Further, President Castro (he is not a labourer) pays £50 a day for his hotel in Berlin, and a matter of £100 per day for ten motor-cars.

As he uses thirty-two rooms in his hotel, it is quite easy to see he could not do with less than ten motor-cars. And yet we hear of one room in London (or is it Glasgow or both?) where four families have to crowd in. One in each corner.

To-day I saw passing along Oxford Street a long procession of unemployed men, who sung out in Psalm-like notes every minute, "WE WANT WORK," much as the Suffragettes droned out "DEEDS, NOR WORDS" in Albert Hall. There was no work forthcoming and no food, and the men marched on empty and miserable. But there is Balm in Gilead, otherwise how could 43,000 British women have presented the Pope with 362 beautiful and costly chalices to provide for the wants of poor churches throughout the world? Which is what they have just been doing.

The poor woman who does her own washing with Sunlight Soap to save time

and labour may take comfort in the knowledge that she makes millionaires. Mr. Lever complains that since the great libel case, two years ago, his firm has lost £1,250,000.

The degrees of poverty are something awful to contemplate.

Miss Sylvia Pankhurst welcomes Lord Robert Cecil's Bill making it a penal offence to disturb meetings.

No doubt she is getting tired of playing "the same old game":

The same old game,
The same old game,
It matters much to me
How I suffer for a spree,
So I'll not carry on the same old game.

Mrs. Stanton Coit speaks up for the stewards at the Suffrage meeting in Albert Hall. From her point of vantage on the platform she observed that the stewards tried honestly to expel the wreckers as quickly and quietly as possible. She saw them try to pacify and persuade; and they only used physical force after other

Arguments Had Failed,

and they were left to contend with dog-wags, cords, or chains.

Mrs. Coit's belief is that the Suffragettes act under hypnotic suggestions! There may be something in that.

The Premier views with "very little alarm" the fixing of a minimum wage. What courage! But what is the minimum to be? Madame J. R. MacDonald and Mlle. Mary Macarthur should give us their views. Ada Reeves says she earns £10,000 a year, and gets it. And yet her dressmaker had to sue her last week for the miserable sum of £3 16s., being 5 per cent. discount which she had wrongfully deducted from £75 worth of costumes.

And still I guess that woman's thigh goes uncovered.

There is to be a great wedding in Calcutta. Lady Violet Elliot weds Lord Charles Fitzmaurice, January 12. Three small boy pages will carry the weighty bridal train, which is a stiff mass of

Solid Silver Embroidery,

with pearls and crystals embedded in the needlework. The train is so heavy that, were it allowed to trail, the bride could not drag it along.

Poor thing! I am glad she will have help. Who worked, by the way, to earn the cost of it all? Doubtless they would gladly take a share in bearing the burden if they only might.

"Christabel! Christabel!"

Miss Pankhurst's release yesterday inspired Mrs. Pethick Lawrence to write in "Votes for Women" the delightful rhapsody of affection which follows:

"Christabel Pankhurst! Who can tell what hope, what vision, what possibility, what joy in conflict, what certainty of victory are bound up in the hearts of women to-day with that name?"

"To women whose backs have been bent under age-long subjection; to women whose hearts have been subdued by age-long sorrow; to women patient with the burden of birth and death, which they have carried since the human race

began, there has suddenly come the call to arise and lift up their hearts, and the voice that proclaims deliverance is the voice of the very spirit of dauntless and conquering youth, strong, joyous, and confident, and untouched by the shadow of fear.

"It is the voice of the very spirit of the dawn, which even as it tells of a coming day brings the light of

The Rising Sun.

"Christabel! Christabel! As the dawn to the waiting earth upon whose breast have lain all night the chilling mist of tears, so are you dear to the hearts of women.

"Long, long we waited for your coming! Too well have we learned the lesson of sorrow and of patience. Fear was upon us, and the anguish of womanhood had subdued us and brought us under submission.

"Child of destiny! Spirit of the dawn! You will emerge undimmed even from the black recesses of a common goal, for until the appointed time you are immune from the griefs which pierce and wound the hearts of those to whom has not been given at birth your

Magic Armour.

"Dauntless champion! Herald of the coming day of deliverance, whose story is already written in the book of Fate. We glory in your courage.

"You who come to meet us out of the sunlit plains of a future which we know only as a bright dream, we love you differently, but not one whit less than we love your mother, who has walked with women through the valleys of shadow, carrying the burden of all their sorrow, forgetful of her own.

"Maiden warrior! We give you rapturous welcome!"

On which the only comment we have to make is that it must be a little difficult for even a maiden warrior so long waited for to behave herself seemingly while such incense burns.

WOMAN AND MAN.

Yet in the long years liker must they grow;

The man be more of woman, she of man; He gain in sweetness and in moral height,

Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;

She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,

Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind; Till at the last she set herself to man,

Like perfect music unto noble words; And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,

Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,

Dispensing harvests, sowing the To-be.

TENNYSON.

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.

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.

JOHN L. ROSE.—Thank you.
MARGARET E. GARRETT.—Thank you for your letter.

G. W.—Miss Ethel Carnie's address is THE WOMAN WORKER Office, Worship Street, LONDON, E.C.

BERTHA LANCASTER.—Thank you for your letter. I have forwarded your inquiry to the business manager. Sorry cannot arrange a date meantime.

Socialism or Suffrage?

Dear Julia.—We had Philip Snowden's wife here, speaking under the auspices of the Era Club, i.e., a woman's club similar to the Suffragettes at home. Her lecture was rotten. But our landlord, i.e., Porter (who was candidate for Socialist Mayor), drew out of her most reluctantly the fact that the only cure for unemployment was Socialism, and she hastened to apologise by adding, "Mind you, this is only my own personal opinion."

So much for that part.
Then she said that HER movement, i.e., Women's Suffrage, had been responsible for the release of Daisy Lord. "A lie," I said; it was Julia, our Julia. What had they to do with it?

Please explain.—With every kind wish, always in the Fellowship. P. PATERSON.
Porter's Hotel, New Orleans, U.S.A.

New Notes.

Dear Julia.—Yes, let us strike some new notes. The world awaits them.

Someone (can it be Bernard Shaw?) says: "Those who sacrifice themselves end by sacrificing others."

There is another old, old adage about obedience. Obedience! How it was drummed into us as children, and still is, as a most excellent thing to be admired! What think you of it, my friend?

Dare we for a change extol disobedience as a brave and courageous trait?—Yours in the Fellowship, LORNA.

An Enthusiastic Suggestion.

A humane, inexpensive propaganda. Why not establish a "Woman Worker" maternity home in a Peckham or other slum?

Batchelor's Hall Place, Blue Anchor Lane, would be a good place to start. It might be necessary to teach the Camberwell Borough Council their duty to the poor in the way of road-making and cleansing in this particular district, but that would only be a side issue.

Four rooms and scullery, 6s. 6d.; but arrangements would have to be made to have a cottage reserved, as there is a demand for these small homes (!). A £10 outlay would be ample, if you can find two capable women volunteers. (Unsigned.)

[We gladly print the suggestion, but this kind of thing is clearly the duty of the municipality.—Ed.]

Medical Examination at Schools: How Not to Do It.

Madam.—I notice you urge us to work away and see that our children are medically examined. I really think not. I enclose you a cutting from our local paper, and beg to confirm every detail stated therein, and even much more.

My little girl, aged 5½, was subjected to the same treatment, and has since been suffering from a sore throat—which I presume is from the effects of having fingers put down her throat.

One of the attendants offered my child a drink of water to rinse her mouth with from the same glass (and the same water) that I had seen a child drink from with sores around its mouth. I naturally demanded clean water.—Yours truly, A. MANTON.
115, Elmers End Road, Beckenham.

[The cutting—from the "Beckenham and Penge Advertiser"—is a letter signed "John Watts," stating that at the Church Fields School children were stripped quite naked, and so hurriedly examined that the correspondent doubts if antiseptic precautions can have been taken. The same rug was used to cover every child on the way from the undressing room to the examiner.—Ed.]

A Bard at the Braes.

In answer to the two or three lady correspondents who wrote asking for particulars of Mairi McLan Ban, I would like to say that all Mairi's poems may be had from Norman MacLeod, 25, George IV. Bridge, Edinburgh. There is an account of her life in English in the preface.

But few of her poems are translated. They are sung and recited by whole communities in the United States and in Nova Scotia.

She dictated many thousands of lines of poetry. (Her memory was like that of the Easterners, who can recite whole literatures.)

In her last days she went to Rona, near Skye, the scene of one of Fiona MacLeod's novels. She is buried at Inverness, her grave being in Tomnahurich cemetery (the Hill of the Fairies), with a fine monument, the money for which was subscribed by admirers all over the world.

Another celebrity, who lived centuries ago, declared that this hill would yet be "looked with keys," and it is. Also that spirits would haunt it. Perhaps they do!

MARGARET McMILLAN.

Child Labour.

Dear Editor.—In your report of the Guildhall Conference of December 4 and 5, you omitted to state that Mr. Ouelch's amendment, prohibiting all boy and girl labour up to the age of 16, was carried unanimously.

In a conference in which there were a large number of representatives of municipal bodies, this was significant, and especially encouraging to those of us who have spent many years in popularising the Socialist and trade unionist demand for the abolition of lifetime work, the raising of the school age to 16, and the maintenance by the State which is necessary if those reforms are to be realised.

