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Edited by  
SUSAN LAWRENCE

# THE WOMAN WORKER:

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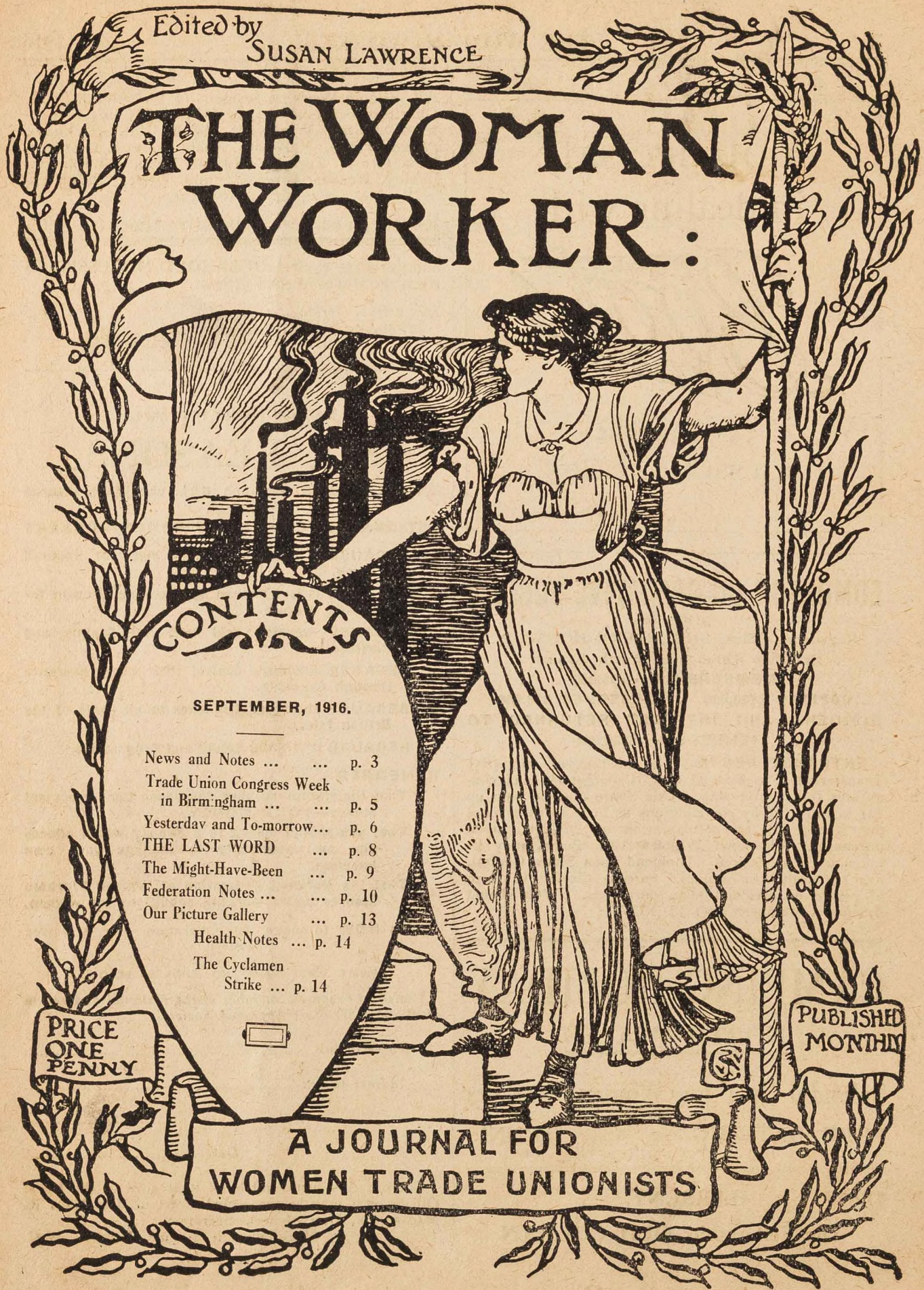
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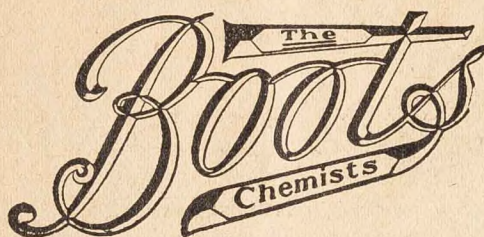
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A JOURNAL FOR  
WOMEN TRADE UNIONISTS



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Date .....

Cut out this form and hand it at once to the Local Officer or it may be forwarded direct to Miss MARY R. MACARTHUR, Hon. General Secretary, 27, Mecklenburgh Square, London, W.C.

**The Woman Worker**

*"We wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."*

No. 9 (New Series)

A PAPER FOR WOMEN TRADE UNIONISTS

Sept. 1916

**News and Notes**

**Parliament and Women.**

Women workers received a good deal of attention in the House of Commons the other day. Mr. Montagu, the new Minister of Munitions, in his account of the increase of output and of the consequent increase in the fighting power of our men, paid a fine tribute to the workers of this country—to their patriotism, endurance, and loyalty to their fellows. He reached what seemed to be the climax of his speech when he spoke of the work done by women. The women of this nation, he declared in effect, have done as much to bring about victory as the men in the trenches. Nothing (one might conclude) was above their deserts. Mr. Montagu himself would go so far as to give them the Vote!

Mr. Anderson's speech formed an interesting commentary on Mr. Montagu's. "Whatever may happen in regard to the civil rights of women after the war," said Mr. Anderson, drily, "I am as much concerned that their industrial rights should be safeguarded during the war." Neither the legislation that has been brought about under war conditions, nor the administration of it, is such as will win the best work of the workpeople. The bad profit-making system remains unchecked, and the workers have been too often the victims of their own generous emotions.

\* \* \*

**Long Hours and Deductions.**

Women, Mr. Anderson declared, were weakly organised in many cases, and consequently could get less attention for their claims. He instanced the permission given by the Government to certain factories to introduce the 12-hour shift, and the difficulty that was experienced in getting this changed. He mentioned, as an instance of the smaller oppression, a deduction of 5s. 1½d. from a woman worker's pay at Llanelly—4s. 6d. for an overall, and the rest for insurance, medical and hospital fund. As the rule is that the worker surrenders her overall on leaving the

firm's employ, 4s. 6d. seems an excessive rate of hire.

On the new Order for women on women's work, Mr. Anderson had equally plain words to say, and he emphasised the moral obligation of a Government that makes it impossible for a woman to leave her employment when she desires, to see that the wages and conditions to which she is bound are just and reasonable. When Mr. Anderson stated that Mr. Lloyd George's speech at the famous Pankhurst demonstration had not been justified by results, the late Minister of Munitions interrupted: "That is true of every speaker"—a poor defence for so able a statesman.

