WOMEN WORKERS.

PAPERS READ AT

A CONFERENCE

CONVENED BY THE

LIVERPOOL LADIES' UNION OF WORKERS AMONG WOMEN AND GIRLS,

IN NOVEMBER, 1891.

Motto :—"UNION IS STRENGTH."

OBJECT OF THE UNION.

TO FORM A COMMON CENTRE FOR ALL LADIES AND ASSOCIATIONS ENGAGED IN THE WORK OF HELPING AND CARING FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, AND TO ENCOURAGE SYMPATHY AND CO-OPERATION.

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CONTENTS.

SECOND DAY.

THIRD DAY.

TEACHERS' MEETING.

YOUNG LADIES' MEETING.

1891.

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Miss REES .....Home of Help, Falkner Street.

Mrs. GALE .....Home for Incurables.

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Mrs. SNAPE .....Ladies' Temperance Association.

Miss DOVEY .....Kirkdale Child Charity.

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Mrs. BABCOCK .....Midnight Mission, Belmont Grove.

Miss ST. JOHN .....Mission to Friendless Girls.

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Mrs. LANGTON .....Garston District Nurses.

Miss HARRIS .....Female Orphans' Asylum, Myrtle St.

Miss RYLE .....Seamen's Orphanage.

Mrs. BELL COX .....St. Margaret's Orphanage.

Miss E. STEWART .....West Derby Orphanage.

Mrs. LOTT .....Falkner Street Penitentiary.

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Mrs. COOPER .....Self Help Society.

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Miss GRAYSON .....Young Women's Christian Association.

Miss GRAYSON .....Bromboro' House, Gt. George's Square.

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Mrs. D. M. DRYSDALE .....Servants' Home, Colquitt Street.

LIVERPOOL LADIES' UNION
OF
WORKERS AMONG WOMEN AND GIRLS.

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE.

FIRST DAY.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 11TH, 10 A.M. TO 1 O'CLOCK.

10.0 Prayer Meeting.

10.30 Introductory Address by the President of the Union.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

1. *Parental Responsibility.* MRS. CREIGHTON, (*Peterborough*).

2. *The Work of Ladies in connection with Elementary Schools.* MISS STURGE.

A NUMBER of ladies, presided over by Miss ISABELLE RYLE, met for prayer at 10 a.m. on this and succeeding mornings. On account of the early hour and the great distances in Liverpool, many could not be present, but those who did come found it a very enjoyable and profitable quarter of an hour. Punctually at 10.30, the Conference was opened by the President, Mrs. ALFRED BOOTH, who spoke as follows:—

Ladies, my first duty is to announce our disappointments, which are few. The first is a great one. The Countess Brownlow will be unable, through ill health, to be with us to read her paper this evening. This paper will, we hope, appear by and bye in Miss Janes' Magazine, *The Threefold Cord*. Lady Welby is also unable to be present. I have received a letter from her in which she says she cannot too earnestly express the interest she has in this Conference. As there are no other letters to which I need refer, I shall proceed at once to open the Conference.

My duty to-day is a simple and delightful one, which shall be quickly discharged. It is, to bid all our friends

welcome to Liverpool, and particularly those who, in answer to our invitation, have come as Delegates and those also who have consented to read papers on this occasion.

Imitators, it is said, "are doomed," but the Liverpool Union of Workers has felt no hesitation in calling together this second large representative Conference of Women Workers among women. Birmingham, and our experiences there, may seem still present, but a year has passed and who will say that the past months have not brought new developments in the field of woman's work for woman. We offer no apology therefore for having called the Labourers together in this city, where we know much earnest work is being done, but where, if anywhere in the United Kingdom the problems of life are hardest and most puzzling to solve. We meet here as members of a Christian community, most of us members of the Christian Church (as represented in her different branches), all of us members one of another, profoundly conscious that we are our sisters' keepers. It is the proud boast of this nineteenth century that great advances have been made in Science and the Arts, but has it not also been reserved for the end of this century for the very practical and perfectly natural discovery to be made, that women are the best workers among women and that to them is committed the duty of considering and improving the condition of their own sex? Those of us to whom this natural law has been revealed late in life, regret the blindness of former years and wish to "redeem the time," rejoicing that before our daughters broader ways of usefulness are opening out, while the far-sighted workers who long ago foresaw our day "enter into the fruit of their labours" and find it sweet. Women workers are of course no new invention, they are as old as mother Eve herself; but combined systematic work by women for women and girls is a *modus operandi* of recent date. It is not so long since many Institutions in this city for the benefit of Women and Girls had no women on their Committees, and there may be some such still remaining. We have as yet no Women Guardians on our Board of Guardians, and the thousands of girls in our Board Schools are represented by only one woman on our Liverpool School Board. But beyond the discovery that women are the most suitable workers among women, we are also discovering that it is possible for us to work together. It was a fine inspiration of that fearless woman, Miss Ellice Hopkins, which led her to establish her "Ladies Associations for the Care and Protection

of Girls and Women" on purely unsectarian foundations. That, as a rule, it has been found practically impossible to carry out Miss Hopkins' wishes in this regard is true, but from these Ladies Associations the Unions of Workers have directly sprung, and by these unions we are encouraged to hope we have in great measure solved the problem of co-operation in what I venture to call religious philanthropic work done by women for girls and women.

Uniformity of belief is as impossible as uniformity in form and feature, but we can meet together, take counsel in reference to our work, and discuss the growing, changing needs of human life. It is not necessary for me to dwell on our Union of Women Workers, an Association still in its infancy, but with possibilities of usefulness only waiting to be developed; but at the opening of this Conference I may be excused if I say a few words with regard to the subjects which have been selected to come before us during the next few days.

Elementary Education, still on trial in England, in its relation to our girls is to be considered to-day, and we shall hear from experienced educationalists on this subject. There is one point upon which I hope they will dwell—*i.e.* the moral development of the child. Are there not many facts which ought to be known in regard to animal life and mental growth, of which parents and teachers are profoundly ignorant, but which, were the relations of matter and mind better understood, would be of great value in the early training of our little girls in the Home and the School? If our consideration of such subjects as "Parental Responsibility," and "The Duties of Ladies as School Managers" leads us to the ethical foundation of things we shall all be deeply grateful. There is abundant proof to-day that the nation must study the whole subject of Elementary Education with deeper spiritual and practical insight, and as women are so closely identified with educational work, they should not only understand some simple physiological and psychological facts, but know how to apply them in a reverential but perfectly practical manner. Especially does this seem to me desirable in connection with teachers in Infant Schools.

Following the subject of Elementary Education, we shall consider Labour Questions. It is most important that educated women should know what trades are opening up to English working women, and what steps are being taken by our Industrial Sisters for their own self-protection. Here we are most of us in need of instruction; and in our ignorance of these

Labour Qustions and our sense of its danger, we acknowledge our indebtedness to those earnest workers present here to-day who will enlighten our darkness with some account of the results of their experience as practical workers among the industrial classes.

Liverpool is perhaps not distinguished for its civic life, but it is very proud of some of its individual citizens. One of the life interests of a most honoured townsman has furnished us with the next subject on our programme. We deem it appropriate that in the place where Agnes Jones gave her life in the service of the pauper poor in the workhouse, and where Mr. William Rathbone has devoted so much time and money to perfecting his system of District Nursing, we should now, after thirty years of trial, discuss the whole subject of Workhouse and District Nursing as done by women.

But our programme would be very incomplete did it not contain those subjects which represent the great field where women have been at work for generations to rescue the fallen, reform the drunkard, and restore moral sanity to the victims of sin and vice. How many noble women have devoted their lives to these painful objects? Can we not have some fresh lights, some new and hopeful views given us by these workers during this Conference. We are on the eve of a new century, and one characteristic of the close of this era is a profound sense of discontent with the *causes* which make woman's work for woman often of such a painful character. After nineteen centuries of looking blindfold at Society, are we not longing, and might I hope ready, to look at the problems of life as the gracious Founder of Christianity looked at them? Are we not at last ready to take the Sermon on the Mount as our standard of right and wrong? Are we not prepared to deal with the roots of evils and not only with the crooked and distorted branches of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? To do this is no easy task, but it belongs to women to solve these questions, and to their solution we must bring the wisest counsellors and the most earnest women workers of our day and of this country. This is what we have endeavoured to do in calling our friends together from all parts of the United Kingdom to Liverpool. We welcome you again heartily and thank you.

One word more—may we not take courage when we remember what women in the past have done in helping on the moral elevation of the world? Was it not the stirring words of a woman, woven into a romance, not so strange as the truth,

which roused the sleeping conscience of a great nation, and led to the emancipation of the slave? Was it not earnest women, who, in the wild west, suffering from the consequences of intemperance, took the matter into their own hands, and by methods which, although they may seem crude and rough to us, yet so influenced public opinion in regard to the drink traffic that their crusading spirit has crossed the broad Atlantic and finds to day its echo in our own feelings on this vital subject? And, to come nearer home, was it not by the very life blood of a noble woman's heart-efforts that England at last repealed laws whose enforcement was a disgrace? That this reform has brought consequences which are a problem to-day may be also true, and if so we are bound to force them. With these examples fresh in our memory may we not be encouraged in our work.

And now my pleasant duty is performed; but may I be allowed one personal reference? Coming, as I did, many years ago as a stranger to this country, if there is anything which could, beyond mere family ties, make up to a woman for leaving her country and home, it is to take part in uniting on such an occasion as this good women of all shades of thought and opinion, gathered to take council together.

Again I bid you all welcome, and thank you in advance for the help we know you will give us.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY.

Mrs. CREIGHTON.

The subject which has been allotted to me is so wide that it will be only possible to treat it by strictly defining the limits within which I intend to speak. The danger of the subject is that it almost compels a hortatory tone, and, therefore, I shall have to ask your pardon should I at times appear to preach; perhaps you will grant it the more readily as I do not speak as an outsider, but as a parent myself. At a time when we are all interested in the question of Free Education, it will be natural that in the first place I should consider how it will affect the sense of parental responsibility. Next, I wish briefly to point out how our desire to quicken this sense amongst the poor should influence our philanthropic efforts among them. And, lastly, perhaps you will allow me to point out some of the

ways in which, in my opinion, we parents of the more educated classes fail to act up to our responsibilities.

Compulsory education cast upon parents the duty to see that their children went regularly to school. Free education removes the obstacles to making compulsion effective. Parents still have to pay for this education in a very important sense, since they have to give up the services of their children during school hours, and to put off any hope of their earning money till the school age is past. The call upon the parent to send the child to school regularly, to see that he does his home work well, is clear and important. To make education free rests this call upon a higher motive than it could claim before. No doubt, some parents did send their children to school regularly, because, having paid the fee, they did not wish to lose the value of their money; this involved no sense of responsibility, and was a somewhat ignoble motive. In future, the call will be made to the true sense of parental responsibility. To enforce regularity of attendance means a real sacrifice to many a hard-worked mother, but a sacrifice which those who care for the welfare of their children will gladly make. So long as parents had to pay school fees, those who were lazy and selfish, and regarded their own ease rather than the welfare of their children, were able to shelter themselves under a real or supposed inability to pay fees. This excuse is now removed, and thus the question becomes simple. No doubt, compulsion will have to be made efficient, but free education makes it far easier to enforce it. Our aim should be to have it considered as a disgrace for children not to be sent regularly to school. Of course, it will always be a more difficult matter for some mothers than for others, but all who know much of the homes of the poor, will grant that as a rule, it is the lazy, gossipping, slatternly mothers who are most apt to keep their children from school, and that for them, as well as for the children, it is most desirable that the school attendance should be regular.

There are other cases in which the mother keeps her children at home because she is anxious to be able to go out to work, and about this point it is essential that our ideas should be clear. Of course, there will be individual exceptions, but as a general rule it is highly undesirable that the mother of the family should go out to work. A true view of parental responsibility will lead the father to be the bread winner, the mother the housekeeper. It would lead me too far into economics were I to attempt to demonstrate the truth of this statement and its far-reaching bearing, upon questions of the

rate of wages, as well as on the comfort of the home. It will be enough to say that this is a point insisted upon by Professor Marshall in his important work on economics, which has lately appeared. He says, amongst other things, "When a nominal increase of income is got by a mother's going out to work, to the neglect of her children and of her household affairs, the result is to injure their health and vigour, for in substituting less important gains for more important, she has really diminished the income of her family." Moreover, many of the women who do casual work, do it, not for a livelihood, but to secure money for drink. A woman who does not go out to work will, unless in exceptional cases of illness, be able to send her children regularly to school. In this will be her responsibility so far as their education is concerned, and the loss of their labour will be the price she pays for their education. It is a real sign of the affection and unselfishness of working-class parents when they are willing to keep their children at school longer than the law requires, for they themselves will not reap the benefit of the increased education, and only put off longer the moment when their child can become a source of gain to them. As a rule, amongst the poorest classes, the parents look upon the school life as a thing to be got through as soon as possible, so that the children may get to work. We can only hope to change this view if the later years of a child's education can be occupied with subjects more directly bearing on his future career. What parent can be interested in knowing that his child is being taught what a predicate is? And no wonder! Parents have a right to demand that the education of their children should be such as to prepare them for the actual facts of life. On the other hand, parents should be taught to desire that their children may be fitted for a career in which they can really get on, and not that they should begin to earn a few shillings as soon as possible.

Free education throws an increased responsibility on the parents as regards the religious teaching of their children. Whatever difficulties the voluntary schools may have to face, we can be sure that all who love religion will use their utmost efforts that children should not grow up ignorant of good, but they will do their work most fruitfully if they can do it through the parents. The teaching of a religious home is more valuable than any school teaching. The study of the Bible and of the truths of religion must be a life study, and when it is such for the parents, their teaching will help to

make it such for the children. The parents must learn to feel that no excellence of teaching in Sunday or day schools can free them from responsibility in this matter. This is, alas, a responsibility which is but little recognised in any class of society.

Not, however, in the matter of religious teaching alone, but in many other points, it seems as if in all classes we were suffering from a diminishing sense of parental responsibility. This comes, no doubt, in great part from the very excellence of the opportunities for individual development given to children. It is easy for them to emancipate themselves from the control of incompetent parents. It is a temptation to the parents to leave to others a task for which they feel themselves incapable. Still, I do not suppose that there are many people, who would be prepared to go so far, as to entirely remove children from the hands of their parents, in order to put them under some ideal system of training. Most of us still rest our conception of the state upon the family, and would disclaim any notion of taking a child from the care of its parents. And yet much of our modern philanthropy does tend in that direction. What are créches, free dinners, many of our recreation rooms and clubs, &c., but means to remove children from their homes, and do better for them than their parents could? But think for a moment how such an apparently good work as the free dinners operates. I will quote the words of Miss Tabor in Mr. C. Booth's last volume. "To the shiftless and indifferent it means the removal of that natural and wholesome stimulus which the necessity of providing for the family wants supplies. To the idle and drunken parent, it means so much set free for the publican's till, to all it means liberty to add with impunity fresh units to the helpless and unwieldly mass already hanging like a mill-stone round the necks of the thrifty poor." No doubt the whole question is very difficult. The needs of the individual are often so pressing, that it is almost impossible to take a wide view and judge what would be the consequences of our actions on a large scale. But we should be quite clear whether we desire before all things to benefit the individual, or whether our aim is to improve the home life of the people, and to increase and heighten the sense of parental responsibility. Perhaps it may be hard to see what we, as individuals, can do in this direction, but an ideal is of potent effect, and a higher ideal of the possibilities of home life will influence our views, guide our activities, and modify many of our philanthropic efforts. The poor must not be taught to trust that others will

step in to do their work for their children because they neglect it. Everything that improves the parents will benefit the children, and, therefore, the work of improving the parents is the more important; but, because it is the more difficult, it is the more frequently neglected. It is so pleasant, so easy to mould the children, that we forget whilst we are doing it that we are doing the work of others, and that the wisest plan is to try to get each to do his own work.

Let me briefly sum up the points on which we should try to get parents more truly to realise their responsibilities. First, as I have already said, they must primarily be responsible for the religious education of their children. Again, all purity teaching will come best from the parents. Chastity in after-life will largely depend upon the fact whether children have been taught self control in their youth. Indulgent parents are adding to the dangers of the time when the imperious desires of the flesh must assert themselves, and must conquer if there be no motive adequate to resist them. True spiritual teaching on the functions of the body as the servant of the soul will supply the motive; habits of self control wlll give that teaching power to be effective. Again, a larger sense of responsibility for the health of their offspring is much needed both by parents and by those contemplating marriage. It should prevent the marriages of those who have good reason to believe that they are exposed to hereditary disease or insanity, and it should lead parents to do all in their power to acquaint themselves with sanitary laws, and live in obedience to them.

Much of what I have said is of general application to parents in all classes, but in passing on to consider this matter with regard to parents in the middle and upper classes, I think we shall find, that their most frequent shortcoming is to cast the whole responsibility of the training of their children first upon nurses, then upon teachers. The selection of those to whom so important a task is entrusted is made with more or less care, but to quote Professor Marshall again, "the company in which the children of some of our best houses spend much of their time, is less ennobling than that of the average cottage. Yet in these very houses, no servant, who is not specially qualified, is allowed to take charge of a young pointer or a young horse." I do not mean to undervalue the devotion and, in some cases, the very wise training given by nurses, but speaking generally, domestics are apt to over-rate the importance of wealth, to be self-indulgent in their habits when dealing with the things that belong to others, and not to estimate things in their true

proportion, and this because a position of dependence does not compel them to face the realities of life. They are thus unfitted, as a rule, for the moral training of any but very young children, and parents cannot throw off their responsibility on them. As regards the intellectual training, most parents feel that specially trained teachers can do this better than they themselves; but even where this is true, the real responsibility rests with the parents, first in the choice of teachers and schools, and secondly in keeping a careful watch upon the teaching given and the progress of the intellectual development of their children. Far from so doing, parents frequently throw all the responsibility of the moral as well as of the intellectual training upon the teachers. Ask any schoolmaster, any college tutor, and he will tell you of repeated interviews with parents who have asked him to guide and influence their sons because they could do nothing with them. I have been told by the head mistress of a girls' high school that she was asked to see that a girl took her tonic regularly, because she refused to take it at her mother's bidding. The child took it like a lamb at school at the bidding of the mistress.

Schoolmasters and schoolmistresses are only too ready, as a rule, to accept the responsibility which parents cast upon them. They are often imbued with a very strong sense of the incompetence of parents, and regard them as a mysteriously foolish race of beings, who have to be cajoled, managed, and kept in order, and, if possible, at a distance from their children. Perhaps, they judge parents too hardly, and yet their object is kindly, for the head master of one of our great schools told me that he thought one important sphere of a schoolmaster's activity was the education of the parents. I do not think that parents wish to give up their share in the training of their children, and I am sure that the best masters and mistresses would all far rather co-operate with parents than manage them. It is my hope that the extension of the Mothers' Unions amongst educated women may lead to more of this co-operation between parents and teachers, and in this view I have the support of one of our leading head masters, who spoke most warmly of the work that, in his opinion, the Mothers' Union might do, and the help that it might be to teachers.

The responsibility of the religious teaching must always, as I have already said, rest mainly with parents; and in this matter the general opinion seems to be that they have grievously failed. The complaint of the ignorance of children in religious matters when they go to school is universal.

A matter of such deep importance cannot be trusted to nurses and governesses, the early training must be given by the parents; and even then they must not stop. During the holidays, the opportunity for scripture reading together must be eagerly sought, then the parent will be able to give the more special and personal teaching which no one else can so well give, and will have the chance to note the moral development of the child. I gladly recognise the fact that our schools are trying to make their religious teaching really effective, but it must be remembered that except in distinctly sectarian schools, religious teaching must necessarily be rather colourless, and must mainly consist of Bible teaching, excellent in its way, but insufficient without that dogmatic teaching which parents should prefer to give themselves. It will hardly do to plead incompetence here. We may not care for the pursuit of intellectual studies, but if we value religion, our study of its truths can only end with our lives, and each year that we live will make us more fit to teach those dependent upon us.

