

SHAFTS

A MAGAZINE FOR WOMEN AND WORKERS.

Edited by MARGARET SHURMER SIBTHORP.

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What the Editor Means.

"No work that is done by true earnest souls, and done with all power possessed and with a perfect will, shall fail to accomplish, at least to some extent, the object for which it was begun and carried on. Therefore faint not, brave heart, and thou shalt not fail.

R. TREVOR.

Pioneer Club Records.

THE reports of the debates in the Pioneer Club for this month are postponed until January, when they will appear at some length. We are glad to be able to announce that the President's health is improving, and Pioneers hope to see her once more in her place before the New Year shall have numbered many weeks.

SHAFTS, in the coming year, will appear in Magazine form. It will also develop some new features, and the Editor hopes that all who read and are helped by SHAFTS will make a special attempt to obtain subscribers. Over twenty letters have been received from sincere friends, asking what they can do to help to pull SHAFTS into smoother waters. To these I reply, there are few persons who can give much money, and money is what SHAFTS wants, but its financial needs are so very much less than they were one year ago, this time last Christmas, that I have great and certain hope. But there are few persons who could not easily manage to send SHAFTS 1s. in stamps once or twice a year. One shilling sent in stamps by each reader would give me all the help I require, or am likely to require in the future. It would save me also much harassing care, and would place SHAFTS' health on a satisfactory footing. The paper has now lived through four years of struggling, and is likely to live through as many more, nor even then dream of shuffling off its existence.

I wish all my readers and friends a very happy Christmas holiday, and a New Year of higher and continually increasing purpose.

HUMANE DIET.

THE Humanitarian League is publishing some excellent pamphlets, under this heading, of inestimable importance to every human being. How many will avail themselves of the benefit to be gained by studying them?

Read *Behind the Scenes in Slaughter Houses* and *The Sweating System*.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

LECTURES AT MOWBRAY HOUSE.

THE Lectures at Mowbray House are discontinued until after the Christmas holidays. Further notice in regard to them will appear in the January issue of SHAFTS.

Choice Bits from Choice Pens.

WE never say Old woman of her whose aspiring, loving, growing life has brought her to the higher estate of the post-maternal period. WOMAN is her name, for age is felt to have made her more instead of less (as foolishly supposed by the worldly wise), so that she more perfectly represents the ideal than in an earlier period. Few in number are these so far by comparison. Granted, but the noble few are always prophetic of the coming many. And men or women, it is ever *but the few* who can transcend their accepted theory of life, and illustrate a nobler one. Now Woman's theory of her nature and destiny is taken from man's teaching, and this is based upon what his senses discover, through the aid of his external intellect alone. For he can have no intuition of those truths of woman's nature which transcend the limits of his own.

Power in the generic sense^{**} is the sum of capacities. Capacities on the corporeal side are functions—on the psychical faculties; and between the two there must be, in the perfect order and harmony of nature, a definite, fixed relation. The more functions, the more faculties. Every power below must have its representative above.

—*Woman's Era.*

To the Rescue.

Now is the time for every woman able to perceive cruelty and to act against it, to put all her influence into the scale against that most fiendish, most inexcusable, most atrocious of all cruelties and mistakes, inoculation, which, under many forms is doing its deadly mischief all over the world, which, under the name of Pasteurism has been doing untold evil, and which has arrived surely at its crisis in the present attempt to establish itself in hideousness in the very midst of us. Many earnest persons are doing all that in them lies to stay its progress. Help is wanted, help in any and every way. There are hundreds of women who might, and surely will, assist in this great work. Send names to this Office: 11, Westbere Road, W. Hampstead, and the necessary steps will at once be taken.

Talks about Books.

SOME OBSERVATIONS BY THE WAY.

PART II.

(Suggested by Björnson's "Heritage of the Kurts.")

"The highest and most perfect creation of the mind (soul) is the Ideal, and to approach it is happiness; although the way leading up to it, by workings of the soul (or actions of the inner life) passes through painful struggles and efforts, and sufferings, the meaning of which is often hidden from us."

Ours is a time of such rapid changes in the mental attitude of appreciations, that it is a not uncommon fact to find an author and his works, which were but very recently ablaze with praise and fame, at this present moment quietly ignored, or even purposely pulled down from their pedestal, by the very same people, who once, in a frenzy of admiration and faith, put them up to be worshipped.

We have all witnessed the catching rage for Ibsen, for Zola, for the ultra-naturalistic and for the ultra-analytical school of novelists; while at the present moment we experience the fact of a waning away of their influence, by tendencies in fiction, and in thought generally, of a directly opposite type. The mental tumult is greater than ever, the chaos of conflicting theories rises daily higher; in distrust of the present, many fall back in great fatigue on the resources of the past. Even amongst some of the most gifted, the best and the truest of mankind, we find a certain tendency to foster a sort of rage and hatred against a modernity, which, it cannot be denied, develops, along with many advantages, serious dangers and evils. Feelings of lassitude, disappointment and scepticism threaten on every side. Unfortunately mankind rushes too easily into a wholesale acceptance of new gifts and gospels, which naturally again brings about, if not a wholesale, at least a very considerable rejection of that which at first was so eagerly welcomed. Hence action and reaction following each other in different spheres very closely.

Amidst this general discontent and uneasiness, it is necessary for those, who could neither wholly delight in the extreme naturalistic and materialistic tendencies of a little while ago, nor find comfort in some recent outbursts of super-natural and fanatical mysticism and spiritism, to cling strenuously to every manifestation of that attitude of mind, which, lying between these two extremes, might be called realistic-idealism, or spiritualism, on a non-supernatural basis, a faith chiefly concerned with upholding the belief in human nature's great qualities as the source of regeneration and development for the individual and for society.

The one supreme thing needed at present is the capacity of discernment between that which in each movement will stand as the kernel holding some precious seed, and that which as mere husks and dust will crumble away, when its first glamour of newness is gone. Here brilliancy holds no life. But the deception of finding some promises of modern times failing in immediate fulfilment need not lead to despondent suspicion of those tendencies themselves, the interpretation or application of which may have been more at fault than their own intrinsic merit.

The confusion now apparent is for a great part caused by superficiality of judgment, by neglect of that higher criticism which should learn to distinguish the genuine from the sham, the real gain from the useless encumbrance.

It is therefore at present a necessity to choose in every sphere of mental activity guides, whose standard of merit, although deeply imbued with the spirit of the age, rises above its weaknesses and pit-falls.

Björnson certainly is one of those writers who may become a source of strength for those who read him. The realistic-idealism of his temperament contrasts with the naturalistic-materialism of some of his contemporaries herein, that, although moving in the sphere of the real—the natural—it still is intensely aware of, and concerned with, human nature's inner life of mind, soul, emotions and intelligence;

but this life seen and followed, not in the great unknown where mystic spiritualism loves to dwell, but in the actual sphere of human life in a world, in a society which, by the right and high action and development of man's spiritual and mental capacities, may be moulded into a higher type.

And for all those who can sympathise with this direction of thought and energy, a book like Björnson's *Heritage of the Kurts*, which many perhaps scorn as being already of antiquated date, still possesses an attraction and a merit which raises it far above the fashionable craze of the moment.

The very earnestness of its purpose, the perfect sincerity of thought and speech, joined to qualities of first-rate literary ability, conspicuous here as in most of Björnson's writings, will assure this author a much firmer and more lasting influence than many of his contemporaries, whose sudden and brilliant European fame witnesses its own decay. For a long time he will remain one of the helpers of mankind, one of the builders of that great forward constructive movement of to-day, which by no faintness of heart, or depression of spirits, will allow itself rest until fuller understanding is gained.

The chaotic conditions of the hour, the acute conflict of contrary opinions and strivings, loses its perplexing aspect if we remember that they are but the natural consequence of that upheaval of human thought and aspiration, not begun only just now, or a little while ago, but ages ago; an upheaval causing the self-directed movement of individuals and the race towards their emancipation of all slavery, be it of the outside despotism of custom and conventions, or the inward tyranny of primitive instincts and low desires.

It is this throwing off of so much that has become futile and meaningless, by the increasing strength and development of human intelligence, which while causing an opening up of endless fields for activity and investigation, at the same time gives rise to a bewildering mass of problems and questions.

Gradually, but surely, the conviction has come, that we have to work out our own salvation, and that of the society we live in; that no outside authority does the work for us, but that we have to do it ourselves, according to the inward light of experience, of thought, of imagination. It is a growing out of former conditions and former conceptions of life into higher and better ones. It is a process of destruction and re-building, of clearing away of much that clings to humanity to deteriorate and undermine its true life; there must be a constant choosing, rejecting, watching, a sifting of the superior from the inferior, of the truly valuable from the merely accidentally expedient. The true gold of the past should be linked to the true gold of the present, to lead us into a future bright with new possibilities and new hopes. It is not really modern life itself which is at fault, but our own wrong and inadequate adaptation of its gifts; lavishly nature provides, yields to intellect and energy; ours the task to select, to adjust, to study our needs, to test the right and wrong way of administering to them. We should stand erect and firm, watchful, on our guard of the disadvantages clinging to many of the advantages of so-called civilisation.