The manner in which the workers in the textile districts are responding to our appeal on behalf of the children gives us ground for hope; but the battle is by no means won, and we want all the help which THE WOMAN WORKER and its readers can give us.—Yours sincerely,

M. BRIDGES ADAMS.
Swan and Royal Hotel, Clitheroe.

Home Topics.

Dear Julia.—Your articles this week are splendid. They have helped me and another woman I know who has a past.

I should like to mention to you, too, how surprised I was to see the article, "Furniture and Patience." We did just what Maria Redding recommends, and now we have several lovely pieces of fumed oak furniture, and we always stain our floors and have casement curtains. When we can afford it we are going to have an armchair made by the Guild, such as Maria Redding describes.

I want to know where I can get very easy music of "England, Arise!" and "The Red Flag."

May I say that I believe the mother who writes you that she did not suffer much at childbirth is right? I see so many women say the same thing in the "Herald of Health," etc.—Yours sincerely, (Mrs.) G. PUGH.
Morningside Road, Edinburgh.

Nurses, Doctors, and Mothers.

I was reading in a newspaper yesterday of the case of a woman dying of puerperal sepsis. The midwife who had been in attendance was to be "dealt with under the Act, and directed not to practise until she heard from the central authority."

It may or may not have been the fault of the midwife that the woman got septicaemia, but in either case her means of livelihood has been taken away and her reputation is gone. Even if it is proved she was not to blame, people will fight shy of her when they know she has been dealt with publicly.

How is it we never hear of doctors being "dealt with" when a woman or her baby dies in childbirth? Because in all physiological matters England is ruled by the medical profession, and there is no higher court of appeal than the doctor.

And yet I have known women invalidated for years, sometimes for life, owing to the carelessness or ignorance of their medical practitioner. There are also many cases of babies being stillborn, or strangled in the birth, who might have been saved if it had not been for the doctor's delay, or incorrect diagnosis.

An experienced midwife often knows far more than a young doctor. There are many clever, conscientious doctors, and many careless, ignorant midwives, but there is another side to the question, and one which people ought to take into account.

Would not the remedy for such injustices be found, first, in obtaining for women their right to share in making the laws of this country—the laws which at present are made by men, for men—second, in teaching all girls about their special functions as prospective mothers—how to prepare for motherhood, that child-bearing may be easy and natural; also how to care for the babies when they arrive?

If this were done we should hear less of "female ailments," "still-births," and "infantile mortality." M. C. H.

Co-Operative Housekeeping.

Dear Madam.—In the "Daily News" of Saturday last (December 12) there was an article by Joan Stanton on "Co-operative Housekeeping." I should so much like to start with others a similar plan.

My thought was this: Each couple to have two rooms (sitting-room and bedroom) furnished by themselves, and all the work in them done by themselves, excepting grates, windows, and boots; a general dining-room, with separate tables for breakfasts and dinners (luncheon and tea to be prepared and provided by occupants of rooms); the work to be done by cook-general and boy; each occupant to take a month's supervision of catering; each to pay a part of the furnishing of hall, stairs, dining-room, and kitchen.

The couples need not be married people. Two ladies would do as well; only to make the plan economical as well as comfortable, I think we could only allow one room to one person. Of course, some would like to furnish as bed-sitting-rooms.

If I only knew of two couples who could start with me, I would be willing to do so at the Christmas quarter. I think I know of a suitable house at Hampstead.

It seems it would prove such a happy arrangement, as it would ensure freedom, privacy, mutual interest, and many good things, at a most moderate expense.—Yours sincerely, (Mrs.) FLORENCE L. MCGREGOR.

Hampstead, N.W.

BROWN YOUR HAIR.

SEND FOR A TRIAL.

TRENT HAIR-COLOURING HAIR restores grey, streaked, or faded hair to its natural colour, beauty, and softness. Prevents the hair from falling out, promotes its growth, prevents dandruff, and gives the hair a soft, glossy, and healthy appearance. IT WILL NOT STAIN THE SCALP, is not sticky or dirty, contains no sugar of lead, nitrate silver, copperas, or poisons of any kind, but is composed of roots, herbs, bark, and flowers. PACKAGE MAKES ONE PINT. It will produce the most luxuriant tresses from dry, coarse, and wiry hair, and bring back the colour it originally was before it turned grey. Full size package sent by mail, post paid, for 1/1.

TRENT SUPPLY CO.,
201 Depot, 222, HAYDN ROAD, NOTTINGHAM.

OUR PRIZE PAGE.

Kindest Grace Done To You.

Each day we live brings gifts for us. We may not recognise them at the moment: we may overlook a small gift of great value in stretching out our hands to seize a worthless offering of tremendous size; but the gifts are there for all that. A thoughtful act performed for us by a friend, a kindly grace done, a cheery word spoken—these all are gifts helping to make the world a place worth living in.

This may sound like moralising—which would be foreign to our nature—but as all roads lead to Rome, so do all morals (in this column, at least) lead to competitions and prize ideas.

The competition this week will be, What is the kindest grace ever done to you? Tell us in 200 words. Address to the Prize Editor, Utopia Press, Worship Street, E.C., and the prize-winner shall win a guinea. All letters must be in by Monday, December 28.

EARLY MEMORIES.

It is strange how many of these are of the country. We apparently have for our readers real sons and daughters of the soil—and we rejoice, therefore. The letters below have been selected with a view to as much variety as possible under the circumstances.

THE PRIZE LETTER.

I was a nervous child, with an emphasised mouth, a quick imagination, a lame leg, and a sense of humour.

My earliest memory is that one or other of these endowments was for ever making me conspicuous.

"Hello, little 'un, you'll see some ups and downs in life," a street-singer called to me as I trotted along one day.

I laughed, knowing he meant to be funny. There was something, too, in the defiant way in which he sang, "Keep Thou my feet!" which amused me vastly. (One foot had disappeared; the other was bandaged!)

Children enjoy more than they understand. There is something in them older than their brain.

I also had a predilection for religion, and was converted at a very early age. The chief injunction laid on us was "to confess our sins."

Now goodness left no room for confession, so there was nothing to do but to make room for it!

"Alas, poor Mother! We positively tormented her for absolution."

"What has come to you?" she exclaimed.

"This was the moment for testimony!"

I understand her muddled expression now as she said—"Be good and don't do it again."

—JEANIE MATTHEWS, 27, Norton Street, Brooks Bar, Manchester.

Just Like Grandpapa!

"Alas, I learnt at a very early age that 'things are not always what they seem.' For instance, toffee was not always 'toffee'—at least, not when it was come upon in large quantities, in a totally unexpected place—then it might, perchance, turn out to be only *glue!*"

A lump of—er—"sugar candy" (my favourite sweet!), sitting innocently on the kitchen table one morning, proved—when popped hastily into a greedy little mouth—to be—*common kitchen soda!* Thus, one learns, early in life, to approach things warily, and to understand "distinctions" and "differences!"

But the deepest and most lasting impression I ever carry with me is this:

One morning, finding the door of "Gran-

dad's" room ajar—a most unusual thing—I stole very gently and cautiously in, and took a peep! *Whatever* was Grandad doing? There he was, standing in front of the mirror, just putting in a row of *teeth!* My eyes opened wide with amazement and fear; and, without a word, I fled! Ten minutes later, however, I was found in another room, standing in front of a big pier-glass, and solemnly, earnestly, trying, by some manner of means, to get out my top row of teeth!—M. BALLARD, Tottenham.

A Compliment for Sussex.

My first memory is of being taken into a bedroom filled with big dark furniture. While my father greeted his bed-ridden cousin I smelled at a red rose which had climbed in at the open diamond-paned casement.

I remember the deep open kitchen chimney where big logs were burned on andirons, and bacon and hams hung to be cured. Gazing up, I could see stars in daytime. Fowling pieces were stacked in each corner, behind big armchairs which tempted the weary. The big brick oven was common to two households, each having a door in their respective bake-houses.

Out of doors I remember the long expanse of wall, with few windows, the currant bush trained beside the waterbutt, in which I nearly met a watery fate; the outhouses, covered with a grape-vine, surmounted by a windmill vane, and festooned inside with strings of birds' eggs; and the uneven line of old palings which bounded the garden.

I remember the long, narrow common opposite, and the little spinney where I saw a vixen playing with her cubs.

I was 2½ years old when I paid this, my only, visit to Sussex, 30 odd years ago, and my first impressions remain unimpaired.—F. A. RIMINGTON, Carlisle.

Real Rain! Artificial Rain!

Oh, for an umbrella! From earliest childhood days my sole ambition was to become the proud possessor of an umbrella. Fancy playing real mothers and fathers without an umbrella! Why, mother never went out without hers.

Imagine the joy that filled my childish soul when I had one given me? What did it matter that it came from the cellar, the cover parting from the ribs, the handle missing, and the blue sky laughing at me through the rents?

My two sisters and I, dear dollies in our arms, heads squeezed together under the umbrella, proudly paraded the garden, crying "Real rain! Artificial rain!" (I remember we had only just learnt that word artificial, and were using it on occasions.) If it would only rain!

Of a sudden, delighted cries of "Real rain!" burst from our lips. Never was such rain. It poured through the holes on to our heads, and our dear children might have caught colds had we not huddled them closely; but, alas! it ceased as suddenly as it came.

Mother, not liking us to be disappointed, had commissioned one of our brothers to pour a large jugful of water from the bedroom window, and that was our real rain. What matter! We had an umbrella.—(Miss) L. HAMPSON, Kennington Grove.