Dr. Addison, when the new Order came under discussion, maintained its good intention also, and its tolerable adequacy. He admitted, indeed, that it did not contain the findings of the Arbitration Tribunals, but he stated that in deference to representations made by Mr. Anderson and the N.F.W.W. (a circular had been drawn up to make it clear that the new Order should not prejudice the position of workers who already had better wages than it assigns). It is designed, Dr. Addison said, to provide £1 a week, and will do more to improve women's pay than any other document ever issued by any Department of State.

Mr. Lloyd George took the opportunity to have a tilt at the N.F.W.W. and its Hon. Secretary. He declared that he had kept his pledge, and complained most bitterly of Miss Macarthur's criticisms and protests. "The real grievance," said Mr. Lloyd George, with his usual picturesqueness, "is the absence of grievance." Women have never earned such pay, he declared, and complaints are not coming in from the workers, but *are manufactured*—by this Organisation, it seems!

These words have a familiar sound to our members. That the workers are "satisfied," and that the grievances are "manufactured" is exactly what every employer has always said.

Our General Secretary has certainly fluttered the Ministerial doves!

Women Everywhere

The uniform of the Glasgow women tramway-car drivers and conductors rivals that of the London women conductors in smartness. The skirt is of the Black Watch tartan and the coat of green cloth.

The only thing needed to make the Highland costume complete is the Glengarry. The drivers wear round caps and the conductors hats.

One hundred women drivers were engaged at the beginning of June, but since then the number has been increased every week. They are selected from the women who have served six months as conductors.

A training school has been established where all the arts of driving are taught. After a test the woman goes out with an experienced motor-man, and then has a month's trial under supervision.

\* \* \*

Women Dockers.

Women are already employed at the docks in carrying boxes of empty cartridges and shells from the quayside, unpacking and distributing them, and stacking the empty packing-cases in the warehouses.

The cases vary in size from 20 lb. to 40 lb. each, two women carrying the heavier cases together. The cleaning of ships by women is extending to many ports in Wales.

In Birmingham, women are even engaged on the sewage farms. Enveloped in waterproofs, overalls, and long boots, they work on the bacterial beds. A woman in the East-End of London is assistant "furnaceman."

Women have begun to enter the optical trade, in which there is a future for them. Girls are being taught lens-making by one firm. Competent women can earn £2 a week at this work.

Local authorities are employing women in water, light, and gas departments in almost every capacity.

It is reported from electric power stations that women do not show signs of panic when the machinery goes wrong, but they are slower in starting up again.—The Evening News.

\* \* \*

The Education We Want.

"Within the limits of inherent capacity, education can give us what we want. Viewed broadly, all that man is, apart from heredity, is due to education. It is, therefore, necessary that Labour should have an educational ideal.

That ideal must take into consideration the needs of the individual, the needs of the class, the needs of the nation, and the needs of the race.

"Since, under the existing state of society, the vast majority are wage-earners, education must give them a knowledge and understanding of the social and economic forces that mould and mar their lives. Only through a fuller knowledge and a clearer understanding of these can the workers attain to social and economic freedom. Further, since the experiences of past ages are embodied in history, science, art, and literature, education must equip the working class to share in its social heritage."—"What Labour Wants From Education," by J. M. MACTAVISH, Gen. Sec. of the Workers' Educational Association.

\* \* \*

An Old House.

The old house had wainscots, behind which the mice were always scampering and squeaking and rattling down the plaster and enacting family scenes and parlour theatricals. It had a cellar, where the cold slug clung to the walls and the misanthropic spider withdrew from the garish day; where the green mould loved to grow, and the long white potato shoots went feeling along the floor, if haply they might find daylight. It had great brick pillars, always in a cold sweat with holding up the burden they had been aching under day and night for a century and more.

There is a garret, very nearly such as one of us has described in one of his books. It has a flooring of laths, with ridges of mortar squeezed up between them, which if you tread on you will go to—the Lord have mercy on you! Where will you go to?—the same being crossed by narrow bridges of boards, on which you may put your feet, but with fear and trembling. Above you and around you are beams and joists, on some of which you may see, when the light is let in, the marks of the chipping of the broad-axe, showing the rude way in which the timber was shaped as it came, full of sap, from the neighbouring forest. It is a realm of darkness and thick dust and shroud-like cobwebs and the dead things they wrap in their grey folds.

There is the cradle which the old man you just remember was rocked in. There is his old chair, with both arms gone, symbol of the desolate time when he had nothing earthly left to lean upon. And there are old leather portmanteaus, like stranded porpoises, their mouths gaping in gaunt hunger for the food with which they used to be gorged to repletion; and the brown, shaky spinning wheel which was running maybe in the days when they were hanging the Salem witches.—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

STOP PRESS.

Congratulations to our members at Rowntrees', York. Girls of 16 and over receive a 2s. War Bonus; girls under 16, 1s. 6d. This will cost the firm £15,000 a year.

Trade Union Congress Week in Birmingham

During the week of the Trade Union Congress, the Women's Trade Union League has always made a practise of organising meetings for women. This year the Congress is to be held in Birmingham, and all workers in that great industrial district should take the chance to hear what the leading women of the Movement have to say. A meeting will be held in the Priory Rooms, Old Square, Birmingham, on Sept. 6th, at 8 p.m., Miss Gertrude Tuckwell, President of the Women's Trade Union League, in the Chair. The speakers will be all women this year—it is a year of "all women!"—and the opportunity to hear Miss Mary Macarthur, Miss Margaret Bondfield, Miss Susan Lawrence, L.C.C., and Miss Isabel Sloan should not be missed by any woman worker who understands, even dimly, what Trade Unionism means—nor, for that matter, by those who as yet know nothing about it! It is a chance

to learn what is being done by women, for women, during a period when all the problems of Labour are none the less pressing because by general consent the consideration of them is deferred until the war's end.

The N.F.W.W. has drafted three resolutions to be put to the Congress: a resolution in regard to the Government's failure to protect women workers other than those that come under L2; a resolution calling on the Government to provide a weekly State grant to mothers, who are workers, for at least two months before the birth of the child, and to continue the grant for at least three months after it; and a resolution respecting regradation of income tax, regulation of food prices, nationalisation of land, railways, canals, and mines, and the organisation of industry to secure to all workers employment at T.U. rates or maintenance till such work is found.

You are Wanted Now in the Fighting Ranks of Women Workers!

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Branch Stamp

I hereby apply for Membership of the National Federation of Women Workers under Class.....
Name in full.....
Postal Address .....
Name and Address of Employer.....
Occupation ..... Department or Shop.....
Weekly Wages.....State whether paid at time or piece rates or otherwise.....
Age NEXT Birthday.....years. Date of Birth (day).....(month).....(year).....
Are you a Spinster, a Married Woman, or a Widow?.....