The very wealth of late discoveries of science creates that complexity and increasing artificiality so marked a characteristic of modern life, which threatens to stifle the simple, vital forces holding the true gain. We are only just becoming conscious of the laws of life, of healthy, human, noble life; of the possibility of raising our existence from the condition of a mere drifting to that of self-directing development. In this consciousness rests our power; wider and wider our eyes should be opened, so as to discover every field for fruitful activity and effort.

For human beings thus gradually moving onward, rising higher in purpose and aim, the vision of true freedom, the dignity of controlled life, will be of greater attraction than any momentary satisfaction of passion and indulgence.

And in Björnson we hail one of our benefactors as a guide to a nobler life to be; we have chosen *The Heritage of the*

Kurts for discussion, because that book inspires with the hope that it is no idle dream to believe that in "the more perfect creature to be" the balance will be struck easier; taught by experience and an intelligent interpretation of facts, his nature will tend towards the good and the pure, bringing fullest development of life in preference to the evil and impure, which he knows to be destructive to the very vitality of existence, whose laws it offends.

GERTRUDE KAPTEYN.

On Some of Ibsen's Women.

THE recent production of Ibsen's play of *Little Eyolf* brings the great Norwegian poet and teacher once more prominently before the English public. In the hearts of those whom his words have reached as a message of glad tidings, he lives, and ever will live, as *the* teacher of our times who has striven more strenuously and more insistently than any other to teach us to

"Bring our inside strife to peace
Ere we wage on the outside war!"

It is for this message that we who have learnt to know and love—even though it be through a translation, which gives the beauty of thought perhaps without the beauty of form—the Northern poet's words, will ever tender to Henrik Ibsen our grateful thanks.

In a paper more especially addressed to women, it may be of interest to sketch some of the poet's women characters, and to indicate, however slightly, the teaching or the philosophy which the working out of some of these characters embodies. One thing we must remember in pondering over Ibsen's philosophy, that it is the outcome, the pouring forth of a soul that has been ground fine in the mill of bitter sorrow and adversity, of a soul that has been crushed in order that, like the grape, its sweetness may flow out for the refreshment of others. He is no holiday poet, no speaker of smooth sayings because his ways have lain among the soft and easy paths of the world; like a whirling upward-aspiring flame his philosophy wraps us around, but if we dread it not, if guided by the Master we keep the highest ideal ever before us, the flame shall not burn, the stress shall not hurt us, and "our inside strife shall be brought to peace."

In order to help us to realise what the grim forces were through which Ibsen's soul grew, let me give a short quotation which Professor Wicksteed has translated for us in one of his lectures on Ibsen's works. It is called the power of memory.

"Listen here! Do you know how a trainer teaches his bear a lesson it never forgets? He ties the bear up in a brewer's vat and they light a fire right under him. Meanwhile the trainer plays 'O happy, happy life!' on the barrel-organ for the bear to hear. The hairy monster is almost beside himself with pain. He can't stand still so he has to dance. And ever after, as soon as he hears that tune he's possessed by a dancing devil. I myself once sat in a copper with a full accompaniment and a very respectable temperature. And on that occasion I burnt myself more than skin deep, and I don't suppose I shall ever forget it. And whenever an echo of that time comes over me, I feel as if I were chained in a red-hot copper. I know it like a thrust under the roots of the nails, and I can't choose but hop on my metrical feet."

This is the "Sturm und Drang" through which Ibsen passed, and from which he emerged not crushed, not soured, but purified, dignified, with human sympathies so infinitely enlarged, so almost divinely catholic, that he could conceive with clear and yet loving insight, a Peer Gynt and a Brand, a Hedda Gabler and a Solvejg.

As this play of *Little Eyolf* is brought at this moment specially before our notice, let us take first the two principal women characters in it, and see how fate and circumstances

spin their webs around them, and how the inner growing life within each of these women's breasts breaks through in due time these webs, and rises superior to fate and to circumstances.

Rita, the wife of Alfred Allmers, stands for the type of the egoistic, self-centred woman, with whom all things up to the present moment have gone well, and who has never been roughly awakened from her dream, in which the worshipped "self" looms ever larger and larger. When the awakening comes and her little crippled son (whom she had already begun to feel made demands upon her, which her wholly undeveloped altruistic instincts were not able to meet) is lured by the Rat-Wife into the depths of the Fiord, she turns at first savagely on her companion in egoism, her husband, and a terribly lurid scene ensues, in which wife and husband, with ruthless, almost brutal recrimination tear off shred after shred of their outward conventional soul-wrappings and display to each other their sick and wounded inmost "selves."

Their rights, their ambitions, their pleasures have so filled the canvas that there has been but room for a faint blurred sketch of the little wounded son, the little passive sufferer whose floating crutch on the waters of the Fiord is the symbol of the mass of suffering childhood thrust defenceless into a hostile world. "Isn't it strange," said his mother, "that we should grieve like this over a little stranger boy?"

But this probing of the depths, this going down into the dark places of the soul brings what Allmers, the gentler and more philosophic egoist of the two, longs for, some sort of a "resurrection," and in the last scene we see the wife and husband drawing nearer to each other in the bonds of a new interest, in a reaching out—a tottering reaching out it may be at first—towards humanity in the shape of the many other little morally orphaned Eyolfs who live at their gates. The best that was in them both had only been stifled, not destroyed; a gentle hopefulness suffuses the later dialogues, and "upwards towards the peaks" is the keynote of the closing scene.

The character and story of Asta is more complex; she appears to represent the woman of purely womanly instincts for whom Fate seems to lie ever in ambush. Foiled at one point Fate lies waiting for her at another, but her intuitions, her selflessness, are proof against Fate's snares, and she passes out of the play, and out of the lives of Rita and Alfred Allmers, leaving behind her, as it were, the soft, evenly diffused light which burns only from the union of self-abnegation with self-realisation. Asta had tasted happiness during the years that she and her half-brother, Alfred Allmers, had lived side by side, joying and sorrowing together, struggling on with small means and yet hardly feeling the struggle because love in the scale made up all deficiencies of weight. But the brother's love was "subject to the law of change" in that after a time it was shared with the self-seeking Rita who brought "gold and green forests" as her dower. But little Eyolf soon followed to fill up the vacant corners in Asta's heart, and like the influence of a guardian angel her love overshadowed the Allmers' home. But Fate had prepared another crisis through which her pure unselfish love was to pass. The discovery is thrust upon her that Allmers is not after all her half-brother, but this discovery her healthy intuitions tell her does not affect the ethics of the case as long as his child needs her, and his wife and work satisfy the other wants of his nature. But relentless Fate will test her yet again.

Little Eyolf disappears into the Fiord, and her supposed brother in his weak agony at finding all slipping away from him, makes demands on her which as a sister she could have responded to, but which as the loyal friend of both husband and wife, she dare not. The soul of Alfred Allmers is the twin-soul with whom her soul has been in the past, and could be in the future, at its best, but the final renunciation is demanded, and she feels it must be no half-hearted renunciation; that between the past and the future all bridges

must be burnt. She places her hand in that of the honest though perhaps limited Borgheim. . . .

ALLMERS (softly and eagerly). What is this, Asta? It seems as though you were taking flight.
ASTA (in subdued arguish). Yes, Alfred, I am taking flight.
ALLMERS. Flight—from me!
ASTA (whispering). From you and from myself.

Perhaps it was a counsel of perfection. . . . At least it embodies perfectly one of Ibsen's noblest teachings, that in the supreme crises of our life the sovereign God is conscience, and the only power is Will, that life proceeds from within outwards, so that when we are called upon finally to judge and act, it is in the depths of the soul where no sound of religious authority or of civil codes can reach, that the cause must be judged, and the thought and will must be born that inspire the action.

In the drama of *Brand* Agnes is one of Ibsen's most beautifully conceived women characters. We watch her development from the slight unformed girl, "standing with reluctant feet, where the brook and river meet," to the heroic woman who though crushed by the uncompromising doctrine of her husband, yet in the nobleness of her self-sacrifice rises superior to it and *above* it, counting life well lost if it is demanded of her as a pledge of loyalty to a principle. When we first see Agnes she is being wooed by one who is her inferior intellectually and morally, all undeveloped though she be. When soon after she meets Brand, her soul which was waiting to be born, goes out to him in an intuition, an impulse that here was the fellow soul who was to make hers perfect—even alas! though it might be through suffering and death. She never hesitates from the moment the spell of this strong soul is on her, she will share Brand's work and life, though she knows from the first that such sharing means trampling on her own heart at every turn of the way. After the powerful scene when Agnes steers Brand's boat through a storm which sweeps across the Fiord—a storm through which a man refuses to steer—we see her resting outside the hut, where Brand the village pastor has gone to pray with a dying man; she seems to be seeing, or as the poet mystically puts it, hearing visions. Immediately after comes the meeting of the two ways, between which she has to choose, when she turns towards Brand, the uncompromising visionary, with the words, "Into the Night, through death. Behind there gleams the morning dawn." Agnes seems to be the type of the woman who needs must go "into the Night, through death," in order that her sister women may awake to the Morning Dawn.