In another and a kindred matter the responsibility must rest with parents. From them, from the home, the child will get its ideal of life. The life and example of its parents will show him what the meaning of life is to them. Upon them it will depend whether he goes out into life seeking enjoyment and success as his first object, or determined to give himself to the service of mankind and the pursuit of holiness.

On points of less primary importance the responsibility of parents with regard to the first start in life needs to be more fully recognised. Boys are often allowed to grow up and finish their university career with no profession in view, and, what is still more serious, with no knowledge of the pecuniary position of their parents. Perfect confidence and openness on these points will help children to grow into a sense of their own responsibility; to make them feel that, is one of the most important of a parent's duties. The responsibility of parents as regards their son's start into life is, as a rule, more fully recognised than as regards their daughters. The idea to a large extent still prevails that it is the business of daughters to get married, or, if not, to live on at home as contentedly as they may. Many parents will make sacrifices for the education of their sons; few are prepared to do the same for their daughters. I do not believe that all women should be trained for professions, and am very far indeed from thinking that the position of a daughter at home is to be despised, but to be happy and useful in any sphere, a woman, as well as a man,

needs an education which should develop her powers to the fullest. It is especially in the lower middle classes that the objection to pay adequately for the education of their daughters is shown. Hence the disastrously low fees at Girls' High Schools, which lead to the underpaying of the mistresses and cripple the efficiency of the schools. The very parents who would grudge paying an increased fee are often those who will spend largely on the dress of their daughters. If parents are responsible for their sons making a good start in life, they are equally responsible for seeing either that their daughters are fitted to earn their own livelihood, or that the home life is such that each member of the family can freely develop and exercise her own gifts.

I think that parents will gain in every way from taking a higher view of their responsibilities. They will not then be so disposed to cast the blame of their own failures upon society, upon their children, upon the circumstances of their own day and generation. To realise the importance and the possibilities of the task given to us is in itself an encouragement to effort. The difficulty of the task makes it only the more worthy to call forth our noblest powers. Probably, nothing that we can say or do will so much influence our children as the atmosphere of our homes, and that will be what we make it. If love, and a sense of duty, and of the obligations of service rule there, with an absolute devotion of all the gifts and opportunities of life to God, this will not be forgotten. However far the erring child may stray, some faint breath of that pure air will linger with him, and who can say what may not be its shielding and renewing power.

Mrs. Henry Wilson (Sheffield) opened the discussion, by saying:—I have been interested, and, I hope, profited by the paper which Mrs. Creighton has just read, though it strikes me that our meeting here, a company of women, is opposed to her opinion of the desirability of men and women working together.

When Mirabeau was asked what course he would recommend in the education of a boy, he replied, "Begin twenty years before his birth by educating his mother."

I suppose we understand that in talking about this matter of education we include boys as well as girls. Our boys require quite as much care as our girls.

The few words I have to say will deal with general parental responsibility, and not so much with that of our poorer sisters as of those in our own sphere of life. Something

has been said about the disadvantage of women going out to work, which prevents their looking after their children. I should like to ask if that applies only to working women of the poorer class? Are there not many who work quite as hard, and yet have not the same excuse? I think we ought to bear in mind that many employ their time in visiting their friends, going to parties, and with work in society, and have nothing to do with their own children. My idea is that children are the first care, and that if there be time for visiting, that should be secondary.

Will you allow me to say that I think the question of obedience is one of the very first that children ought to be taught. Many people underrate the age at which children can be taught obedience. In my opinion, a child six months old can learn it, for at that age a look of displeasure on the mother's face is quite understood. It would save a great deal of trouble if implicit obedience were insisted on at first. If we have secured obedience, the recognition of a higher authority, we have made a good foundation for the after-training.

Another point is the cultivation of mutual confidence between parents and children. We ought to make their interests ours, to listen to their troubles and desires, and not so much to check and forbid what is wrong, as to make them reason and feel they would not do things because their father and mother would not like it. Then as they grow up we should try and interest them in our pursuits and work, that they may engage in the same. Children should be taught the importance of self-denial, and of giving a little of their own earnings to a good cause.

With regard to the moral education of children, it is the duty of parents to warn their children about the dangers of the world. I do feel that it is the parents' duty to see to the Christian teaching—that teaching which comes from the heart and conscience, which we cannot expect paid teachers to give.

Miss Beatrice Potter:—I feel I have very little right to enter into this discussion, as I know very little about parental responsibility, but there is one point on which I have a very strong opinion, and that is the influence of women's work on the labour market.

I was present the other day at a conference of Trades' Unionists, and we were discussing what we could do to get rid of the evil of the sweating system. It was said that women are at the root of the evil, and that is true; but it is not the fault of the unmarried women, it lies at the door of the married

woman who works either for pocket money or to support the husband who ought to work for himself and his family. But I should like to add that, although I object to women going out to work, I have a far greater objection to home work, as that is often the means of destroying the home, It is doubtless the same in London as in Liverpool, and in manufacturing of all cheap clothes and furniture, home work is far worse than out-door work.

If you wish to destroy the evil of married women's work you will attack the pernicious system of home work. Pressure should be put upon our Parliamentary representatives to get this evil checked to some extent.

Miss Blythe :—Ladies, like the preceding speaker, I cannot claim the position of a parent, but having shared the responsibility of parents in the care of children during my whole work in life, this question stirs me very deeply, I have listened with the greatest delight to all that has been said upon developing the responsibility of parents, and recognising the family life as that which lies at the root of the welfare of the community. The one idea I would enforce is that you should impress very strongly that this is the only divinely appointed life; it is the one we are born into; God has appointed that men and women shall be together, fellow-helpers. If we get this idea clearly before us, that it is a paramount claim for ever being required from us by our Heavenly Father, I think we shall have power and strength to meet it, and shall be stirred up to a deeper feeling of responsibility.

Hon. Mrs. Maclagan :—I have only a very few words to say. I should like to endorse very strongly all that has beeu said about training our children early in life in obedience, and in this connection there are two words we ought to make our motto :—*Duty* and *Responsibility*. Duty is often sadly lost sight of in the present day. I think children are not sufficiently taught to do things because it is their duty to do them. Duty must, however, always go hand-in-hand with sympathy. Any child can recognise that it must play alone, or leave the room, provided it is done at the call of duty and with sympathy shown to it by the parents. I am afraid some of us are apt to lose sight of this. If children are brought up to this obedience we shall hear fewer complaints from mothers that their children will not do what they are wanted to do, because it "bores" them. Duty and sympathy, these are the two watchwords in this question of parental responsibility. There is one other word I should like to say in connection with our poorer sisters,

and I should be very glad if any lady can throw any light upon it. I have before my mind the work that goes on at Leek, nearly the whole of which is done by women. This includes the making of buttons, and silk braids and trimmings, and fabrics which require women's fingers. The wages are high, but the homes are miserable. Almost all the women go out to work, and the evening is the only chance of teaching them. As for the men, they have literally hardly anything to do in the town; they either have to go somewhere else for work, or live on their wives' earnings. I should be glad if any lady experienced on the labour question could make any suggestion as to how to make these wretched homes what they ought to be.

Miss Burton, of Edinburgh:—I wish to speak a little on this subject from my own experience. I know what is done in Edinburgh with regard to what are generally known as the slum people. I draw rents from between fifty and one hundred familes, so I know something of their habits. I am entirely opposed to married women going out to work, as it is not even economical; they would do far better to stay at home to cook, and mend their children's clothes; it is often the case that the money the women earn goes in drink. The only women who do well to earn their living in this way are widows.

I should like to say that I was very much pleased with the whole discussion which treated of the respect children should show to their parents. It is true that it is often said there are many parents whom their children cannot respect. Yet Scripture says "Honour thy father and thy mother"—*always*—not only when they do their duty.

Another matter is with regard to the feeding of the children. We have no Day Industrial Feeding Schools in Edinburgh. I should like to point out the evil of such a School. Children are taught *dis*respect for their parents by being told that those parents do not do justly by them, and that therefore the State takes them up. Children are thus taught to look to others than their parents for support; it is not well for them to look upon themselves as charity children, as this tends to lower the strata of society.

Mrs. Fawcett:—Ladies, I should like to say a very few words on this question of woman's work. With regard to the disuasion of married women from going out to work, nothing but praise can be awarded to efforts of that kind. We do not wish legislation to interfere in this question, as one result would be to discourage marriage, and that would lead to evil consequences.

On the subject of wages, the work of women to support their husbands tends rather to keep them up than to lower them.

I wish to point out the intimate relation between the economical and the religious side. You have problems of extreme poverty to deal with. If you shut the door by legislation against work in the home and out of it, you must know there are other ways much less desirable in which women can earn money, so that by shutting the door of honest work we open the door of vice.

The case of widows has been referred to. Any legislative interference would tell cruelly on this class, and I wish to ask you to do all you can to prevent such interference.

Miss Potter rose in answer to this, and said that her proposal was only to make employers responsible for the condition of home work. She objected to the work of both sexes in the home.

Miss Robinson, of York:—I consider that religious teaching by the parent is preferable to the children receiving it at the schools. It behoves us to arrange how the dogmatic teaching can best be imparted. To children, this sort of teaching is not very necessary, still some parents feel the importance of it, and it should be impressed upon such that it is a part of their work. Education may be given by the teacher, but training by the parents.

With regard to the teaching of religion in schools, I have rather a horror of it. The Bible is looked upon too much as a lesson book.

I think there is one point which has been lost sight of, and that is, the advisability of women from the more educated classes becoming teachers. I have known one or two who have undertaken the work and they find it one of great interest. It is an important position to hold in our town board schools, but I want to impress more upon you the importance of it in country villages. The opportunities for good it affords cannot be over estimated, and no one need fear a loss of social position.

Mrs. Creighton replied to the various remarks that had been made.—There are two points I wish to refer to. We all agree that children should be taught obedience, and also that it cannot be begun too early; but may I give one word of warning to the younger mothers. I cannot help thinking the wisest plan is to avoid a struggle with the children in enforcing obedience. *Let us never give an order unless we are sure we can secure obedience.*

Mrs. Fawcett is quite right in thinking I should not wish any interference in the matter of legislation. I only wish that we should try to bring our influence to bear on the married women and on the employés.

We cannot make rules and laws, but the thing is to keep before us the cultivation of home life. Let us be sure what we are working for, and then we shall do what we can with greater vigour.

THE WORK OF LADIES IN CONNECTION WITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

By Miss STURGE.

Although during the last half century a hot dispute has gone on with varying fortunes as to the sphere and work of women, it has never been contested that they are in their proper place and doing their special work when they are taking part in the education of the young; whether mothers teaching their children to read as soon as they can lisp, or whether as heads of colleges and great schools. Among the earliest pioneers of elementary education were the old ladies who, failing other means of gaining a livelihood, gathered together the little urchins of the neighbourhood into a stuffy little room furnished with a few forms, and professed to teach them the rudiments of learning, with the help, frequently appealed to, of a cane. The dame, we may hope, has at length been improved off the face of the earth, and her place has been taken by the trained and certificated mistress, whose ministrations are carried on in a handsome, airy, well-arranged building, fitted with all the latest appliances. Since the passing of the Elementary Education Act of 1870, the whole country has been dotted over with schools, the greater number of the children who ought to be in them are in them; the teachers have grown to be an army, and over all is the directing influence of the State.

When we remember that half these children are girls, that another quarter are little boys, and that three-fourths of the teachers are women, we see at once what a great scope there is for us to continue to exercise our traditional occupation of caring for the education of the young. And especially is there scope for the influence of educated, cultivated women, which I do not think is at present exercised as much as it might be

and ought to be. Far be it from me to cast the slightest slur on the teachers of our schools, who do such splendid work, but it cannot be denied that for the most part they are drawn from a class only a little above the children themselves, and therefore, have not had the advantages of those who have been able to obtain a more liberal education and a wider culture. And under the system of State control, it is sometimes the case that officialism makes its iron hand too much felt, and the schools are practically ruled by inspectors and clerks, whose duty it is to see that things are properly done, and who cannot, in the nature of things, be exactly a humanizing influence in a school. Here then is the place for those ladies who have no need to earn a livelihood, and who are thus set free to serve their city or their parish without other reward than the consciousness of having been of some little use in their day and generation. There is need for such as these upon the School Boards, whether they are Boards having control of the education of many thousands of our city children, or whether they manage a single school in one of our country parishes. Especially great is the need on our great Boards, with their enormous amount of work and small armies of teachers. There are a few disagreeables to be encountered, of course, but only a few, and, as a whole, the work is most interesting and most repaying, for it is full of hope for the future, and one feels that no labour or time spent upon it is thrown away.

The chief disagreeable lies at the very threshold, unfortunately, viz., the election. The prospect of a contested election is very alarming to many ladies, and it never quite loses its terrors for the most hardened. On the first occasion you know so little of the work that you are dismally conscious that you have almost nothing to talk about at the inevitable meetings, and afterwards you feel rather tongue-tied because you dislike to say anything which could hurt the feelings of colleagues with whom you have worked pleasantly for three years, whom you respect, and yet who may be, educationally speaking, in the opposite camp. And sometimes there is some amount of heckling on the part of your own party to be gone through, which is anything but pleasant. But all things have an end; the speeches are done, the votes are counted, and you find yourself one of 15 people of all sorts, of different creeds and professions, who have to shake down so as to be able to pull together in harness for the next three years.

Once elected, the period of training begins. To any one coming fresh to it, the educational machine seems to be of

excessive complexity. There are the various Acts to be got up, both Education and Industrial Schools, the Bye-laws of the Board, and last, but not least, the Code; a lengthy and complicated document, an unfortunate circumstance in connection with which is, that no sooner have you mastered it, as you think, than a new one comes out with quantities of alterations, which render your previous knowledge to a large extent nugatory.

Then there are the schools to be visited, and the acquaintance of the teachers to be made, and the mastering of an immense amount of detail, all of which must be done before you can be said to be of any real use. In fact, it is a work not to be taken up in order to lay it down soon—one term of service upon a large Board is little more than training—you may hope in your second term to do some good work. And naturally there is some personal sacrifice to be made, for you are almost as much obliged to stay at home, except when the general holidays take place, as professional men are, and when a Board transacts most of its business in the afternoon, as the Bristol Board does, it involves the giving up of a good deal of the social side of life.

Certain qualities are desirable in those who wish to become members of School or any other Boards; ability to work with others, tact, discretion, willingness to accept a compromise, power to keep one's temper whatever happens. It is trying when you have perhaps spent many hours in elaborating some scheme, possibly involving the conducting of difficult negociations, to have it thrown out bodily at the Board meeting, perhaps upon some quite trivial point, by those whom you feel certain do not understand it. It is well to learn to take defeat well, and never to carry your chagrin into your personal relations with your colleagues. Those who can do this are pretty sure in the long run to be able to do what they wish to do.

It is worth while to put up with all difficulties and drawbacks which a seat on a School Board entails, on account of the power it also confers of exercising a wide influence over both teachers and children. The women teachers are usually disposed to regard a lady member as their friend, and to come to consult her in their difficulties, which are not few, and to speak to her about matters which they prefer to discuss with a lady rather than with a gentleman. Most lady members have much more leisure to visit the schools than their gentleman colleagues, and these visits are often looked forward to by the

mistresses as opportunities for discussing various points in connection with the management of their schools. There are the prize-givings and other functions also, when it is possible to talk to the children themselves, and advice given on those occasions is not always thrown away. I was walking in the street one day, when a boy with a basket on his arm came alongside, looked up in my face and said, "Miss Sturge, I've gone to work now, but I told my brother what you said at our school about being regular and going early." I am ashamed to say that I had to enquire at what school the poor child had been attending. It is very pleasant to be greeted by the children one meets in the streets, but one is a little embarrassed by their touching confidence in one's ability to recollect who they are and all about them. One child I met outside a school one day could not contain his delight at having passed his examination, so shouted to me as I passed "Miss Sturge, the Inspector says I may go into the 4th Standard now!" Another was anxious to inform me that it was his birthday to-day, and that he was 15 years old.

There is some scope for gaining an influence over the younger teachers, more especially the pupil teachers, though their large numbers in the case of the larger boards make it difficult to make their individual acquaintance. Under small boards, and in voluntary schools, it is possible for lady members to take a personal interest in all their staff, and such personal interest is of the utmost value to the teachers. But under the larger boards, it is well for ladies to take the Pupil Teacher Centre especially into their care, to go among the pupil teachers often, and try to arrange social gatherings and some kind of recreation for them when possible.

I have mentioned lady managers of voluntary schools. I am sure the School Committees ought always to include at any rate one lady, and where there are local managers under the School Boards, a large proportion of them should be ladies. Many feel that the position of local manager is not worth having, as it sometimes simply means the right to visit a school without conferring any right to really assist in the management, but it does at any rate afford an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the work, and School Board members might well be chosen from among the local visitors who are interested in the schools.

I repeat here what I said a few minutes ago, that for those ladies who have leisure and means, there is no work more interesting, more repaying, more full of hope for the future, and

with fewer drawbacks than the work of taking a part, however humble, in the direction of the education of the children of our country.

Let us now regard the elementary teaching profession as a career for ladies to whom paid work is a necessity. And here I do not mean to confine myself solely to the schools, but to include the headships and tutorships of the Training Colleges.

To touch on the latter point first. Here it seems to me is a great opportunity for ladies of liberal education and wide culture, for by taking such posts as these, they are able to influence the teachers themselves at the most impressionable time of their lives.

Perhaps not all my hearers may be aware that to become what is technically called a trained and certificated teacher, the young men and women, after passing through their apprenticeship as pupil teacher, and passing the scholarship examination, must enter a training college for two years, at the end of which they receive their certificate There are for girls at present 26 residential Training Colleges, providing accommodation for 1,859 students, which is not nearly enough. Most of these colleges are presided over by men; in the case of those belonging to the Church of England, usually clergymen, assisted, of course, by mistresses in various capacities. Dr. Fitch, Her Majesty's Inspector of Training Colleges for Mistresses, speaks of what ought to be their aim :—

"It is not merely as a seminary in which students are to be prepared to pass certain examinations, and to learn certain technical rules of school keeping, but as a place for the formation of character and tastes, for broadening and liberalising the mind, and for encouraging generous aspirations, that the training college has its chief value."

It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that women of the highest character and liberal culture should hold these posts in the Training Colleges. I regret that the headships are not more generally thrown open to them; there can be no such suitable head as a lady of wide sympathies and great power of imparting knowledge and of influencing others for good, and certainly no amount of culture or knowledge would be thrown away on such a post. At the moment, too, it is especially necessary that women, such as I speak of, should come forward for this work, for the Education Department, recognising how thoroughly inadequate the present accommodation in Training Colleges is, is trying a new experiment by opening non-

residential Colleges in connection with the University Colleges in various large cities, and it is entrusting the oversight of the female students almost always to well qualified ladies. Some training for these posts is needful beyond the usual qualifications required, let us say, for a High School mistress. A head of a Training College, or a Mistress of Method, should have made some study of what the French call *pédagogie.* and should know a good deal about the aims and methods of elementary education. There are, fortunately, institutions such as the Training College under Miss Hughes, at Cambridge, the Maria Grey Training College, and others, which give special preparation for such work, and where a certain amount of practical experience of school work can be obtained as well. I do not think that at present there are many ladies thoroughly competent to do this work, and I am very anxious that more should prepare themselves especially with this end in view.

I come now to the chief point of my paper. I want to urge the great desirability, from all points of view, of ladies entering the elementary teaching profession itself. At present, but very few have done so, partly, no doubt, on account of the extended period of training necessary, and partly for another cause to be touched upon presently.