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Are you a member of an Approved Society?..... If so, state name of Society.....
Where were you born? (County or Town).....(Parish)..... Are you a British subject?.....
I agree to be bound by the Rules of the Federation and declare the above answers to be true to the best of my knowledge and belief.
SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT.....DATE.....

## Yesterday and To-morrow.

Bank Holiday is ruled out of the calendar this year; fittingly enough, for most of us have little of the holiday mood, with the guns of Flanders in our ears. But it was a pleasant feast, and will be kept again in happier years. The glory will return to Hampstead Heath. The brakes will roll through the heat of some other, cheerfuller August, and the man with the cornet who sits on the near side of the box-seat, with one leg dangling over the wheel, his hat on the back of his head, and three other men (besides the driver) under his right elbow, will play something that is not "Keep the Home Fires Burning," nor any tune even dimly reminiscent of war and loss and waiting. The cornet player is put in the outermost seat, one surmises, that the gusts of his music may be carried away from the ears of his friends, or, perhaps, because he must keep awake to blow, even on the return journey, when an unoccupied man might fall into the road.

Hampstead Heath and Margate, and the rest, are the Londoner's holiday ground; good and zestful jaunts, in their way. But to the Northerner, and above all to the mill worker of Lancashire or Yorkshire, it is given to know the fuller splendours of the feast. The Londoner has more everyday amusements, perhaps: a procession, a Lord Mayor's Show. Even the very streets of London are a ceaseless entertainment. But in the grey cotton towns the look of hurrying toil and the whirr of machinery seem to cease never, until the glorious Monday when Ezra fra Owdham puts on his best suit and goes out to spend the good money that is in its pockets.

And—with an apologetic glance towards other local patriots—these Northern towns by the sea have surely a variety, an intensity of colour, and merriment, and unreckoning one-day jollity that your Margate or Clacton has not. This is not an advertisement, so nothing shall drag from us the name of the town, gilded and towered like a city of the Arabian Nights, where Ezra is met at the very railway by sandwich men, with boards and leaflets inviting him to dine on a cut off the joint and two vegetables for ninepence. Or he was so invited in those before-the-war days that seem so long ago. The streets, gay with striped awnings and display of bright wares, that run steeply up to the Promenade, are places that allure the money out of you at every step, and as there is no way of reaching the sea except by one of these streets, and every one of them is alike in danger and in delight, Ezra has usually lightened his pocket by the time he looks on the whirligig merriment of the sands. A wreath of shells by now adorns his bowler hat, and a cigar with a large red label is in his mouth. Mrs. Ezra has bought a basket or a bag; probably a basket and a bag. She has a round dozen of each at home, but some irresistible instinct drives her to buy another every holiday—a string bag or Japanese basket or a rush basket. The children, of course, have bought spades; either the wooden sort that cuts wettish sand in a scoop that wrinkles it on the spade and lets out all the delicious smell of sea and caves; or the so-called iron kind, of which half the blade is Prussian blue and half an unnaturally metallic grey. These have red handles and cut the sand with a straight delve. They are never recommended by mothers, who know that they delve just as straight into a bare foot and are most horrid to fall upon. The wooden kind have other but less obvious risks. A thoughtful child can put the handle in his mouth (it is the thoughtful and not the reckless children who meet with the real

misfortunes), and a jerk of the tramcar or the swoop of the scenic railway can drive that handle into the roof of the mouth with painful effect. But mothers still insist that "yon's a gradely nice spade, love"—that Northern term of endearment warms one's memory with much old kindness—and it is true that the iron do not compare with the wooden for wear. They buckle if you try to kill a crab with them, and come out of their red handles fairly soon.

Ezra's mother, in the bonnet in which she mourned Ezra's father twenty years ago (bonnets last, if you wear them only for Bank Holidays and funerals), clasps an umbrella in one hand and in the other a box covered with giny shells. It has a plush edge and a little mirror in the lid; a mirror that distorts the comely countenance of Ezra's mother into the likeness of an ancient walrus. The children carry, in addition to their spades, green or red buckets, inscribed in gilt lettering, "A Present from \_\_\_\_\_" (the place whose name is not given lest its pride should swell), or with the more individual note, "For a Good Child." Little boys generally refuse these, but little girls have more belief in their virtue, and "our Elizabeth Annie" or "our Sar'ellen" carries "For a Good Child" with entire faith in its justice.

These and other things are acquired in the uphill street. There probably reposes in Mrs. Ezra's bag a pint of shrimps to be eaten when the point is reached that both the Mrs. Ezras, senior and junior, call with a sigh of exhaustion "a bit of a sit-down." Ginger-breads—Ormskirk gingerbread than which there is nothing in the world more delectable, though these that Mrs. Ezra has bought have perhaps never seen the town of the tower and the steeple—cockles (Ezra has a weakness for them, buns, and the sweets they call either humbugs or paradise—an odd alternative—in the North, are also in one or other of Mrs. Ezra's baskets, and she has marked down the restaurant where the ninepenny dinner is languidly advertised by a young lady in a large hat, who plays a piano with masterly runs and trills. Mrs. Ezra has a soul for music, and none at this hour of the morning for dinner, so she decides without closer investigation to return at half-past twelve to the restaurant that employs the young lady in the hat.

But it is some hours yet to half-past twelve, and the sands at \_\_\_\_\_ are literally bestrewn with catchpenny shows. There are more chances of that feeling between sea-sickness and suffocation on \_\_\_\_\_ sands than in any other square mile of British territory. There are swing-boats, of course. A pretty ordinary swimming of the head results from hauling yourself skywards in one of these. There is a scenic railway. We all know the leaving-yourself-behind sensation of the last dip among its cardboard mountains. There are merry-go-rounds; not your common affair of a spotted horse with a rod through his withers, but horses that sway up and down, and follow a zigzag course, and do everything except stand on their hind legs. Mrs. Ezra waits steadily when our John and our Elizabeth Annie are on those horses. Even the steam-driven music in the middle that is grinding out "Sweet Rosie O'Grady" imperturbably does not drown her cries of warning and dismay.

But there are rarer joys yet. The Razzle-Dazzle is a thing that swiftly and strongly draws your heart out of your body and hangs it on your hat. You climb a wooden stairway to a great height. You sit in a small chair. You are strapped into it by a brass-buttoned person with a cold and calculating eye; his coldness is

## A WORD TO WOMEN

BY SIDNEY R. CAMPION

(The well-known Author and Journalist.)

### Authorship and Journalism.

The profession of authorship and journalism is unique in so far as it is open to men and women throughout the world. Whether you be rich or poor, old or young, man or woman, the advantages and opportunities are for each one. There is no distinction whatever. And to become a member of the most distinguished, honourable and profitable profession in the world requires no monetary capital. It is not necessary to pass difficult examinations or to belong to certain social circles. All that you require to become a successful author and journalist are plenty of good, original ideas and the ability to express those ideas correctly. Then you are on the highway to fame and fortune. Editors are thirsting for men and women with ideas. If you have originality they will accept your articles and short stories, your poems and books, your cinema and stage plays. If you are the right person handsome sums will be paid for work from your pen. Why? Because you will present something new every time. That is what I want you to do; that is what I am sure you can do after I have set you on the right path through the medium of my course of instruction.