The message in *Brand* appears to be that we must raise our ideals as a community and then the individual will not suffer as he suffers now. And more especially is this a message to women, for on them press most severely the cramping and stultifying conditions of our present social life. Each one of Ibsen's women characters we have met, we have known, we have loved or pitied. Fru Alving is a living type in many of her experiences of—shall we say—more than half the married women of our day in England. Hedda Gabler is a type of the neurotic highly-strung woman, whose own lower self is her only ideal, who through pampering and pandering to that self has allowed it to grow out of all proportion, and fill the whole horizon of her vision; so that her life becomes a falsehood, and even her death is a falsehood. Nora is the type of the woman whose awakening is sharp, whose self-realisation appears to the superficial observer, sudden and perhaps bordering on the inartistic. Yet with

what insight and yet with what tenderness does the poet indicate the intensity of the inward drama, while outside flow on its accustomed course the everyday life of bourgeois correctness and convention. Like a forcing house trouble borne alone ripens the blossom and fruit lying latent in Nora's soul (as it has before now ripened the blossom and fruit of many another woman's soul) as she feels from henceforth, though perhaps without being able to put it consciously into words, that she must go out into the wilderness in order to gain unity of soul, in order to reconcile the conflicting impulses of self-abnegation and self-realisation. But there is no word spoken to hint that she will not return when this reconciliation has taken place.

Ibsen in the Rhymed Epistle throws out a striking simile in regard to our existing social life. He compares life to a ship cutting its way through the water on a sultry night:

"A stifling hot air flowed up from the cabin, and held its weary victims in a half slumber. Their sleep was restless and unpeaceful as I could see through the half opened swing glass of the skylight. . . . Then a sound struck my ear from there below; it struck me as I sat leaning against the mast. Someone cried out, half-way it seemed between an uneasy sleep and a night-mare, 'I believe we're sailing with a corpse in the cargo!'"

When we read the poet's quiet scathing irony levelled against hypocrisy and cant in all forms, we ask ourselves, we English women, if we are not sailing with a corpse in our cargo, the corpse of the glib conventional lies with which we cover over the rottenness of our boasted social and home life? A corpse in the cargo! Is it the half-waking consciousness of this corpse on board that makes us toss restlessly in an uneasy sleep? Is it the corpse of dead ideals? If so, let us awake and see that we have on board for our life voyage nought but Living Ideals.

DORA B. MONTEFIORE.

Curious Instance of Help for Women.

THE following appeared in the *Echo* of Nov. 26th, and is a sequel to a letter from Miss Mordan, which appeared in *SHAFTS* last year.

"BEGIN AT THE RIGHT END."

MADAM,—Exactly at this season last year you were good enough to insert a letter of mine concerning a singular committee of gentlemen calling themselves "Woman's Mission to Women," whose custom it is to issue appeals for funds to be spent in persuading women to turn a deaf ear to the wiles of men. Tired of writing these gentlemen letters of expostulation in times past, I wrote to the public last year through your columns. The time having come round for the annual issue of the said appeals, these gentlemen, nothing daunted, return to the charge, and again solicit me to spend my money in converting from a "life of sin," not their fellow men, who lead the life from pleasure, but my fellow women, who lead it through destitution. If these gentlemen, who quaintly describe themselves as a "Female Mission to the Fallen," and who must surely understand the management of their own sex better than they can understand the management of mine, will undertake to begin at the right end instead of the wrong, to convert their fellow men, and clear the streets of all male prostitutes, I will undertake that they will have no more trouble with the women, who will thankfully see themselves relieved from the horrible temptation of taking to the streets in sheer despair at the difficulties thrown in the way of a woman earning "a living wage" elsewhere.

Faithfully yours,
CLARA EVELYN MORDAN.

Pioneer Club.

LONDON. 22, BRUTON STREET, W.

THIS column is reserved for the announcement of the lectures, debates, discussions, meetings of other societies, or extra lectures and meetings, which take place regularly, or may take place by arrangement at the Pioneer Club. For (possibly) the announcement of any change in the constitution or locality of the Club, or any other matter it may be deemed advisable to give notice of.

Tuesday afternoons are reserved for social gatherings of members and their friends.

On the first Tuesday of each month, a programme of music, singing and recitation is arranged, to which also guests may be invited.

SPRING SESSION, 1897.

Thursday Evening Lectures, Debates, Discussions, etc., 8.15 p.m.

TO BE OPENED BY PAPER OR OTHERWISE.

Jan. 28th.—"That individual measures should yield to party." Debate opened by Herbert Samuels, Esq., M.P. Opposer will be posted. Mrs. Brownlow in the chair.

Feb. 4th.—"That the result of marriage considered socially somewhat narrows a woman's career." Debate opened by Mrs. Leighton. Mrs. Meade to oppose. The Viscountess Harberton in the chair.

Feb. 11th.—"The Ethics of Imprisonment." Lecture by G. W. Foote, Esq. Capt. McNeile to open the discussion. Honnor Morten in the chair.

Feb. 18th.—"Democracy—To what does it lead?" Paper by Miss A. W. Waters, followed by discussion. Miss Eileen Munro in the chair.

Feb. 25th.—"That private property in land is incompatible with justice and the well-being of the community." Debate opened by Mrs. Holah. F. Evershed, Esq., to oppose. Mrs. Leighton in the chair.

March 4th.—"Poetry." Lecture by William Watson, Esq. Mrs. Franklin in the chair.

March 11th.—"That the Voluntary Schools be assisted by grant, and not from the rates, Government being pledged to increase their efficiency." Debate opened by Mrs. Russell Cooke. H. Gibbs, Esq., to oppose. Mrs. Morgan Dockrell in the chair.

March 18th.—"What constitutes sanity?" Paper by Miss Holden, followed by discussion. Miss Carr in the chair.

March 25th.—"Force as a disease and a remedy." Debate opened by Herbert Burrows, Esq. J. C. Kenworthy, Esq., to oppose. Miss March Philipps in the chair.

April 1st.—"Municipal and Co-operative Kitchens." Discussion opened by Mrs. Martindale. Mrs. Holroyd Chaplin in the chair.

April 8th.—"Shakespeare at home." Lecture with lantern slide illustrations by Mrs. Weed Ward.

Papers from Mrs. Hobson and Miss Henderson will be forthcoming should one or more openers fail.

The Club will be closed 25th, 26th, and 27th December.

For further particulars apply to the Secretary (Lady Hamilton), 22, Bruton Street, W.

Books.

BOOKS, WHICH TO READ IS A DUTY, BOOKS WELL WORTH READING, AND BOOKS FOR A RESTFUL HOUR, *pour passer le temps.*

SOME persons know not what *ennui* means, so full are their lives of good works, so well, and therefore happily employed each hour. To these time is too precious merely to be passed away; too full of work and joy to be weary; their golden moments are too few to enable them to accomplish one half of their desires.

To such what is desirable to be read comes as a duty to be done, and time will be found to read and to digest what is read.

A REIGN OF TERROR, a story of the year 1896, in England. Price 6d. (F. Longman and Sons, 38a, Tetcott Road, London, S.W., 1896.)

This story is a simple one, the characters in it few, the theatre of their action principally home life. It opens in a society of artists with the death of a young woman, a favourite model, respected and liked by all, and much regretted. She had committed suicide, overcome with grief because of the desertion of her husband, a vain, weak, silly fellow, but passionately believed in by his wife. This leads to the adoption of her now orphan child, a baby, by one of the artists, Phil Merrión, who puts aside the subscription being raised by the kind-hearted owners of the studios. "Phil" had just returned from his holidays, and walking into the midst of them as they were discussing how the little *protégée* of the studio was to be brought up, soon made his resolve. We are told:

"Everyone, even his bitterest artistic rival, loved Phil. He was one of those charming people who always want their own way and always get it."

Being asked how he would overcome the difficulty of arranging matters, he replies:

"Oh, Lady Joyce will help me; she says I haven't enough responsibilities."

Lady Joyce was Phil's sister; handsome, young, rich, she was a woman with ideas, which, though they somewhat frightened Phil's friends, were tolerated because "What is to be done when ethics are preached by a beautiful woman who dresses bewilderingly?"

So the little "Baby Bess" passes into the hands of these two friends, and upon this the development of the tale and of the lives of at least two persons rests.

The book cannot claim much in regard to *style*, nor does it so desire. Its interest, which is keen throughout, consists in the sweetness and beauty of the child, the devotion of its self-elected guardian, or father, the kindness and tender interest of Lady Joyce, the Love that arose, doing its beautiful work even as we may well imagine, after many years, and above all the pathetic, pitiful, awful tragedy which closes the existence of the lovely little human blossom, who in her early unfolding interests the reader so much. More of the tale I must not reveal, save that it holds us in breathless interest to the end, and leaves the reader tear-blinded, mad with grief, passion, and a rage of frenzy at the terrible facts which in real life have been, and are, repeated a hundred-fold; the same, though differing in details. The anguish of sorrow arising from the knowledge gained so effectively by such reading, is enhanced unbearably by a sense of the impotence of effort. But surely a condition of things which has been created and is upheld by the enthusiastic determination and persistence of numbers, might be overthrown by the still higher enthusiasm, still nobler persistence, and still greater numbers of those who can, if they will, doom it to death.

We may earnestly trust that all who read this thrilling tale will resolve once for all upon their own course, and so speed the reading of the book, that numbers will resolve and act. For we have no time to lose. "On the side of the oppressors there is power," and those who slay make no tarrying. Only the footsteps of the healer halt on the way, halt, and fear every shadow.