Graveness Makes Happiness.

My earliest recollection is of a summer day. I had been taken out of doors by my mother. As a child I showed great velocity of movement at an early age, and had a positive genius for disappearing. On this occasion I succeeded in eluding my mother and having a bit of an adventure on my own.

I managed to toddle into a graveyard. I have no recollection of any other part of the day's proceedings, but I have a vivid recollection of sitting down on the grass and gazing at the sky.

I was impressed by the great expanse of

blue, and the dazzling sunshine brought to my conscious perception for the first time. I think the very solitude of the graveyard (for it was a week-day), and the absence of people and objects in the near vicinity to attract my attention, accentuated the picture on my childish mind.

It would be difficult to find words to convey to your readers the sense of happiness I experienced. The vastness of the blue sky, the brilliancy of the sun, and the entire absence of all restraint, even the gentle restraint of my mother, gave me a delicious feeling of freedom, wonder, and happiness. There was also present the vague undefined sensation that I had discovered this "new world" for myself. I was too young to have any mis-giving as to how I would get home, and only took a child's philosophical delight in the joy of the moment.

At night I was found in the police station by my distracted mother. I have no recollection of this unpleasant side of my escapade. The pleasant side only is vividly stamped on my memory.—NO NAME.

THE WAITS.

My chamber was in the old part of the mansion, the ponderous furniture of which might have been fabricated in the days of the giants. The room was panelled, with cornices of heavy carved work, in which flowers and grotesque faces were strangely intermingled; and a row of black-looking portraits stared mournfully at me from the walls. The bed was of rich, though faded, damask, with a lofty tester, and stood in a niche opposite a bow window. I had scarcely got into bed when a strain of music seemed to break forth in the air just below the window. I listened, and found it proceeded from a band, which I concluded to be the waits from some neighbouring village.

The moonbeams fell through the upper part of the casement, partially lighting up the antiquated apartment. The sounds, as they receded, became more soft and aerial, and seemed to accord with the quiet and moonlight. I listened and listened—they became more and more tender and remote, and, as they gradually died away, my head sank upon the pillow and I fell asleep.

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HOME NOTES.

By Dorothy Worrall.

While rummaging in the glory hole today, I ferreted out a scrap-book which belonged to my great aunt. Such a quaint old-world tome. Compared to mine it is much like comparing our dear old Irish spinning wheel with its wooden pegs and picturesque hank of flax and slow movements with the new bicycle, smart, shiny, and swift.

My book is full of newspaper cuttings, but my aunt's is made up of gorgeous valentines with a wealth of gold and silver leaves, wonderful wax roses, and still more wonderful mottoes of heart-breaking sentiment. It has a flexible back of mottled paper, and the colour of its leaves is what I believe was then known as celestial blue.

She must have had scores of admirers in her youth, and I can imagine how excited she would be every February 14th guessing who had sent her these

Scented Love Tokens.

In nine cases out of ten she would guess right, too. I can just remember her; how her Christmas tree used to be richly dight with silver balls and things, and she used always to pick out the nicest toys for me.

We are far too prosy and practical to send valentines nowadays—worse luck. But thank goodness we still have our Christmas-cards. Do let us stick to the good old-time customs and forswear the bad ones. Last night, to my great joy, I heard

Queer Gurglings

and squeakings issuing from the cottage doors in our village. For I knew that the village band must be practising.

Every Christmas morning it wakens up by braying out in anything but dulcet tones, "Christians, Awake!" and we wake. The top notes may be a wee bit shaky, and the bottom ones a trifle wheezy, but it is right fine to hear them on a frosty morning when the bells are in the air, and everybody is trying to be merry.

Do you think it wrong to take delight in these things when there is so much misery among us? I do not. As Mark Tapley would say, that is our chance to show we can rise above it all. If the blind try to lead the blind, they fall into the ditch, and what is the use of that?

So long live the good old customs. Hang up the mistletoe, kiss and dance and sing. Do not forget to look for the threepenny-bit in your plum-pudding. And—a merry Christmas to you all.

Hints and Recipes.

I can never say that I asked for bread and you gave me a stone. No, indeed, if I ask for anything you give it me and plenty of it.

Do you know that since answering a correspondent about cake icing I have had over seventy recipes of that kind sent in? Now I cannot publish them all, but as I know you will be making your Christmas and New Year cakes I will put in as many as possible.

Two of our readers who sent in re-

cipes say very fairly that they do not compete for the prizes, as they are professional teachers of cookery, so instead of giving a recipe myself I will put in theirs, but do not vote for them.

WATER OR SOFT ICING.—For an ordinary sandwich cake: 8oz icing sugar, 1 teaspoonful lemon juice, about 2 tablespoonfuls tepid water. Roll and sieve the sugar. Add the lemon juice and water, being careful not to make it too thin. The icing should cling to the spoon when held up in it. Any flavouring may be added—coffee essence, vanilla, almond, grated lemon or orange rind, etc. Pour over the cake immediately and smooth with a knife dipped in cold water. When pouring, do so boldly, as the icing will flow more easily than if put on in spoonfuls.—MISS GILLOTT.

BUTTER ICING.—Mix ½ lb fresh butter with 6oz sifted icing sugar to a cream. Flavour with vanilla or lemon essence, colour with carmine, or coffee essence, and spread on the cake with a knife dipped in warm water and dried.

CHOCOLATE ICING.—6oz icing sugar, 1oz chocolate, one and a-half tablespoonfuls warm water. Melt chocolate in water in a small pan, add sugar. Heat till it grows dark in colour. Do not boil. Pour over the cake at once.—MISS ROSS.

Nos. 25 and 31 have received an equal number of votes, so the 5s. prize will be divided between Mrs. Norman, 57, Church Road, Erdington, Birmingham (25), and Grace Pigott, 50, Sydenham Road, East Croydon (31).

Please vote for the best of the following recipes. Each cake with the icing counts as one recipe:

CHRISTMAS CAKE.—Beat ½ lb of butter to a cream, add ½ lb of fine sugar, and one to three eggs well beaten. Then add ½ lb flour, ½ lb currants, ½ lb raisins, and one teaspoonful baking powder. Cream the butter with the rind of a lemon. Beat well together. Line a cake tin with buttered paper, and bake in a moderate oven for 2 or 2½ hours. This cake is also very nice if 1oz of ground almonds are added instead of lemon rind. Ice with following: SOFT ICING.—8oz of castor sugar, ½ teaspoonful milk, vanilla flavouring. Put sugar into saucepan, add milk. When dissolved, bring to a boil, do not stir. Boil exactly five minutes. Pour into basin, stir at once with a wooden spoon. Continue until the mixture turns into a white thick cream. Add vanilla. Pour over cakes.—No. 39.

RICH CHRISTMAS CAKE.—1½ lb fresh butter, 1½ lb flour, 1½ lb sultanas, 1½ lb currants, 3oz peel, 3oz almonds, 10 eggs, essence of cinnamon, essence of cloves, 1½ lb sifted sugar, two teaspoonfuls baking powder. Cream the butter with the hand till quite thin, add the sugar, always beating one way, then the yolks of the eggs, which have been well beaten, then the flour gradually, in which the baking powder has been mixed, then the fruit, which has been well washed and picked, the peel cut in thin strips, the almonds blanched and cut in strips, then the whites of the eggs last (which have been whipped to a stiff froth), then the flavouring, more cinnamon than cloves. Put in this lined with paper, and bake in a moderate oven until done. Ice with the following: BOILED ICING.—Put half a pint of sugar and a quarter of a pint of water into a saucepan. Heat gradually to a boiling point, and boil without stirring until syrup will thread when dropped from tip of spoon. Pour syrup gradually on beaten white of one egg, beating constantly, and continue beating until of right consistency to spread, then add vanilla essence or lemon juice. Ornament at once with candied cherries or violets, or fancy preserved sweets.—No. 40.

CHRISTMAS CAKE.—½ lb butter, ½ lb flour, ½ lb sugar, four eggs, half wineglassful milk, ½ lb large raisins, ½ lb currants, 2oz candied peel, nutmeg or cinnamon if liked. Beat sugar and butter well. Add eggs alternately with flour. Beat well between each addition. Beat well

before adding the fruit. Bake about three hours in a slow oven. Ice with the following: ALMOND ICING.—½ lb ground almonds, ½ lb sifted icing sugar, and enough yolk of egg to mix it. Mix all together, and use as little egg as possible. Knead well. Roll it out and place it on the top and round side of cake. Let cake go cold before icing.—No. 41.

POUND CAKE.—1½ lb flour, 1½ lb castor sugar, 1½ lb currants, ½ lb raisins, 1½ lb butter, 4oz mixed peel, 8 eggs. *Mode.*—Work butter to cream with hands, then add sugar. Beat well. Add fruit, the eggs last. Beat well for fifteen minutes. Bake in a hot oven for 3 hours. Ice with the following: WHITE ICING.—Place 1½ lb sugar in a bowl and moisten with the beaten white of an egg. Pour over the cake and make smooth.—No. 42.

A CHRISTMAS OR BIRTHDAY CAKE.—It has been well tried. The ingredients are: 1½ lb flour, 1½ lb raisins, 1½ lb currants, ½ lb butter, ½ lb sugar, 2oz almonds, 6oz peel, ½ lb treacle, spice to taste, 6 eggs, ½ pint milk. Beat butter to a cream, add well-beaten eggs and beat again. Then add peel, almonds, and fruit previously stoned and chopped, next add flour and spice, lastly add treacle and sugar, which should have been dissolved in a saucepan over the fire, and milk slightly warmed. Beat all well together, and put in a tin well lined with buttered paper, and bake in a moderate oven 5 hours.