### Course of Instruction.

There are thousands of men and women overflowing with brilliant ideas touching all subjects. It is a tragedy to think that these people are unable to turn their ideas into money, and at the same time to benefit the world. Yet it is a fact that "Many a gem of purest ray serene, the dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear." If people could only clothe their ideas in clear and simple language what a change would be effected in their lives! Fame and fortune (which everyone desires) would be theirs. The purpose of my course is to instruct such people how to make use of their gifts. I want to place everyone in the way of contributing to the Press and thus meet the ever-growing public demand for more and more literature; to write cinema and stage plays, novels, short stories, articles, poems, booklets, and thousands of other things connected with authorship and journalism. For the small weekly fee of one shilling I will give you the benefit of my experience as an author and journalist. I have been connected with some of the greatest newspapers in the world, and all my training and knowledge is at your disposal. If you are ambitious to succeed in life, to obtain wealth and popularity, to give to the world some of your ideas, then follow up this course. Apply yourself to the short course of simple studies, and there is no reason why you should not gain fame and fortune. Send a shilling postal order and a stamped addressed envelope for the first lesson.

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directed towards your present fear of being electrocuted; his calculation towards the chances of your screaming all the way over, or only half way. The chair is slung on a wire that is stretched over the artificial lake where the Magic Grotto is, and at a word from the brass-buttoned man you are shot across the lake as change is shot from the cashier's desk in certain shops.

The Razzle-Dazzle is rare, but the Big Drum is rarer. It is in shape just what its name implies, but inside it are seats at convenient intervals. You are strapped into a seat (a companion—preferably male, something to hold on to, at all events—is advised), and the drum is rolled slowly along, the people inside it being as slowly turned heels over head. This can safely be depended upon to put off any thought of the ninepenny dinner for at least another half-hour.

There is not space to speak of the Camera Obscura, or of shies and shooting galleries, or of the man who will cut out your portrait in silhouette; he makes too much of a turned-up nose or a bulldog chin to be considered successful, but he can always give a most faithful likeness of your hat. Nor is there time to say all that might be said of the donkeys with white saddle-covers that will trot you stolidly over the sands for six pence. Nearly all the saddles are side-saddles, as experience has shown the donkey owner that even those who ride astride (such as our John and his friends) like a pommel to hold on to. There is no space for anything more, indeed. The two Mrs. Ezras, who have not been in the Big Drum, are sitting on the sand with an umbrella up (the sun was hot in those gone-by summers!) and the bag of shrimps between them. Our John and our Elizabeth Annie, who have been in the Drum with their father, are staring rather fixedly at the horizon, which does not seem to them precisely horizontal, and Ezra has thrown away his cigar.

### EVERY WOMAN WORKER SHOULD READ "The Woman's Dreadnought"

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## The Woman Worker

SEPTEMBER, 1916.

Can be obtained from W. H. Smith and Son and most Newsagents.

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## The Last Word

THE first week of this month means a great deal to Labour generally, and a great deal to organised women in particular.

The Trade Union Congress will meet during that time in Birmingham; and there is much, indeed, for that Parliament of Labour to do—much for it to remember—much to prepare for.

If there is one thing which is certain, it is that organised labour, when the war is over, will have to confront a far better and a far more closely knit organisation of capital. The Prime Minister, in a recent speech, dropped a hint of the great part which he expected that organisations of employers would play in the reconstruction of trade after the war. His words were few, but they indicated no mere surmise, but a knowledge of an increased and powerful organisation of employers throughout the country. We may yet live to see the hopes of the Guild Socialists realised and reversed; and trade in the hands of trade guilds of employers, not of workmen.

### Cheap and Docile.

Capital wants from Labour the two things it has always wanted: it wants Labour to be docile, and it wants it to be cheap.

As far as war work is concerned, Labour has consented to an amount of "docility" unheard of in times of peace. It has consented to forego the weapon of the strike. It has abandoned all trade union practices tending to restrict output. It is true that these concessions only apply to "munition" work, but considering the enormous number of firms controlled and uncontrolled engaged on "munitions," it is probably not too much to say that most English trades have had a taste of the new docility.

Labour has done more. It has agreed to regulations expressly intended to lower wages. At the beginning of the war employers were concerned in getting some general rule passed which would prevent wages being sent up by competition for labour. To meet this, Section 7 of the Munitions Act was passed. That section can be applied to any firm engaged on war work that the Minister chooses; and where Section 7 has been applied, the worker must get a clearance card, or face six weeks' unemployment. But for this provision, there is very little doubt that the wages bill of this country would have been enormously increased.

### Doubtful Gains.

In return for all this Labour got certain things and certain promises. Arbitration is granted to those who cannot strike; the Minister of Munitions has power to deal with the wages of women who are not free to leave their work; and for the future there are promises that all abandoned trade union rules shall be restored as before the war.

These are all doubtful gains. In especial, the power of the Ministry to deal with the wages of women may become, if it has not already become, a mere engine for oppression.

But such as they are, they end with the war. When the war is over, Labour will be faced as has before been said, with a thoroughly-organised Capitalism—a capitalism which has had some taste of what State-regulated "docility" and artificial "cheapness" means, and which is likely enough to apply its brains and its efforts to maintain so desirable a condition.

A really strong, far-seeing, and well-organised union of employers could do for themselves much of what the new special legislation has done for them. It is easy enough, for instance, to imagine an arrangement by which employers should refuse to give employment to workers who had left without "reasonable cause"; in fact, such an informal agreement did exist between certain firms on war work before they obtained the protection of Section 7.

It is more than time, therefore, for Labour to prepare its policy. That policy must deal with the women; for a very great deal depends on them.

Women are still much too "cheap"; if they were "docile" enough to consent to that cheapness, they could ruin themselves, and not themselves alone.

### What We Ask.

But the organised women are alive to that danger, and are putting forward at Congress their suggestions and demands. The National Federation of Women Workers has down a long list of resolutions. First comes the wages question. There are two things here that are needful—first, that where a woman is doing the same work as a man, the principle of equal pay for equal work shall be rigidly maintained. We are still a long way from that, in spite of all the floods of promises and the oceans of talk that have been poured out. Secondly, that a living wage shall be paid in uncontrolled as well as controlled factories, and in agriculture.

The Federation also calls for the re-estab-

lishment of the Factory Acts, and a universal eight-hour day; for an adequate grant to mothers for two months before and three months after the birth of the child so as to keep her out of the labour market; for the regulation of food prices; and for a programme of national development.