Courage, the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Love, if it be love, is mighty to overcome.

HUNTING.

Cassell's *Family Magazine* for December has a highly interesting article by Ernest Jessop on "The Horses of the Princess of Wales." From it we learn, with feelings which may be well understood, of the innumerable acts of kindness, generosity and affection shown by the Princess to these noble animals of hers, how she will not allow them to be killed, and how they pass after years of a service most gentle and enjoyable into an old age of ease and quiet, well cared for as in their more active days.

Four pet ponies are particularly noticed—"Bina, Merry Antics, Belle, and Beau." Mr. Ernest Jessop begins with the following assertion:

"The most beautiful thing to be observed on the Sandringham estate is the touching confidence displayed by all the dumb population,"

which the writer goes on to declare is mainly due to the teaching and example of the Princess. Here is a paragraph refreshing and gladdening to read:

"Take a stroll through the kennels; the dogs put their noses into your hand, and look for caresses with mild, appealing eyes. 'Well, you see, sir,' says their keeper, 'they are all such pets of the Princess.'"

Look in at the head-keeper's beautiful house, "a lovely white dove flutters on to your shoulders and coos in your ear." Again, "it is the Princess's pet dove." Going through the walks, you may come on a knot of persons with a baby squirrel, a young bird, or a lost kitten, which they have picked up in the woods and must try to rear because they know that it is the Princess's wish. "She would not like anything to be hurt or to die," they say. In such an atmosphere the horses have no whisperings, even in dreams, of the sufferings of their kin in a world outside. It is a rest and joy even to read of these horses, *all pets*, some *special* pets, living the life they ought to live, and trusting unreservedly in human love and care. They have their names, places and work—here is "Puffy," busy and smart, "Huffy," who had to be coaxed with apples to allow his portrait to be taken, "Huffy" now superannuated. He would follow his mistress about anywhere were he allowed. He has been sixteen years in the service of the Princess, and a prime favourite, but now he "feels the shocks from which no care can save," and so his shoes have been taken off, his work is over; he "lives a most luxurious life, constantly visited and fed by his mistress," made much of as one who has served well, and so earned a right to be honoured in his old age.

Then comes "the grand old hunter, Viva," who "still looks a picture, though getting old." She is spoken of as having travelled much, made "continental journeys," etc. In connection with this beautiful creature comes a paragraph, which knocks the rest out of joint. To read it in connection with a princess of so good a heart, so full of true love, tenderness and thoughtful consideration to her servants, both human and animal, as this article beautifully depicts, comes like a spear thrust. Mr. Jessop tells us:

"It is not generally known that the Princess is an intrepid rider to hounds. Her light weight and hands, coupled with the high class horses she rides, and her own fearless spirit, enable her to remain almost invariably in the first flight. In fact during a fast run, she, as a rule, leads the field, and many a fox's mask and brush decorate her private apartments, to testify to her prowess.

"Upon a notably bad day last winter, Prince George was the only one of a large party who faced with his mother the storm of snow and rain which prevailed in the time fixed for the meet."

This is the only dark bit in the picture of light given us, and though much *must* be allowed for old customs, legislation, etc., we feel that for princesses and women, amusement ought to mean something higher, and must mean in the process of evolution. It is sad and strange to think that many kind hearts, which, especially among women, are so easily and generously moved to sympathy for the animals belonging to them, should be so unaccountably indifferent to the agony of the poor hunted deer and fox, the coursed hare and the trembling, fluttering pigeon.

Waiting.

WHEN the flowers are dead and the land is bare,
When the wind blows fierce and chill,
It is hard to think that some other-where
Glad Summer is reigning still.

It is hard to think that the waiting days—
So long and so dreary now—
The mountain paths and the rugged ways
That we tread with an aching brow:

May bring us once, where we fain would stand,
To wonder, and own at last
That the only way to our Promised Land
Was the wilderness we passed.

Yet the feast and song, and the waving palm,
Are won by the battle strife;
And storms bring ever an after calm,
And Death is the Gate of Life.

O lift thine eyes! for the clouds break fast,
The haven is nigh at hand:
Yea! the very waves that we dread, at last
Will carry us safe to land!

C. E. TEMPLE.

An Unhealthy Habit.

In an age that is nothing if not scientific, and at a time when education, though still inadequate, reaches to the very lowest strata of society, it is amazing to observe the amount of ignorance, and the gross carelessness of the rudimentary laws which govern life and health, displayed by even persons of wide experience, and of at least some measure of culture. All persons it may be fairly supposed are desirous of good health, and even those foolish enough to disregard health are anxious to possess and preserve a good appearance. Yet, although when but slightly out of sorts or indisposed, people spend much time and money on medical advice, in seeking change of air and scene in order to get well, and in so doing often injure themselves permanently by abuse of drugs and cosmetics, they *will not* open their eyes to the fact, that more often than not, ill-health and muddy, or unhealthy pallid skins are the direct result of neglect of one or other, or all, of the simple, fundamental laws of hygiene, namely—to breathe the pure air, drink pure water, eat wholesome food, and exercise the physical functions in moderation. Abernethy used to say the two great killing powers in the world were Stuff and Fret. Stuff and fret are indisputably deadly foes to life, but they are by no means so fatal, because not so universal, as that third, deadlier foe, rebreathed or vitiated air. For it may safely be computed that, for every ten persons afflicted with gluttony, or prone to inordinate worry, there are at least a hundred neither gluttonous nor over-anxious, who habitually, and from choice, or inexcusable want of thought, exist for the most part night and day in a very dirty atmosphere. There are thousands of refined persons who would decline with a shudder to use their neighbour's soiled serviette or finger-bowl, to say nothing of bathing in previously used bath water, who yet have no hesitation in systematically imbibing a much more befouled and disgusting element; and who go on doing so day after day, without apparently the faintest suspicion that they are being slowly poisoned by carbonic acid gas and by the inhalation of organic matters. Everyone of average education knows, that as every part of the body pours something into the blood, so the body in turn takes something from the blood, and that an impoverished or corrupted blood supply entails an impoverished or a corrupted system. For the blood is the life. But because the ill-effects of breathing vitiated air are not generally so immediately perceptible, and cannot therefore be as readily traced to their source, as some other sins against health, people do not recognise the graver dangers following on this almost universal, unhealthy habit of breathing impure air. Of the seven kinds of waste given out by the lungs, heat, water, carbonic acid gas, ammonia, organic matter—that is actual waste matter of the body—mineral matter and urea, the three most important to be taken into consideration in the regulation of breathing are carbonic acid gas, organic matters, and watery vapour. Of these three, organic matter is the most inimical to life and health. It is a matter of history, how carbonic acid gas and organic matter killed 123 out of 146 persons cruelly thrust into the black hole of Calcutta, a room 18 ft. square, with one window 3 ft. square, and how the wretched survivors almost everyone succumbed to fever. But it is not known or even suspected by the majority of people how many lives and constitutions are sacrificed year by year in civilised, cultured England through the same insidious deadly poisons. Many a fashionable drawing-room and staircase, during some smart function, most of the places of public worship and amusement, buildings wherein men transact their business, offices, shops, and too many of the homes, not alone of the illiterate and ignorant, but of the educated middle and upper classes are hygienically, only modified black holes. The result is seen in the numbers of blanched, anæmic men and women, wrinkled and prematurely aged, many of them handicapped in the race of life, burdened by physical and consequently mental unfitness for its demands and duties. It is

not for the most part hard work, physical or mental, that breaks down constitutions and renders life but a miserable struggle for existence; it is, more often than not, the conditions and environment under and within which, the work is undertaken. Men, women and children go forth in the morning—from badly ventilated bedrooms—to their work, in shops, offices and schools, wherein on dark days gas is often burning, where every burner consumes as much oxygen as three persons, and where throughout the long hours of the day there is no direct and continuous communication with the outer air. So they have the very springs of their vitality poisoned for the want of the life-renewing oxygen which is shut off from them by a few panes of glass. The result of this is, that large numbers of persons born into the world healthy, who under natural conditions and with healthy environment would mature and decay naturally and healthily, that is with the measure of vitality from which spring the hope and buoyancy that ensures a keen enjoyment of life for life's sake, pass through their tale of years rendered physically and mentally unfit, through nervous exhaustion, irritability of temper, headache, languor, depression, neuralgia, dyspepsia, or any of the thousand and one ills which are engendered and nourished by a blood supply poisoned by the habitual breathing of air that has been breathed by and from their own and others' lungs. To those coming into life with any hereditary taint, or predisposition to disease, the consequences are not seldom premature death, or what is worse, a self-imposed life of miserable suffering.

The old-fashioned treatment for consumption was stuffy, airless rooms, closed carriages, hermetically sealed windows, a studied avoidance at all points of nature's life restorer, *fresh air*, and withal, a fatuous resignation to what was blasphemously ascribed to "the will of God." To-day we are wiser. We know that the prevention and cure of consumption is an abundant and fresh supply, night and day, of pure air; and that the fiercest ravages of the disease are produced by the deadly action of a vitiated atmosphere. But this knowledge is for the most part held theoretically; while practically the old system is still adhered to. The dangers are ignored or not realised, disgusting and uncleanly as the habit is. If they were realised, unventilated rooms would be shunned as would the plague; and any enjoyment intellectual or social would be considered too dearly bought at the peril of hours spent in rooms and buildings defiled by carbonic acid gas, impregnated with, and reeking of organic matter to the great detriment of health, and to the almost certain result of suffering in some form or other. During the recent severe epidemic of influenza it was proved over and over again, that persons living in houses kept thoroughly and continuously ventilated escaped the disease.