SOFT ICING FOR ABOVE.—Put 1½ lb of icing sugar into a pan with half a teaspoonful of water. Stir over the fire till quite dissolved, and of a smooth shiny appearance, but do not let it boil. Then pour over the cakes before they are cold, and leave to dry in a cool place.—No. 43.

Answers to correspondents must be left over till next week.

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

To do with as few things as we can, and, as far as we can, to see to it that these things are the work of freemen, and not of slaves—these two seem to me to be the main duties to be fulfilled by those who wish to live a life at once free and refined, serviceable to others, and pleasant to themselves.—MORRIS.

Wincey Wears Well

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THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

A "Striking" Story.

"List! List! Oh, list!" "Perpend!"
 "Lend me your ears!"
 "Hark to my lay!" "Come, lithe and
 listen!" dears.
 Oh, yes! I see Miss Poser's questioning
 motion,
 But what "lithe" means, I've not the slightest
 notion;
 In all these differing ways did bards of old
 Begin when they would wondrous tales unfold;
 And as I too a thrilling tale would tell,
 With them do I desire to start it well.

And yet—mayhap would better suit my rhyme
 Childhood's old favourite, "Once upon a
 time."
 Once on a time, then—yes! I'll make that do,
 Though here the thought occurs, it's not quite
 true.

Not on a time—on me a spell was cast—
 Methought I stood within a cavern vast;
 Frost-diamonded, its walls gleamed snowy
 white,
 From pendant icicles flashed dazzling light
 On gracious shapes in old-time glamour clad,
 Who long ago made childhood's Yule-tides
 glad.

Yet—naught of gladness met my wondering
 view,
 As gazed I on those forms so well I knew,—
 To which through storm and stress fond
 memory clings.

Dejected herald angels drooped their wings,
 Old Father Christmas, duly crowned with
 holly,
 What'er he felt, looked anything but "jolly,"
 And Santa Claus—ne'er thus would fancy
 paint
 The bairnie's best-beloved, gift-showering
 saint;

Where all were sad, of mourners he the chief—
 Fit model for a monument of Grief.
 The late tree-decking, garland-weaving elves
 Listless upon the ground now couched
 themselves,
 And e'en Jack Frost, who loves a biting joke,
 Looked dolorous as he makes thin-vestured
 folk.

No sign I saw of Yuletide mirth and glee;
 And, while I marvelled wherefore this might
 be,

Spake Christmas: "Lo! my kingship I
 resign—
 Be 'merrie,' 'jolly,' no more titles mine.
 Fitting it is that I should be discrowned,
 Since want and woe beneath my sway are
 found.

Some well-content, on earth their voices raise,
 Of 'good old Father Christmas' sing the
 praise;
 But can the starving poor thus hail me?
 Rather,
 Must I to them appear a stern *step*-father,
 Unjustly partial bringer of 'good cheer'
 To those who lack it not throughout the year.
 'Tis sure by sorcery vile doth this befall,
 Since fain would I bestow good cheer on all."

"I, too," sighed Claus, "unsaintlike must I
 seem
 To children of the poor, who night-long dream
 That I with oft-craved gifts their stockings fill,
 Then wake—and weep—to find them empty
 still;
 Rich treasures go to homes of wealth and
 pride,
 While oft to lowly cot is all denied;
 Yea! sorcery as thou say'st, my gifts, thy
 feast,
 Perversely misdirects where needed least."

Lifted her head a Herald Angel then:
 "Of Peace on Earth," she said, "Goodwill to
 Men,
 Our song hath earthward floated year by year,
 Mingling with ruder strains of Yuletide cheer
 For centuries many—yet, from age to age,
 Discord, ill-will recordeth history's page.
 Now cometh Yule once more—the world we
 scan,
 See man contending still 'gainst brother man;
 Not yet Goodwill o'er Christendom doth reign,
 Or none for work and bread might ask in
 vain.

Alack! 'midst clamour wild of strife and
 greed,
 The Angel song few hear, and fewer heed!"
 Sighed Christmas: "Sooth, a sorry king am I!
 Whose power some mightier monarch may
 defy,
 Since 'neath my sway by no ordaining mine
 Some wretched feast, in penury others pine;
 Henceforward, then, within my secret grove
 Will I remain—the earth I visit not,
 Until (o'erthrown the dominance of Ill)
 My good intent for all may I fulfil."

Said Claus: "The bairnies all I fain would
 bless,
 But since my will must yield to sorcery's
 stress
 No more in reindeer chariot will I glide
 O'er chimney-pots of earth, but here abide
 Until some power ariseth strong to quell
 The wizard vile, and lift the baleful spell,
 Which ever turns my stream of gifts to such
 As, lacking nothing, tire of over-much."

The Angel spake: "Henceforth our song be
 dumb
 Until in far-off years a time may come
 When men a-weary shall their conflict cease,
 And cry, 'Sweet Angels, sing once more of
 Peace!'"

Bowed then the languid elves and fays alike
 Their mute assenting to the General Strike.
 A brooding silence fell, with grief oppressed;
 Low drooped each head—I sorrowed with the
 rest.

Yuletide! Oh, woeful thought! Fast fell my
 tears—
 Without the long-loved friends of by-gone
 years!

Then, lo! a sound that scarce the silence
 stirred,
 Light as the fluttering wing of brooding bird
 O'er young ones in the nest! A fragrance rare
 Of sweet vale-lilies floated on the air.
 The mourners thus to wonderment beguiled—
 Looked up—Lo! in their midst the Holy Child
 White-vestured, lily-fair! A rosy glow
 His face and raiment showed as dawn-flushed
 snow.

'Twas from the Christ-Child's heart with love
 aflame
 That soft, soul-melting, roseal radiance came;
 And 'neath His tender words, as freshening
 dew,
 The flowers of Hope, fast-withering, bloomed
 anew.

"Ah, friends unwise! How may ye give relief
 To human woe by adding grief to grief?
 Because the voice of sorrow floats from earth,
 Would ye, then, hush therein all sounds of
 mirth?
 Because unbrotherly man striveth still,
 Shall we withhold 'Glad Tidings of Goodwill'?
 Lo! Year by year, as falls the Angel song
 With deepening fervour hearts of men shall
 long
 For Peace on Earth, and faintly shall foresee
 The Brotherhood—which when man wills shall
 be.
 E'en now sweet hopes and succouring cares
 employ
 The minds of many who find lessening joy,
 In hearths for them made bright, and tables
 spread,
 While brethren go unsheltered, lacking bread;
 And ever more and more, 'tis understood,
 The best for each lies in the common good.
 'Tis ours the heart to soften, sway the
 thought—
 By man's own striving is the weapon wrought
 Which 'gainst the Powers of Darkness oft may
 fail,
 Yet—doubt it not—shall in the end prevail.
 Ah! then—the victory won! The lesson
 learned,
 The strife-filled Jungle to a Garden turned,
 Himself shall man our prophecy fulfil,
 Of 'Peace on Earth, to all Mankind Good-
 will!'"

As ceased the music of that love-thrilled voice,
 Its hearers, shamed and swayed to Duty's
 choice,
 Uprose full cheerily—a flood of light
 Veiled from my raptured eyes the gladdening
 sight!
 The radiance faded—within my room once
 more
 Alone I sat, and, marvelling, pondered o'er
 The "Striking Story" glamour-revealed,
 While merrily without the Yule-bells pealed.

Plum Pudding or Doleful
Dumpling.

Thus was the great strike averted,
 dears. And Oh, how glad was I!
 Johnnie is quite to be excused—should
 Santa Claus forget him or bring the
 wrong thing—for exclaiming, gracefully
 and ungrammatically, "It's a jolly shame!
 Everybody can have what they want but
 me!" And Jennie may ask, rebelliously,
 why she can't have one doll when Mollie
 Moore can have two. But—would either
 feel happier in their "going without"
 for the knowledge that everyone was going
 without also? Can you fancy Christ-
 mas with none having "good cheer"?

No carolling! No pealing of joy-bells!
 No Yule log! No holly-crowned plum-
 pudding veiled in flickering flame! All
 in doleful dumps with never a laugh nor
 a jest to divide amongst us! Oh, my
 dears!

Peace(?) and Plenty.

But I may feel jolly, looking in my
 stockings full of nothing, at the thought
 of a gleeful Rosie and Posie with wonder-
 ful dolls that shut their eyes, and of
 Charlie blowing his trumpet, beating his
 drum, and dragging his "puffer-train"
 about, till mother says, distractedly,
 "Dear, dear! Why couldn't Santa bring
 you something quiet?"

It is better to see happiness through
 other people's eyes than not to see it at
 all.

Nevertheless, my chickies, I am not
 desiring that you should have only second-
 hand—or should one say second-cilled?—
 happiness. Had Santa Claus called on
 Peg to assist in labelling his parcels, her
 WOMAN WORKER bairns would not have
 reason to call him a "mean old fink"!

Good Cheer.

I hope he will be very generous to you,
 and that Father Christmas may give you
 plenteous share in his good cheer. Not
 quite the kind I read of in a song of more
 than two hundred years ago, though:

Now, thrice welcome Christmas which brings
 us good cheer!
 Mince pies and plum porridge, good ale and
 strong beer;
 With pig, goose, and capon, the best that can
 be,
 So well does the weather with our stomachs
 agree!