## WOMEN WORKERS' MEETING

IN

The Priory Rooms, Old Square, Birmingham  
On Wednesday, Sept. 6th, 1916

At 8 p.m.,

Under the auspices of the WOMEN'S TRADE UNION LEAGUE

To Win and Maintain Better Working Conditions

Miss GERTRUDE TUCKWELL in the Chair

SPEAKERS:

Miss MARGARET G. BONDFIELD

Miss ISABEL SLOAN

Miss SUSAN LAWRENCE, L.C.C.

Miss MARY R. MACARTHUR

ALL WOMEN WORKERS INVITED

### The Might-Have-Been

"It isn't fair," Miss Lydia cries,  
"That I should sit at home and sew,  
When Mary Brown, who lives next door,  
Is going to the Raree Show!"

"I might have heard the lions roar,  
And fed with buns the shaggy bear;  
Felt seasick on the camel's back,  
And watched the mermaid comb her hair."

"I might have seen the man who makes  
His dinner upon swords and knives,  
The lady without arms and legs,  
The ape who in a carriage drives."

"My dearest Lydia," said mamma,  
"Do, pray, consider, if you please,  
The many other might-have-beens  
Of more importance, love, than these."

"You might have been an orphan poor,  
Or born among the Esquimaux;  
You might have been a negro child;  
You might have had no seam to sew."

"I'd like to be a negro child,"  
Said Lydia, "with no seam to sew."  
The ceiling might have fall'n at this  
On Lydia's head. It didn't, though.

M. C.

## Federation Notes by Some Members

Still through the dust of that dim prose appears  
The clash of fighters and the sheen of spears.

### New Branch at Whiteinch.

A new branch has been formed here for the numerous works employing women in the Whiteinch and Scotstoun districts. The start was made by the women workers employed by the North British Diesel Engine Co. in shell work, who made an enthusiastic start as Trade Unionists after several meetings held by Miss McGregor and Mrs. Lauder, and others in the neighbourhood are waking up rapidly to interest in the organisation. Look out for further news from this branch.

### Grantham.

Miss Harris's visit to the Eastern Counties has given new energy to the Federation in those parts. At Grantham her timely arrival prevented a strike which would have involved 200 women employed by Hornsby and Sons. A successful meeting was held, and the difficulties of the workers are being investigated. This branch has about 120 members engaged in the making of brass percussion primers for 4in. and 5in. Howitzers and shell noses. Messrs. Harrison's, Watergate, is another firm that is being organised. The workers there make hampers for Red Cross vans, and are also employed in making and upholstering chairs. An increase of wages has been asked for.

### Whittington Moor.

A new branch has been formed here as a result of Mrs. Lowin's recent campaign. The girls employed by W. A. Malson are on fuse work. Thirty-two girls joined the Union in the week following Mrs. Lewin's visit, and only a few now remain outside. An improved time-rate is asked for, and, as some of the work is very dirty, the girls think the firm should provide them with overalls.

### Netherfield.

The questions in dispute were settled by Miss Sloan, whose help has been in request literally from one end of the kingdom to the other. Scotland, Lancaster, Redditch, Gloucester, York, give the points of a pretty wide area, and Federation members cannot feel they are neglected by Head Office when all this ground is covered in a month. The rather difficult situation at Netherfield has ended more satisfactorily than might have been expected. Time workers in the sorting department get 1s. a week increase. Three-side doublers also get that advance, and when the old frames are ready, three sides of the old frames are to be paid at the same rate as four sides of the new frames. The reelers' price list is to remain as at present as regards the better paid operations, but two hank is to be advanced to 8d. for eight hanks—an increase of 14 per cent. The winders are to give the new list a month's trial and then vote as to whether they consider it an improvement or not.

### Manchester.

Mrs. Pearson has been very busy lately, and Northern energy has found another outlet in the branch just formed at Dukinfield. It was only in last month's WOMAN WORKER that we noted the formation of a branch at Blackpool, and the older branches are as active as ever, or more so. "Each week," writes Mrs. Pearson, "makes the Federation stronger, both in membership and acknowledgment from firms who are desirous of fixing things up with me."

Several of our members at Messrs. Brooks and Doxey had been suspended, and there was no sign of their

reinstatement, although the firm continued to take on new girls. After Mrs. Pearson's interview with the manager, a promise was given that the girls should be taken back the following week.

Three hundred women who were suspended for an indefinite period by Messrs. Armstrong-Whitworth, were the next subject for Mrs. Pearson's enterprise, and the dismay of the Clerk of the Munitions Court may be imagined when she claimed a week's notice or wages in lieu thereof for all the three hundred! Mrs. Pearson and Mr. Binns interviewed the firm, but meanwhile word had been sent to many of the suspended women telling them to return to work. Over 200 are now back at work, and no others have been suspended—a triumph for women's organisation!

The dismissal, without notice, of a member at Messrs. Galloway's, Knott Mill, was another case calling for intervention. The girl refused to do work on which another girl had lately broken her wrist, and the fact that when she did so refuse a man was put on to it, seems to show the heavy nature of the job. The firm received Mrs. Pearson courteously, and showed a readiness to deal fairly by the girl, ordering that she should be taken back and given her chance.

### Neath.

Another new branch! This is an offshoot of Miss Howarth's stay at Bristol, and a most promising beginning has been made. All our members are in the Tin Box Trade, in which the rate for solderers is 3½d. an hour, under the Trade Board Act, though efforts are being made, in view of the increased cost of living, to get it raised to 5d.

### Kilbirnie.

Miss Quin notes an increase in membership. This is owing to the restarting of some of the net works. "I am pleased to report," writes Miss Quin, "that the girls here in Knox's Thread Mills have received another increase of wages, also Knox's Net Works and Watt's Net Works. Knox and Co. have given an increase of 1s. 6d. per week for women and girls. Mr. Watt's workers (net workers) asked for a rise, and received the extra fourpence, for which they came out on strike before. This is the only net works in Kilbirnie which is strong in membership." The moral in Miss Quin's last sentence is plain.

### Falkirk.

Negotiations are still proceeding with the National Light Castings Ironfounders' Federation, which demands proof of this Federation's right to speak for the workers. Proof is forthcoming, and will probably have been offered to the satisfaction (more or less!) of the Ironfounders by the time this is in print.

### Sheffield.

Practically all the girls employed by the Sheffield Silver Plate and Cutlery Co., Ltd., are members. These girls are on munition work, some of them working on 18 lb. shells. Others cut brass discs nine inches in diameter. Some women are labouring for men workers—filing plugs and discs, stamping them, and putting them in bags. There should be a chance here of useful work for the general cause of Labour.

### Birmingham.

Although we are moving slowly in Birmingham, we have decided prospects of a great awakening amongst the women and girl workers, especially the munition

workers. Enquiries are coming along, and murmurings of discontent are heard, and when once they fully realise the help we can give, the results will be great. I hope we shall be able to tell you in our next report that a large number are fully awake. We are hoping for great results after the Trades Union Congress which is being held in the Birmingham Town Hall the first week in September. If Congress benefits the organisations, we hope to get at least a share of it for the N.F.W.W.—CECILIA M. MITCHELL.