A very frequent and distressing complaint of our day is persistent insomnia, leading to such grave results as melancholia and insanity, while in its milder form it quite unfits its victims for the ordinary duties and avocations of life. Many such cases need but the simple remedy of properly ventilated bedrooms. Not the so-called well aired bedroom, the windows of which are opened for certain hours in the morning, to be closed again till the following day, but the room wherein direct and continuous communication with the outer air is provided for throughout the hours of the night. For the nervous and highly strung, for hard brain workers and infants, healthy refreshing sleep is all but impossible in an atmosphere charged with carbonic acid gas; and even a large room used by only one person is fouled long ere morning by the breath of the occupier. It is no merely selfish instinct, no undue fussiness that prompts us to guard and take care of our health; to treat our own flesh and blood rationally; it is an intelligent recognition of a law of nature of the relation subsisting between mental activity and bodily health, of the truth that the measure of our vitality is also the measure of

our usefulness and working power. The worst part of the ignorance and carelessness in the matter of ventilation is that the bad, the sinful habit of breathing re-breathed air renders those who practise it so delicate, so susceptible to the slightest change of temperature, to the draught that haunts their fears, that the better informed and cleaner portion of the community far too often gives way to them, and rather than be thought fussy or inconsiderate makes no protest against the vile atmospheric conditions resulting from the exclusion of fresh air from places within doors where people congregate. Go where we will, to make the ordinary call, to theatres, lectures, concerts, hotels, in trains, one finds the same conditions; people straining at the gnat of a draught and swallowing whole the camel of air made unclean and poisonous by organic matter and carbonic acid gas. We should, as a nation, be more scientific practically, and far more healthy if, instead of giving so much attention and time to the cure of disease, we were more devoted and attentive to its prevention. The one implies and entails much expenditure of time, money and intellect, the other, for the most part, but a strict individual and collective observance and application of the laws of nature affecting health, life and death; chief and foremost of which is that for us to be at our best physically and mentally, it is absolutely necessary that we should always, night and day, at work and at play, breathe pure, unvitiated air.

EMILY MORGAN DOCKERELL.

Burmese Women.

"NOWHERE under the sun has any nation accorded to its women such absolute freedom, such entire command of their lives and property, as have the Burmese. They stand in every way on an absolute equality with men, as far as law, as religion, and as custom are concerned. In the face of the law man and woman are alike. Girls share equally with boys in all inheritance, and they inherit absolutely. There are no trustees between a woman and her property, and when she marries she retains it. Her husband has no control over it at all, neither has he any legal control over her. From her childhood up she is free. Chivalry, which praised women as gods and treated them as slaves, never came to Burma. No Burma lover sings his mistress as something too good for this world, and then treats her as something infinitely inferior to himself. Their religion has never considered them as the source of all evil, has never warned man against them as snares to lead men to hell, and no Pope has ever called them the 'sole hope of the Church.' There has been no second-rate literature to give them false ideas of themselves, of man, and of the world. They have always been held for what they are, and they have had freedom to find their own place in a very real world, unfettered by conventions and rules. They have always had fair-play, both from men and from themselves, and they have been held the best judges of what will soil them. Of all women in the world none are more womanly than they, none possess in greater strength all the nameless attractions of a woman.

"All careers are open to women in Burma. Married or unmarried, from the age of sixteen or seventeen, almost every woman has some occupation besides her home duties. In the higher classes she will have property of her own to manage, in the lower classes she will have some trade. I cannot find that in Burma there have ever been certain occupations told off for women in which they may work, and others tabooed to them. As there is no caste for the men, so there is none for the women. They have been free to try their hands at anything they thought they could excel in, without any fear of public opinion.

"As might be expected, men and women in Burma, being left free to choose for themselves what each could do best, make their selections and leave what they are less competent to do to others. It is rather curious to find that sewing and embroidery are in Burma distinctively male occupations. The women are great shopkeepers.

"The retail trade of the country is in the hands of the women, and they nearly all trade on their own account. Just as the men farm their own land, the women own their businesses. They are not saleswomen for others, but traders on their own account, and, with the exception of the silk and cloth branches of the trade, it does not interfere with home life. The bazaar lasts but three hours, and the woman has ample time for her home duties when her daily visit to the bazaar is over. She is never kept away all day in shops and factories. Her home life is always the centre of her life; she could not neglect it for any other; it would seem to her a losing of the greater in the less. But the effects of this custom of nearly every woman having a little business of her own has a great influence on her

life. It broadens her views, it teaches her things she could not learn in the narrow circle of home duties; it gives her that tolerance and understanding which so forcibly strike everyone who knows her. It teaches her to know her own strength and weakness, and how to make the best of each.

"Another remarkable thing which Mr. Fielding mentions is that divorce is as free as the most advanced reformer could desire; but that not one marriage in a hundred is ever annulled. Mr. Fielding does not know of any case in which a divorce has taken place when the marriage has resulted in children."

(From an article in *Blackwood's Magazine* on "Women in Burma," by Mr. H. Fielding.)

Self-Denial.

"It is well with those who lie down to sleep young and willing."

How strangely the words fall amid the noise and the hurry the fever and the fretting of these "wide-awake" days. They seem a direct contradiction of the clarion voice of the time, that calls to a wider awakening to fuller activity and fiercer fighting against all darkness and wrong, the voice whose cry is ever "Progress!" and "Reform!"

"It is well with those who sleep." Not the old and weary, finding their rest in the sleep of the grave—though surely "it is well" with them also—but "with those who sleep young and willing." May we not wisely listen to the quiet words, for the message that lies hid in them is fraught with meaning deep and true, and pregnant with joy and peace for those who will hear aright. The sleep they speak of is only the preface of a true and full awakening.

Yes, an awakening! For what is our restlessness but a sign that we sleep? What are our anxious hurrying but the purposeless tossings of our feverish dreams. What is our careful—*self-careful* life here but somnambulism?

So the gentle words are after all but another reiteration of the often repeated, little heeded counsel of self-denial. A promise of Life for those who willingly, joyfully lie down to die to this little life of self. A call to sink from a restless feverish state of somnambulism into deep and actual slumber—and thus awaken.

And it is perhaps just because this counsel has always been given so simply, clearly and emphatically that it has been disregarded or misunderstood. It is difficult to accept the idea of absolute self-denial literally. To deny one's self to become *no self* at all. Yet it is literal and absolute acceptance that is required. "Deny thyself." There is little room for mistake, it is not suffering for others, not self-sacrifice, but entire and unconditional self-denial, self-death.

It entails the abnegation of desire; how can a dead self desire? And strangest of all the complete suppression of thought. "I think, therefore I am."

Nothing was ever truer. I would cease to be, I would "deny" myself, therefore I must cease to think.

Is not this actually to obey the command "deny thyself," to lie down and peacefully, faithfully lose oneself in sleep. And having closed our eyes upon the narrow and limited self-life, with its anxious desires and doubting thoughts, to open them upon the Light of Life Universal, God's Life.

This may seem extravagant and perhaps sentimental transcendentalism. Yet fully understood it would prove simplest and most practical common-sense. Truth that by its very obviousness evades our sight.

If we believe that from God proceeds all Light and Truth, all love and holiness, that from the Infinite naught but good *can* proceed, why should we fear to lose ourselves wholly in that good. Does it not seem that we live within ourselves, torn by our unfulfilled desires, and haunted by fearful thoughts, as one dwelling within a narrow and gloomy room, haunted by foul shapes and sounds of evil and

darkness. While the door opens outward into the wide free air and the blessed sunshine where "God lies."

Could we not open the door and pass out into the light? Not at first. The door opens outward, but we have barred it with our own illusions. We shall not dispel them all at once. One by one, slowly, gradually, after many a painful effort they will fall away.

But they are so seductively subtle. In every guise of deepest and most actual reality will they meet and seek to baffle us. Clothed in fairest garbs of love and charity, of helpful thought and tireless action for others. Speaking of benevolent deeds and endless schemes of improvement. Of self-deprivation and sacrifice and infinite heavens to be gained by our effort. And only shall we begin to know them for illusions when we have learned to see the good thing done, with supreme indifference for our share in its doing, ineffably contented with the knowledge that *it is done*.

And even when our idols are all broken, when having fled we know the shadows and illusion for what they are, when the door of our prison house of self is open, and we may pass out, free at last. Maybe it is not given to us to do more than lie down there in the sunshine, and wait in faithful, humble, acquiescence and submission for the sleep that can come only as the gift of Another. That other SELF we must lose our limited personal self to gain.

C. A. ECCLES.

An Incident and a Letter.

RESPECTFULLY ADDRESSED TO THE BISHOPS, PRIESTS, DEACONS AND LAITY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

(Reprinted from the "*Westminster Gazette*," November 6th, 1896.)