It is not merely from the money point of view that I look at the matter, for I regard the work of the elementary teacher as one of the noblest in the world, and one full of promise and hope for our country, both in the present and in the future. For consider only that the children in the elementary Schools are the children of the England of to-day, and will themselves form the England of to-morrow, and that the influence of their teachers is paramount for weal or woe. For we must remember that the home influence is often far from what it should be, and in too many cases it works for evil rather than for good on the character of the child. Those of us who have come much into contact with the parents of the children attending our elementary schools know how often they have hardly the most rudimentary notions as to the management of their children, and we know also, alas, how many of those children come from drunken, miserable homes, where the influence and example of their parents is entirely for evil. For such children the school is their true home, and their teacher must act the mother's part. She has not merely to teach the three R's, she must inculcate obedience, honesty, truthfulness, thoughtfulness, consideration for others; she must counteract the evil influences of the home and the street;

she must root out the evil already implanted; she must supply the training that the child cannot otherwise receive. Thus the School is a true mission field, and the teacher a real missionary, and it is in the missionary spirit that I would urge ladies of education to enter upon this career.

As regards salaries, the pay, as far as head mistresses are concerned, is, under most Boards, fairly good, but then no one entering the profession at once becomes a full-blown head mistress. The usual way is for children of fourteen or so to be apprenticed for four years, after which those who take good places in the Queen's Scholarship examination pass into a Training College for two years, at the end of which they receive their certificates after a fairly stiff examination. There is a provision in the Code under which women who have passed Higher Local or equivalent examinations can at once become assistants, but they cannot become certificated until they have taught for two years in the same school, and have passed the certificate examination. Even then they do not become heads at once; they usually have to take an assistantship and await their turn. It is this period of probation which many ladies find it difficult to pass through, as often they do not think of earning their living until the pressure of need comes, and then they cannot afford to wait. What I desire is, that girls who are seeking a career in early youth, and whose parents can afford to help them, should turn their attention to the teaching profession, and deliberately train themselves for it. If they thus obtained their certificates by twenty-one or twenty-two, by twenty-seven or twenty-eight they would probably find themselves head mistresses of Schools with salaries ranging from £120 to £180 or £200, or even more, according to the size of their school.

The other difficulty to which I referred, and which I believe has some deterrent influence, is the supposed loss of social status. I cannot see why there should be any such loss, nor why the elementary teacher, whose work is of such vast importance to the future citizens of England, should be supposed to be lower in rank than other teachers. I believe this difficulty to be merely temporary. There was a time when the nursing profession was left to the Sairey Gamps and Mrs. Prigs, but now the best women of the land throw themselves eagerly into it. It only needs a start, and then, when a few of the boldest have led, others will follow. Already there are pioneers, and soon may others follow in their wake.

If ladies could but realise that this is work done directly

for the benefit of the State, that the future of England lies largely in the hands of the Elementary School Teachers, that in scarcely any other career does culture, womanly influence and love for others so immediately bear fruit, they would be eager to enter the profession, and would feel assured that in no other way could they render service more acceptable to God and to their fellowmen.

Miss A. J. Davies, of the Liverpool School Board, opened the discussion :—Ladies, I shall occupy your time for a very few moments. I thank Miss Sturge for her paper, which I agree with in the main. With respect to women as members of School Boards, it does seem to me that they have great opportunities of usefulness, but on the larger Boards there is so much to be done that the work should not be undertaken by any with whose home ties it would interfere, those being the highest and most sacred duties of woman. I think Miss Sturge unintentionally made a little distinction between ladies and teachers. I should like to include in the work of ladies that of our faithful teachers, for women have the most of the teaching, and it is admitted on all hands that their influence is invaluable. As regards the Day Industrial Schools, one lady said that children there were taught disrespect for their parents. I do not see how that can be, unless teaching a child to do right implies disrespect for those who do wrong. It is not a voluntary act upon the part of the parents to send their children to these Schools. It is only after two or three fines for non-attendance have been imposed, and an order to attend disregarded, that the child is committed there. They are, in effect, a trial to get children educated and improved without taking them away altogether from their parents. The parents are ordered to pay 2s. a week for each child, which would be sufficient for its maintenance in the school, but only about 11 per cent. of this amount can be got from them. After being in school a few months, if there is improvement, a child is licensed to an ordinary elementary school.

The Board has four Day Industrial Schools in Liverpool, which are in Queensland Street, Park Lane, Addison Street, and Bond Street.

As regards Managers of Board Schools ; in Liverpool they number six gentlemen and three ladies for each school, and have important duties to fulfil, many of them being those for which women are eminently qualified. 1. They have to appoint teachers, and, in this connection, woman's instinctive appreciation of character is important. 2. They become friends of the

teachers, who will confide in them, feeling sure that they will see that they are treated fairly. 3. They can take notice of individual children, and, during their visits to the school, pay attention to any whose health, eyesight, clothing, &c., seem to require it. 4. They can take a friendly interest in the children out of school, in their games and pursuits, and give them help and advice as to their future when they leave.

The Liverpool Board employs with advantage a lady as inspectress, and another as assistant inspectress.

The Edge Hill Training College here is among the few that have a lady as principal.

Miss Flora Stevenson, member of School Board of Edinburgh, : — Ladies, the only claim that I can have to address you is that for nearly twenty years I have been a member of the School Board, and am the oldest woman member in Great Britain. My experience as to the pleasantness of the work is the same as that of Miss Sturge. I would appeal to you to do what you can to increase the number of women members. Much has been said of the value of women workers, and I need not say more. I should like to emphasize what has been said as to having ladies as teachers in our schools. We want women of more culture and higher education, and where ladies have taken such a position their work has been of great value.

Miss S. J. Hale, of the Liverpool Training College, said :—Ladies, I wish to say that I very heartily approve the most valuable paper by Miss Sturge. She has given a most liberal view of the whole subject. I should like also to say how very much the cordial relation of the managers and teachers in the elementary schools helps them in their work, and, as representing a number of elementary teachers, I should like to thank the ladies who have thus contributed to their happiness. The particular point on which I wish to speak is the enormous amount of work that may be done with the children when they leave school. We feel it very hard that they should pass from us without our being able to do anything for them. This work, however, might be taken up by ladies who, obtaining the names of the children from the elementary teachers, could endeavour to do something for their future life. The time of leaving school is the most dangerous age, as the children are then freed from the restraints which, during their school life, often counteracts the influence of a wretched home. The thing must be done not by large associations, but by small bands of workers attached to each school, who will

interest themselves in the welfare of the girls. In this way, the teachers who have at heart the moral as well as the intellectual training of the girls will be best helped.

Hon. Maude Stanley. I wish to say a few words with regard to the position of managers. A great deal of power and influence is given to managers, and they have time to do more for the schools than the members of the School Board. I have been a Board School Manager in London for a great many years, and I know that a Manager can do a great deal by sympathising with the teachers and helping the children. Help can also be given in the way of Savings Banks and Country holidays. In the London School Board there is no restriction as to the number of women on the Committee.

Miss Emily Janes, Organising Secretary of the Society. I think it may be desirable to mention a plan which is being worked in Yorkshire. A lady is appointed, whose duty it is to visit all the teachers and endeavour to interest them in the work of continued influence over the girls after they have left school. She obtains the names and addresses of the girls with a view to helping them to get situations, and interesting herself in their welfare, getting them to become members of clubs, &c. I think this plan might be tried with advantage in other places.

Miss Florence Melly. Allow me to say a very few words as to the work we can do among girls after they have left school. This was so great a cause of trouble to the head mistress of a school in Liverpool, that some eight years ago she and I started a sort of club for these girls. Those who have just left school, having passed the upper standards, meet once a month to spend a happy evening. This consists of playing games, and having a talk with the lady workers. Girls from 14 to 17 meet once every other month and have tea, games and music. Those from 17 to 24 spend a similar evening. The married girls meet in this way twice a year. We workers also undertake to be at home for one morning or afternoon in the week, when the girls may come to see us. The result of these calls is wonderful. The girls show the most touching gratitude for the help and counsel they receive.

The conference was then adjourned till the afternoon.

AFTERNOON, 2.30 TO 4.30.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.—*Continued.*

1. *Continuation Classes.* Miss LIDGETT *(London).*

1a. *Technical Classes.* Mrs. BELL *(Marlborough).*

2. *Dull Children and how to deal with them.* Mrs. WALKER *(Bath).*

2a. *Dull Children and how to deal with them.* Mme. ADELE DE PORTUGAL *(Naples).*

The chair was taken by Mrs. ROWLAND WILLIAMS at 2-30.

CONTINUATION CLASSES.

By Miss LIDGETT.

THE School Board Elections, now close at hand for the seventh time, force us to consider once more Mr. Forster's great measure for providing elementary education for every child, and for making regular school attendance part of the law of the land. After twenty-one years we may form at least a partial judgment as to its success, in the decrease of juvenile crime, the decrease of pauperism and the improvement in manners and in the standard of living generally observed among our people, an improvement in which our School Boards have undoubtedly borne a most important part. But it has not taken so long for those who hoped the most to feel disappointment at the waste of early school teaching given at so great a cost, when the scholars gain the liberty to spend their leisure time as they please.

For several years School Boards in various parts of the country sought to prevent this waste by forming evening elementary classes under the Government Code, but with very moderate success. Indeed the average attendances decreased from 46,069 in the year 1880 to 24,233 in 1885. School Inspectors were then lamenting the "practical extinction" of evening schools. Empty school rooms had to be closed.

Instead of the 1363 schools inspected in 1880, there were only 841 in 1885.

But there could be no harking back; the schools could not be closed finally. The fact was recognised that our schools were fatally unattractive, that part of the teaching must be recreative, and that the code must be amended which refused any teaching at all unless every scholar submitted to work at subjects he did not wish to learn, in the ordinary standards.

In Nottingham, the experiment of recreative teaching was first tried by illustrating the reading-book with lantern views of the places and scenes described, and by musical drill. The success of a more cheerful evening and of the personal interest shown by voluntary workers was so great that Dr. Paton, who had furthered the work in Nottingham, made it his business in the next few years to wake up all who had spare money, time, or energy, to devote it to reviving and extending our Evening Schools, and it was with this object that the Recreative Evening Schools Association was formed.

It is not an easy matter for volunteers working under a voluntary association to fit their work into a system of teaching given by specially trained and responsible teachers. They were looked upon, naturally enough, with a certain amount of suspicion. It is too often thought that a voluntary worker is free from obligation as to regularity or punctuality of attendance. However, in spite of all drawbacks, and in virtue of much steady enthusiasm in the work, the voluntary and recreative element has roused up fresh interest. In addition to the lantern illustrations and Musical Drill, the Association has supplied elementary teaching in Natural Science, in History, and in handicrafts, such as Wood-carving, Fret-cutting, and Needle-work.

The figures for London alone speak for themselves. In October, 1885, the number of scholars on the register was 4,865; in October, 1891, there were 19,544. This improvement may be taken as owing in great measure, directly or indirectly, to the Recreative Evening Schools Association; directly, in the way already described; indirectly, through the alteration of the code, which the Association unceasingly strove to bring about. There is still plenty of room for development, when we remember that in London alone 84,000 children leave the Elementary Day Schools every year, and that, out of the half million boys and girls between 12 and 18 years of age, we have under 20,000 attending evening classes, and that among these we have a good sprinkling of older men and

women anxious to repair the defects or neglects of their early years.

We cannot use the words of the Jesuit fathers, "Give us the child until he is seven, and do as you like with him afterwards." We claim those seven years of plenty when boys and girls have greater freedom of time and money than they are likely to have in all their after life. The immeasurable waste of human life in those unburdened years, the miserable leanness that follows—Is any effort too great to prevent so great a loss?

People concerned in education at least are awake. With them the next questions are: Shall our Evening Schools be compulsory? Shall they be free? For my own part, I hope the attendance will not be compulsory, except in the case of children under thirteen, who have left the Day School, or of those who have not passed the sixth Standard. It would, no doubt, be right to make attendance compulsory at a day school until the thirteenth year has been completed, irrespective of any standard, not even allowing half time. But if, though thirteen, the scholar has not passed the sixth standard, he should remain at school until he has done so, having the choice of the Day or the Evening School. But even this could hardly be enforced in the case of many girls, and it is more than doubtful whether public opinion would, as yet, support compulsory attendance at Continuation Schools. I think we should agree that it is better to attract than to drive, and this is the view of the London School Board. To quote from their Code of Regulations for Teachers and Managers:—

"Responsible teachers must endeavour to make the classes as interesting and attractive as possible, and should, as far as may be found practicable and expedient, meet the individual wishes of the pupils. They (the responsible teachers) should guide the pupils in the choice of subjects, as experience shows that pupils who take up too many subjects become discouraged by their slow progress, and then leave the classes. In advising a pupil, the responsible teacher should have regard to the knowledge already acquired by the pupil, his occupation, his spare time for study, and his capabilities."

As to attendance without payment, except in cases of compulsion, it is difficult to see why boys and young men and even girls who have money to spend on their amusements, cannot afford two shillings for thirteen weeks' teaching. If teaching is given practically free of charge, the plan adopted by the Leeds School Board would certainly seem the wisest:

"The Education Committee did not propose to declare the schools free in name, but at the end of the session they would make a return to every pupil who had not missed attending a single night, the full amount of the fees he paid on the opening night—*viz.*, 3s. Those who had been present all but four nights would receive 2s. 6d. and those who had missed not more than eight nights would have 2s. repaid to them. It was not proposed to return the money itself, but to give the pupils a deposit-book of one of the Board's branch banks connected with the Yorkshire Penny Bank, showing 3s., or whatever amount might be due to them, standing to their credit. This would be a stepping-stone to thrift."

If you visit the Evening Classes any evening, you will find a cheerful, hearty set of workers, both teachers and taught. The boys are mostly shop assistants, errand boys, etc., and the girls are of the same class. As to the subjects taught, the new code makes it no longer necessary for those who have passed standard five to go on with the "three Rs," though they may go on with one or more of them if they wish to. They may take four special subjects out of those called class subjects or specific subjects.

The class subjects are—

Singing,
English,
Geography
Elementary Science,
History.

The specific subjects are—

Algebra,
Euclid and Mensuration,
Mechanics,
Chemistry,
Physics,
Animal Physiology,
Botany,
Principles of Agriculture,
Latin,
French,
Domestic Economy,

In looking through the programme for the 266 Evening Schools under the London School Board, you invariably see Book-keeping, Shorthand and French with some branches of practical science. Laundry-work, Cooking, Needlework and Cutting-out are taught to girls. As you look at the scholars,

you cannot resist the impression that you have here the pick of the working class boys and girls. The programme assures them of teaching that will bear directly upon their daily calling and their advancement in life.

And here two questions arise in your mind. The first is, where are the boys and girls of a humbler rank? After allowing for those kept late at work, I fear the answer to this question must still be found in the streets, and, as I am told, in Music Halls.

While I speak of the Board Schools, I am well aware that voluntary efforts is working all round, gathering in, cheering and guiding those who will not submit to the discipline of full school teaching. And this free adaptation to the ways of a rougher class is winning over little groups, both of boys and girls, in numbers that cannot be easily reckoned up. But when we remember the forebodings of those who said that our girls were going to be educated out of all relation to their business in life, and when we look at these thousands frolicking about the streets, we can hardly understand the fear of over-education. We cannot doubt that evenings of this kind of amusement are unfitting them for any worthy part in life.

Within the next few weeks we Londoners shall hear much of the appalling extravagance of the London School Board. In spite of all that can be said, thoughtful ratepayers will will consider no extravagance so appalling as that of human life, and of life in those years when they think most anxiously of their own sons and daughters, years when new impressions come in like a flood, and when every month shows a change in character for better or for worse. To see habits and aptitudes for learning squandered and lost, just when they might be turned to most account, to find those minds in their freshness saturated with base ideas which will never be quite washed away, be the sobering experience of later life what it may, this will make any thoughtful ratepayer prefer to add a little at least to his or her burdens rather than to have any share in such extravagance as this.

To come back to our earnest workers in the Board School Evening Classes; as I look down the list of their subjects, and as I see the preponderance of those immediately bearing on daily work, that in every completed programme Book-keeping, Shorthand and French are taught, and that in all the 266 schools there are only eighteen classes for History and Literature, while making allowance for teaching in these subjects given under the name of Reading, I cannot but ask whether at

last we are not a little overbalancing our educational scheme with what is immediately practical. It is difficult to overrate the importance of preparing our people to hold their own against foreign or any other competition. But even in our schools, it seems,

> "The world is too much with us, late and soon,
> Getting and spending we lay waste our powers."

We seem to be training clerks and mechanics. We want men and women. As one day in seven is reserved from ordinary toil, so some little portion of our teaching should be reserved for enlarging the mind, for awakening the imagination, for learning who and what we are, for learning something of the great inheritance into which we are born, and of the labours and struggles by which it has been won. We may well suspect mere smatterings. But the citizens of a great country should at least have some sound knowledge of its history. Those whose votes will modify, or reform, or even abolish ancient institutions should at least know how those institutions came into being. Boys and girls, men and women should be led to delight in our great national literature. We are moving forward. We may perhaps hope for the time when they will no longer speak of the "educated classes," but when there will be one great people in full possession of all its faculties.

In concluding let me quote the words of James Russell Lowell: "We are inhabitants of two worlds, and owe a double, but not a divided allegiance. In virtue of our clay, this little ball of earth exacts a certain loyalty of us, while in our capacity as spirits, we are admitted citizens of an invisible and holier fatherland. . . . . Our true country is that ideal realm which we represent to ourselves under the names of religion, duty and the like."

Let us not forget or fail to pass on this ideal inheritance to those who shall come after us.

TECHNICAL CLASSES.

MRS. BELL.

I HAVE been asked to tell you about some Classes for Cookery and Domestic Economy which were set on foot nearly three years ago in Wiltshire and Dorsetshire. At the present time, when technical education, and the distribution of the fund that

is to be devoted to encouraging it, is discussed all over England, it may be of interest to hear the experience of one who has tried what it will do for girls in agricultural districts.

Our work in Wiltshire and Dorsetshire grew out of our connection with the Girls' Friendly Society. The standard of morality is terribly low in the agricultural districts of some parts of England. These isolated villages and homesteads, which nestle so picturesquely in the folds of the downs, are disfigured by evil which is repeated from generation to generation. *Nowhere* is the existence of a right public opinion more necessary. The utter callousness of the parents, in matters which touch the very life both of body and soul, fills us with despair. Talking to the parents is of little use. The best chance is to put before the girls the beauty and sanctity of the home as God intended it to be; to urge them to do all they can outwardly, as well as inwardly, to fit themselves to be worthy of it, and, if possible, to give them some little preparation for the duties of life.

For it is impossible to know much of the children of the labouring class without recognising how little is done to prepare the girls either for service in their own home or elsewhere. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors for the Wiltshire Elementary Schools, in writing to me lately, said:—"The district under my charge contains nearly 230 schools. Nothing whatever is done in any of the schools to give the girls the least practical insight into the work and duties that most of them will eventually have to perform."

We have long recognised the fact that it is not enough to teach boys to read, cypher, and write, but that there must be also some training for the actual business of life, the work produced being thereby greatly increased in value.

If this is true for boys, it is equally true for girls. Whether at home or in domestic service, in business or in a profession, their usefulness, their happiness, sometimes even their morality, depends on their being properly fitted for the work they have to do.

At the present time there is an immense demand for cooks and for laundresses: the work is notoriously ill-done, fathers and husbands are disgusted, wives and daughters are worried; yet so far we have done little to meet the want, and in this way to secure the comfort of our homes. There are a few Training Homes in the country, but these are chiefly intended for girls who, for various reasons, are in special need of help. What are we doing for the average girls in cottage homes, who would naturally in time be our cooks and laundry women?