### New Branch at Coatbridge, Lanarkshire.

A new branch was formed here in July under interesting circumstances. Forty women and girls employed by the Eglinton Silica Brick Co., were summoned to appear before a Central Munitions Tribunal on a charge of striking. They were unorganised, but (Labour) Councillor Coyle very kindly had taken up their case, and appeared in Court to conduct it for them. Miss Young, of our Scotch office, was an assessor. The case occupied about two hours, and in the end the girls were convicted of striking, but were let off with an admonition. It was pointed out to the girls during the case that if they had been organised they would not have got themselves into this difficulty, and at the end of the case Miss Young held a short meeting of the girls, and they all agreed to join the Federation. Other meetings followed in Coatbridge, and the Branch is now going successfully, and is being increased by members from other works in the neighbourhood.

### Leith.

Leith Branch, which has had many ups and downs since its start in the strike of 1911, fell into very low water early this year, but has made an excellent recovery. The revival was started by some of the enthusiastic old members inside the Roperie, and an appeal was sent for an organiser. As both of the Scottish officials were fully booked up, Mrs. Beaton (our Miss Kate McLean) came as ever to the help of the Federation, and devoted a fortnight to the Roperie with excellent results, and the branch is going steadily ahead, with a membership increasing weekly. Miss McLean's visit to Leith, where she was so well known in times of trouble, was a source of great pleasure to old and new members, and there are many pleas that it may be repeated.

### Ilford.

Our Dagenham Dock friends are coming to the front. We have members from White's, the Sterling, and other factories there, but it is their wish to transfer and establish a branch of their own. With so many workers it should eventually be a very strong Trade Union branch. We want our women to join, not because they are asked, but because they realise it is a duty they owe to their fellow-workers. As organised workers, you are raised to a higher plane: it promotes a spirit of friendliness and goodwill amongst you; an injury to one is the concern of all. We stand shoulder to shoulder with our men, and it gives us power to insist on better conditions for one another, so be Trades Unionists on principle. What a difference if every working man and woman of this country were Trades Unionists! Oh, may the day soon come when they will realise its in their own power to do away with poverty and low wages, and filthy slums.

ADA WARTERS.

### Leeds.

A beginning has been made in organising the workers at Whitley Partner's, a controlled firm. All our present members are in the Brass Shop.

### Acton.

The Award in the case of the Napier Motor and Aeroplane Works is of more than common interest. One of the questions it has settled is whether taping is doping. The girls engaged in taping make the seams secure by fixing the strips of material along the seams of the aeroplane wings with the poisonous dope. The firm considered this was not doping, as so little of the substance was used. The Award, however, says that the term "dope-hand" means a girl employed on any operation, including taping, which involves the use of the poison.

The other main points of the Award are that learners get 4d. an hour (the period of probation not to exceed eight weeks), other workers 5d., and dope-hands 3d. extra. No girl under 18 shall be employed as a dope-hand.

### Leeds.—Mrs. Arnott's Message.

A few months back I read an article in praise of the Pioneer, the writer quoting the beautiful, inspiring lines of Whitman's, "Pioneers! Oh, Pioneers!" My experience of organising for the Federation has caused me to appreciate much more deeply than ever before the stupendous work of the pioneers of Trade Unionism.

Unfortunately, women workers were for the most part left outside of their influence. To-day there are still many obstacles and prejudices to overcome, but events are teaching women the need of organisation. The changes brought about by the war, the cry for equal pay for equal work, the good wages which were given to induce middle-class women to come out to work, the fight of the men's unions that women should not work for less than £1 per week, has stirred women, and it will be hard for employers ever again to get women to "stitch, stitch, stitch," and do all the other work of the "sweated trades" for a few shillings a week. And they are learning that Trade Unionism is the best means of fighting for better conditions.

Leeds, although not so responsive as some cities and towns, has been affected too. We have a good branch in Leeds, with two places fully organised, a third partially organised, and members in the big shops of Greenwood and Batley's, Barns Bow, Mann's, and other places. Negotiations are in progress by which we hope to get an increase in wages in two shops. We meet monthly—oftener if necessary—on the third Tuesday in the month, in the A.S.E. Institute, Woodhouse Lane.

Like other places, we have to record the good help of the "Allied Trades," particularly the A.S.E., with the especial help of Alderman Taylor and Mr. H. Briggs, the District Secretary.

### Otley.

In Otley, where the printing machines used to come from, but are now superseded by munitions, we have got a branch at Dawson's, and members at Payne's and Mann's, through the good help of Mr. Burnell, Secretary of the District Council of the A.S.E., and Miss Jackson.

A very successful dance was held in the Recreation Hall, on July 22nd, which was well backed up by the members of the A.S.E., Mr. Myers being M.C.

There is no doubt that this dance brought us to the notice of a good many of the girls, and we hope to get them as members soon. Also, we intend to have a whist drive in the early winter.

JEANIE ARNOTT.

**Miss Filing writes from Grantham.**

I must say that we enjoyed Miss Harris's visit very much. We were all pleased to see her again. We had several satisfactory meetings, one of them being held on July 9th, when we had our friends, Mr. Osborn and Mr. Crooks with us, about 50 of our members being present. We also held a meeting on Wednesday, July 11th, when most of our London Road members attended. It was arranged at this meeting that we should in future take all contributions at our club room once a fortnight, starting from July 22nd, from 5.30 to 6.30. Miss Ross has kindly consented to take Miss Hook's place as collector. Mrs. Spink has also resigned, and we hope to ask one of our friends to take her place at our next club meeting. We hope that at some future date Miss Bondfield will also pay us a visit at Grantham.

**Sheffield.**

Our garden party on August 5th was a great success. Some of our Wheedon Street members, wishing to give pleasure to others, took a collection for wounded soldiers. The idea caught on, and other factories followed suit, and we were able to invite 50 of them, and give them "smokes" and a good sit down tea. Those who saw them eating our famous Yorkshire pork pies, salmon, potted meat, and sweets began to think they were very well on their way to recovery.

We had Councillor Short to preside, and a fine speech from Mrs. Edna Penny, who urged the girls to stick to their Trade Union and demand better conditions and wages than the women of Sheffield have been content with in the past. The Popla Pierrot Troupe gave two performances, which were highly appreciated, and the pierrots seemed to enjoy the chaff of the girls as much as the girls enjoyed the songs of the Pierrots. The Houp La tables and the boat were great attractions, and each one seemed to have a good time. We owe our thanks to Mrs. H. J. Wilson, who helped to give us such a good time.

Our members at Wheedon Street are anxiously waiting for a settlement of their wages claim. The bonus system which they are trying at present is not satisfactory, and they are determined to work through their Union to get decent piece rates.