A FOX IN A CHURCHYARD.

AN unusual incident occurred yesterday afternoon in connection with a run of the East Devon foxhounds. After leading the hounds several miles a fox made straight for Exeter, and with the hunt in full cry went through the grounds of the local Deaf and Dumb Institution. Still being hard pressed Reynard sought sanctuary in St. Leonard's Churchyard, well within the boundary of the city. Here the fox was dead beat, and after it had been removed by the huntsman to unconsecrated ground, the hunt terminated in the customary manner.

To the Editor of the "*Westminster Gazette*."

SIR,—In your account of the run of the East Devon foxhounds on Thursday last, you relate how the "fox took refuge in St. Leonard's Churchyard." There was a time surely when the Church would have protected all hunted and tortured ones. But our religion has become but a name, in spite of the pomp and ceremony that adorns it. They would not actually kill in the churchyard, but the huntsman took the fox outside and gave up the hard-pressed animal to the dogs. Is this all that Sanctuary amounts to now?—a mere form?

Faithfully yours,

E. L. MASSINGBERD,

President of the Pioneer Club, 22, Bruton Street, W.

[Would that every reader of the incident had acted with the promptitude displayed by the writer of this letter.—ED. OF SHAFTS.]

FREEDOM FOR WOMEN.

THE day of Woman's Freedom will be brightened by a divinely human Self Respect, such as the earth hath never known—a Self Respect that will stoop through attraction and Love—not constraint or tyranny, to embrace the lowliest, and exalt itself, in the condescension. Then the prevailing standards will be found above the higher nature instead of below it; and the approaches to them for Woman, will be through freedom, tenderness and purity—and for man, through her leading.

E. F. FARNHAM.

What she said in Reply.

A DIALOGUE'S* REVELATION OF A LIFE THAT HALF THE WORLD WOTS NOT OF IN THIS YEAR OF GRACE ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETY-SIX.

"Going to the City I suppose?"—"No, I'm not—worse luck, wish I had somewhere to go to. I know I'm sick of this. Last night was about enough for me. Out in the wet I was, up and down, up and down, and all for nothing—except two drinks, and they ain't any good—don't pay the rent, you know. Six hours on my blessed feet I was, and soaked through and through at the finish. I stuck it till after one o'clock and then went home to bed."—"Supper?"—"Yes, a drink of water, and same again for breakfast. I tell you I hadn't a copper."—"Fact?"—"Yes, straight. I couldn't stop in the house, so I was out again this morning soon after six, just walking about. Of course, I didn't do any good for myself, you never do in the morning. You're very good: I should like a bit of cake or something.—Yes: I'm a widow. He died over two years ago, a bad job for me it was. He did keep a home over my head.—No, I haven't any trade, worse luck, only what we all do, and there's too many at it to do any good. I had a nice little home when he died; now, I've got just what I stand up in.—Yes, I had two children. They're both dead, and a good job too. I didn't think so at the time, but I do now. May I have another cake? Thanks, you're very kind. Stout, please.—Yes, it's quite true, I haven't had a bit since tea yesterday.—Friends? I wish I knew who they were. I haven't any relations of my own, and I never knew his people at all, somewhere in the North, he came from.—Landlady? Yes, she's all right so long as she gets her bit of money; but I owe her two weeks now, and if I don't pay up, it will very soon be a case of 'out you go.' Of course she knows what I do for a living, but so long as I do it on the quiet, and she gets her rent, that's all right. She's respectable, she is—yet—I never expected to come to this myself.—No, I can't take anyone to my room: there's just where it is. I should be a lot better off if I could. Besides the room money, there's plenty of gentlemen would go to your own private place when they won't go to a house. You see those places soon get known, and you can never tell who's about. I've lost many a good friend through not being able to take them home.—Why don't I go where I could? Ah! it's the rent you see. I should have to pay a lot more: but if I only had a pound or two to get started, I should be all right.—Make a difference to me? it just would.—No, not half a sovereign a week. Why, many a night I come out all for nothing, you see there's so many women about: as thick as bees I say. And just look at them. Half starved, cold and wretched. No wonder we drink, and that so many kill themselves. It's a horrid life; and some of the men—ugh! they're enough to make you sick. I suppose it's no use asking you. The West End is more your mark, though, mind you, there are some funny folks about Piccadilly, if all I hear is true. You're really going there?—Well—take care of yourself. Thanks, it will get me a bit of breakfast, at any rate.

C. E. TEMPLE.

[If this be a true picture of the ways and conditions of millions of our sisters (as it really is) who shall answer, when the great Spirit of the Ages, maketh inquisition for blood? Who shall stand the ghastly stare of eyes unnumbered, that gleam beneath the rivers' flow through all our land? or the deep and desolate despair of eyes that madden underneath the false and cruel glitter of society's waters? Are there women among the readers of SHAFTS who will think themselves defiled by reading what reveals their sisters' awful lives of dread. Are there those living on this earth who pick up their skirts and step aside feeling themselves put to shame if they chance to see or hear? Let them take their shame into their quiet chambers, where alone with their conscience

* The questions have been left out.—C. E. TEMPLE.

they may look into its false unmasked face and see how grisly a thing it is. And to save themselves from the awful remorse of those who make compromise with sin, who close eyes and ears lest they be defiled: let them arise at once ere another day dawn, and do their soul's best to put an end for evermore to the shameful social conditions which are at the root of all this misery and abomination. Destroy for evermore the need of such a life as is here set forth in language many will call vulgar in its realism. Vulgar! yes, horribly so, but which is the more vulgar, *their* shame, or ours?—who pamper and pet and toady to our men, husbands, sons, fathers, brothers, knowing that they are the keepers of such lives of desolation, the active cause of its existence. We lift no condemning hand, no accusing voice, ask no questions; we let our young sons follow in the paths in which their fathers' feet have trod, because we are too pure, too delicate to prevent them, too meek and submissive (oh, sweet womanly devotion!) to assert our right to keep from pollution the children to whom we have given life. Woe unto us hypocrites! Woe and shame unutterable.—Ed.]

A Rough-cast from Life.

THE village is, in itself, a cosmos. Here the intercourse is closer, and the confidence of necessity deeper than in the life of cities. The thoughts and feelings of villagers in matters within their range follow the natural trend more untrammelled by convention; but on the whole these are an accurate reflex of the greater world. It is easier, therefore, to point a moral or adorn a tale with modern instances from rural than from urban life.

The shadow of the hill seemed to hasten the approach of night over the little village of Hazleden, though the lights which gleamed for hours from the window of the little school showed that the day was not yet done for some of the villagers. Within the school-house were seated in solemn conclave the members of that august assembly known as the Parish Council, composed of the choicest spirits of those who might be called the nucleus of the village intelligence, while the rest might be likened to the slowly developing protoplasm.

At the head of the table sat the parson, the intellectual autocrat of the village, and along either side three councillors—three farmers ("well favoured kine," and three labourers "lean kine"), the latter the most industrious of their class and possessed of the greatest force of character. One of the farmers—but of him more anon.

The meeting had been a long and stormy one, for the question to be settled was contentious: "Should Muncey and James Jepps, junr. be recipients of the charity coals?" The history of the case is this: Muncey was an honest, sober, hardworking, respectable man, such as the pious donor of the "charity" had thought to benefit, but alas! Muncey had a daughter. And Muncey's daughter was what the world called astray from virtue's paths, the paths of rectitude, astray certainly from the paths of common-sense, and James Jepps had been her companion.

What a mighty power is art—art which can transfigure and clothe in the light which gleams from the altar of self-sacrifice the same fault in the heroine of a modern erotic novel which in Jane Muncey appears so different. But hush, the Rev. Cowdale is on his feet.

The Rev. Cowdale never loses his pulpit manner and diction.

"My dear brethren," he is saying, "we must put a bride upon vice or it will flourish hydra-headed in our midst. We must mark our disapproval of licence of this sort, or we shall be overrun with it, and our little community will become a by-word of disrepute among our neighbours. We must deal stringently with immorality. This is the only in-

strument to our hands, and poor and feeble as it is, we must use it. We must deprive Muncey of the coals according to precedent."

During this speech, which was received with acclamation, the rev. gentleman cast many furtive glances at a certain councillor among the farmers. This councillor needed no distinction to mark him as a man of different stamp—keener and more thoughtful, nobler, more of a "village Hampden." He seemed a man who could dare to oppose the priest, even in a question in his own domain. In a village where there is no squire the vicar is God's vicegerent upon earth, but when he combines squire and parson, as did the Rev. Cowdale, he becomes Very God of Very God. He was not a "little tyrant" of the fields to "be withstood," but a very Juggernaut. The other councillors knew this, and a hush of awe fell upon them as Barnard rose to speak.

"Judge not that ye be not judged," he began, and the two farmers understood.

Their thoughts went back to certain episodes that each knew were common property, as are almost all things which happen in rural life. They became more antagonistic to the speaker, and more highly moral than before.

"It is easy," the farmer went on, "to be very conscientious when the punishment of others' sins is in question, but we must not allow that to make us austere with this poor girl. Besides, Muncey is not the sinner. Do not punish him for this slur, for that would be to punish the father for the daughter's fault—if we are able to look into this poor creature's motives and say that it is a fault. Do not let us show ourselves Pharisees, nor attempt to show up our own virtue by strictness, injustice and—yes I will say it, brutality. Let him that is without sin amongst us cast the first stone."