Whatever might be the case with the
 weather, I fear such mixed fare at one
 feast would not "with your stomachs
 agree," but that your long-desired
 Christmas holiday would be—

One day of flavorful feasting, frolic, laughter!
 Pains, potions, powders, pills, for seven days
 after!

Roses stripped of their thorns, jam
 with no hidden pills, mirth and laughter
 with never a sigh nor a tear, Peg wishes
 for you! And the merriest, merriest
 Christmas you have ever known.

PEG.

It is not wisdom, but dulness, that
 keeps men from joining in the livelier
 fancies of children.—R. L. STEVENSON.

The Employment Bureau.

Conducted by Pandora.

NOTES AND NEWS.

The Workers' Bookshop, which has just
 been opened by the Women's Employment
 Bureau at 18a, New Oxford Street, W.,
 should prove of great service to all those
 who are interested in women's work, and
 in the various societies connected with
 women's interests. Here will be on sale
 every kind of pamphlet and leaflet which
 deals with women's interests, issued by
 such associations, etc., as the Women's
 Industrial Council, the Parents' National
 Education Union, Catholic Women's
 League, and many others. I visited the
 little shop this afternoon, and had a chat
 with the thoughtful worker in charge,
 who told me that a very large number
 of persons who visited the women's sec-
 tion of the Franco-British Exhibition
 were absolutely ignorant of the many
 societies now existing which deal with
 women's work and interests. I hope
 London readers of this column will visit
 the capital little shop in Oxford Street.

The attention of parents and teachers
 is called to the Junior Domestic Economy
 Scholarships offered by the London
 County Council next Easter. Candidates
 must be not less than fourteen years of
 age, and must have attended a public
 elementary school. Successful candidates
 must attend the school of domestic
 economy selected for five days a week for
 one year, during which time they will
 receive instruction in cookery, needle-
 work, dressmaking, laundry work, house-
 wifery, and hygiene. The scholars will
 be provided with dinner and tea, with all
 the necessary materials and books, and
 £1 a term as a maintenance grant.

It is to be hoped that parents will avail
 themselves of this excellent chance of
 securing for their daughters a good
 domestic education which will always be
 of use to them, no matter what work they
 take up later. In the immediate future
 there will be good openings for teachers
 of domestic subjects in the elementary
 schools, and such training as that given
 in the Technical Institute might be con-
 sidered as a stepping-stone to higher
 things.

Miss G. Holland Wren, who recently
 obtained the Pereira medal, the most
 coveted honour of the Pharmaceutical
 Society, has been appointed demonstra-
 tor of pharmacy at the Society's school
 in Bloomsbury Square. This is the first
 time that a woman has been appointed to
 the post.

Miss Gertrude Edis, M.D., has been
 appointed medical inspector of elemen-
 tary schools in Blackpool at a salary of
 £200 a year. Other educational councils
 will now perhaps do likewise, for there
 is no work more suitable for a woman
 than that of looking after the health of
 school children. Far more than a man
 a woman is peculiarly fitted for such work,
 which is at this moment more essential
 than any other. The school nurse and
 the school doctor might, between them,
 do a great deal towards stopping the
 physical degeneration which is so ap-
 parent on all sides.

A co-operative system of house-keeping
 for working ladies has been established
 by Mrs. Barnett, at Garden Suburb,
 Hampstead. For a very moderate rental
 ladies can obtain a couple of rooms, with

the use of a common dining-room, read-
 ing-room, garden, etc. Such arrange-
 ments as these are badly needed in all
 large towns where women earn small
 salaries and work for many hours, and
 if the scheme is financially sound there is
 no reason why such co-operative houses
 should not prove most successful. They
 offer the privacy of the home—dear to
 most of us, whether wage-earners or not—
 without any of its drawbacks.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.
 WHERE TO GET A LOAN (OPHAN).—I doubt
 whether you would get a loan for the purpose
 you have in view, as most of the loan societies
 only lend for training, and not for setting up a
 business. However, I should advise you to
 state your case fully to Miss King, Society for
 Promoting the Employment of Women, 22,
 Berners Street, London. There are four loan
 funds under her control, one of which may be
 available for your purpose.

JOURNALISM (G. H.).—Thank you for your
 letter, which, coming from a practical jour-
 nalist, interested me considerably. Of course
 I agree with you that the more intelligence a
 girl has, the better for her journalism, but for
 ordinary journalism, great intellectual capa-
 city is not required to-day. It is always well
 to face facts. I would like to raise the
 standard of journalism, and I think it badly
 needs raising, but remember, I was not giving
 advice on journalism as it might and ought to
 be, but as it is! I am sure you really agree
 with me, or you would not have applied a
 certain adjective as you did! It is good news
 to hear that *males* are reading this column.

CHEAP BOARDING-HOUSE IN PARIS (TYPIST).—
 The terms you mention are distinctly low, but
 I think you would find the British-American
 Y.W.C.A. Student Hostel, 93, Boulevard St.
 Michel, would take you at that rate. If you
 go, please let me hear how you go on.

LETTER OF THANKS (ANNIE P.).—I am glad
 you wrote; this column is at present a new
 feature, and it is very pleasant to hear that it
 fulfils a want. You may rely on always get-
 ting honest advice here, as I have absolutely
 nothing to gain by giving anything else but
 the facts. It is not, however, always easy to get
 at the facts about women's work and wages,
 as there is so much concealment in these
 matters. I am always most anxious to receive
 accurate information, and I shall certainly not
 consider you "efficious" if you supply me
 with this article! Do not hesitate to write to
 me whenever I can be of any use to you.

Talks with the Doctor.

I have only just time to advise all my
 readers to be moderate, temperate, and
 ascetic at Christmas time. Of course,
 my advice will not be followed, and a crop
 of doctors' bills will be the result. But in
 wishing my readers a good time and a
 Merry Christmas, I would like to say
 that a dinner of turkey, goose, sucking-
 pig, and merriness and contentment
 withal is better than a dinner of stale
 herbs, weighed proteids, and a wizened
 and niggardly conscience. I speak, of
 course, strictly from the scientific point
 of view. X. Y. Z.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mrs. J. J. (Bradford).—Take the following
 mixture: Liqueur arsenicalis, one and a-half
 drachms, Feni et Quin. Citras, 2 drachms,
 water to 12oz. One tablespoonful three times
 a day in water. Take two bottles only, and
 then write again. Apply this ointment: Ung.
 Ichthyol, one half-ounce; vaseline, one half-
 ounce. Bathe the places until they are soft,
 and rub a little gently in.

ANXIOUS AUNT.—The child has some obstruc-
 tion behind the nose, which ought to be re-
 moved. The enlarged gland is not necessarily
 very serious. You should have the nose seen
 to at once, and take advice about the gland
 later. Even if the child does outgrow the
 obvious effects of the post-nasal trouble which
 you mention, he would be likely to suffer (in
 a different way) in the future.

A LAPP LEGEND.

"Grymta," said Klemti, "was an old
 woman who lived long, long ago. She
 knew everything that can be learnt about
 spells, for her father had been a mighty
 magician, and she had inherited his
 drum. Grymta lived in the tent of her
 son, who had many children, and the
 youngest of them all was Grymta's
 favourite; she was never too weary to
 hush him when he cried, nor too feeble
 to carry him if he were tired.

"One day the Sickness" (*i.e.*, small-
 pox) "broke out among the Samelats;
 many fell ill in the tent of Grymta's son;
 but all who lived recovered before the
 reindeer had eaten the neighbourhood
 bare—all but Grymta's favourite. One
 evening her son came into the tent and
 said: 'To-morrow we must set off again,
 although many of us are still weak. The
 snow is deep and the reindeer are grow-
 ing thin for want of food. If they should
 die, what would happen to us?' 'The
 little one must lie still for a week yet,'
 said Grymta, 'you must wait for him.'
 'That I will not do,' answered the son,
 and there was much talk. The end of it
 was that Grymta was left behind in a
 tiny tent that her son put up; and he
 gave her a sledge, and a reindeer to draw
 it as soon as she could move. So the rest
 went away and left her.

"Now the first night a bear came"—
 "But surely bears go to sleep in
 winter?" I remonstrated.

"I am coming to that," returned
 Klemti, testily. "Listen: he who listens
 learns." After which rebuke he pro-
 ceeded.

"The first night the bear came down
 and devoured the reindeer; the second
 night the bear came down and ate up the
 sledge; but the third night the bear came
 and tore down the hanging over the tent-
 door, for he intended to take the child.
 Then Grymta dashed a blazing brand in
 his face and came forth on to the snow
 with the child in her arms. And she
 cutseyed to the bear and began to dance
 round him—round and round, singing in-
 cantations the whole time. The moon
 was in the east when she began, and the
 bear's long shadow stretched westwards;
 but the moon was in the south when she
 ended, and the bear's short shadow was
 towards the north. And the bear grew so
 giddy, so dazed, that at last he shut his
 eyes, laid his nose between his paws, and
 fell asleep. Since that day all the bears
 sleep through winter; for Grymta
 laid a spell on them and their descendants
 for ever."

"And did Grymta and her grand-child
 rejoice their kinsfolk?"

"We know no more," Klemti answered,
 "the story ends there. But if she had
 not lived to tell her tale to others how
 should we have heard it?"—H. MAC-
 KENZIE.