We drive them to school when they are little more than babies, thus depriving them of the rough training entailed by the necessities of their own home. Government certainly encourages the study of Cookery and Laundry Work in Elementary Schools by offering a grant, but it is rarely claimed, because in small towns and rural districts it is practically impossible to get qualified teachers. When our girls are twelve or fourteen they leave school. A few, owing to the kindness of friends, get a little training in private houses, but the majority scrub a little, or wash a little at home, or mind the baby, and learn to idle and gossip in the streets till they hear of "a place."

Now what sort of a place can such girls take? They often do not know what cleanliness means! This condition of things is cruelly hard on mistresses, and harder still on the girls. The mistress often enough can teach them nothing. She could not clean a saucepan herself, and so the little servant gets disheartened and goes from bad to worse. Can we wonder that domestic service is distasteful when the steps to perfection are so hard to climb? That our girls prefer any ill-paid uninteresting work at a factory to household service? Or that they drift in restless dissatisfaction, or in a vain search for work, to our large towns, where, they either come utterly to ruin, or crowd still more the crowded dens of the sweater, who alone is able to utilise, by a cruel grinding system, the unskilled labour which finds a market nowhere else?

Recognising, as it does, the special dangers which beset girls, and especially untrained girls between the age of twelve and eighteen, the Girls' Friendly Society determined to do something to meet this want. In January, 1889, our Bishop's wife wrote asking me if I could find some one who would undertake the organization of an Industrial Department for the Diocese of Salisbury. It was new and unfamiliar ground, and no one knew much about it. If I would take the work for a year and see what could be done, perhaps afterwards——, and so on.

I had a good deal on my hands at that time, other technical classes, such as Woodcarving, under that most excellent Society, the Home Arts and Industries Association, and classes under the Science and Art Department; I knew nothing about the organization necessary for instruction in the Domestic Arts and Sciences, but I *did* know that it was work which ought to be done, and that the magnificent organization, which is the strength of the Girls' Friendly Society, was the very

machinery which should make it possible. Here was a Society which, in the Diocese alone, numbered three or four thousand girls between the ages of twelve and thirty, linked together by a double chain of associates, many of them experienced parish-workers, and all willing to forward any plans likely to be useful to the girls under their care. The opportunity must not be thrown away!

The first thing to be done was to find out what had been attempted elsewhere, to learn from the experience of others, and to take advice from experts.

After much enquiry we fixed upon the Liverpool Training School of Cookery and Domestic Economy as the one from which we should obtain a class of teaching which would be in itself educational, and suited in its practical work to the wants and means of the people. The right principles once mastered, it would be possible to graft upon this stock any amount of skilful practice. We decided that this special teaching was to be had only from Liverpool, and that the itinerant teacher scheme, which has been worked out so admirably, commended itself to us as the very thing to meet our requirements.

With Miss Fanny Calder's plans in our hands we saw the work was possible, and we determined on two principles which we have adhered to.

Our watchwords were *economy* and *efficiency*. Our first desire was that the work should be thorough; the second, that, if possible, it should pay its own way. Our hope was that if a scheme could be worked out by which the teaching would pay its own expenses, and yet be within the reach of the poorest, instruction in the Domestic Arts and Sciences might become a permanent and very valuable institution throughout the diocese.

We commenced work in the autumn of 1889 with a grant of £10, with which we purchased a set of cookery utensils (everything except crockery), which the teacher took round with her, and for the use of which each branch was charged a small sum. We were so fortunate as secure an admirable teacher who was personally acceptable everywhere. Here, as everywhere, it is the gentlewoman who does the best work. She can sympathise with the aims of the promoters of such teaching, and she can show the pupils that the meanest work is noble work if well done. If only more gentlewomen would train for this work!

Our plan was as follows:—We proposed that each branch should hold courses of high class lessons in Cookery and

Laundry work for the well-to-do at a rather higher charge than the actual cost of the teaching. This permitted a very low charge for the artizan classes which were held during the same period. The courses consisted of six, ten, or even twelve weeks' instruction, and we hoped by undertaking the whole responsibility of the teacher's salary, to send her from centre to centre, from group to group of classes, to give a few weeks teaching in each centre. The teacher was able to give ten lessons every week, but as no town or district required her whole time, groups of classes were formed in neighbouring villages which were visited in turn once a week. Our choice of a centre depended upon the applications for lessons which were received; of course careful grouping was required to fit in the teacher's time to the necessities of each place, and at the same time avoid waste of time upon the circuit, but it was done, and done so successfully that at the end of a year's work we found we had completely defrayed the cost of the teaching, the branches had done the same, and had presented their profits, or part of them, to the centre. A second year has given us the same results. From first to last during the two years of which I am speaking, £10 was the only sum necessary to start and carry on this work. That sum provided for the purchase of utensils, and the first cost of these has been almost covered by the small charge made for hire, whilst the profits made in the different branches were sometimes considerable.

Between fifty and sixty courses of lessons were given in the two years.

I will now tell you of our efforts to make the work *thorough*. In Cookery, there are two classes of lessons, and both are absolutely necessary if any real good is to be done. The first are *demonstrations*, the second *practice lessons*. At the first, any number of persons can be present that can see and hear, and if well managed they are very popular and very profitable. Such lessons are not merely lectures, they consist of practical illustrations of the art, two or three dishes being cooked at each lesson: the whole process is shewn, principles are inculcated, and practical hints given. But these demonstrations, although useful and stimulating, are not by themselves enough. A certain amount of training is necessary before such a lesson can be assimilated and utilized for the benefit of the working man's home. But it is difficult to secure regular instruction for girls when schooldays are over. The boy generally has his evenings free, but the girl, whether at home or in service, can never count upon being free, her work is "never done." This

being so, no system of Technical Education for girls will be satisfactory, until the Elementary Schools do their share of the work. It is whilst discipline is strong, whilst the fingers are supple, and the brain not dulled by the mental inactivity that sets in when a girl leaves school, that first principles should be instilled, and the girls made to learn thoroughly the use of tools such as knives, spoons, rolling pins, etc., the practical habits of observation as to the management of stoves, and the general principles of heat. Our lessons would be more truly *continuation* lessons if the work were begun in Elementary Schools. The Education Department offers a grant of four shillings per scholar for this teaching, the School Inspectors urge its importance; the difficulty in country districts is to pay the fee for teaching with the 17s. 6d. limit to the grant imposed by the Education Department. Such work in villages can now be done only by private charity, and will not be done at all in most places until the Elementary School Teacher is qualified to undertake it. The Elementary School Teachers are anxious to qualify, for they feel that the recent introduction of compulsory teaching of drawing into the boys' schools, may be followed by a shock to them; instruction in Cookery and Laundry Work may be suddenly required in girls' schools, for legislation will probably follow public opinion in this matter, and with all the money now spent on technical education, and the many opportunities of instruction, they will be left without excuse if they do not qualify. The work, however, is not yet done in the Elementary School, and in order to provide this necessary instruction and training for the girls, our teachers hold practice classes. These practice lessons are taken alternately with the demonstrations, and the girls themselves do the cooking under the supervision of the teacher. These classes are admirable, but like Dairy Work and Carpentering, they are necessarily expensive. Only twelve can be conveniently taken at one time (though the Education Department permits twenty-four in the Elementary Schools at one practice lesson), and the food cooked is not always perfect after experiments have been made with it by beginners.

One word as to the popularity of these classes. Wherever we have sent our teacher, there it is that they want her again. If there had been difficulty in getting together enough pupils to form a class when the work was first started, it was not so the second time. Girls who had almost to be pushed into the artizan classes, and who were suffering badly from that common complaint in rural districts called *apathy*, wakened up to

real enjoyment and interest, the enthusiasm spread to the home, and the mothers became as keen as the daughters. I have heard of several girls in the past year who have attended our practising classes in Cookery, which includes some cleaning, who have been enabled through the short training to take satisfactory places. It has made all the difference in their position, their comfort, and their self-respect. We all love to do the thing we can do well, and these little servants begin quite differently if they have learned the elements of house-cleaning, of cookery, and of laundry work. The few practical lessons in blacking a stove and cleaning a saucepan, and the knowledge of the rules for boiling and baking and stewing make all the difference. These rules are imprinted on the memory by the popular Cookery Rhymes published by the Liverpool School, which might with advantage be sung in every Elementary School in the kingdom.

We had obtained these very satisfactory results when we heard that a large sum had been handed over to the County Council which might be used for Technical Education, and which it was resolved to use for that purpose, and we determined to do all that we possibly could to secure that a portion of this money should supply the much-needed instruction in the principles and practice of those arts and sciences on which the comfort and health of the home depend. We at once took steps to put the matter before the public. At a large and representative meeting of ladies it was resolved to petition the County Council for funds to carry on the good work on the same lines as those already found so successful, and with the hope of support the meeting resolved to form a central school for Cooking and Domestic Economy, and to put itself into a strong position by affiliation to the Northern Union of Schools of Cooking and Domestic Economy. As a result of this appeal a sum of £500 was granted for the support of an Itinerant Teaching Scheme for the County on the lines already laid down, and £200 for a Central School where it is hoped that teachers in the Elementary Schools and others will take advantage of the training it will be possible to gain, and in order to qualify for earning the government grant will present themselves for the Examination for the Diploma of the Northern Union of Schools of Cookery. By its connection with the Northern Union, the Wiltshire School secures the advice of an experienced body, and sets before its members a high standard of excellence which it would be difficult to reach and maintain without some external test.

The fund placed at our disposal will defray the travelling expenses of our teachers, who will thus be equally available for all parts of the county; it will defray half the cost of apparatus and utensils, and about half the cost of instruction for those who are eligible. The new committees which have been formed in each district to carry out Technical Education will for the future be the organization through which the work will be done, and we are urging these local committees to form sub-committees of women to undertake the arrangements for these particular subjects, Although help is given towards expenses, that help is dependent on the attendance of the pupil. In many districts, and especially those our teachers have not visited, the girls have no sense of imperfection and no desire for improvement, and the mothers are not alive to the practical advantages of the instructions. As before, these classes will be dependent for success on the energy, good sense, and enthusiasm of the ladies' committees. If our girls are to be taught, it can only be done by looking them up, compelling them to come in, that they may not miss their share of the advantages so liberally offered to them.

It seems strange to me to stand here in Liverpool and tell you the story of our work in Wiltshire. To us in Wiltshire, Liverpool seems to be the very source and fount of practical wisdom in such matters. That we have been able to do any work at all is due to the never-failing help and kindness of the Secretary of the great Liverpool School. Her ingenuity and enthusiasm have carried her through difficulties and discouragements that would have daunted most women. But for her vigorous and victorious struggle with the Education Department, we should not have secured the recognition of Government for both Cookery and Laundry work in the Elementary Schools. She has been the founder of that great educational body, the Northern Union of Schools of Cookery, which is a council of experts as well as an examining body with the power of granting diplomas which qualify the holders to practice in the Elementary Schools. The Northern Union holds the same relative position with regard to the Training Schools connected with it that the Universities hold with regard to their Colleges.

Miss Fanny Calder's name is one to conjure with in England, and her plans and schemes for artizan teaching have been translated into several languages, and used especially in Germany, which is far before England in technical training of all kinds. She has been the pioneer in this Missionary work,

and her object throughout has been not alone to shew the best methods, to encourage thrift in the use of food and skill in preparing it, but to train the understanding to an intelligent comprehension of what the processes are and the reasons for them—to make the work scientific in its best sense. The results have been and are of enormous importance. They are in many cases nothing less than the *making of the home*, and no higher, nor sweeter, nor more precious work can be done by a woman.

The discussion on the last two papers was opened by Miss Flora Stevenson, of Edinburgh, and Miss Fanny Calder.

Miss Flora Stevenson :—I have listened with very great interest to the papers which have just been read. The paper on "Continuation Classes" is the one I have to speak about. I am glad to observe the change made in the name—formerly the term Elementary Evening Classes was employed.

These evening classes are necessary because so many boys and girls arrive at an age when compulsory education ceases without being fitted for undertaking any remunerative employment. The name "Continuation Classes" is, therefore, very suitable.

There is a danger of looking only at what is purely the practical part of the education; it seems to me that it is of great importance that there should be some greater mental elevation imparted, and that to this end there should be literary subjects introduced into the schools.

Then with regard to the irregularity of attendance. The boys and girls were unwilling to retrace their steps on subjects which had been included in their school routine, but this difficulty disappeared when a larger choice of subjects was introduced.

With regard to payment, we have adopted the plan of exacting fees with the promise of returning them when attendance is regular. It seems to be a little like a bribe, but still it is worth trying.

Another point is the combination of recreation with instruction, and we gave over two rooms in which to carry on classes purely recreative. I am glad to say that through the liberality of the trustees of an educational endowment we have been able to give to the School Board a certain sum for carrying on classes in cooking and dressmaking.

There must be a great deal of personal influence exercised to induce girls and boys to attend these classes.

Miss Fanny Calder :—After the very interesting account

that Mrs. Bell has given us as to what the Girls' Friendly Society has done, you will be interested to hear that that was but the beginning of a great amount of work in the South of England. I should like to say a few words about what this technical education is and how it should be conducted everywhere.

Within the last nine months there has come a sudden demand throughout England for teachers for these subjects and more applications have been made than can be met. This points to the fact that the want has been felt by the women of England for some time past. It is necessary to train our girls for the possibilities of home life in all its branches, which would be the calling of most girls trained in our elementary schools. This technical education includes four heads. Cookery, elementary laundry work, household sewing and dress cutting, and lectures on health in the home. Laundry work can be easily taught, without preliminary expenses. A class of this description can be conducted in the simplest manner possible, with few utensils, and in a small room. We are not training professional laundresses, but only enabling girls to do their own laundry work at home. Household sewing is not to take the place of sewing taught in schools, but it is to be a continuation of it. The instruction includes the mending and patching of garments in actual wear. The dress cutting is a great attraction, and if interest is shown by the girls in making their own things, they will not be so anxious to spend their evenings out of doors.

The object of our technical education is to teach girls to be useful housewives.

Miss Burton:—I was very much interested in the last paper, but I should like to advise that a sewing machine be introduced into the school and taught to the girls, as mending can be done better with that than anything else. The girls should also be taught to keep the machine in order. I should like to mention that I take a great deal of interest in evening classes, and quite approve all that was said with regard to literary culture.

Miss Mary Petrie:—I have only a single word to say on each of the papers. May I mention an experiment that has been made in the parish of Kensington. A sum of money was left for the benefit of the poor, and by means of this evening classes have been started. The teachers are efficient and the girls eager.

Then I should like to mention the experiment made by the

National Health Society of sending out lady lecturers who have obtained certificates to teach women to take care of their own bodies and those of their children. A knowledge of the laws of health and an understanding of the benefit of pure air and water is essential.

This experiment has been made in Devonshire where the County Council has made a grant of money for the purpose. I heartily endorse what Miss Lidgett said, that although technical education is a good thing yet we want something more. There are powers of imagination in our girls who are yet in their teens, and if we do not cultivate that taste our young people will indulge in music-hall and similar entertainments. We must give them some food for the higher part of their being.

The next two papers were by Mrs. Walker, of Bath, and Madame Adele de Portugall, Directress of the Froebel Training College and Kindergarten at Naples. Madame de Portugall was unable to be present, but her paper was introduced by Madame Salis Schwabe, and read by Fraulein Klostermann.

DULL CHILDREN, AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM.

MRS. WALKER.

DULL children! This title falls upon one's ear as a contradiction. We are so accustomed to think of children as the very sunbeams of life that there is something painfully discordant in the epithet! Yet true it is that, within England alone, there are not scores only but hundreds of children who are only too accurately described as dull.

By dull children we do not mean idiots, but all those who are deficient in brain power to any degree short of idiocy. The term includes a great variety of cases, from the child who is almost an idiot to the child whom we hardly like to pick out from his school-fellows as "exceptional," but who yet fails entirely to keep pace with them in his lessons, and is left behind as a dunce. In an intellectual point of view, we mean those who, after due amount of trial, fail to pass the Government Standards, in a moral aspect, they are those who, as they grow up, show themselves to be "deficient in self-protective power, who cannot, in one word, take care of themselves."

While in some respects dull children are better off than idiots, in others they fare worse. The idiot is not expected to take a part in the battle of life. But the feeble-minded are

supposed to do so. Hence they are hustled and pushed about and trampled in the fray. "Devil take the hindmost!" has been the past order of things for them! Who can tell how many pangs boys and girls of deficient brain power have suffered in past times from the ignorance and impatience of teachers, and of masters and mistresses!

No doubt, all schools contain naughty, idle boys and girls, who will not work though they can work. But the careful teacher soon learns to distinguish them from the heavy-browed, or timid anxious-looking child who wishes to learn but cannot!

In this happy century of ours, when all hidden evils seem brought to light, and as soon as discovered are valiantly coped with, the sorrows of the feeble-minded have come in for a due share of observation. From various quarters, compassionate voices have called attention to them. Amongst the earliest pleaders in their behalf were several lady-guardians, in this, as in many other things, justifying their appointment. Miss Donkin, long a lady guardian in London, pleads for the feeble-minded girl found in the workhouses, and thus traces her history: "She is seen first in the little group, incapable of profiting by the instruction given to the rest. When of an age to go up into the girls' school, her deficiencies become still more obvious. When she is of an age to leave the district school, how to find a place for the simple Susan is a problem for the matron. She is totally unfit for ordinary service. She drifts from place to place, a burden to herself, and a constant care to the secretaries. All else failing, she has to return to the workhouse at last." Miss Clifford, a Bristol lady guardian, takes up the same tale. She had often watched with bitter sorrow the downward course of such weak-minded girls. She can tell us how one and another has drifted into the streets, and how, again and again, the feeble-minded girl, having developed into the feeble-minded woman, will come to the workhouse as a mother!

What can be done to save such hapless maidens from the ruin to which their guiltless lack of wits exposes them? The Guardians have no power to retain them in Poor Law Schools after 16. Had they such power who would wish to keep them there? "The Workhouse!" exclaimed a lady of great experience, "you might as well throw them at once into the streets!" For as the Workhouses are at present constituted it is impossible to keep grown-up girls altogether apart from the low bad women who form a large number of the inmates of such institutions.

Superintendents of Training Homes for Girls have similar experience to that of Lady Guardians. Owing to the low class from which their children usually come, frequent cases of feeble-minded girls, often the offspring of drunken parents, appear amongst them.

In the Preventive Home which I superintend at Bath, we are seldom without one such child amongst the average number of 22. She is not supposed to be feeble-minded when sent to us, but is soon discovered to be so. What shall we do with her? is the difficult question we ask again and again.

True, we must not hastily pronounce a girl feeble-minded. She may only be one of slow development. Patience and time may be all that is wanted for her. I can remember more than one child whom at first we thought hopelessly dull, who yet under persevering care has developed into a sensible, useful young woman. Still there remains a certain number who are positively below par. What can be done for them?

Private benevolence has already led the way in their behalf. A few small Homes have already been opened to receive them. One of these, in Gloucestershire, I had the pleasure of visiting last summer. The quiet, the bracing air, and the charming country around, all combine to make the locality of this Home most desirable. Eleven girls are here comfortably homed in a roomy, old fashioned house, at the back of which is a spacious garden. Some of the inmates were busy taking mattresses to pieces, cleaning, and remaking them, an industry which it is hoped will prove profitable. Others were at needlework, in which they excel. One or two were at housework. "Such girls," it was explained to me, "can do many things well, only it is always necessary for some one else to furnish the brain power needful to direct their work!" One girl had so much improved that she was shortly going into service. Improvement is aimed at in all, but many, as Miss Wemyss allowed, are never likely to be fit to send out into the world. Happy for them if they can remain in such a Home, and happy any lady who will gather similar girls into similar shelters,

> And thus by love and tender care
> Shield some poor sisters from despair!