In this little speech Farmer Barnard had disregarded the first rule of oratory, which is, to speak not what your audience ought, but what they want to hear. It was received at first in silence, but after a few minutes' confused talk in which the word morality (used of course in its narrowest sense), was very much to the fore, the question was put, and as may be foreseen, Muncey was condemned to a fireless hearth.

But James Jepps yet awaits his fate.

His name is read out, but no one, not even the clergyman rises to object, and the judgment which is tacitly made in thousands of cases is about to be confirmed in this, when Councillor Barnard springs to his feet, his eyes flashing with indignation. He does not pause to weigh his words.

"You will never let it be said," he cries, "that you will punish one and let the other go free. That you will visit on the weaker only, the weight of the error. You will never do this injustice. That you, sir, a Christian gentleman, will give the lie to all your teaching in this way is beyond belief. What did your Master in a like case, when the sin was infinitely worse. Shall we not say 'Go in peace and sin no more.' We are none of us better than we ought to be, and even if she, not her father, deserve punishment, were we all to get what we deserve, we should none of us 'escape whipping.' But at any rate let us be just. Let us deal fairly, and if we dishonour one, dishonour both."

The case is different they all said; and they carried their point. So Muncey sits beside his fireless hearth, for he is very poor, while James Jepps basks in the warmth of the charity fire, and suns himself in the glow of his own approved righteousness.

HANNAH MASON.

LECTURES in connection with the Franchise will be given at 11, Westbere Road, W. Hampstead, Office of SHAFTS, once or twice in each month. Day and date will be announced next issue.

The Women's Employment Defence League.

This Association held their annual meeting on Wednesday, December 2nd. Mrs. Charles Greenwood presided, and the report was read by Miss Whyte, hon. secretary. The Association was formed a few years back for the purpose of watching, and if necessary opposing legislative measures or Trades' Union regulations likely to affect injuriously the position of women in the labour market. The meeting was held at the Cadogan Club, which was opened by the Countess of Cadogan, after whom it was named. Here at their fortnightly meetings, women enjoy opportunities hitherto denied to the female portion of the wage-earners, of discussion on proposed restrictions, and careful consideration of their effects.

The League does not believe in the opinion of women being taken second-hand, but considers that the workers themselves should, even if they cannot vote, speak out when their powers to earn their bread is being interfered with. Twice the League has assisted working women to appear before the Home Secretary, and speak for themselves. Until the first of these deputations in 1895, no purely working women's deputation, with only working women speakers, had ever before visited the House of Commons. The result of this action was that, whereas Mr. Asquith told them then, that "the whole of factory legislation was based on treating women like children," later on Mr. Russell in receiving a similar deputation premised his remarks by saying, "the government did not wish to treat women as children, nor to limit their freedom by unnecessary restrictions."

The adoption of the report was proposed by Miss Jean Grieve, who has earned a grand reputation for helping on the movement whenever necessary, and the adoption was seconded by Miss Ada Heather-Bigg, who devotes much time and energy to the cause. The following resolution was put by a member in the audience, "That this League affirms the necessity of clubs for working women, and urges all present to join either the Cadogan, the Jersey or the Boucherett Clubs." This was seconded and carried unanimously.

Mrs. Charles Greenwood then told of her experiences in enquiring into the conditions of the pit brow girls, in Lancashire, this being one of the threatened industries. She said:

"I was lately present at a debate at the Pioneer Club when Mr. Sieveking, who is one of the gentlemen who kindly served on our Committee, spoke with convincing force and vigour against the legal and parliamentary restrictions which have been placed in the past on women's labour. In reply a lady, criticising his speech, said she thought he was not up to date in alluding to the pit brow women. Well, ladies, I wonder whether that lady knew that the pit brow women were wished to be interfered with as late as July in this year when the 'Miners' International Congress' advocated the prohibition of female labour at the pit brow?"

"Doubtless in some instances it was wished for by men who really desired the good of the women, but they always forget, I notice, one thing in these questions, that is, that we have tongues and can speak for ourselves; we can't vote, but we can speak; perhaps if we could vote, we should not do so much talking!"

"I am very much interested in these pit brow lassies, and when I was staying in Lancashire this autumn I went to see them coming out from their work, and a fine set of young women they were, I can assure you. Now I made enquiries about them, because I had heard talk against them; I was not afraid, I knew I should find out nothing but what was good, but I own I was surprised at one or two things; one was, that these girls, whom you will hear some people describe as so unsexed by their work, were so fond of working for people poorer than themselves that a lady told me, who had just been calling at house after house to get new members for her needlework guild, that forty were members, and that she had greatly offended one woman because she had not called there."

"Now I tell you this, not because I think every woman is unsexed and unwomanly because she is not able to use her needle, any more than I should think every man who is unable to wield a sword unmanly; we allow men to choose their occupations, and we take it quite meekly when they choose apparently unsuitable ones, such as when a young man has to stretch a stocking over our hands, although you might think it perhaps more suitable if women's stockings and under-garments were served to them in the shops by women. No, depend on it some of us are destined to become mothers, and others

to remain single, and have to work for our daily bread, and therefore let us fight to the bitter end any legislation likely to interfere with women's own choice of life.

"Another person I visited on that same day, said to my sister, 'I did not quite agree with what you said in your article about the pit girls as servants, you said they would probably not make good servants; now I know to the contrary, I have had several of them come to me, and although I am an invalid and easily upset, I have never had better servants in my house.'

"So you see this much-repeated assertion that women lose much of their womanliness at this occupation is entirely without foundation. When we hear all this talk about protection of women, I feel what they really want to be protected from is their protectors."

A concert followed which afforded hearty enjoyment for all, after which the audience dispersed.

TURKISH AND OTHER ATROCITIES.

DEAR MADAM,—All true humanitarians—and the large majority of the readers of SHAFTS, doubtless, are such—will have perused the leading article in the October number upon this momentous subject with very great satisfaction and with entire sympathy. Most especially will they have cordially applauded its concluding reflections upon the atrocities of Christendom—whether suffered by humans or by non-humans.

It cannot too often or too strongly be affirmed that *virtuous indignation* may quite possibly be directed against certain forms of wrong (in other lands and in other religions) and yet be entirely silent in respect to, and in face of, yet greater wrongs and crimes against humanity at home. The latest instance of this national and religious partiality—so especially characteristic of the average Englishman—is the outcry on public platforms in this country against the recent atrocities perpetrated (not so much by the Turkish people, but rather) by the Turkish Commander of the Faithful and his Pachas. The denunciation, without a shadow of doubt, is, *absolutely*, just—justified by the most certain evidence of horrible massacre and yet more horrible outrage—but what if the followers of the Kurán had a mind to *recriminate*? It would be quite unnecessary for them to go back, e.g., to the period of those frightful exhibitions of Christian military atrocity—the *Crusades*—or, in particular, to that supreme exhibition of the villainous barbarity of the soldiers of the Cross, the treatment of captured Jerusalem by the representatives of Christendom (1099); or even to the date (say) of the capture of Magdeburg by the Christian Imperialists, under Tilly, when every conceivable species of the most horrible villainy and outrage was perpetrated by Christians upon fellow-Christians, little more than two centuries ago; or to any of the innumerable intermediate horrors of all kinds, perpetrated by Christian princes and priests, under full sanction of Christian law and custom throughout all the long ages of Christian supremacy. No, it would be quite superfluous (for the Mahomedan recriminator) to ransack the remote past for retort upon his Christians accusers. He would find superabundant material in this very year "of grace," 1896. As you put it with equal force and justness, *the question* for Christendom to ponder is:—"What is *our* position with regard to our poor, our women, our men, our [helpless dependents, the so-called 'lower'] animals, our morals [and, I will add, our religion]?"

"First and foremost, so productive of awful results, we have in our streets millions of starving, homeless women, who sell their honour for bread. . . . We have men and women goaded to madness by poverty and its accompaniments, till its outcome, crime, sends them to prisons, in which seldom is it recognised that the inmate is a human [or feeling] being. We have suicides by hundreds annually; deaths not *self-inflicted*—the outcome of hunger, cold, and want; we have [the other] animals tortured day and night [by tens of thousands] with the most horrible ingenuity that the debased imagination can invent; we have rabbits coursed and torn to pieces by our working men; hares, deer and foxes hunted and torn to pieces, or preserved for a further chase by our gentlefolks, and *legalised* under the name of SPORT. . . . Well may we shrink and bow our heads in craven fear when called upon to go forth to the defence of our cruelly-slaughtered fellow-Christians."

I have ventured to reproduce thus much of your admirable article—chiefly to enforce the significance of the last sentence which I have quoted. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all"—rather, conscience makes cowards of those among us—how large a proportion!—who basely sanction openly, or acquiesce in, daily deeds of iniquity and atrocity, whether from selfish interest, from moral cowardice, or from callous indifference and insensibility.

I beg to subscribe myself,

Very faithfully yours,

CRITICUS.

Overstrained Virtues.

By PRISCILLA E. MOULDER.