The "tingle" girls at Messrs. Cuthbert Cooper and Sons have just got a rise in their piece rates, so that now every piece worker in this factory has a better rate than when she joined the Union.

I interviewed the management of the Silver Plate Company, Priestley Street, on behalf of the munition girls there, and was successful in getting the whole of our demands granted. This will mean a big difference in the wages of some of our members there, and should be a splendid proof to them of the value of the Federation to working women.

We have now opened a branch meeting room in Rotherham, at the Hallamshire Cafe, Westgate, for our members at the National Projectile Factory. The meeting is 7.30—9 p.m. every Saturday. We hope that Rotherham members will see to it that all non-members are brought to this room to join with their fellow workers in the organisation which is out to improve their wages and conditions.

GERTRUDE WILKINSON.

**Newcastle.**

The high level of enthusiasm, characteristic of the women workers on the Tyne, is still being maintained, and new members are being enrolled every day.

The past month, like all its predecessors, has been full of activity on the part of the officials and members of the branch.

The dinner-time meetings are proving a very successful method of propaganda, both in stimulating the members of the Federation and persuading non-members to join up. I pass this hint on to other branches.

We were very fortunate in securing, for a dinner-time meeting, Councillor Egerton P. Wake, of Barrow-in-Furness. His vigorous and telling speech to about 600 women, is still being talked about, and it was a great pleasure to the organisers of the meeting to observe the rapt attention and keen appreciation of the points he made. The impression made was very deep indeed.

Mrs. Fawcett has also been, as usual, working hard, too hard, many of us think. Her tireless energy is something good to see, but, unless she conserves some of it, it may run out, but her holidays are approaching, and one hopes she will return to Newcastle reinvigorated to carry on the work she has set her hand to.

The Social, held on July 29th, was a success. The weather was rather warm for dancing, but a good number attended, and all seemed to have a very enjoyable time.

On Saturday, August 26th, we are having a Garden Party at Jesmond Dene, a full report of which I hope to give next month.

JOHN DRYDEN.

\* \* \*

**Best Wishes for Miss Harris.**

Our readers will be interested to hear that Miss Reina Harris, organiser of the North-Western district, and also of Grantham, Stamford and Loughborough, was married on August 20th. Miss Harris has done much valuable work for the cause of Trade Unionism, and has made numerous friends, who will be delighted to know that her marriage is not to take her away from us. Miss Harris, whom we shall henceforth have to learn to know as Mrs. George Davies, returns to her work on September 3rd. We feel sure that all our readers will join with us in sincere good wishes.

\* \* \*

463 Ley Street, Ilford.  
August 12th, 1916.

Dear Editor,

I remember reading Miss Sloan had the address of some of our American friends who wished for correspondence. I would be pleased to correspond with someone in America who is interested in our work and also the social problems of the day.—Yours sincerely,

ADA WARTERS.

P.S.—If you have space, will you kindly announce we are hoping eventually to hold monthly committee meetings for our Dagenham and Dagenham Dock branches at the Liberal Hall, Ripple Road, Barking.

**Our Picture Gallery**

Miss REINA HARRIS  
(Mrs. George Davies)



Some Dagenham Dock Members



Mrs. WARTERS, Dagenham Secretary

## Health Notes

AMONG all the advice concerning their health which is showered so freely on munition workers nowadays, it is strange to find so little bearing on *clothes*. And yet our comfort, and to a certain extent our health, is dependent on a sensible choice of garments. This may not be as easy as it sounds, for a natural desire for daintiness pulls us one way while common sense and economy pull another!

\* \* \*

**Warmth** is the first necessity, save for a few weeks (one might say days) in the summer. Several women employed as forewomen or supervisors have complained to the writer lately that they cannot keep their rooms properly ventilated, the girls come so thinly dressed they "shiver at a breath of fresh air." Now, the hotter the room and the closer the air, the more quickly will the worker get tired and the more likely is she to take cold going home. So she pays heavily in the long run for her flimsy underwear or blouse showing half the chest!

\* \* \*

### Dangers of Coddling.

But the girl who goes to the other extreme, who shrouds herself in woollen mufflers or fur necklets in and out of doors, is simply "asking for trouble" in the form of colds, sore throats,

and hoarseness. The fashion of wearing low collars and a neck open in front is—in moderation—as healthy as it is pretty. If nipping weather demands a neck wrap, it should be *loose* and light. For those who must work in over-heated surroundings, it is still desirable to wear a thin woven woollen garment next the skin. This soaks up the perspiration and prevents "chilling" afterwards. A warm outer wrap (such as a knitted shawl or coat) should be kept handy to put on *directly* the worker reaches the cool outer air. Only doctors can guess what this would mean in saving kidney trouble, coughs, rheumatism, and pneumonia.

\* \* \*

### Garters.

These harmless-looking commonplace objects do so much harm that they ought to be forbidden by law—at least for those who do much standing. Tightness round the leg prevents the return of the impure blood and leads to the aching swollen feet and calves which make life a misery to so many. Later on varicose veins appear, and, if neglected, ulcers and sores, which may make the woman an invalid for good and all. By using suspenders attached to the corsets or a belt, varicose veins and their unpleasant accompaniments would largely be prevented.

## The Cyclamen Strike

H. M. ALLEN.

It was the most polite description of strike. It happened at an Italian gentleman's country house that went by the name of Scaccia Pensieri, which means "Chase Away Thoughts." It is a place where such disagreeable burdens are chased away. The Signore, or Padrone (the "Big Father"), as the peasants called him, had a head woodman who lived in a gay little house at the end of the drive. His name was Orestes, and besides being the woodman, he was the main prop of the house. For example, you should have seen him at night when the Signore with his daughters, the two Signorine, chose to stroll in the drive enjoying the moonlit cool after the heat of the Italian day: Orestes would march behind erect, and slim, and beautiful as a stag, carrying a big

stick and leading a mastiff to keep off any possible brigands there might be.

The Signore lives high up in the blue Apennines which stride away to a cluster of ice-peaks cutting the sky on the far-away edge of the world. Upon each tiny hill is a red and yellow farm watched over by its sentinel cypresses and surrounded by its fields of vine and Indian corn.

The people are beautiful. They seem to take on the character of their surroundings; there is in them something of the free, strong growth of their own pines, of the austerity of their fields, of the delicate, keen outline of their hills. Their movements are swift and graceful as the motion of woodland creatures; and they are as shy as hares.

All the houses of that country are gay, but the house where Orestes lived with his wife, Annunziata, was among the gayest of all. It is painted all over with broad pink and white bands over which the sunlight quivers, shining through the acacias behind it. There is a vine over the door.