A letter just received gives a most encouraging picture of the progress of this Institution. It is as follows: "I am so thankful to say the Home has succeeded more than I could have hoped. It does one's heart good to go there and see bright happy faces, and these poor things busy and useful in

their lives, instead of dragging through a miserable monotony in a Union or Penitentiary, or leaving both to go for excitement into the streets." A lady who is living here remarked to me a day or two ago "What a remarkably nice looking set of girls you have at the home. I do hope there will be similar Homes in every place. I have so many applications to take in girls."

Another Home of the same character, but in a very different neighbourhood, I visited last August. Half-an-hour's drive took me from the brilliant company of savants in Burlington House to the quiet little Home in Aubert Park, Highbury, where some of the most meagrely furnished with brains of any girls I have seen out of an Idiot Asylum are lovingly sheltered. This Institution owes its origin to the need felt by Mrs. Barnet, of Whitechapel, of some place whither to send the dull girls of the Workhouse she visited. The girls are sent from the Union with the hope that prolonged and special training may at last make them fit for domestic service. A month's probation is given to each girl sent. Only cases supposed to be capable of improvement are kept. A fair amount of success has already been secured. During the last year, nine girls were sent out to day service, and three to permanent situations. The longest period one has remained in a place is three years. "They are," said Miss Jennings, the kind and devoted Superintendent of the Home, "very stupid and difficult to teach at first, but by patience and kindness soon improve." The monotony and isolation of Workhouse life cannot have been good for them. "Some of them," said Miss Jennings, "have no idea what a shop is when they come. It is a gain when, by sending them on errands, they learn the value of money, and what buying and selling means." Their range of knowledge is very small. A lady in giving a class to them one day had occasion to refer to green peas, and was surprised to find that not one of the girls knew what they were like! I found the girls busy at ironing and needlework. They are fond of singing while so employed at work, and it has a soothing effect on them,

> For gentle Music, darling of the skies,
> Loves to assist our lowly charities!

When they go into service they are still allowed to look on this house as their home. They come on Sundays to tea, and always receive a kind welcome.

This Home is certified by the Local Government Board.

It is well that there should be some variety in the Homes established for this class of girls, but, on the whole, the country, with its fresher air and more ample space, seems more suitable for them. To help in gardening, in the care of poultry, in haymaking, in fruit gathering, and jam making, are excellent employments for them.

Homes such as these, then, are required, how much required it is hard to say! Most painfully the want of them is felt by all workers amongst friendless girls and young women.

I have mentioned that the inmates of the Aubert Park Home are mostly sent by the Guardians. But there are two impediments to this being freely done. (1) They have no power to send a girl over 16 without her own consent, (2) an application must be made to the Local Government Board for leave in each separate case. To remove these hindrances, it is proposed to apply to Government to authorise a slight extension of the Act of Parliament which empowers Boards of Guardians to place the blind, deaf, and dumb in suitable institutions, the proposed extension of the Act to include the feeble-minded only involving the addition of one or two words.

We must remember that a lad or girl of 16 is reckoned as an adult.

It may be objected that the Guardians would find themselves involved in new expenses by undertaking the maintainance of such young persons for a longer or shorter period after they have reached the age at which it is usual to place them in service. But on the other hand, the greater evils of the present state of things would, it is hoped, be largely avoided. The girls would in many cases ultimately become useful members of society, and there would be fewer miserable creatures returning again and again to the Workhouses, to become mothers of illegitimate children, often feeble-minded like themselves! Of the character physically of such illegitimate and feeble-minded children, Mrs. Greenwood, a well-known worker amongst Friendless Girls, tells us in her pamphlet on the Protection of Child Life. She mentioned that whereas the death-rate amongst children born in wedlock in England is 17 per cent., the death-rate amongst the 50,000 illegitimate children annually born in England is 37 per cent.! * "I have met" she

* The revelations of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children shows us, however, that a large proportion of the deaths of illegitimate children is due to the neglect and cruel treatment to which they are exposed.

says, "with the most pitiful incapacity among these unmarried mothers; one girl of 17 could not be taught to dress or undress her own baby, and had never been able to learn to use a needle." In April, 1890, a Poor Law Guardian stated that in one Workhouse alone with an average of 900 inmates there happened to be last year 26 feeble-minded women all of them incapable of living an independent life.*

But now let us ask whether nothing can be done to *prevent* the existence of so large a number of helpless young women? Cannot we save the *children* from growing up helpless and feeble-minded?

This is a most important question, and it is one which we are seriously bound to answer.

Dr. Shuttleworth, the skilful and experienced doctor at your splendid Northern Counties Asylum for Idiots, pointed out, some years ago, that "while exceptionally quick children are well provided for, no systematic effort has been made for the training of those who cannot keep up to the code."

In foreign countries it is different. There, for years past, auxiliary schools have been established in which children, who, after two years' trial in the public elementary schools, cannot keep up with their companions, are placed for special training. It is found that some of such scholars are, after a time, sufficiently improved to return to the ordinary schools; others who prove incapable of any advance are sent to Idiot Institutions, the rest complete their training in the secondary school, and ultimately are mostly able to earn their own livelihood by trades there taught them. Dr. Klemm, an American, thus described a visit he paid to the first school of this class established in Germany, at Elberfeld. "Some nine years ago (he wrote in 1889) a beginning was made here with 25 pupils. A teacher was sent to special schools for Idiots to learn the system employed there. All desirable means of instruction were placed at his disposal, and he was not hedged in with a prescribed course of study. The choice of the teacher was a very happy one. The trial of a year proved that the children were not hopeless cases. Some wealthy parents who had children with weak intellects observed the results of the effort and sent their children to the school. It has exercised a beneficent influence directly within its walls, and indirectly by freeing the other schools of impediments. Course and method are as elastic as the individuality of the pupils makes

* See letter of Marianne Greenwood in "The Women's Herald." Page 587.

necessary. Some pupils stay beyond 14 years of age. Teacher and inspector keep their eye on those who have completed their course, and help them to enter life and to carve out a future. The attendance at present is about 90 pupils; 90 out of a population at Elberfeld of 120,000 is not an exorbitant proportion." Of course the first steps in teaching are hard. "Look at those young ones" said he "there is no ambition." All we can awaken at first is a kind of dull interest in bright pictures. Many cannot conceive of such numbers as 3, 5, or 7. One boy being taught 3 by 3 pegs being held up to him, laid hold of the notion that 3 always meant 3 pegs! However, in course of time, patience and perseverance have their reward. There had been 30 children in the school. The following carefully gathered facts will answer the question, what has become of them?

3 Locksmiths
1 House Painter
1 Mason
1 Tinsmith
1 Baker
1 Tailor
1 Ribbon Weaver
1 Bookbinder
1 Clerk in a Store
1 Messenger
1 Spool-worker
1 Factory hand, lad
4 Factory hands, girls
6 Servant girls
3 Bodily weak not earning anything
3 Still undecided

Classes for the feeble-minded have, for some time past, been held in the ordinary schools of Norway. They are held each afternoon in two of the public schools, distant not more than a mile and a half from the homes of the pupils. These are selected from the ordinary schools upon the report of the teachers made to the head-masters, who thereupon confers with the director of the auxiliary classes as to the necessity for special instruction in each case. The requisite funds are provided through the School Board, and the annual cost is about £6 15s. each pupil. The ratio of abnormal children in schools at Christiania is 4 per cent.

The following passages occur in the first Report of Mr. Lippeslad's valuable Institution in Christiania:—"The Home is for all those children who are partially or wholly unfitted to profit by the teaching of the ordinary schools. Their abnormalities are partly physical, as with the deaf, mute, or blind, partly mental, shown in defective power of thought and understanding, shortness of memory, and weakness of will. . . . Until 1874 no special provision had been made in Norway for the training of mentally abnormal children. A small afternoon

school was then opened by some private individuals, and 10 such were committed to their training for a year. . . . Particular attention is paid to handicrafts, and this branch of instruction has included basket-making, straw and mat plaiting, fretsawing, carpet-patching, work in pasteboard, sewing, knitting, and ribbon weaving. As may be supposed, a great quantity of material is wasted in these occupations. But results prove how great is the importance of developing the children's practical aptitude as far as possible. An attendant sleeps in every room, or in an adjoining room. Every Sunday, service is held, as far as possible, suited to the children's capacity. Beyond that, the day is given to play and walks, if the weather allows; though, by talking about Bible pictures, we seek to give the day a special character. . . . The length of time for a course depends much on each child's powers and standpoint. Amongst the lowest and most stupid, every child must be dealt with separately."

Into this school it appears that children whom we should term "idiotic," as well as the less deficient, are received. It is, indeed, difficult, in some cases, to make a distinction between the two classes, for feebleness of mind differs from idiocy, not in kind, but only in degree.

There is also an interesting school, of the same description, at Ekelrind, near Bergen, in Norway, under Mr. Jacob Soethre, a person, we are told, specially qualified for his post by study and by travel. Great value is there attached to Ling's system of drill, which "calls all the muscles into play in one way or other."

Miss Donkin visited a similar school in Stockholm, partly supported by the State, partly by voluntary payments. Of the work done there, I shall be able to show you some specimens.

A very interesting work for feeble-minded and otherwise afflicted children has, for some years, been carried on at Wilhelmsro, in Sweden, by Mrs. Ebba de Ramsay. An account of it, well worth reading, has been written by that lady, and is to be had at Partridge's, Paternoster Row, price 1s. I cannot refrain from quoting one incident, showing the spirit in which her work is done.

Amongst the children placed in her charge was one little boy almost three years old, sent from a workhouse, with little else than his power of crying to distinguish him from a corpse. He wasted night and day, took scarcely any food, had spinal complaint. The little skeleton scarcely bore to be touched. He was brought in a sheepskin, and the lady had to carry him

about in her fur jacket. When he was cradled in her arms and she sat in the sun, he was quiet. Thus many an hour was spent, but, try what she would, disgust filled her whenever she looked at him. If she could love him, it would be easier. One Sunday, sitting on the verandah steps, she felt the sun shine warm on her head; the strong scent of the autumn honeysuckles, the chirping of birds and buzzing of insects lulled her into a sort of sleep. In this half-waking, half-dreaming state, she thought of herself, but in the shape of the child lying in her lap—only still more repulsive. Over her she saw the Lord bend, gazing intently, lovingly into her face, and yet there was rebuke in His gesture; she knew He meant to say as much as, "If I can love and bear with you, so full of sin, surely you might, for my sake, love that guiltless child." Sleep was gone in a minute, and with a new sense of pity and love she gazed on the boy's dismal face. She had awakened him, too, by her start, and expected to hear the usual wail, but he gazed at her intently for a long while. Overcome with emotion and remorse, she bent her face to his and kissed his forehead as tenderly as she had ever kissed any of her own babes. With a startled look and a flush on his cheeks, the boy gave her back a smile so sweet that she had never seen one like it before, nor will she, she thinks, till it will light up his angel features some day on their meeting in heaven!

The poor child had never had a conscious kiss in his life. Henceforth, intellect became quite marked in his face. He became the pet of the house, but eight months later, after four days' heartrending suffering, his imprisoned soul returned to the Lord.

This beautiful anecdote may well remind us that to labourers for the feeble-minded the blessed Lord will say "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me."

Whilst foreigners were thus trying various methods of treatment for the Dull, the British Medical Association in 1888 appointed a Committee to examine into the number of feeble-minded children in our schools. A report was drawn up by Dr. Warner,* and others. The result was that there were found amongst the 3,931 pupils in 10 public elementary schools, 31 exceptional children, 22 boys in 1,944, and 9 girls in 1,987, and it was found that the teachers themselves recognised the difficulty of feeble-mindedness, whilst the Poor-Law Inspectors

* This gentleman had devoted many years to the study of the brain in Childhood, and is the author of "The Children, how to study them," and other works on Mental Growth.

began to consider whether better arrangements could not be made for the education and classification of these children.

In 1890 another and ampler investigation of children in public schools was made at the joint expense of the British Medical Association, and of the Charity Organisation Society. It was carried out with wonderful enthusiasm and patience by Dr. Warner, assisted by Dr. Rogers, 50,000 children in 160 Board and Day Schools passed in review, and notes were taken of 9,000 of these. Dr. Warner writes "As to the cases requiring special care, I take

Epileptic	54
Cripples	240
Mentally Defective	234
Defective Development in combination with Nerve signs, Low Nutrition, and Dullness	349
Total	877

Of these 877 I find 37 in two groups; deducting these we find 840 cases probably requiring special care, out of the 50,000 children seen. Probably 18 of the Mentally Deficient would be proper candidates for an Asylum for Imbeciles."

The cases picked out by Dr. Warner are those most pressingly in need of special care. Including these cases, 3,679 children out of the 50,000 are reported by the teachers as dull children, many of these having also some physical defect, and many appearing also as cases of Low Nutrition. Dr. Warner, himself, is of opinion that no child should be dismissed from the Public Elementary Schools, if he or she can by any arrangement be kept there. The less Defective Classes, not requiring removal to other Institutions, will yet require special classes.

The cases of Low Nutrition were not medically examined and it is not necessarily implied that they were all underfed, A child may be given plenty of food, but from weakness of digestion may remain unnourished by it. On the other hand. we may be sure that insufficient or unsuitable food will cause physical debility and consequent loss of brain power. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." All work and short commons is certain to produce a similar undesirable result.*

No returns have been made to Government of the number of children, who, though present in schools, are withheld from examination, on account of feebleness of mind. It is, probably, about 1 per cent., among our better class of children, but

* It is startling to find that out of 50,000 children 2,003 were reported under the head of Low Nutrition.

perhaps as much as 2 per cent. among the very poorest children in Ordinary Day Schools. As there are 6,000,000 children in schools under the Educational Board, this would give a large number utterly unable to profit by ordinary teaching. There is probably, besides, an average of 4 or 5 per cent. who are with difficulty pushed through the standards, but who would be likely to profit much more from special classes or from a more Industrial training.*

Medical men describe feeble-minded children as chiefly the offspring of marriages between persons who are both of weakly constitution, specially if consumptive. Others, perhaps, have suffered from want of care in infancy, and from the wretched sounds and sights with which they have been surrounded. This is a subject which might sometimes be discussed at mothers' meetings. It might be pointed out what serious and lifelong injury may result from rough handling of little children. "She must be broken in somehow!" angrily exclaimed the mother of a baby 18 months old, "and it's as well to do it now." There are, perhaps, a majority of sensible, kindly mothers at our meetings, but there are still some who need to learn that successful training of children does not lie in careless indulgence alternating with rough usage. A child of 18 months can hardly need to be "broken in" as Rarey would have tamed a vicious and unmanageable horse.

We have seen how large is the proportion of our dull children. In the description of what is done abroad, we have also met with suggestions as to how to deal with them.

Day-classes in towns, boarding houses in country districts for the worst cases, special classes in Poor-Law Schools, are required for them. Taken in hand in time, the dull child may be saved from growing up to be a dull man or woman, and there may gradually cease to be so many helpless beings turned out at 15 and 16 upon the world. The great success obtained in idiot schools may surely encourage us to hope that yet more may be done for those who are less afflicted. Of course, their education must always be largely industrial, to prepare them for earning their livelihood. As to moral training, Dr. Shuttleworth says "they, like other children, can be taught the difference between right and wrong. Some of them are very susceptible to religious feeling." "Darkened and infirm as the mind of the imbecile child may be," writes Dr. Parrish, of Pennsylvania, "yet far down, behind its solitude, somewhere in

* These conjectures may be wide of the mark, as it is very difficult to get exact information on the subject.

its nature is the image of God. But for our faith in the existence of mind in every human creature, we could not labour with any hope of success."

The School Board of London has determined to open three schools for feeble-minded children, and has sent a gentleman to Germany to study the system of the schools there. It is, indeed, high time we should endeavour to overtake our duty to this neglected class of children.

> Is there a child the mother loves the best,
> And clasps with tenderest feeling to her breast;
> 'Tis not the fairest, whose fresh rosy cheek,
> Bright eye and smile its health and strength bespeak.
> No! 'Tis the weakest, for which most she cares,
> And lifts to Heaven her most prevailing prayers.

Such are our dull children, and thus, with true parental instinct, should we care for them.

Mrs. Salis Schwabe:—I wish before all to thank our President, Mrs. Booth, who kindly asked Mme. de Portugall, Directress of the Froebel Training College, at Naples, to write a paper on "How to deal with dull children," which has given me an opportunity to be present at this interesting and instructive gathering. Mme. de Portugall, being kept by her duties at Naples, has sent her paper to me, with the request to represent her on the occasion, and I now hand the same over to Miss Klostermann, my friend and faithful fellow-worker in the furtherance of Froebel's and Wm. Ellis' educational principles, as she, I think, will read it louder and more distinctly than, I feel, I should be able to do.

DULL CHILDREN, AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM.

By MADAME ADELE VON PORTUGALL.

It is a fact not to be denied that intellectual gifts are unequally distributed, as well as material possessions; and, however much we may have to suffer from this inequality, we must confess it to be an indispensable element in human life, since without it our intellectual and physical powers would be less brought into play. It is this very inequality of worldly goods which ripens the best fruits on the tree of humanity. Without it where would be the noble virtues of charity, self-sacrifice, unselfishness, and gratitude? And where would be

the real incentive to perfecting our knowledge, abilities, and impressions, the improvement of our circumstances, or the embellishment of our surroundings? This aspiration, it is true implies a battle, but without battle there can be no victory, without aspiration no progress. The struggle for existence alone gives a charm and interest to life, and preserves us from mental stagnation. The rich man helps the poor, the cultivated man teaches the ignorant grown-up people to care for and educate the little ones, the healthy heal and strengthen the sick, and so in all directions, in all circles, and through all the circumstances of life. Thus everyone, consciously or unconsciously, contributes his mite to make up for this inequality, and the more active interest we take in life the more irresistibly are we drawn into this whirlpool, for it is the very essence of life. And who can steer his ship through this stormy sea safe into the harbour? Surely he who, from his earliest years, has been trained and prepared for striving with the elements.

It is in this preparation, this training for life, that education consists. It is a serious, arduous and responsible office, for which certainly but few are quite fitted. He who undertakes the education of youth has to deal with a great variety of dispositions and capabilities, with inherited and acquired faults and virtues, and he must always find the right way to aid each of his pupils to attain the highest degree of development possible to each. Here, there is certainly a call for firm principles and a wise application of them. But, before all, he must know human nature, and have studied the growth of mind and body, at least as far as the present progress of science renders possible. He must have observed life, and strive to understand the anomalies in which life abounds.

How often children who, in their early years, were clever, intelligent, and quick, prove dull scholars, and how often scholars, of whom all their teachers despaired, become famous men, discoverers, and inventors. And again, how often good pupils, nay, the very best, become mediocre, ordinary people, who have just understanding enough to fill some insignificant post all their lives, or to squander, in a short time, what they have inherited from their parents.

All these contradictions are the more striking when we consider that we only hear of unusual intelligence when it is a question of very little children. I, at least, have never heard a child in its first year spoken of, without a conviction being expressed of its quite unusual intelligence. What becomes of

all these clever children then, since we are so seldom moved to enthusiasm at the intelligence of grown-up people?

In mechanics the aim is to attain the greatest possible equality between labour and the results of labour, and a machine which proves unsatisfactory in this direction would be useless. Should not a similar proportion exist in the domain of intellectual development? Should not the principle prevail in education of developing the powers given by God to their highest capability? This seems to me one of the most important results of education, and if this be universally recognised, why do not all these intelligent little children remain intelligent; why do clever children so often become mediocre and dull scholars, and later, dull and mediocre men?

If a child comes into the world mentally and physically healthy, education should preserve it from becoming stupid. It is well known that education cannot create, but it should also stifle nothing, but from the first moment protect and guide the dawning life. On the one hand, it should guard it with anxious care against all harmful influences, and, on the other, create regular impressions and form good habits, and this from the very first moment. But I believe that it is just then that the most mistakes are made. Little children are far too often treated as playthings, too much is made of them, they are too much kissed, admired, and excited. Only their mother should caress them and play with them, and that in a conscientious way, taking into consideration the welfare of the child, not her own pleasure. The maternal vanity which finds a satisfaction in the admiration of others, and mostly indifferent persons, does more harm than one thinks.