The good old times? All times when old
 are good—
 The present might be if they would.

THE SCIENCE OF FOOD AND DIET.

The famous food expert and scientist, Eugene
 Christian, has just completed the formation of a
 company for the sale and manufacture of his food
 products, called Christian's Natural Food Company,
 Limited, with sales office located at 54, Duke Street,
 Mayfair, London, just two doors from Oxford Street,
 where the company wish to announce that all of
 Christian's foods may be obtained, also the very
 popular book called, "Uncooked Foods, their benefits,
 and how to use them," which contains hundreds of
 recipes and invaluable advice on foods and diet. For
 list of goods, see advertisement, page 749.—[ADVT.]

Complaints and the Law.

Anybody who is injured by the negligence of somebody else's servant is entitled to claim damages from the employer unless he is himself in the service of the same employer.

For instance, if A is knocked down by a van driven carelessly by B, he can claim damages from B's employer; but if A is a fellow-worker with B (e.g., suppose he is the van-boy, or is employed in the factory to which the van belongs), he cannot claim from the employer.

This strange rule is known as the "doctrine of common employment." It is not to be found in any Act of Parliament, but is part of what is known as Common Law—i.e., law which has grown up out of legal decisions in Courts of Justice.

The main reason which led the Courts to adopt so absurd a rule seems to have been the theory that a workman who agrees to work for an employer accepts implicitly the risks of that employment, including the risk of being injured by the negligence of his fellow-workers. I cannot imagine why the doctrine was not done away with by Act of Parliament long ago. It is not a matter of such urgent importance now that we have the Workmen's Compensation Act, but it is absurd enough in any case.

The doctrine does not, of course, affect the Workmen's Compensation Act, which entitles workmen who meet with accidents to certain payments regardless of how the accident was caused.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.
QUERY.—The above will explain your difficulty. Further details of the particular case you have in your mind would interest me very much.

FRIGHTENED.—They cannot compel you to undergo the operation or stop the compensa-

tion if you refuse. If the operation was a very slight affair, and your own doctor as well as your employer's doctor agreed that it would be beneficial, the case might be different. But no Court would insist upon such a serious operation, especially as your own doctor is so doubtful as to its expediency. So do not be frightened, and let me know what happens.

FREEZING.—There ought really to be some other means of ventilation besides the window. But if the other girls like the air, cannot you change places with one of them and so get rather further away from the offending window? You ought not to freeze, but no more ought the others to suffer from stiffness, which is very bad for everybody's health. If you will send the address I will write to the inspectors about it, and perhaps they may be able to get some ventilators put in that will satisfy everybody.

Julia Dawson's Answers.

HOPEFUL wants to know the writer of the following: "Man's life is measured by his days, not years. No aged sloth, but active youth, has need of praise."

JEAN wants to hear of something that will take away some discolourations from a blue satin gown. The spots were caused probably by mud splashed off carriage wheels.

W. T.—It is quite possible that "Barbara West" will be published in book form. In that case the publishers will surely advertise it in THE WOMAN WORKER. Glad it gave you such pleasure.

J. S.—No, the furniture would not be taken. But in estimating the woman's income the amount of interest which the value of her furniture would yield would be considered. Thank you so much for your warm appreciation of THE WOMAN WORKER.

F. C.—I fear it is true that a man can compel his wife to live with him. But if he has been cruel or neglectful, she can get a legal separation. Thanks for helping on the circulation of our paper.

M.—An article on Secular Education 6,000 words long? Stupendous!

D. S.—The address of the Malthusian League is New Cross, London, S.E.

A NORFOLK SOCIALIST.—Sorry I do not know of such a youth. Why not advertise for one? Doubtless many would be glad of the chance of learning a skilled trade and finding a good home.

E. E. H.—I will with pleasure enclose your cards where they are likely to do good. Hope your advertisement will be a help.

REDUN.—Yes, we'll stir 'em up. Let us know what happens.

R. E. W.—I sent your letter on to the lady, but she cannot make any change just at present. Let me know if your advertisement is successful.

A. S. G.—Will you please communicate with Douglas Hurn, 26, Prince of Wales Road, Battersea Park, London, S.W.?

A WOMAN WORKER.—We have not much space for poetry, but should like to see the poem which so touched your heart. You do not even mention the title.

E. C. W.—I cannot find that there is any law requiring Guardians to store the furniture of people who enter the workhouse. But possibly some order on the subject may have been issued by the Local Government Board. Why not write to the L.G.B. on the point? I am inclined to agree with you that if all our Socialist M.P.'s would leave Parliament to its own devices and stump the country with the simple gospel of Socialism, we should get on quicker. I am with you on the minimum wage question, too.

CHARIOTTE.—I can see no way of preventing the under managers complained of from collecting for insurance companies. Most probably their employers would put a stop to it if they knew. I will report to the Factory Inspector, and will you let me know if anything happens?

M. H. T.—I sent the letter on with pleasure. I hope your funny curate assumed a proper dramatic attitude when he said, "God forbid that such a curse as Socialism should fall on England!"

B. N.—My dear, I have my doubts as to the usefulness of an article on how to make a "bag patchwork quilt," on the score that it would mean so many weary hours of needle-work to produce such little result. Thank you just the same. The patchwork quilts of our grandmothers—when simply made to use up pieces—is surely economy run mad! Thanks for the nice things you say about Dorothy and Peg.

THE UNEMPLOYED PROBLEM.

STILL WORKLESS.

A Demonstration at Poplar.

Alas! It is plain that when the frost comes there will be many women and men without work, and without food or fire.

The Premier, replying to Mr. Keir Hardie last week, said "the Local Government Board had sanctioned the formation of distress committees under the Unemployed Workmen's Act." The question of whether there could be more efficient and elastic machinery for the Act "was receiving his best attention."

Meanwhile, fear and impatience drive the more spirited sufferers from unemployment to make their existence known. On Thursday there was an exciting scene in the Poplar Council Chamber. Mr. George Lansbury had just carried the meeting with him in a protest against some ruling of the Mayor's when two deputations appeared—one from the Right to Work Council, headed by Mr. John Sturr, and another from the Poplar Unemployed Committee, led by Mr. Andrade and Mr. Williams.

Each spokesman was given five minutes, and Mr. Andrade had not finished when the Mayor said, "Time's up."

"I don't care about the time," Mr. Andrade said. "I'm going to speak."

"This Council stands adjourned," the Mayor announced.

Mr. Williams rushed to the table, and striking it, cried, "We want work, and work we will have!"

Cheers came from other members of the deputation and the gallery, but the Mayor left the room to disrobe.

But a score of members remained in the Chamber with Mr. Lansbury, and there was high excitement. Amid a storm of cheering, Williams took his seat in the Mayoral chair, with Andrade by his side.

While Mr. Lansbury conferred with other Councillors with a view to getting a special meeting on Monday night, the deputation sang "The Red Flag," "Dare to be a Grayson," and other Socialist songs.

At last, pacified by Mr. Lansbury's assurance that a special meeting would be held, they departed.

ANOTHER BACKWARD COUNCIL.

The Lewisham Borough Council, which was still wondering whether it ought to put in hand any "special works" this winter, found its public gallery invaded last week by a crowd.

One councillor, the Rev. J. C. Morris, vicar of St. Mark's, Lewisham, was told that he had a pebble where his heart ought to be; and when Councillor Trenchard looked up to the gallery cries of "Scamps" and "Rotters" were frequent. Others shouted, "Our wives and children are starving; you have got plenty; beware! look out! If you don't listen to us you will know it. We don't want your half-sovereigns; we want work. You are led by one man as you have been before."

This scene of disorder was not quelled until the Council went into committee.

THE STARVED CHILDREN.

Surrender of the L.C.C. Education Committee.

The London County Council's attempt to thwart the Provision of Meals Act is, happily, breaking down before cold weather comes.

The Education Committee are convinced that they ought not to rely on voluntary help, and yesterday they were to ask the Council to draw £10,000 from the county rates—for use if necessary. This recommendation came from the General Purposes Committee in the following form:

"We have been informed by the Sub-Committee on Underfed Children that whilst they hope that funds from voluntary sources will be available to defray the cost of the food furnished for meals under the Education (Provision of Meals) Acts, 1906, it is desirable, in order to preclude the possibility of funds not being available before the reassembling of the Council after Christmas, to recommend the Education Committee to ask the Council for the necessary power to draw upon the county fund for the purpose, and they ask us to submit a special maintenance estimate of £10,000."

It is probable that the London Schools Dinner Association will now decide to disband. A special meeting is being summoned for an early date in order that a decision may be arrived at.

THE LUDGATE HILL HAWKERS.

With reference to the banishment of the gutter toy-sellers from Ludgate Hill, the "Star" remarks:

"The police say it is necessary to keep the streets 'free for traffic.' In reply to which we may ask, Why do not the police see that Throgmorton Street is 'free for traffic,' instead of being blocked by rich stockbrokers?"

Chased in turn from Farringdon Street and the Embankment—which surely should be big enough—these poor souls are apparently not to make a living. Their case amounts to a "painful Christmas scandal," for, as a matter of sentiment, even the Tory papers are saying things on their behalf.

Sentiment misses the point, of course.

A Woman Letter-Carrier.

Mrs. Emma Stevenson, of Wrecclesham, Surrey, a letter-carrier for 27 years, has been granted a gratuity of £10 by the Postmaster-General, on retiring.