It is a curious fact that, the virtues when carried to excess may do as much harm as vices pure and simple. Take cleanliness for instance. How often has the proverb "Cleanliness is next to godliness" been dinned into our ears as children? We used to believe the proverb, but now we continually come across people who pride themselves on their cleanliness; yet the general tone of their lives has been such that even the most charitably disposed individual could not say that cleanliness in their case had contact with godliness. Someone has said of the Dutch, "of their cleanliness they make a vice," and this saying is applicable also to English people. It does not prove that because a person has one striking virtue, that she or he has all the others. There are two women known to me, both members of the labouring class. The one regards cleanliness as the acme of all human virtues. Everything in her home is as clean as time and labour can make it, and she always keeps herself and children neat and tidy. This woman is very fond of changing her place of residence, and it has transpired that although so clean in her personal habits, she does not possess the virtue of honesty. Her conscience never troubles her when she gets into debt, with never the least intention of paying unless forced to do so. When one neighbourhood proves too hot for her, she simply removes and repeats the process.

The other woman is of quite a different stamp. She is what is known in Yorkshire as a "mucky" woman. Her house is never tidy, her furniture is always dusty, and she herself would look all the better for a systematic course of soap and water, yet a more thoroughly honest woman could not be found. She is known to all the tradespeople as a "safe" customer, while the other woman cannot be trusted with a shilling's worth of goods. I knew a young married woman whose husband was an overlooker in a factory, and she was one of those mistaken women who will persist in making a god of cleanliness. To do her justice, a more capable, thrifty, domesticated wife never existed. The majority of working men would have considered her a prize in the matrimonial market. No badly cooked meals for herself and her family to eat, no washing or baking about at night. Everything in the house was spotless, but there was not comfort, because she sacrificed comfort to cleanliness. When her husband returned from work it was, "Harry, wipe those dirty boots before you come in. Harry, don't sit down in that chair with those greasy trousers. Harry, keep your feet off that best fender," and so on. The neighbours used to say that she "worried" Harry's life out, and that he would take to drinking if she did not mind. But Harry was a steady well-conducted young fellow, and managed to steer clear of that evil. After a few years of married life Harry lost his wife, and he has since married again. His second wife is not less clean and tidy in her household duties, but she does not carry it to excess. Harry can now appreciate to the full the vast difference between extreme tidiness and comfortable disorder. Again, truthfulness is a desirable virtue but it also may become a fault. Some people pride themselves on speaking the truth in season and out of season, when it may do good and when it is perfectly certain to do untold harm. Most of us have come across those tiresome individuals who make it a boast that they always speak their mind, and they generally make a point—in their eyes a virtue—of never having the slightest consideration for other people's feelings. Politeness is worth cultivating, but one can have too much even of that. Polite remarks and suggestions are sometimes very wearisome, and the ceremoniously polite are apt to bore us; sometimes politeness may be carried to the verge of absurdity.

Readers of *Adam Bede* will remember that old Squire Donnithorne was noted for his politeness, yet he was never popular among his tenantry. George Eliot says of him, "He was always polite; but the farmers had found out

after long puzzling, that this polish was one of the signs of hardness." And when the squire was more than usually elaborate in his civility to that worthy lady, Mrs. Poyser, she whispered to her husband, "I'll lay my life he's brewin' some nasty turn against us. Old Harry doesna' wag his tail so for nothin'."

No one can deny that self-sacrifice is a grand virtue, but the fact is patent to every thinking person, that, self-sacrifice when persisted in beyond the limits of reason and common sense, is very apt to breed selfishness of the worst kind. It only needs a glance round our circle of acquaintances to call to mind how many boys have been ruined by their mothers, how many brothers by their sisters, and how many husbands by their wives. And in nearly every instance it was mistaken self-sacrifice that was to blame. Refinement, good taste are pleasing acquirements, but when we come across those who nurse their refined tastes up to a point which, in their estimation, at moral worth may be at any time eclipsed by a badly-fitting garment or a violation of grammar, spelling, or etiquette, it is time to open our eyes and time to protest. It is not the virtues themselves or culture that is to blame, but the people who overstrain and distort these. Sensible persons will do well to avoid those of their fellows who have the misfortune to be troubled with overstrained virtues. And any of us who may be tempted to make efforts towards perfection, may learn something from the remark made on a paragon after her decease, "She was a good woman, but I've known heaps o' wuss ones that was easier to live with."

Was it absolutely necessary that Harry should have done any of these things? When a house is kept beautifully clean it means hard work and much thought to the woman—such work and thought, such vexation and worry as a man never experiences. True, such ideas of perfect cleanliness can be, and often are, carried to excess, but is it not possible for a man to assist a woman by trying to keep clean what she makes clean? Why cannot a man wipe his muddy boots, or refrain from sitting on a chair with greasy clothes, or putting his feet on a "best" well polished fender? Is there nothing he can do to make himself comfortable without giving his wife extra work? Surely she must be considered as having need of comfort equally with himself. Usually she needs it more, having two burdens to bear—her housework and her bearing and tending of children. Giving them life and sustaining them in life for years, during which her care never ceases, gives her a claim upon the consideration of the world which she never gets. All the thought of the world is given to the husband, who really needs it less.

Dwelling for ever between the four walls of her home creates this hyper-scrupulousness of fussiness about the neatness of the home. Give her room; cease to narrow, crib and confine her in grooves. Give her time and opportunity to cultivate her mental powers, to do mental work, to use her head, if it be merely in the making of money that will be her own, that will make her independent—then no one will find cause to complain of her over-cleanliness and "worrying" in her home. She will forget all about it, the dust may lie for a day or two if need be, she will not notice it. When will we understand the mischief we are doing to womanhood and through her to her children, the human race, by our legislation in Church and State; our determined, silly efforts to groove a creature that must not be grooved, to narrow paths that ought to be the widest known, and to widen ever "with the process of the suns." Poor young woman! Well for her and many of her compeers that they pass the outer gates early, and returning, find, let us hope, some wider sphere where grooves are unknown.—Ed.

LECTURES. The Women's Educational and Industrial Union, 405, Oxford Street (entrance in Thomas Street), London, W. Mrs. Mary J. Hall-Williams (M.D., Boston) will deliver a Lecture at the above address on the First Wednesday of each month, at 4 p.m. Ladies seen by appointment, to secure which apply by letter to 40, Highbury Hill. Silver collection taken at each Lecture.

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WOMEN AS WIVES AND MOTHERS.

(Continued.)

THE lecturer proceeded to say that to lead a life of self-indulgence before marriage was to unfit a human being for the serious duties of married life, and to render them unworthy of the sacred privilege of reproducing the human race. To lead a life of self-indulgence after marriage was a blasphemy against the highest laws of existence, and of our responsibilities to the generations to follow us, to the race and to the world.

It meant to ourselves loss of health and mental power, and a weakening of the spiritual nature. It meant either encouragement in sin to the partner of our life, or absolute hindrance in what might, but for us, be steady progress. It meant, what a candid, earnest writer recently had called "Prostitution within the Marriage Bond." It meant to our children, very frequently, disease, deformity, and death. A wonderful help for those who found it hard to lead the only life consistent with holiness, was to abstain from flesh meat, alcohol, and tobacco; also to be moderate in eating and drinking, to breathe pure air, and to take sufficient daily exercise in the open air, not neglecting cleanliness. Another, and even more effective help in conjunction with these things was to teach the thoughts to dwell in higher planes, to teach the desires to aspire, to give no entertainment to temptation, and to realise what a pure, strong parent soul meant to the young souls in her care. The time approached when no human beings would venture to bring children into the world, to reproduce their kind, unless they were pure in soul and body. Then the mother would be the arbiter; with her, and with her alone, would lie the decision of maternity. We should have no more unwelcome children, no more overstrained, worn-out and suffering mothers. For it was of infinitely greater importance that the mother should be strong, and capable to instruct and train and develop her child's faculties mental and physical, to prepare the child to be a good citizen, to store up in its mind a fund of strength and wisdom, to guide its footsteps, than that she should give physical life to many children. Through the strength of the mother the child was nourished in body, and developed in intellect, through her, its character was formed, its desires and habits. The nobler the mother the nobler the child, and this extended even to the outward form. Women did not yet know their own power; when they did, they would so act in their lives as wives and mothers, so respect and hold sacred their own persons, that they would soon cease to require doctors; and all unnatural treatment would fall away into the limbo of the mistakes, often so dire, which human creatures have made and are making every day. Life meant endless progression, both in the material and spiritual. We should have nobler bodies as well as nobler souls. The future held immense possibilities for us all, and the least educated, the simplest woman among us held in her hands as mother, the power to make her child according to her highest thoughts; to so train it that it would go on from where she placed it, to great and greater heights.

We might take great courage for the future, if we would turn to look back into the past and see what progress we had made. Women must be independent financially, girls must be taught trades and professions, they must not have to look to marriage as a means of support. No one can be independent or act freely and truly so long as some one else buys her food, and clothes, and gives her house room. Domestic life must cease to be drudgery, must cease to be women's work only, must cease to absorb all a woman's time and energies, so keeping her from the world which needs her. At present she was dependent for everything upon man, and so, enslaved. Under good conditions motherhood would be a blessing, and healthy children would be born. It was our duty as women to produce these conditions.