We imagine that education begins when faults and bad habits already exist in the child, while, in reality, its most lasting effect lies in prevention and protection. Every good physician knows that it is more difficult to cure an illness than to prevent it, and the medical science of to-day is principally engaged in studying the conditions under which illness arises, and seeks to neutralize and transform these. When an epidemic of typhus has broken out, the physician cannot shield the victims from it in spite of the greatest care and devotion. Therefore the attempt to prevent it by the proper means. And the same should be done by the educator of youth, whose work with very young children is in the hands of the parents.

The earliest education can only be given by the mother. She alone has the love and self-denial which this sacred duty demands continually. She alone can surround the child with

the atmosphere of peace and happiness, which the appearance of the little stranger diffuses in the house. Possessing a knowledge of education (for the mother must be prepared for her mission), and with the insight of love, she will prepare and arrange the surroundings of the child, in which all that is necessary, but nothing superfluous, will be found, and in which order and cleanliness will reign. An exact division of time, and careful observation of the same, will promote the child's well-being and lighten the mother's task. With a quiet joy, and in the happy consciousness of her high vocation, she will fulfil her arduous and fatiguing duties, knowing well that in this tender child of to-day the man of to-morrow slumbers, and that it depends on her whether he becomes a useful, noble, or sickly member of the human organism.

Most mothers take care of their children, but very few are conscious of the greatness of their task; and thus it comes that they are satisfied with caring for their physical welfare, without thinking that in the earliest education mental and physical are blended together, and we can only act on the mental powers by means of physical care. Not what we do only, but how we do it, is here of consequence.

If it be thought that this is attributing an importance to the earliest training which does not belong to it of right, let two children of the same age, from different social spheres, be compared—one that has been cared for by a cultivated mother, and the other from the lower classes—and let the difference be observed between these two little creatures after three months. We shall find this difference is so great that even a superficial observer can convince himself of it, and will agree with me.

When we, furthermore, take into consideration what an immense mass of knowledge the child obtains in the first year, no one will be surprised if I assert that it cannot be indifferent *in what way* it obtains this. How much trouble and study is employed in finding out the best methods of teaching, just because we know that learning is facilitated by them.

Now, it is universally known that the child in the first year of its life learns twenty times more than in the tenth, and, on this account a methodical way of proceeding does not seem superfluous; all the less, that it is the question here of an infinitely delicate organism. Of course, it cannot be a case of methodical learning, but certainly there may be methodically-arranged impressions.

In the first stage of its mental growth, the child is exclu-

sively a receptive being; but just on this account its surroundings are so important, and, therefore, Froebel gives the child the ball for its first toy. In the infinite variety of forms which surround it, there must be a simple object, easily comprehended, which produces a clear indelible impression on the mind, and may be, so to say, the starting point for all others. It is followed by a whole series of games and employments which, in their logical succession, may have a favourable effect on the development of the thinking powers.

There are, moreover, in the beginning of intellectual life, important moments over which we pass lightly, because we do not recognise their importance generally, and, therefore, confide the child to the care of uncultivated persons, and are satisfied if the latter only preserve it from physical ill. It is almost a misfortune for the future generation that mistakes and neglect in the moral training are not as perceptible as physical defects, for then, from vanity alone, or a sense of beauty, one would seek to guard the child from being morally crippled.

To these important moments, which indicate progress in development, belong the first smile, the first shedding of tears, the first reaching after anything shining, the first intent look at anything, the first attempt to stand up. But especially important for mental progress are the reaching after, and intent look at anything. In both of these the child should be left to itself. Let it stretch out its tiny hands a hundred times, it will find out at last what it must do, and how far it must reach in order to attain its end. On the basis of its *own* experience, it will construct others, and at last it will learn to estimate distances. Equally important is the intent look at anything, in which a little child will often show great persistency. In these moments of attention leave it entirely alone; it will, of its own accord and with a very eloquent gesture, give us to understand when it desires a change. In all these manifestations of life we must follow the child; it needs all these and *many other* exercises, which it makes unconsciously, for the purpose of its development, in order to know its surroundings and their nature. It would lead me too far, should I attempt to explain all its other manifestations according to their importance; I restrict myself, therefore, to indicating those which may be exclusively characterised as intellectual activity.

After some months appears the development of language, in which imitation plays such an important part. This should

be well considered by the grown-up people, who form the immediate surroundings of a little child. But is there a single family which does not yield to the temptation of imitating the little darling in its imperfect pronunciation and formation of words? In this way the child is strengthened in its imperfections, instead of being led to strive after perfection. And how difficult it is later to correct the pronunciation, all those know who, like myself, are constantly among little children.

But how should a child, who speaks wrongly and badly, learn afterwards to read correctly? Speaking and reading are intimately connected, and form a chain in which the study of Grammar is to be regarded as the third link. Correct and intelligent speech must certainly precede reading, if this is not to be an entirely mechanical and dead exercise, without any infineuce whatever on the intellectual development.

When the child in the bosom of the family has advanced so far that it can eat, speak and walk, the careful observation of its instinctive activity should be redoubled, and it should be the endeavour to excite and cultivate it in the right way. This can be effected first of all, by a sensible choice of toys and materials for games, such as Froebel offers us in his *Kindergarten*. Besides this, we should invent little duties for the child, and insist on their punctual fulfilment. The child should be permitted to take part in household matters, as far as it is at all possible, and its help, when offered should never be refused, even if it should be a hindrance to our work. One scarcely reflects how important how all these trifles are in the child's earliest education, and how beneficially they affect its varied development. In fact, there is nothing small and insignificant in education, *all is great and all is important.* In education more than in anything else, it is true that small causes bring forth great results. If the powers of the child, which it desires to employ and develop, are not used and guided aright, they take an evil direction, and if even this opportunity is lacking, they become entirely dormant. It is the same with mental as with physical powers. We know to what agility the body can attain by suitable progressive exercises, and we forget that the mind requires the same, and only by a logically progressive incitement from easy things to difficult, from the concrete to the abstract, the powers of thought can obtain their full development. The less intellectually-gifted the child is, the greater attention must be bestowed on this logical, systematic incitement of its mental powers. But it would be a most fatal mistake to try to make such a child keep step with other more

highly-gifted children. Above all, parental vanity must be silent, which is so fain to compare one's own child to others, and feels flattered if it is more advanced than they. Only a slow and methodical progress can make up for this inequality in time. According to my opinion, there is no special treatment for dull intelligences. We must follow here, as in all difficult questions of education, the wise example of Nature and become her obedient pupils. Slowly and gradually she develops the tender germ from the grain of seed, sends down the roots into the ground, and only allows the leaves to expand when the former have so much strength as to supply them with the needful nutrition. Let us do the same! Let us work untiringly to form logical and orderly impressions, let us develop in systematic succession the faculties of the hand and eye, and let the child work quietly, gather experience, instruct itself by touch and sight of the qualities of objects, before we lead him into the regions of the abstract. We should keep a child of weak intellect in a *well conducted* Kindergarten till we see that it is capable of passing from observation to comprehension, for everything depends here on the child doing nothing that it cannot understand and appropriate mentally; I mean not what it can *repeat*, but what it can *understand*. If we do not hold here by a firmly rivetted chain of progression, the whole work of education can be easily destroyed.

If a dull child is placed on a school bench, and has to stare at the dead letters without the preparation already hinted at, it is condemned to a miserable waste of school-time and childhood, and neither punishment or rewards can help him onward. The very generally diffused haste in learning to write and read has a retarding influence on clever children, and how should it then surprise us if the dull ones are rendered entirely stupid thereby.

In no branch of education has it been so difficult for modern pedagogy to conquer mediæval prejudices as in reading and writing. In everything else we can moderate the impatience of parents, but not here. If at four years the child does not know his letters, as the saying is, the anxious father's brow is contracted with a frown, and if the happy child comes home from the Kindergarten, and answers its mother's question, "What have you done?" with a joyous "O! I have played; I have amused myself," she, too, becomes alarmed, and thinks that one should not spend the hard-earned money for nothing. And yet *play* is the true occupation of the child, for it is only play that develops it in every direction and brings all its powers into exercise, and exercise is life and progress.

In my long experience, two cases occurred which support the opinion I have just expressed, and in which, for an exception, the parents allowed me to act as I would. I must especially insist on this latter circumstance, for the parents' often unreasonable opinions, wishes, and demands are frequently a stumbling-block to the best intentions of the most able educator.

While I was still at Geneva, I had a little child in a village Kindergarten. It was sickly, had a disproportionately large head, and large, expressionless pale blue eyes. The unhappy child contrasted painfully with the lively little company around it. The Kindergarten teacher had a warm heart for her little flock. She suffered from the apathy of this little creature, and often asked me what she should do with the poor child. I advised her to have patience. She placed it near lively, clever children, gave it the material to work with, which, however, remained untouched for a year, till one day, when I again visited the Kindergarten, the teacher told me with an expression of the greatest pleasure, that this child had begun to work with the others. And so it was; not only did it take part in their occupations, but also in their games. From this moment it not only made intellectual progress, but gained also in respect of health. When I saw it two years afterwards, promoted to the elementary classes, and following the instruction with attentive eyes, I experienced heartfelt satisfaction. She was certainly already eight years old, a year older than her class mates.

I had a similar experience with a town child; it was a little boy, who always sat with his mouth open. In everything else he followed pretty well the majority of his class, except in arithmetic. His parents thought him something of an idiot, and I was unable to convince them of the contrary, because the poor little fellow compared disadvantageously with his younger, but far more intelligent brother. The parents' indifference to him made the child yet dearer to me, and often in my spare time I had him with me, and made him learn arithmetic by help of little sticks, cubes, &c., and play as a child two or three years younger might have done. In less than a year he followed the lessons, and in the second he became one of the best scholars. Subsequently he had no difficulty in studying, for he is now one of the most respected masters in the intelligent City of Geneva.

Thus the principal means to help those who are dull-minded are love, patience, and a natural progression from easy to

difficult subjects; and let it be written in capitals—FROM THE CONCRETE TO THE ABSTRACT.

The discussion on these last two papers was opened by Miss Clifford :—I think the great thing we want is for public opinion to be excited on this subject. It will be obvious to everyone that the subject of dealing with these children is divided into two parts. I. There is the educational side and the dealing with children in the schools. II. The destitute.

The condition of the girls leaving the workhouse schools appears to some of us to be our special duty. The thing that strikes one is that so many girls leave school with the character of having a bad temper. They go into service, innocent and harmless, but if not followed up at once, are, after a time, found ruined and have to be sent to a penitentiary. What we want is permanent homes for these girls. We think that Guardians would be able to contribute towards the expenses, but it would be necessary that private help should also be given. £100 at least would be needed in starting, and the chief hope seems to lie in arousing public interest and laying before the Local Government Board the need of such homes.

Mrs. Salis Schwabe :—I cannot refrain from expressing the great gratification I felt in listening to the two papers which were read this morning on "Parental Responsibility" and "On the work of ladies in connection with Elementary Schools," and the discussions which followed. I particularly rejoiced in Mrs. Wilson's and Mrs. Maclagan's clear statements of their parental experiences with their children at a very tender age, for it seems to me that they are strong and practical evidence to the truth of the statements given in Mme. de Portugall's paper, and to Froebel's educational principles of the early development of all the faculties in the child—an education which tends to form the character, developing at an early age the religious nature and the reasoning powers of the child. One of the ladies truly remarked, that we ought not to command and require blind obedience from our children, but reason with them and make them understand our wishes for their good.

I believe Froebel's method has been much sinned against, by making use of his games and occupations, and teaching them mechanically, or considering them as playthings for little children. This has just the contrary effect of their original meaning, for Froebel invented these games and occupations as means for the teachers to observe and bring out the natural gifts of each individual child. To avoid this mis-

representation of Froebel's system it is, I believe, of the greatest consequence that a Training College be established specially for training teachers for the kindergarten and the successive stages of *early* education, for I feel sure the teachers for older children will find their task greatly facilitated, and their work more successful, if their pupils have been in a good kindergarten, and have been taught in the succeeding classes on the same principle. I may here state that the teachers trained at the Froebel Training College at Naples, who came first as children of three years to our kindergarten and went through the whole course of education, are at present the best teachers in the Institution.

Miss Poole, of the Metropolitan Association for befriending young servants, said:—In connection with our home at Highbury, the Council have lately resolved to try and form a home for feeble-minded girls at a short distance from London, in which we propose to accomodate 30 girls at once. We mean to try and get various Boards of Guardians to send us girls who are unfit for service; we also mean to apply to the Local Government Board to extend the power to the Board of Guardians to pay for these girls as they do for the deaf and dumb. I have here a petition for this purpose. Our object in the Home will be to do all we can to develop the girls, and hope, as a consequence, that some will be able to support themselves in the world, though there are sure to be many who will never be fit to do so. We hope to make the Home very happy and cheerful so that the girls will like to stay. We mean to take the girls and keep them there six or seven years if they need it, and if then they are fit for service, situations should be found them.

When the girls are able to earn for themselves it is hoped the School will be self-supporting.

EVENING, 7 TO 9.30.

I. *Girls' Schools.* THE HON. MAUDE STANLEY.

II. *Duty of sharing our Educational Advantages with others.* MISS MARY L. G. PETRIE, B.A. (*London*).

III. *Home Arts and Industries.* MISS JEBB.

The chair was taken by the COUNTESS OF LATHOM, who said: I cannot claim in any way to be one of the noble band of workers of whom there are so many now in Liverpool, but I come here to-night because I do feel the greatest interest and sympathy for this woman's work, and am willing to give any help I can. We are met to consider the duties, the responsibilities of women, and the part they can take in the world, by their social standing, their precepts, and their example, by active co-operation and personal labour; and there is enough to interest and occupy the minds of all who come. One little word I feel bound to say. I have been asked by the President of the Central Council of the Girls' Friendly Society to represent them this evening. This Society is the largest of its kind, and embraces 200,000 women and girls.

I need only now add how sincerely I hope the blessing of God will rest upon this Conference, and that all will be encouraged.

CLUBS FOR WORKING GIRLS.

HON. MAUDE STANLEY.

THE subject on which I am called to speak at this Conference appears to me to be one of the most satisfactory works that are presented to us for discussion, because there is a finality about it—we are able definitely to accomplish our aim. We are able, through the many influences of a Club, to awaken, to stimulate, to strengthen the desire for higher aims of life amongst our working girl population in the large towns of our United Kingdom, where, for commercial reasons, vast numbers

of working people are brought together, thereby forming a concentration too often injurious to their well-being.

And by finality I mean that, if we can succeed in safely steering the fragile bark of girlhood through the difficult years from fourteen to twenty, encountering, perhaps, at times, rough winds and squalls, still, if we have sailed bravely on, needing only occasionally slight repairs of the rigging or sails, we can consider that by twenty the small bark has proved itself a seaworthy boat, and we may confidently hope that she will reach her port in safety, whether she is bound for a short or for a long voyage.

Our girls will often come to us as children. We admit them at thirteen when they have left school, and they remain with us in their girlhood and womanhood. In consequence of the excellent training they have had at the good elementary schools, they will generally wish to join classes, and will be as eager as girls of a higher position to carry on their intellectual work. I have had classes of English Literature and History, taking them to the British Museum or Westminster Abbey, to impress upon them what has been taught, and visits on Saturday to the National Gallery have often been made, and the girls have had lectures on Greek stories, and read Ruskin's works. And I am certain that no girl's club will be a success that does not provide classes and encourage the girls to join them, not through the very unsatisfactory bait of prizes, but for the desire of improvement which we hope to instil into their minds. Girls are very imitative and impressionable, affectionately sensible of kindness, so that, by these means, we can train them up to higher intellectual and moral desires, not wasting these qualities in sentimental attachments; but by pointing out to them that the best appreciation they can show for our efforts on their behalf is by a healthy and vigorous spirit, taking every opportunity for self-improvement, and for working for others. That our girls have confidence in us, and know that our sympathy is always with them, is shown by the way in which they come to us in their difficulties, their sorrows, and their joys.

It is possible that the unwearying kindness shown to club girls by ladies will tend to make the recipients of all this kindness somewhat selfish, they get into the habit of receiving without a thought of what they should do in return, so that we need to put ways before them in which they can give freely what they have received abundantly, and I have never seen a more satisfactory outcome of our work in Soho than when some

of our club members went down one evening in every week to Spitalfields, to teach the poor girls for whom a club was established last winter—girls who were certainly of the lowest class to be found in any of our towns, whose homes were, in many cases, in the lodging-houses of those parts known too well by the public at large as the locality where the Whitechapel murders took place. Another of our members undertook voluntarily the work of teaching drill to a class of deaf and dumb girls. And in their own club, girls will be able to be of use to their companions. We have had dressmaking regularly taught this autumn, by two club members, and I think it should be one of our aims, in training the rather rough element that comes to us, to teach them how they can both improve themselves and how they may help others.

We must reckon that the work-girl is, in worldly experience at least, three years in advance of those of the higher classes. At fourteen they know what life is, as few girls in the upper or middle classes would know at seventeen; they have often learnt to be housewives by that time, and they have risen to the honourable position of wage-earning members of the family. But they have also heard that amusements are within their reach that are destructive to womanly modesty, and may even endanger womanly virtue.

To counteract these dangerous temptations, and to carry on the education both intellectually and morally, we establish girls' clubs, and we cannot fail to see, year by year, a refinement of manners, and an eagerness to improve that grows up in the club; so that, after a time, we need not speak to our new members of manners, nor need we remind girls that politeness and good feeling are needed in all social intercourse, for the atmosphere of the club is pervaded by these adornments, and the new members will learn from the old ones the lesson we have so repeatedly taught in the infancy of our club. It is interesting to watch the eager attention the new young members pay to all that the older ones are doing, anxious to show themselves to be fit members of the club they have lately joined.

Twelve years' work amongst London girls in a club, an acquaintance during that time of more than a thousand girls of various ages, has given us an insight into their characters and habits, their good and bad qualities, and has also shown us how the good work of a club may produce an ideal working girl—the neatly dressed young woman, with pleasant manners, equally at ease with her companions as with the ladies and

gentlemen who visit her club, ready to talk of her work, of her club, or of her amusements; at her ease, because she receives with friendly welcome the friendliness that is shown to her by those whose position she knows to be above her own, but whose place she does not aim at filling, because she is satisfied with her own as a competent skilled work-woman. She looks upon her daily toil as making up a life as honorable as one of ease and independence. She looks forward, no doubt, to the time when her wage-earning days will be over, when she will become the happy wife of one who will not require her to work outside of the home for which he will provide the ways and means, and to which she will bring the happiness, the comfort, and the love which the good wife knows so well how to bestow.

Her interests will be enlarged by the teaching she has received at her club. She will be a brighter and better companion to her husband for the continual cultivation of her mind since she left school, and the technical teaching she may have received of cooking, of laundry, and of hygiene, will materially add to the comfort of the working-man's home. We find that, with all the pleasures and attractions of the club, our best girls will still feel strongly, perhaps more so from the moral influence of the club, that some evenings must be given to home to helping the mother. On Tuesdays we have fewest girls in the club, as they tell us it is mother's washing day; they will also like to keep her company, whilst she, like all mothers, is made happy by the varied attainments of her child. The drawing, the art needlework, the wood carving, all arts she can see and wonder at, fill her with peaceful contentment at the thought that her girl is so well employed, and that her spare hours are spent at her club, and not at music halls and dancing saloons.