Mrs. Stevenson, who is 59 years of age, has regularly walked her daily round of 16 miles, with alternate Sundays off. Her pay has been 13s. 3d. one week and 15s. 2d. the next, with 7s. 6d. every six months for "boot money," and a fortnight's holiday in the year.

She kept her crippled husband, and is now in poverty.

The nation to-day is paying more to 100 ambassadors than to 2,000 teachers.—"Schoolmaster."

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, Abstainers, no children, seek Situation as Caretakers or Domestic help. Willing to do entire work, but preferably no cooking. Well educated and domesticated. —WARDE, Hillcroft, Woking.

WOMAN wants Situation as Housekeeper to Working Man, Socialist preferred. Thoroughly understands domestic duties.—Glasgow. 26.

YOUNG WOMAN requires situation as Nurse to one or two children or as Housemaid in small family.—C. W., 230, 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.

SITUATIONS VACANT.

WANTED, a Capable Girl as General Servant comfortable home.—Mrs. COPE, 132, Croxted Road, W. Dulwich.

APARTMENTS.

DEVON, "PENLKE," Nr. DARTMOUTH.—Home for Rest and Recreation. Sunny, romantic cliff situation. Vegetarian. Every home comfort. Sea bathing. Christmas Party.

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, Carden Road.

TO 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.

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

FOR SALE.

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

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

20,000 yds. Nottingham Lace Given Away.—Valenciennes, Torchons, Insertions; 5 yds. free with each assorted 1s. parcel.—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.

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR.

Play is not for every hour of the day, or for any hour taken at random. There is a tide in the affairs of children, and civilisation is cruel in sending them to bed at the most stimulating time of dusk. Summer dusk especially is the frolic moment for children, baffle them how you may. They may have been in a pottering mood all day, intent upon all kinds of close industries, breathing hard over choppings and poundings. But when late twilight comes there comes also the punctual wildness. The children will run and pursue, and laugh for the mere movement—it does so jog their spirits.

What remembrances does this imply of the hunt, what of the predatory dark? The kitten grows alert at the same hour, and hunts for moths and crickets in the grass. It comes like an imp, leaping on all fours. The children lie in ambush, and fall upon one another in the mimicry of hunting. The sudden outbreak of action is complained of as a defiance and a rebellion. Their entertainers are tired, and the children are to go home. But with more or less of life and fire they strike some blow for liberty. It may be the impotent revolt of the ineffectual child, or the stroke of the conqueror; but something—something is done for freedom under the early stars.

This is not the only time when the energy of children is in conflict with the weariness of men. But it is less tolerable that the energy of men should be at odds with the weariness of children, which happens at some time of their jaunts together, especially, alas! in the jaunts of the poor.

ALICE METNELL.

NATURAL FOODS.

FOODS THAT CURE DISEASE AND PRESERVE HEALTH, STRENGTH, AND VIGOUR.

CHRISTIAN'S Combination Meal. Famous for Hygeia gems.

CHRISTIAN'S Combination Cereal. Delicious for Breakfast.

CHRISTIAN'S Unfried Fruit Wafers. Scientific combination of fruit and cereals.

CHRISTIAN'S Unfried Bread. Used in place of ordinary bread for Dyspepsia.

CHRISTIAN'S Laxative Flakes. Especially recommended for constipation and stomach disorders. Contain 35 per cent. protein, 45 per cent. fat, 10 per cent. carbohydrates. One pound furnishes the body with 2,800 heat calories. An ideal food, and perfect substitute for meats.

CHRISTIAN'S Combination Nut Butter. The best food ever put on the market.

CHRISTIAN'S Granulated Milk Coconut. A cellulose fibre, making it one of the most valuable foods grown in the tropics.

CHRISTIAN'S Alpha Puddings. Harmless, pure, and delicious, made from the most delicious food known to science.

CHRISTIAN'S Foods are so proportioned and combined from the best cereals or grains in nature that a proper balance of the nutritive elements is established. We ask you to try them, then judge. We will gladly send you price list and interesting booklet on application.

Mention the "Woman Worker."

CHRISTIAN'S NATURAL FOOD CO., LTD.,

54, Duke Street, Mayfair, LONDON, W.

Telephone—2296 Mayfair.

THE SUFFRAGE.

TWO CHRISTMAS PARTIES.

And Two Meetings.

The week's social and political occasions have included two large Christmas parties—that of the W.S.P.U. last evening, and that of the Women's Freedom League on Saturday evening.

The meeting of last Thursday night in the Queen's Hall, where the extreme militants summed up their doings of the year, and the demonstration by the Freedom League in Trafalgar Square on Saturday, also kept the agitation running up to the Christmas holidays.

Mrs. Pethick Lawrence's rapturous greeting to Christabel Pankhurst is elsewhere noted. Her summary of the year's martyrdoms was as follows:

"January.—Five women sent to prison for three weeks.

"February.—Sixty women for four to six weeks.

"June.—Twenty-seven women for four to twelve weeks.

"October.—Twenty-seven women for four to twelve weeks.

"December.—Five women for various periods.

"The roll of prisoners for 1908 numbered 124."

And the New Year motto is, "Never to fail, nor falter, nor repent."

ACTRESSES AND THE VOTE.

An Actresses' Franchise League came into existence last week—Mrs. Kendal being the president.

The resolution passed at its first meeting was this:

"That this meeting of professional women calls upon the Government immediately to extend the franchise to women; that women claim the franchise as a necessary protection for the workers under modern industrial conditions, and maintain that by their labour they have earned the right to this defence."

Among the speakers Miss Cicely Hamilton struck a sad note: "It is no longer enough for us to give our lives trying to please men. We have lost our old gods and yet we may not have found new ones. Perhaps the first and hardest service that the new gods will require of us is that we shall put our self-respect before the admiration of our brethren."

Mr. Jerome K. Jerome contributed the sage wish: "May you win the vote without losing the woman!"

BOTH SIDES.

The "Daily Chronicle" publishes a letter and a comment in amusing contrast:

"As an old subscriber to your valuable paper I think it well to let you know that your persistent and undisguised bias towards the militant Suffragists is severely straining the support of a large number of your most loyal followers.

"East Putney.
"The militant Suffragists consider that we have a bias against them because we support constitutional methods, and not their methods.—Ed.]"

"JOHN J. RISDON.

MRS. DESPARD'S RESISTANCE.

Mrs. Despard is still awaiting the action of the Inland Revenue Department for the recovery of income-tax due from her. She has received a bill of costs incurred by the Attorney-General in applying for judgment in the High Court, but has ignored it.

MRS. PANKHURST'S CHRISTMAS.

Mrs. Pankhurst's Christmas will at any rate be relieved by many greetings. She is to be allowed to receive Christmas cards. If this does not mean a specially large cell, or an overflow in the corridor, it will be better than the Governor of Holloway Prison is said to fear.

There will presumably be a special staff for censorship, since it is forbidden that any of these Christmas greetings shall have "communications" written on them.

INDIFFERENT OR BUSY.

City men were invited by the militant Suffragists to attend a luncheon hour meeting at the South Place Institute last week, but as they were expected to pay 5s. for a front seat and 1s. for any others, they did not respond heartily.

Mrs. Carrie Nation in Glasgow.

Mrs. Carrie Nation, the "saloon smasher," visited Glasgow Police Court one day last week, and asked leave to address the magistrate. She said she has visited many other police-courts and gaols, but never before had she seen female prisoners in a majority over men.

A Woman's Paper in China.

Of the many signs of progress in China, one of the most interesting and unique is the editing and publishing of a daily newspaper by a woman named Mrs. Chang, a native of Pekin. After marriage to a Chinese official, a writer in the "Sunday at Home" tells, she spent several years in Central China, where she learned much about the condition of the people. The paper is called the "Pekin Woman's News."

Girls As Gas Inspectors.

The Chicago gas authorities have appointed young women as inspectors of meters in place of men. The girls wear neat uniforms, and answer all complaints by calls at the homes of the gas company's patrons.

The Socialist women of Germany claim to be proportionately represented on the Party's executive organisations, there being at least one woman member of each.

In Paraguay the women are in the proportion of seven to one of the men. The consequence is that they undertake everything unpleasant or risky.

FASTIDIOUSNESS AND COARSENESS.

Like other things spurious, fastidiousness is often inconsistent with itself: the coarsest things are done, the crudest things said, by the most fastidious people. Horace Walpole was a proverb of epicurean particularity of taste; yet none of the vulgarians whom we vilified had a keener relish for a coarse allusion or a malicious falsehood. Beckford, of Pont-hill, demanded that life should be thrice winnowed for his use; but what was his life? Louis XIV. was "insolently nice" in some things; what was he in others? If we observe a person proud of a reputation for fastidiousness, we shall always find that the egotism which is its life will at times lead him to say or do something disgusting. We need expect from such people no delicate, silent self-sacrifice, no tender watching for others' tastes or needs, no graceful yielding up of privileges in unconsidered trifles, on which wait no "flowing thanks." They may be kind and obliging to a certain extent, but when the service required involves anything disagreeable, anything offensive to the taste on which they pride themselves, we must apply elsewhere. Their fineness of nature sifts common duties, selecting for practice only those which will pass the test; and conscience is not hurt, for unsuspected pride has given her a bribe.—MRS. KIRKLAND.

SOCIALIST CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR CARDS.

Not "Gilty" or Deadly.

