

# The Woman Worker

Edited by Mary R. Macarthur.

REGISTERED AT THE G.P.O. AS A NEWSPAPER.]

[FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.

No. 23. [NEW SERIES.]

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1908.

ONE PENNY.

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ROBERT BLATCHFORD

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## LIFE OR LANGUAGE.

By (Miss) H. D. Ogston, B.Sc.

LIVING at the beginning of the twentieth century, some of us fancy that we have outgrown the barbarity and savagery of earlier ages, and that we are coming at last to realise the sanctity of human life. We see many signs of this advance in feeling.

But let us not deceive ourselves.

There is a section of the community who are as careless of the sacrifice of life, provided it be not their own, as any tyrant or autocrat in the Middle Ages; and the sooner we recognise their existence, the sooner we shall be able to take their inhumanity into account.

If we cannot change their natures, utterance of their cold-blooded sentiments should be made impossible by the criterion of good taste.

I write to protest in the name of decency against a sentence in a leading article of the "Morning Post," which began as follows:

"Agitation having become the established, or even the fashionable, method of pleading a cause, as is shown by the effect upon members of Parliament of processions and demonstrations of the unemployed, we are tempted to propose an agitation on behalf of a cause at least as good as that . . . of the demonstrative labourers without occupation. The English language is in a parlous state," etc., etc.

One wonders if in these times a man can be found who would put his name to such an opinion.

And perhaps it is as well for the "Morning Post" that those who live a life worse than death in our great slums are not likely to read that paper; that men and women starving for want of bread, and watching their children die unaided before their eyes that most cruel of all deaths, slow starvation, do not study leading articles on the question of the English language.

But to those of us who are tortured by knowledge of all the suffering and misery which are the lot of those pleading for the right to live, such sentences as those quoted from the "Morning Post" come as an insult which we can scarcely bear, even for the sake of our own honour.

Let us have done with this fearful mockery. By the manhood and womanhood in us, let us protest, once and for all, against such inhumanity.

If there are some among us—in this Christian country, in these enlightened days—who are content to allow such horrors as are at present being enacted in England, let us insist, if we can do nothing else, that the hungry and the

starving and the dying shall be allowed to starve and die in respectful silence. In God's name, let us refrain from mocking them as well.

If we consider academic and pedantic questions of as great importance as the world-old questions of life and death, let us realise that such an opinion should be hidden as carefully as we hide our dearest sin.

And I would say: Beware! Remember that one of the immutable laws of Nature is, "As you sow, so shall you reap." Remember the swing of the pendulum. Remember the murmurs that ran through France before the days of the French Revolution.

If for no greater motive than to save your soul alive, look at life as it is and play the part of a man.

After all, my literary friend, we all value life more highly than any other good. When your time comes to meet that Angel of the Darker Drink, you will put your back against the wall. And it will not be the memory of the English language to which you will cling, and which will make those moments lighter or darker. It will be the memory of life as it is.

You will see things in their true proportions; and you will realise that a lifetime spent in helping men to help themselves, and in lifting a great mass of humanity out of the pit into which it has fallen, is better than a life in which you have stood coldly on one side and busied yourself with smaller matters.

Give to men and women the right to live which you reserve for yourself, and who knows? You may find that in doing so you are giving a helping hand to the English language as well!

## MARGARET.

SWEET pearl of womanhood—thou gem  
inset  
Amid the thorny crowns the People  
"wear;  
Content to shine with steady lustre  
there,  
And in thy love for others to forget  
Thyself, still easing others' care and fret,  
And taking of the toilers' stress thy  
share:  
Almost too frail thou seemest for the  
care  
Of poverty and anguish and regret.  
But oh, the steady trust of those brown  
eyes,  
The tenderness of thy love-lighted smile,  
Shall bless the weary pilgrim's dusty mile  
And show him where the path of duty  
lies.  
With greater love shall this poor world be  
rife  
Because of thy self-sacrificing life.  
ROSE E. SHARLAND.

























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