In establishing a girl's club, what is our object? Is it not to give recreation and helpful amusement to our working girls, and do we not succeed in giving them the happiness of which, from the circumstances of their lives of real or comparative poverty, they would have been deprived? Is it not to bring together the sympathy of one class for another: to allow those who are less fortunate in life the benefit of our culture and light, and to reach out to those who are in trouble the sisterly or motherly hand, to bind up the broken heart, to refresh the weary, and to strengthen the weak? Is it not for this we establish clubs, and do not all those who take a part in this work, however small a part, do not they contribute to the gradual bettering, the improvement of the working classes of

our country? For is it not by the woman's influence, by the mother, the wife, and the sweetheart, that the men are made to love their homes, and is it not through the homes of England, the happy satisfied homes, that both men and women are made better citizens, contributing in no small degree to the commonwealth of the nation? I consider that this work, as many other philanthropic works which run on quietly, unobserved, and often unrecognised, is one of great importance.

Every year of the life of a club for working lads or girls is valuable, for that year will never return to them, there is no delaying, for if we are not influencing the girls through our clubs, others will be influencing them and leading them too often astray; and remember always that wandering in the paths of pleasure in a great city will most surely lead to pitfalls of destruction.

We who have worked in girls' clubs know how various are the characters, how different are the lives of our members, and as various must be our way of dealing with them. Our experience needs to be large to organize such work, and experience will only be gained by practice; so let all young ladies who feel how hard is often the life of our poor working girls when unrelieved by pleasure or sympathy, remembering how unequal are our lots in this world, let them join a club already established and take some class, and by regular visits, get to know the girls individually, and become their friends; if possible visit them at home, see their mother and enlist her interest in your work should it be unknown to her. It is not by theory that we obtain the power of helping on this work, it is by practice that we develop the best way of dealing with our girls, that every year's work shows us fresh ways of making it more effective and more complete. New methods will present themselves to our minds for the infusion of our energy and enthusiasm into the lives of our girls. By visiting other clubs, and seeing what they have originated, we shall make our own more perfect. My visit last year to Liverpool taught me many lessons. Your clubs seem to be most admirably managed, and it was marvellous the way in which I saw you had got hold of some of the poorest girls, who, without shoes and stockings, were in the same class as the tidily dressed girls. The sight of musical drill being taught in such a mixed class by a young lady whose face shone brilliantly with a loving kindness, and who, with an energetic and strong will, combined with gentleness, kept her class to their work with decision and skill, made me desire, still more, to establish a club in the east end

of London, in Spitalfields, a neighbourhood possibly lower than any you would find in Liverpool; and our success can well be compared with yours, for the work has also been done by ladies, and Soho Club girls who thought not of fatigue or weariness as long as they could help to better the lives of these poor girls.

These girls were from the lowest parts, as I have said. The police say that Dorset Street, where is this Club, is the worst in London. A year ago, three little girls of twelve were overheard in the club when it was first started talking of what fun they had had by getting drunk. They had saved up their money till they had 3d., and then spent it in rum. These girls, after a year of club life, seem to be entirely changed, they have come to visit us in Soho, and have received visits in return.

Many small arrangements, trifling in themselves, will conduce to discipline and to the general improvement of clubs. Cards of membership on first joining, marking attendances, badges denoting the years of membership, elections of Committee members, a large members' sheet of payments put in a prominent place in the club room, a frame of girls' photographs: all these small details contribute to the welfare of the club.

These are the externals, and within there must be order which we may say is essential, and the first necessity for a properly conducted club; and perhaps order, punctuality, tidiness, keeping engagements, are among the most difficult things to teach our girls. Why should it be so, when they must be orderly, tidy and punctual at the factory or the workshop? Is it not that the life of the crowded home makes these qualities unknown there, and that their value is not appreciated because they seem only to belong to working hours. Discipline, which sounds, perhaps, a hard word in connection with recreation, is the only way of insuring individual comfort amongst many persons brought together who have no natural connection one with another. There will be different ways of carrying on clubs according to the position of the girls for whom they are established, but this principle of order and discipline must come into all management.

Of one thing I feel certain. That a paid matron and superintendent is absolutely needed for a club. She may be a lady or a working woman. Ours has been with us 10 years. She was an artificial flower maker, and for two years a Mission woman, and she has now been trained and does her work well.

£25 a year salary, is easily made up by the increased efficiency of the club. The payments of our Soho girls for this club is 1/- entrance, 2/- a quarter; and for servants 1/- a quarter, as they cannot come in so often.

Much difficulty is often found in the workers, they are sometimes like the girls, unpunctual, and even fail in their engagements to come on their appointed evening. If that is the case, do not ask them to continue as a regular visitor to the club, as such an example is most injurious to the girls; do not ask any to come who do not take a real pleasure in the work. How can they, if not enjoying their part of teacher, make the girls forget the fatigue which they must feel after their long day's work?

If the teacher brings with her to the club a feeling of lassitude or want of interest, it is cruel to ask the poor girls to listen to her teaching. What we want in philanthropic work is an enthusiasm which surmounts all difficulties and all obstacles, and this enthusiasm is often infectious, and will spread itself from teacher to pupils, till all will have the spirit of progress and development.

Many present may be engaged in girls' clubs and have worked out for themselves the best method of dealing with their members, but if any should not have leisure to visit other clubs to know what is being done elsewhere for girls, may I say that I have written a small book called "Clubs for Working Girls," published by Macmillan, in which I have put down the experience of myself and others in this work, and have there spoken of the classes, the country visits, the amusements, the religion, the homes, the social position of club members, and the way of starting and managing a girl's Club; and I think we may often save time if we know beforehand the difficulties we must meet, and how such difficulties have been overcome by others in similar circumstances.

Since writing that book last year I think the work of our Committee members in the Soho Club has been carried further, and that they have undertaken and executed their duties more efficiently. The Soirées are left for them to organise, the concerts that they give in the club or elsewhere, and the entertainments given to other clubs; the money they think they will need for refreshments for guests is given to them, and they seem to get two shilling's worth out of every shilling, and with the profits of their own refreshment bar they are often able to entertain guests at the Soirées. This self-management is, I

am sure, an object to aim at, but it must be done slowly and cautiously.

Another valuable element in our club life is the Magazine. I would urge on all great cities like yours to start one. You have made a Club Union for Liverpool, so that we now have to call ours the London Club Union. A union should be formed in all provincial centres, and the magazine, however small, gives cohesion to this movement. The magazine should be taken by all club members, and above all by all club managers, as through the magazine information can be given on all matters concerning the clubs collectively.

The organizer of any movement has so much of her time taken up by letter writing, which would not be needed if the magazine was read by the secretaries and the members of the clubs in the Union.

The annual singing competition and the musical drill competition of our London Clubs has been of great use in uniting our clubs into a feeling of fellowship. We have a challenge picture for the singing and a challenge shield for the drill. Our clubs exchange hospitalities, and receiving members from other clubs is a great pleasure and interest to our girls. One of the things which has, I think, had the most refining influence on our girls, has been the country visits, and small or larger tea-parties given to them by our friends. From six to twelve girls are often asked out on a Saturday afternoon, and two or three hours are spent in conversation, tea, and music; this is the most delightful and refreshing pleasure to the hard worked girls. All ladies who have tried these small tea-parties, have found that they were most successful.

As for the country visits the advantages are untold, and we in Soho have been blessed by the very kindest of friends who have, year after year, asked out our girls to their own country houses, or lodged them in cottages near them. There is no way in which such perfect happiness and joy can be given, and this is shown by the fresh and pleasant accounts of these country visits which are often printed in our Magazine. I will read part of an account written by one of our Club girls who has been a member with us for nine years, a lacquerer by trade, who earns her living by hard hand work, and you can judge of her appreciation and sense of the beauties of Nature, and of the refinement of mind in consequence of her Club life and yearly visits to the country. She speaks of her holiday in the New Forest.

We never seemed tired of wandering through such a lovely place.

When taking our walk over the hill which is at the back of Mrs. Maxwell's house, we saw on the left one part of the forest enclosed, this is where the game is bred, in this enclosure it is so dark that the rays of the sun could not shine through the thick foliage and enterlacing boughs. On our right was the common, this was covered with bright coloured heather blazing away as if trying to make up for the darkness on the other side; looking across this dazzling colour nothing was to be seen but the forest which walled the heath in on all sides, and the blue heavens smiling over all things. Everything was so beautiful and calm, here the silence was only broken by the songs of the birds, and the soft cooing of the wood pigeon, this was my favourite place when I wanted to read and did not want to be disturbed by the cows and pigs.

When by myself I often followed the course of one of the streamlets which were so numerous, they led me into such lovely parts of the forest, which were so lonely and wild, and yet so peaceful and shady that it used to put me in mind of that pretty song that was often sung by the Club girls,

O forest deep and gloomy
Or woodland, vale and hill.

The music seemed as if it were composed for this forest which was indeed deep and gloomy, and yet it was delightful walking here forgetting everything save the beauty of the woods which surrounded you on all sides, and the murmur of the water as it ran over its pebbly bed. As I went farther up the stream I came to an opening, and found myself standing on a hill. The scene before me was very picturesque. There was the white winding road leading through the forest, and large fields of grass mixed with heather, where cattle and horses were quietly grazing. A pretty thatched house; a duck pond in front of it with white ducks sailing on it, the sound of children's voices, and the tinkle of the bells on the cows' necks, who were going home to be milked, was all in perfect harmony with the place. On the following Sunday I went with some friends to Rinefield House, on our way there we came across a large beech tree, one of its limbs had been blown off by the wind, and was about two yards and a half round. Going up the hill we crossed some beautiful spots and green glades where the sun shone on ferns and shrubs, making them look golden in the mellow light; the ground was carpeted in some places, and dotted in others, with little patches of soft moss. At length we came to Rinefield House, it is an old deserted mansion, we could not go over it as it was locked, and there was not anyone in charge of it, it is surrounded by an orchard, and near the gate are two very curious trees, called puzzle monkeys, outside the orchard are large fields of feather grasses, this house stands on a hill, and the view from it is most splendid, it is really so beautiful that I cannot describe it. As we gaze over this spot of beauty the sun is sinking behind the blue lines of the tree tops, and the soft white mist is rising in the valley, and as we bend our steps homewards through the woods again, there are various cries coming from the darkening forest, it is quite dark when we reach home, so ends our walk of some miles to see the old mansion of Rinefield.

September has now come in with its falling leaves which put me in mind of these lines:—

Comes autumn from the sunset skies
With nut-brown hair and dreamy eyes,

But summer haunts the woodland yet,
Her fair face showed her eyelids wet,
And lingers as if loth to go—
From lonely man who loved her so.

We are going to the village and find ourselves surrounded by sixteen piglings, who run at us and then beat a hasty retreat when we turn round to them, and directly we turn our backs they are at us again, squealling all the time.

On the third of September my three friends left me to go to London, whilst I remained in the forest, I could not go out much in the day as it was raining, but the evenings were lovely. When returning from one of my walks, I was surprised to see a beautiful lake, as I thought, but on coming up to it, it was the fog, on looking round I seemed to be on an island, for wherever I looked there was this mist laying on the ground just like a river with the moonbeams shining on it. Returning from the horse's grave, which we had been to see, I hear the cry of the owl as he flies from an old tree after some little bird who is late home, and then there is wafted across the breeze the gentle hee haw of the donkey. My third week is nearly up and I must bid good bye to the forest which holds such charms for me, and to all my kind friends down here, and now I must conclude my short and very poor account of what I have seen and felt in the forest, with many thanks to Mrs. Maxwell for her kind invitation, and for giving me such a pleasant holiday.

MARIAN CASEY."

With this account of a delightful three weeks spent in the New Forest from one who owes most of her happiness in life to belonging to the Soho Club, I must close. I have not had time to enter on details of our Classes, all so valuable in our work, but I hope that Girls' Clubs will multiply and increase, and that soon no part of our large towns will be without one.

If any here present will visit our Club in Soho, we shall be most glad to see you, and you can judge for yourselves that our girls are happy, and you must take my word that a great many of them are good and God loving girls.

We are unsectarian, and have many Roman Catholics, Nonconformists and Church of England members, and though we do not preach to them, we trust they know that we are working for the love of God and Christ, and that we believe that the best and highest aim for us and for them is to love God and our neighbour.

The Discussion was opened by Miss GRAYSON:—The Hon. Maude Stanley has spoken about the Girls' Clubs in London, and as we have copied her in Liverpool I want to say a few words about our work.

Eight years ago our Liverpool association was started. It was the outcome of Miss Ellice Hopkins' work, and commenced with an Association, which had a young ladies' branch, the

object of which was to form Clubs. Last year we thought it would be a great advantage if these various Clubs could be brought into greater contact by a Girls' Club Union. The union started with ten Clubs, and this year two more have joined, so that at present there are 2000 girls members of the Clubs, and 200 workers.

The Clubs have had a very elevating influence, but more workers are urgently needed, and we hope one outcome of this Conference will be that some will come forward to take part in the work in helping to brighten dull lives and sharing their educational advantages with others. I think it would be well if the girls would adopt as their motto, the words of Charles Kingsley,

> Be good sweet maid, and let who will be clever,
> Do noble things, not dream them all day long,
> And so make Life, Death and that vast For Ever
> One grand, sweet song.

Lady Laura Ridding:—I thought you would allow me to say one or two things about our clubs in Nottingham, of which there are sixteen. It is often a difficult matter to keep the girls, and we have found it a good plan to send them out to help at other clubs. The great thoughtfulness shown by these girls is surprising. Some of our girls that were thus trying to help others, finding that those whom they had gone to help would not come on Sunday because they had no Sunday clothes to wear, themselves went down in their week-day attire in order to encourage the others to appear in theirs.

Then, the prize-giving is a great success. We began to have it in a small room, but now we have to take the largest room in the town.

In order to keep up the interest in the summer we find it a good plan to have excursions arranged by the girls themselves, and to which they invite their mothers. In addition to these excursions we arrange for garden parties and botany rambles.

In replying to the remarks that had been made, the Hon. Maude Stanley said:—My experience is that the clubs should never be closed in the summer, even though there be few members. I have never found the slightest difficulty in keeping members. We have as many as forty who have been with us over five years, and eight who joined over ten years ago. I also think the clubs should be open every day in the week and not on only a few days.

THE DUTY OF SHARING OUR EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGES WITH OTHERS.

Miss MARY L. G. PETRIE, B.A.

I take up the question of education where our morning and afternoon discussions leave it, viz., at the end of the school-days, and strike a keynote with the grand old word "Duty," which at once suggests the question, "How much *owest* thou"? We look first at those who have had educational advantages. It is not two hundred years since Defoe, in his "Essay on Projects," first mooted the idea of a college for women; it is scarcely forty years since Tennyson, in his charming "Princess," dreamed a poet's dream, which for us has become a waking reality. Yet "finishing at seventeen" may already be regarded as an extinct superstition, and I am not speaking merely of the exceptional woman who has in all ages managed to obtain exceptional culture, but of the average girl also, who, as Miss Welsh told me a year ago, when I visited the college of which she is Mistress, is already beginning to go to Girton. We rejoice to think that it is not for the remarkably clever girl only that "knowledge is now no more a fountain sealed."

And then comes the practical question, "What will she do with it?" "What do *you* want with a degree?" my puzzled friends asked, when I went to college, with only the profession of "a daughter at home" in prospect. The query involves a radical misconception. Our higher education is essentially *liberal*, not *technical*. I refer you to John Stuart Mill's famous "Inaugural Address" for a definition of the difference between them.

Let us rather put the question thus: "What will she *not* do with it?" A girl who has conversational knowledge of French or German uses it occasionally, a girl who has accurate knowledge of Greek uses it every day of her life, for in acquiring it she has gained mental power which makes everything she undertakes easier to accomplish.

We recognise that many girls *do* go to college with professional aims; not to enter into unlovely competition with men, rather to do what they cannot do, as, for instance, in the grand work of medical women in India. And one happy result of the Higher Education movement has been abolition of

the idea that "governessing" is but a refuge for the destitute. The time is come when tuition is acknowledged to be a happy and honourable vocation of which any woman may be proud, when the Head Mistress takes rank as high as that of the Head Master.

But an ever-increasing number of girls are now going to college without any breadwinning plans in connection with their work. I want to emphasise its benefits first to themselves. Contrast the highly cultured woman, cheerful and useful under all circumstances to the end of her days, with the uncultured woman wearing out her life in tedious and unprofitable trifles.

Secondly, to them as members of society. The leaders of society, and the most cultured women in the land, were one and the same class in the days of Queen Elizabeth. Now, much of the highest culture is to be found in the middle class, and many (I do not for a moment say *all*) of our leaders of society throw away much power for good that might be theirs by not availing themselves of our present educational advantages as they might do. If they remain idle and frivolous, idleness and frivolity will still be fashionable, and miserable class antagonisms will be aggravated. We have, on the other hand, examples of the power that ladies of high degree may have to raise the intellectual ideal of a whole people, in "Carmen Sylva," the gifted Queen of Roumania, in Margherita, Queen of Italy, and in the Empress Frederick of Germany.

Thirdly, let me speak of the help that may be given by highly educated girls to their sisters who have not had educational advantages. Study with an unselfish aim will not make a girl "wise in her own conceits" or ostentatiously eccentric, and in this aim it will find a better stimulus than in any other.

That there is much educational work that must be done unprofessionally, that many girls who have acquired knowledge for its own sake long to make it useful to others, and that a multitude of other girls long for knowledge which they have no opportunity of acquiring from professional teachers, are three facts which have been vividly brought home to me in organising the College by Post, which I will now briefly describe.

It did not begin with a theory, or a large scheme on paper, but with a request made to me by Miss Caroline Cavendish, founder of the Christian Women's Education Union, as she placed in my hands a letter from a country girl who asked aid

and advice in her studies, saying, " Will you as a young student help this young student?"

Two or three girls thus began to correspond with me informally, and my work with them was mentioned in 1881, in the " Girls' Own Paper." I was immediately inundated with letters from all parts of the country, asking for this proffered aid. But I had only matriculated myself at the University of London, all the hardest part of my own work at college lay before me, and I should not have dreamed of undertaking to teach others for a long time to come. Still I could not refuse all these applicants for teaching, so I appealed to some friends whose college careers were over, and began to organise correspondence classes.

During the last ten years, 2,600 students have been enrolled on our books, and 167 friends, most of whom have had a university education, have joined the staff as teachers. I owe groups of colleagues to University College, London, Westfield College, Hampstead, Girton and Newnham Colleges, Cambridge, Lady Margaret and Somerville Halls, Oxford, the Ladies' College, Cheltenham, &c., &c. We carefully avoid unfair competition with professional teachers, and, for that reason, have nothing to do with public examinations, such as the Cambridge Local, &c. " Study for study's own sake " is our motto.

Eighteen subjects are taught in the various secular classes, and recognising that one kind of knowledge is more important than any other, and one Book worthy of more earnest study than all the rest, we have from the first admitted to our secular classes only those who were willing to join a Scripture class as well. In organising these Scripture classes, now forty-seven in number, we availed ourselves of various plans of Bible reading already widely followed, such as the Church of England Daily Lessons. None of these, however, completely met our needs as students; so, in 1888, I began to shape a scheme expressly for the College by Post, grouping the books of the Bible according to the periods which produced them, and recognising throughout that the History which tells us what men did is best illustrated by the Literature which explains why they did it.

The Chronological Scripture Cycle has grown with a rapidity I never expected, which proves, however, that there was a need for it among the more thoughtful Bible readers of our age. Ten elevenths of the new students joining for the two last terms have chosen it in preference to any of the other

schemes put before them, and a number of busier or older ladies, who could not join our classes as *Students*, have expressed so great a desire to take it up that an outer circle of *Readers*, now over 1,100 in number, has been formed in addition to our classes of Students who work out the scheme in correspondence with our Scripture Teachers.

All further particulars as to the College by Post may be had by application (enclosing a stamped envelope) to me at Hanover Lodge, Kensington Park, London, W. Here I will only add that it indirectly benefits a class for whom it was not originally designed through the "Writing Mission," which has been organized in connection with it at the suggestion of a friend, who is deeply interested in factory girls. In this way over two hundred of our Students are in friendly correspondence with the working girls of London.

