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The National Banner of the Women's Co-operative Guild.

MANY great ideas have been represented in the past by symbolic figures of women. For example WISDOM has been represented by the goddess Athene, with an owl as her emblem, and JUSTICE by a blindfolded woman holding a pair of scales.

To-day, a new idea is making its way in the economic life of the world, which gives a special place to the married woman as the typical consumer. This new idea is that every nation's prosperity depends on the power of the people to purchase. Because they cannot or do not buy, we have recently seen unemployment everywhere, wages reduced, corn and coffee being burnt, ships lying idle, factories and mines closed, and false economy cuts made by our so-called National Government. And it is useless to think of producing more and more wealth (which Science is enabling us to do) unless the consumers can buy the food that is grown or the goods which are manufactured.

Now, what is the fundamental reason why work is carried on? It is in order to provide food, clothing, housing, and all that contributes to the health and happiness of mankind. But this fact has been hidden from us, because profit-making has always been the object of Capitalism, while the necessary power of the people to purchase has been neglected. It is not profit-making, but consumption that sets and keeps running the wheels of industry throughout the world.

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The solution of our difficulties is, therefore, to give the consumers their right power and place in the economic world, and this is what the great Co-operative Movement is doing with its membership of sixty-two million families in forty-one countries. It is the actual embodiment of the democratic idea that trade and industry are carried on by the people for the people. We have entirely got rid of autocratic profit-makers in Co-operation. And do not wives and mothers—those chancellors of the family exchequers—most fitly represent the people as purchasers?

When at the Jubilee Congress of the Women's Co-operative Guild its National Banner was unfurled, the striking figure of "Co-operation" was seen as a Guildswoman, whose emblem was a basket full of Co-operative purchases. There she stands, in her simple dress of beautiful colours, carrying her C.W.S. groceries, her *Co-operative News*, and a bunch of daffodils to brighten her home. Her other arm is round her lively little girl holding a shopping bag, happy and proud to have bought at the Store, and no doubt thinking of the Luton chocolates she will soon be eating, and the new pair of C.W.S. shoes she will be wearing to-morrow as she goes to school. Behind the two figures, in the background, is the local Co-operative Store, with people looking in and admiring the fine display of C.W.S. goods, and its red flags are flying to show that Co-operation stands for a peaceful revolution to establish a more just and humane society. On the left is a Co-operative factory, and a man carrying a sack, symbolic of the industry set going by the buyers at the Store.

Above, across storm clouds, with the light breaking through between them, is a rainbow, the most ancient symbol of HOPE, recalling the Guild motto, "Of Whole Heart Cometh Hope." A rainbow is now the emblem of International Co-operation, in which women are vigorously playing their part.

Seen from a distance, it is impossible to realise the immense amount of trouble, thought, ingenuity, and skill which went to the making of so inspiring a work of art. The banner was designed and executed by two sisters with one mind, Muriel and Susanna Jackson, who live in Hampstead. The former trained as a mural decorator, and has had a good deal of experience in painting and designing on a large scale. She has exhibited pictures and engravings in London.

Paris, and America. Susanna Jackson is a "needlecraft" woman with a tailor's cutting diploma. She has a thorough knowledge of stitchery, and has worked as a dressmaker and embroideress for many years. She is now specialising in historical costumes for theatrical purposes. They entered into the work with great zest, appreciating the unusual interest of the subject. The following account of how the banner was made, and the care taken that the materials should be fadeless, and the whole banner light to carry, shows how practical, as well as imaginative, artists can be.

A small design was first drawn out, and enlarged to the exact size, seven feet by five feet, on a sheet of cartoon paper, and no trouble was spared to find the materials which would match the colour scheme. Then the cartoon was hung up on a wall, and beside it was placed the corn-coloured linen forming the basis of the banner. Then the pieces of casement cloth and linen, after careful measurement, were pinned into position (involving the use of $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of pins). The clouds were the first to be pinned on, then the rainbow was placed on them, and all the parts were superimposed one on the other, ending with small figures looking in at the Store windows. The heads and hands of the woman and child were outlined on sateen with brown sewing cotton, and modelled in oil colour. The problem of how to make the basket was solved by the use of bias binding, interwoven with bits of the brown wool used by the artists' father to make rugs. The child's pretty flowered frock was made from the actual flattened pattern of a child's dress. And one day when she was in a workroom Miss Jackson picked up a bit of thin gold, rubber-like material, which, when well soaked in water and manipulated, came in most handily for the woman's wedding ring and the W.C.G. brooch. The larger lettering at the top was cut out and sewn on, and the smaller letters at the bottom were embroidered in heavy black sylko.

It will be seen that the principal figure is that of the Woman with the Basket. Let us think of her as possessing all the qualities desirable in every Guildswoman. We see her courageous, steadfast, sympathetic, public-spirited, disinterested; we see her as one who is seeking knowledge and understanding of the causes of poverty, unemployment, and war. As a Co-operator, she has found a solution which

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inspires her with a vision of a new and happier world, and leads her to be determined to work loyally with her sisters in making that vision a reality.

Thus our Banner represents a symbolic figure of CO-OPERATION, showing forth the true value of consumers. And when this Banner heads a procession, or is displayed at Guild Congresses and Conferences, it will also proclaim the power of women through Co-operation to be practical creators of the Co-operative Commonwealth.

December, 1933.

M. L. D.

L. H.

17, ~~GRANT~~ PRESCOT STREET,
LONDON, E. 1.

A coloured picture post card of the Banner, price 2½d., or 2/3 per dozen (post free), may be obtained from the Guild Office.

C.W.S. Printing Works, Longsight, Manchester.—L 2586

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