They had several children, and the boys were like nothing so much as fluffy young rabbits scampering about, and the girls at six or eight had all the dignity of matrons. You would see them outside their house, the girls straw-plaiting on a primitive wooden frame, the boys in and out of the pine-woods collecting firewood, forever in a leisurely industry. To see Annunziata (the little Annunziata, the big one's eldest daughter), advancing down the drive between the tall cypresses with a burnished copper jar of water balanced on her head, and with the smooth, swaying step that kept it in place, her hands often knitting at the same time, was one of the joys of life. There was such a pomp of industry about it; when you saw her, you could have no doubt of the dignity of labour.

Annunziata symbolised it and was aware of it in every inch of her. At eight years, she bore the maternity of all the ages in her gait, but Morino and Gigi her brothers, and Assunta and Proserpina, her little sisters, were funny, round, small creatures with bare legs the colour of rabbits' fur, and eyes that were deep, brown pools of wonder. They would field for the Signore at tennis with an earnest solemnity that left no room for delight in the game; they rolled over one another in the path of a returning ball, or swiftly darted across the court in the line of a serve with a diligence that shut "sport" out in another world. The children, too, were flower-gatherers, gatherers of wild strawberries, blackberry-gatherers, gatherers of apples for the Signore's family. They also picked cyclamens, and the strike concerned the cyclamens.

These tiny, rose-coloured flowers were blooming under the pines in such numbers that it looked as if there were a continual sunset all day on the floor of the woods. "If you picked millions," said the Signore, "you would see no difference"; so he and his daughters were forever sending little cardboard boxes of them to friends in the town. Day after day Annunziata's children were ordered to gather them, and then just as it was time for Orestes to start for the post, the cyclamens were sought for from their special bowl in the larder and packed with a few twigs of fir.

One day as usual, the Padrone and his daughters went in procession to fetch the cyclamens from the cool larder where they should have been, and found nothing in the bowl but one flower, lank and dreary from the day before.

"Where are the cyclamens?" cried the Signore, in tones of indignant amazement.

"Where are the cyclamens?" echoed the Signorine, in more modest tones, as became them; and consternation was written on their faces.

Orestes was sent for, and he came singing a ballad which announced that if he had loved God as much as he loved his betrothed he would have left earth for heaven long ago.

Although the matter of the song had less sarcastic significance for Orestes than for his hearers, it was not usual for him to come singing, and it boded ill.

"Where are the cyclamens?" said the Signore.

Orestes smiled a slow, sweet smile—much as a cherub would smile over a naughty child on earth—spread out his hands, lifted his shoulders, and said: "I do not know."

"Why are they not picked?" cried the Signore.

"They are not picked," said the young Apollo, more helplessly than ever.

"I said *why* are they not picked?"

Orestes paused, his brows drawn into a pensive frown, and he shifted his slim, stag-like body. He did not look in the least like the father of a family.

"They are not picked," he brought out at last.

"Did you tell your children to gather them for me?" asked the Padrone.

"I told Annunziata," said Orestes.

"And did Annunziata *not* pick them?"

"I told Annunziata."

"Send Annunziata," cried the Signore, in a voice of thunder. "So it is," he added on Orestes' departure, "we get no further. They have struck."

The Padrone and his daughters waited at the end of the drive for Annunziata; he spoke of the necessity for discipline, and tore at the leaves of a laurel near by in token of its absence among his own feelings. The dignified, small woman of eight years old came down the aisle between the cypresses knitting a pale blue sock. She wore a neat, dark blue dress, trimmed with scarlet braiding, and had scarlet ribbons tied in her black, silky hair. When



she reached her masters she lifted sober eyes full of wonder.

"Annunziata," said the Signore severely, dropping the tender diminutive which was her right by the christening service, "where are the cyclamens?"

"You have not got the cyclamens?" asked Annunziata, with the innocence of all the angels in her eyes.

"No. Did you pick them when you were told?"

"I told my brothers," said Annunziata.

"Annunziata!" exclaimed one daughter, reproachfully.

"Eh, Dio!" despaired the other.

"It is true, Signorina"; and the little girl looked straight up in the Signorina's face with no hint of duplicity in those brown eyes.

"Body of Bacchus!" the Signore cried, exasperated. "It is impossible to find the truth. Go, fetch thy brothers."

And Annunziata went back down the aisle of cypresses, still knitting her pale blue sock, with leisurely grace. She was seen alternately in a bar of shadow, then in a bar of sunset gold till the turning swallowed her up.

The two little boys came, not at their usual gait, like kittens rolling over one another, but very slowly, with shy eyes on the ground; and in the distance, from behind the furthest cypresses, peeped the babies, Assunta and Proserpina, very much interested in the whole affair.

"Where are the cyclamens?" cried the Signore.

"They are not picked."

"Were you told to pick them?"

"They are not picked."

"But were they not my commands that you should pick them?"

"They are not picked." The elder, who was spokesman, here gave a glance to the unrelenting heavens as if for mercy; the younger heaved the deep sigh of a martyr.

"Via, via, via, via! Get away with you!" cried the Signore, striking his hands together, and the lads ran like hares before a gun-clap. "Send your mother," he shouted after them. "That is what they have been told to say. Those four words. Those and no more. Their mother shall know my commands must be obeyed."

But their mother never did know. Her method of resistance was simple. Although the Signore and his daughters waited half-an-hour and talked of the new apple-trees and the sunset no one came.

"There will be no cyclamens," they said sadly.

"And the letters will be late," the Signore exclaimed suddenly. "Oh, the rascals!" He rushed into the house with the vigour of a man about to rescue all his worldly goods from fire, and the daughters followed him more slowly.

The letters had gone. Orestes had slyly taken them hence.

The Signore came out to meet his girls, laughing and wiping his forehead. "It is no use. They are tired of picking them. No more cyclamens," he said; and then, in a downward peal of laughter, he gave vent to the most illogical sentiment. "Ah women, women, women, women!" he cried. The whims of women were a constant entertainment to him, and he found women in every whimsicality. Henceforth, at post time, there were no more cyclamens, unless the Signore's daughters had themselves gathered them.

It was an excellent example of the solidarity of Italian labour.

#### Friendship.

Friendship is the next pleasure we may hope for; and where we find it not at home, or have no home to find it in, we may seek it abroad. It is a union of spirits, a marriage of hearts, and the bond thereof virtue. There can be no friendship where there is no freedom. Friendship loves a free air and will not be penned up in strait and narrow enclosures. It will speak freely and act so, too, and take nothing ill where no ill is meant; nay, where it is, 'twill easily forgive, and forget, too, upon small acknowledgments.—William Penn ("Some Fruits of Solitude").

**Crochet Work.**—A blind worker would be glad of orders. Her charges are very moderate: Camisole tops, 1s. 9d., 2s., 2s. 3d. Lace for short curtains, 1s. for 1½ yards. Crochet forms one of the prettiest and most durable trimmings, and the excellence of the work in this case is vouched for by the Editor of the "W.W." Will any of our readers send an order to—Miss Knee, 107 Chester Road, Seven Kings.