Which if we can escape from the taint of commercialism? In our innocence, when ordering our Socialist Christmas and New Year Cards, we told the printer to adorn the Clarion Badge with a rim of gold. We thought the badge deserved it. And now comes the fat in THE WOMAN WORKER that gold-printed cards are dangerous to the workers. Therefore, we suppose, our "Badge" Cards are "off," so far as "Woman Workers" are concerned. We can only plead that we did not do it on purpose, and that next year's cards will be free from gilt.

Our "Flag" Series, however, contains no gilt in a whole barrel of them. They are the daintiest cards ever issued in the Socialist movement. Order now, and you will receive the cards by return of post.

We have three series—

"BADGE" SERIES.—Ivory white cover, embossed with Clarion Badge in red and gold. Inset, the portrait of a prominent Socialist, with appropriate quotation from his or her writings or speeches, together with seasonal greeting. The cards are tied with red silk ribbon. The portraits are as follows: Two of ROBERT BLATCHFORD (full face and profile), one each of KARL MARX, WILLIAM MORRIS, KEIR HARDIE, VICTOR GRAYSON, JULIA DAWSON, and H. M. HENDMAN.

"FLAG" SERIES.—Same as "Badge" Series, excepting that cover is embossed with Red Flag bearing the word "Socialism."

Prices are: Single card, 2d.; more than one at the rate of 2d. each; 8 for 1s. 3d.; 16 for 2s. 6d.; and so on, all post free. Each series of 8 will cost you 1s. 3d.

The "Red" Series.—The cards which sold so well last year at the rate of 2d. each. We are clearing these out at very low figures. They are as suitable for this year as they were for last. Enclosed in a bright red cover is the inset similar to that of the "Badge" or "Flag" Series. We have a large number of the Blatchford, Grayson, Hardie, and Marx cards, but very few of Morris, Hyndman and Julia Dawson are sold out. We shall not reprint these cards; it would not pay us. While they last, however, we offer them at the following prices: 6 for 8d.; 12 for 1s. 3d.; 25 for 2s. 6d.; all post free. The Blatchford portrait in this series is that by G. de Vries. CASH, preferably in the form of postal orders (or 3d. stamps where only a few cards are wanted), must accompany orders.

Address: SOCIALIST SOCIETY,

Leazes Park Rd., Newcastle-on-Tyne.

"MERE PALLIATIVES."

Mrs. L. E. Simm, of Newcastle, the organiser for the Women's Labour League, presided over the monthly meeting of the Central London Branch at Chandos Hall on the 15th, when Mrs. Ramsay MacDonald lectured on "Mere Palliatives."

In opening, Mrs. MacDonald said that though they aimed at the collective organisation of industry, Socialists had to realise that their progress was a gradual one. The idea of a physical force revolution as a precursor to better things was to-day almost extinct. Many people cried out against "mere reform" movements, but it had to be insisted that no available reform should be neglected, though it was undesirable that the higher ideals should be lost sight of. The regulation of the existing system was not the same thing as building up the ideal State, and it was not enough that they should pronounce a policy of simple prohibition.

If, for instance, they sought to prohibit wage-earning work by children under school age, there should be compensating advantages of a positive character in the way of child-feeding in the schools, additional playgrounds, and similar efforts to brighten the life of the children.

Passing to the Children's Bill—one of the saddest documents she had ever read—Mrs. MacDonald urged that, necessary as some of its provisions might be, its administration should not be overborne with that interference with parents which still remained the prerogative of the Charity Organisation Society. They already suffered too much from the voluntary lady visitors who rode down to the slums in their motor-cars to teach working women how to look after their homes, while their own houses were attended to by paid servants.

The wages board movement also should not result in years being wasted on the tinkering of wages, only in the end to find, as in Australia, that the lowest-paid workers were practically no better off than before.

Other palliative measures commented upon included an extension of factory legislation, municipal initiative, the constructive educational efforts involved in medical inspection and feeding of school children, and the provision of work for the unemployed. In the latter case, however, the Socialists and Labour supporters had to guard against attempts being made to build up national industries on the less capable workers forced out of the ordinary industrial field, and failure brought upon otherwise promising experiments.

Dr. Ethel Bentham moved a resolution urging the immediate establishment of clinics for the treatment of the children attending L.C.C. schools.

Dr. Salter, L.C.C. (Bermondsey), seconded, and stated that of the 900,000 children in attendance at the schools, 60,000 suffered from defective vision to the extent of one-third of normal sight; nearly 100,000 were defective to a lesser extent; 10,000 were affected by ear ailments; while it was computed that almost 600,000 required dental attention. Large numbers suffered from tubercular complaints.

Mr. Salter concluded, amid applause, by announcing the recommendation of the Education Committee that the L.C.C. should devote £10,000 to the feeding of the necessitous children in the schools.

WOMEN'S LABOUR LEAGUE.

Edited by Mrs. J. R. MacDonald.

A Big Rally.

We have taken the large room at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, for the meeting of protest and demand in connection with the provision for unemployed women in London and elsewhere. The question is a national one, and we hope some of our provincial branches will send contingents to help us to demonstrate. Some of the delegates to Portsmouth may be able to start two or three days earlier in order to be present. We want to have an audience partly of unemployed women and girls, partly of those who demand fair treatment and consideration for them. We are getting a list of speakers who know the subject well, and know the need for dealing with it promptly.

The chair will be taken by Mrs. J. R. MacDonald, and Mrs. Despard and Miss MacArthur are both putting themselves to considerable inconvenience to be present; Mrs. H. J. Tennant is trying to evade doctor's orders in order to come (she assures us this is not immoral, and we try to believe her, as she knows the case so thoroughly as Chairman of the London Women's Work Committee). Miss Bondfield and George Lansbury we have not been able to hear from as we write, but of Labour M.P.'s we have promises already from Will Crooks, George Barnes, and J. R. MacDonald.

The Need for Action.

The damping effect of Mr. Asquith's letter to the Central London branch of the Women's Labour League did not keep our spirits under for long. Rather, it roused us to organise this meeting and give voice to the indignation and shame with which we see women starving for want of work whilst wealth surrounds us, on the one hand, and on the other hand the need for women's work is evident in every slum child's rags, in every dinnerless child's pinched face, in every destitute person's lack of comfort and cleanliness.

We must get the unemployed women to claim help under the Unemployed Act. It exists for them as much as for men. As administered, its inadequacy drives us almost to despair. But despair will not mend matters, whilst a stirring meeting of protest may do something to secure work for the workless, whether the exportation pays in pounds, shillings, and pence, or not. In answer to a question in the House put by Mr. J. R. MacDonald with regard to the Prime Minister's letter to the Women's Labour League, Mr. Asquith gave a non-committal answer, but said that he did not intend to close the work-rooms.

Let us tell him on January 21, at the Memorial Hall, that not only will the men and women of London not allow him to close the three workrooms which now have to do duty for this vast city, but that they demand more workrooms and extensions in other directions, and will not be put off with assurances that nothing practicable has been suggested.

Ways of Helping.

The first way to help is to come to the meeting. The second way is to bring your friends. The third way is to distribute bills and make it known at all sorts of places, trade unions, P.S.A.'s, mothers' meetings, I.L.P. branches, wherever two or three are gathered together who might come out of sympathy, or even out of curiosity.

As soon as bills and posters are ready, Mrs. Nodin, of Minock, Kenley, Surrey, will supply them, and will announce more central places where they can be obtained. Mrs. Nodin's Christmas holidays look rather a diminishing quantity in view of the organisation needed for such a meeting! Last, but not least, you can help by giving money. We are starting out in faith.

We have no reserve fund for big ventures. We want to get hundreds of people to come who cannot afford to pay for their seats; for the unemployed, we shall need money for their fares to the hall. Then there is the big expense of rent, and printing, and advertising. Mrs. Nodin, or Mrs. Middleton, or Mrs. MacDonald, or anybody else belonging to the League, will welcome donations, big or small, to be devoted to the expenses of the meeting.

Unemployed Women in St Pancras.

Mrs. Frances James, Secretary of the St. Pancras branch of the League, writes:

The distress among unemployed women is as bad in St. Pancras as it is anywhere, and while we are urging the L.G.B. to extend relief and open workrooms, we also think it necessary to encourage the women to register at the District Committee, and generally to make their wants known. For that purpose we have sent a circular letter to a number of clergymen of the churches and chapels in the poorer districts, asking if one of our members may attend their mothers' meeting to explain what is being done, and what we think they should do. Also, we wish to explain about getting meals for the school children, how to apply, etc.

We find that the circular was well received, and this week we are visiting by arrangement two of the poorest districts, and hope to arrange for more after Christmas.

Propaganda Meetings.

Mrs. Pete Curran addressed recently a public meeting, promoted by the Women's League, on the "Unemployment of Women," to a decidedly appreciative audience, and subsequently gave particulars of her experiences at Walthamstow in respect of the feeding of the necessitous school children in her own particular district. Mrs. MacDonald also visited Wood Green to address a meeting upon "Women in the Labour Movement," and found a very enthusiastic audience, eager to hear how the glorious work of our movement was faring in other localities. In both meetings the collections made, on behalf of contingent expenses, reached a very satisfactory amount.

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.

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By Edward Francis Fay.

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 The strange adventures of "The Bounder" on his tours in the Eastern Counties and other parts of England and France. Wherever Mr. Fay went he met tramps and other queer human fish, and in this book he relates his experiences with that rare gusto and whimsicality so admired by his readers in the CLARION.

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