I have said enough to prove that it is worth a girl's while to aim at the highest in her education, and to take as her own the motto of Chaucer's Clerk of Oxenford

Gladly wold he lerne and gladly teche.

I cannot conclude without a word as to the highest sense in which we may share our educational advantages with others. In this generation a sphere of work has been opened to women where they are not only welcome but most urgently needed, a sphere which could easily claim all the educated Christian women of Britian.

A few days ago, I heard the wife of the Principal of the Agra College say that she knew a large number of young Hindus who would gladly confess themselves Christians did they not fear to outrage the affections, and defy the influence of their female relatives. Women's ignorant bigotry is the great stronghold of those religious systems which have made the lot of woman in India more deplorable than we can imagine. The only people who can enlighten these, our fellow-subjects, are the women of Britain.

Last year, I listened in a London drawing room to the passionate and pathetic pleading of Mrs. Ahok, who had crossed the world saying "If the women of England only knew how greatly the women of China need the blessings which Christianity alone can give, they would hasten to us as its teachers."

I am not speaking to those who are content to take their idea of Foreign Mission from the off-hand statement of some acquaintance who has been abroad, and who cares as much

about religious work as we here care about the races now going on in Liverpool. I do say to all willing to study this subject intelligently, here is an opportunity we have never had before, and an appeal we dare not set aside.

The roll of the Church Missionary Society for this year contains the names of twenty-five women of means and leisure, who have gone out as honorary missionaries at their own charges. Through the "Student Volunteer Movement," some 2,000 women from the American colleges have pledged themselves to a missionary career.

Are there not many other highly educated women wanting to use their lives well, who might go forth, with the knowledge of Christ in their heads and the love of Christ in their hearts, to prove that they do recognise our responsibility as our sisters keepers?

Miss Huckwell opened the Discussion on Miss Petrie's paper:—The subject of Miss Petrie's paper is one that must come home to every thinking girl and woman. It is natural that we should ask how we are using or can use the great educational advantages that have been thrown open to women. I think all will agree with Miss Petrie, that it is our duty to share these advantages with others. The extension and widening of our intellectual privileges offer a new and wide field for young workers. The deeper work of purifying the moral life from sin and suffering is not for them, it requires the more experienced heart and mind, but as pioneers of culture in its truest sense, gentleness of heart, and refinement of life, there is a great and noble work before them. Girls' clubs, night schools, classes and teaching of all kinds are paths by which they may reach those cut off from the higher influences of life. It is not so much instruction in Encyclopaedic knowledge that is required; we need, I think, more especially that those who have long inherited and enjoyed the treasures of culture and true learning should guide and lead others rightly to understand and appreciate this higher knowledge, thus helping them to raise their standard of thought and life.

There are two points in connection with our subject that I should like to emphasize. *First*, that it is our duty, if it be not our *pleasure*, to shew these intellectual gains—I use the word pleasure almost in opposition to duty. I do not think we can expect young girls accustomed from their earliest days to refinement and culture to find *pleasure* in association with, and work amongst, others of lower interests and untrained manners.

They will find much that is unlovely and dull, still more that is disappointing and disheartening. A young girl who undertakes such work as a pleasure and amusement is likely to be soon discouraged, and work often enthusiastically begun consequently ends in failure.

That those who have had the priceless advantages of cultivated homes, refined leisure, and liberal education, should use such advantages for others, is a *duty* and a debt owed to society. As a duty, it should be earnestly undertaken and adhered to, it should be placed above the minor claims of life's pleasures—and here the support and encouragement of the home is needed. Those who accept this duty ought to be earnest and constant in its performance, and should allow no pleasures to interfere with it or break its regularity. A girl should be prepared and willing to sacrifice some amusements and pleasures for her work; and this she will do if her aim is high and true. It is not too much to ask, that she should give up some of the many pleasures of her life for the sake of others. Voluntary workers are, in honour, bound to perform their work as efficiently and steadily as the paid worker. So I should urge all young girls to take up some work of this nature and to carry it out resolutely and bravely, not to expect it to be all that is bright and pleasant, but to be prepared for much weariness, frequent failure, and constant self-sacrifice. In the end, when the chord of sympathy has been struck between them and those for whom they are working, they will receive their reward in wider interests and increased knowledge.

A few words on one other point. It is that those who go in for such work should go fully equipped; for it requires the fullest and brightest capacities and training; and it is impossible for any one to work among others of lower aim and level, and to preserve purity of ideal, unless they come with a large reserve of inspiration and thought, derived from long friendship with the highest and noblest works of the greatest minds. It is, too, of the utmost importance that every worker should frequently renew that friendship, and keep herself in touch with things lovely and of good report. This as much for her own sake as for others. Those will succeed best in making one nook of God's Creation a little more fruitful and better, in making some human heart a little wiser and happier, who, with gentleness of heart, bring to the work the most cultivated faculties, the trained eye, the skilled hand, the cultured and well-stored mind.

Miss. Malleson spoke of National Home Reading. She said—We are agreed as to the importance of technical education, yet it is also necessary to cultivate the imagination and the heart. This is a plan by which we hope that those who are educated and cultured will extend the culture they have to others. We gain much by reading the most beautiful works, thus making our own the most beautiful thoughts that have been written, cultivating the "friendship of books." If we can pass this on to others, we are doing a great good. Our plan is a simple one: it is that a very careful selection of books, on various subjects, shall be, every year, put before a certain number of readers. This reading scheme should include three sections—

I. For young ladies—those who have just left school.
II. General reading for the artizan class.
III. For the more cultured.

It seems to me specially necessary that children leaving school with a knowledge which can be used for good or evil, should join such reading circles. We called on the schoolmistresses, in Croydon, and asked them if they could carry out this plan, and at each school in Croydon now they have a reading circle. The books selected are read at home; but once a month the members meet, presided over by an advanced student, and talk over the books, and re-read favourite passages. I wanted to call your attention to this scheme, as I believe the classes might be useful in Girls' Clubs.

Mrs. Pinner—I think in nearly all the papers there has been a call for the educated young ladies of our land. There are many pressing forward to work, who only want direction as to the way. But there are many others who would like to work, if their mothers did not prevent them; and it is to the mothers I should like to speak to-night. I do not think there are many who would wish their daughters to spend their lives in idle gaiety; but there is a great danger of wanting to keep them in perpetual childhood. There is work to be done in the world, and we cannot expect this work to be done if we keep our daughters in a state of dependence. When they are grown up they ought not to be watched over as though they were children. I hope we shall not let our own selfish wishes rule us in this matter. I do not know whether you remember Jean Ingelow's poems, in which she speaks of the joy with which a mother gives her daughters up to their husbands. God has a call for our children, and shall we only yield them to Him with tears and moans!

Mrs. McCallum, *Nottingham*.—I want to make just one little protest. I cannot think that our society ladies are all frivolous. The members of our royal family are cultured. For an example, we have only to look at our own Princess Royal, a cleverer woman hardly exists, or one who wants to do more for her fellow-women.

Mrs. Alfred Booth :—Just one word about the selfishness of mothers. I have long come to the conclusion that of all beings the mother is the most selfish. I believe that it is first the mothers, and then the fathers who stand in the way of their girls engaging in useful work.

I want to speak to the mothers who are afraid of their girls taking infection. We let them go to theatres, concerts and evening parties, lightly dressed and exposed to many dangers, and have no anxiety about them, but when they come home from the Girls' Club, the first questions we ask are if they have had a good fire, and if the girls were all well. We mothers need to learn to be less anxious about our girls in this respect.

It is not easy to arrive at this point, but thank God some of us after much discipline have arrived at it. Might I suggest that at first the girls should give only one evening in a fortnight to this work.

Miss Grayson :—I feel that one of the great difficulties in the way of our girls is the home arrangements. This has often been given as a reason why girls cannot undertake the classes. As to the proposal of attending only once in a fortnight, that seems to me to be practically of very little use. Could not some alteration be made in the dinner hour, so as to enable girls to attend regularly once a week.

HOME ARTS AND INDUSTRIES.

MISS JEBB.

In Lady Brownlow's absence, it has fallen to my unhappy lot, with the scantiest notice, to speak to you of the Home Arts and Industries Association, a Society which was set agoing by a woman, and has at its London Office a female staff. Now, in the seventh year of the Association's life, it has classes—between four and five hundred of them, I believe—in all parts of the kingdom, and as often as not these classes are under the guidance of women. I call myself unhappy, and

why? Surely not that I have the unexpected pleasure of attending this Conference. Surely not that I do not gladly put before you the claims upon your attention of an Association with which since its foundation I have been closely connected. Rather I am unhappy from regret that my paper is unavoidably a hasty compilation from the writings of others—in a great measure, in fact, a series of wholesale transcripts from Dr. Adler, of New York, from Mr. Bosanquet, and others who approach the subject of manual education from a lofty and comprehensive standpoint.

For the information of any persons here who do not already know much about the Association—which by the way is well represented in Liverpool—I will just read a short account of its aims as set forth in its own publications.

1. To train the eyes and fingers of its pupils, thereby not only adding to their resources and powers of enjoyment, but increasing their value as workmen, and making them more fit to earn a livelihood in whatever occupation they may adopt.
2. To fill up the idle hours of lads and girls, especially at the age when they have left school, and not taken up a regular trade, by providing occupation of a kind which will keep them happily employed at home.
3. To promote pleasant and sympathetic intercourse between the educated and the poor, and to enable the possessors of art knowledge and culture to impart their gifts to those who are without either.
4. To revive the old handicrafts which once flourished in England, but which have now died out, and to encourage the labouring classes to take a pride in making their homes beautiful by their own work.

To this I may add that an exhibition is held yearly in London, or one of our large towns, of the best work done in the classes. At this exhibition awards are given and the work exhibited may be sold. It is chiefly wood carving, metal repoussé, embossed leather, needlework, baskets, and bent and forged iron. The work is judged and criticised; and no annual exhibition passes that does not bring us expressions of appreciation and encouragement from some of our very greatest artists. Classes are at work in the four countries of the United Kingdom, in the slums of London, in our large and small towns, and in several places, for the benefit of the household and workmen, in isolated country houses. To set up a class to begin with, of course, involves more or less outlay. But a

certain number of the classes existing have become self-supporting, and more than self-supporting, so that it may fairly be affirmed that, after the preliminary expenses, in a class well managed and taught, work may be turned out and sold at remunerative prices. Only really good work commands a steady sale, and in this economic law the Society rejoices. For to make money is no part of its scheme, and to foist rubbish upon the market would be to stultify its aim.

I pass now to a consideration of manual training as an essential element in education. In our country manual training enters necessarily into the national school course only as yet in the forms of drawing and needlework. That is a step in the right direction, and one, no doubt, which will lead us further in the course of time as it crawls on this side the Atlantic. In New York, during the last five years, under the auspices of the Society for Ethical Culture, manual training has been incorporated, experimentally, with the book work and oral instruction at the Working Men's School and Free Kindergarten, with the result that Dr. Adler takes that successful school as the text of his able advocacy of what he calls the Creative Method in Education. He regards the Creative Method as a natural and orderly advance on the object-lesson system which Pestalozzi initiated—an advance that is from the observation of things to their production—Froebel's method in fact enlarged, and extended from infant schools to the entire pupil-life of boys and girls. From such ideal schools the friends of progressive education in this country may well turn in envious despair, for public opinion with us is still perhaps half a century away from a lively belief that an all-sided educational system is the only measure which strikes effectually at the root of pauperism. By a variety of organisations we English seek to supplement our defective national education; and the teaching of the Home Arts and Industries Association is based on the perception of the value of the Creative Method, not only for the culture of the intellect, but as well for the development of the æsthetic and moral nature. I will say a word on each of these heads, merely referring parenthetically to the more obvious advantage of an eye and hand that are quick and true, a physical nature that is the ever ready and nimble handmaid of the mind.

1. In the first place, then, in respect to the training of the intellect, the bearing of the Creative Method on the study of geometry is obvious. The practice of hand work will make a pupil's conceptions of the fundamental geometrical relations

unusually clear and distinct. The properties of a square, circle, cube and cylinder will be more vividly realised by those who *embody* these forms than by those who only observe them. And if we remember that the geometrical forms are the key to the understanding of all forms whatsoever, we shall not underrate the importance of a perfect grasp of these forms by the youthful mind. Further, drawing and manual work are mutually complementary. The work is the concrete representation of the drawing, the drawing is the abstract representation of the work. It is well known how few workmen in the various trades are able to work from a drawing without a model, or to represent their ideas by a correct drawing. No one can doubt that the language of form is one of those languages which everyone should seek to master. Like the study of Greek in higher education, the study of the language of forms trains the mind, and enables it at the same time to cope with the widening subjects it brings upon the mental field.

2. And this consideration leads me, secondly, to point out the direct value of the Creative Method in developing and refining taste, and in inspiring the love of harmony and beauty. By teaching one of the minor *arts* in connection with freehand drawing (these two again are mutually complementary) the Association believes that it goes far to impart to its pupils a new organ, for a sense of beauty, ever so little aroused, amounts to no less. Nature with all its forms, and movements, and colours, becomes an endless source of interest, and the world a different place—whilst Philistine content with debased art is gradually displaced.

3. And, thirdly, what is the moral side of Creative Education? I am not speaking of it merely as a counter attraction to an idle or an evil life, nor as a means of rescuing Jack from being a dull boy. Rather, I should say, that to add the power of artistic creation to what may be called a utilitarian education, tends to intensify the sense of the value of life, to develop a capacity which is the birthright of a civilized human being, and to create in him a conception of the True and the Beautiful that will bear its part in the formation of character. By this method the child learns to appreciate the value of rightness in his work. The true in the realm of matter is the analogue of the true in the moral realm. The sense of rightness, translated into terms of human conduct, becomes the sense of righteousness.

No instinct requires more careful or delicate handling than

the divine instinct of creation, if it is to be brought to full maturity and bear its ripened fruit through all future life; fruit not evidenced only in the making of tangible things, but fruit of well ordered energy, directed to the wise and beautiful making and shaping of life itself. This is essentially work for cultivated women.

So much for the theory of education in its largest sense upon which our Association is founded. Collaterally it serves also a number of useful purposes.

It brings into wholesome and natural intercourse those who need teaching and those who are ready and willing to impart it.

It attracts and develops the latent artistic talent that exists in every community.

It provides absorbing occupation that may, in rainy and slack times, be carried on in the home of the worker.

It is specially useful to invalids and the maimed. The first pupil of the Association was a cripple.

It utilizes the acquirements of many a girl who till she begun to teach had been an unawakened learner.

It often turns to educational account the art treasures that lie unprofitable in the houses of the wealthy.

It promotes general handiness and aptitude to learn a regular trade.

It leads pupils to take a pride in the decoration of their own homes.

Some of the speakers this afternoon seemed to apprehend that in the new zeal for a more practical education, the development of the imagination and the higher qualities of the mind might suffer. We of the Home Arts Association entirely concur with that view, and therefore we *prefer* to teach some branch of *Art*, however humble, rather than mere crafts and industries.

The Association consists of two parts:—

(*a*) Its actual mission is carried out by means of little classes, held chiefly by lady volunteers. In these classes the different branches of artistic handwork are taught to working lads and girls and men, all of whom are simply attracted by the love of the pursuit. No previous knowledge is demanded of the pupils, and if any charge is made it is very trifling.

(*b*) Secondly, from the London centre the classes derive advice and guidance, and most of their artistic nutriment; that is to say, there is a special committee which collects, and selects, and produces designs such

as seem good in themselves and suitable for instruction. These designs and corresponding models are circulated amongst the classes. The office and studio are in charge, not of mere letter-writing secretaries, but of ladies who thoroughly understand the various branches of the work and are practically skilled in them. The London studio also organises training classes where intending teachers are trained, and where class-holders can at any time take a single lesson.

In order to start a class, very little is wanted besides a teacher and a little money. Pupils are always forthcoming. To begin with, the class must be provided with tools and materials. The class ought to be quite small if the pupils are all new to the work and the teacher has little experience. The lesson is usually two hours, and after a few lessons work may be advanced between times at the pupils' homes. It is a great advantage to have a trained instructor to start a class and prepare the teachers. The expense of employing such an instructor is usually met by having a class of ladies and gentlemen whose fees cover the whole, or nearly the whole, of his salary. Anyone, however, who cares for the subject, and has a sound knowledge of drawing, can acquire the capacity of teaching these arts without any lengthy training. Help can often be obtained from a local carver, or metal worker, who can ground the class thoroughly in the handicraft part of the work. It is really wonderful what has been done in remote classes by the help of local teachers, and by something of a gift and strenuous self-education on the part of the class-holder. It is particularly noticeable that the Association is as much or more for the roughest unskilled class as for skilled mechanics. The classes include agricultural labourers, shoeblacks, pitmen, carmen, country carpenters and blacksmiths, grooms and gardeners as well as town mechanics.

The object, of course, is not mere recreation, yet the classes must be recreative in the sense that the pupils must come because they enjoy coming, and this is one reason for beginning, as our teachers do, at once with manual work proper, and not, for example, with freehand drawing. Any boy likes to cut wood, or to handle clay, but the elementary part of drawing is less immediately attractive. And this plan is right in theory. Design cannot be rightly created, or rightly interpreted except through a mastery over the material for which it is intended. When the instinct of form is aroused it demands

further cultivation by means of drawing. The teacher should labour chiefly to awaken the perception of beauty, and to make familiar by well chosen examples the modifications undergone by the beauty of nature in passing into the beauty of decorative art.

Perhaps I am entering too much into details, but I am anxious to inspire some of the younger women here to join our Association, and to help us to extend its teaching. To put some of what I have said into a more concrete form, I should like still briefly to describe a few of the classes that I have myself seen at work, for that will bring out vividly the wide scope of the Association, which, wide as it is, calls aloud for fresh labourers in the field.

In the East End of London, I have watched a class of the poorest and wildest lads. Here the teachers at first had to be at least half as many as the shoeblacks and street arabs who came, as often as not, just for a lark, but who returned again and again to carve and to carpenter.

At Cambridge, there is an admirable class for carpentering alone. It is taught by a professional teacher for two hours an evening, three times a week. Ten or fifteen boys are usually at work there. It is looked after and supported by fellows and undergraduates of colleges, and costs, I was told, about £40 a year. The intention, of course, is not to make professional carpenters, but handy men. I looked in upon this class one evening, and came away saying to myself that it would be cheap indeed at double the cost.

In a lady's dining-room, I have been present at a drawing class that is carried on side by side with leather work which has developed into quite a village industry. A workshop has been put up, and one or two lads find constant employment in it at weekly wages, besides teaching the recruits.

At a country hamlet where wages are low, and quite young boys are ploughmen and carters, these often wet and unfed urchins besiege the door of the carving room, and many of them have to be refused admittance to the class for lack of space and teachers.

Then I know well the history of one of the oldest classes of the Association, a class which struggled manfully against every kind of difficulty, and made, no doubt, at first, many mistakes. From it other classes have spread in widening circles, and to its experience many of them owe it that they have glided into work with none of the rough joltings that attended the pioneer. Here, under my own observations, I have in later years seen a

widening and deepening of the movement, which has, in fact, by degrees drawn together into wholesome communion persons at the opposite ends of the social scale who had no common interest before. This class has, to my knowledge, made many a life fuller and happier, and it has prepared the way for the technical education that the best of our English workmen have for so long been asking to receive. At the present time, the place I am speaking of is in receipt of a grant from the County Council, which enables it at last to have a course of lessons by a thoroughly trained and competent teacher. It will be very astonishing if ground that has been so well broken up in former years does not now bear an abundant harvest.

I conclude with words written three years ago by Mr. Bosanquet—words whose significance is as important now as it was important and prophetic then.

"Do not let us imagine our efforts superfluous, from the idea that the state or the locality may shortly take up this task with larger means than ours. Whatever form the new system may assume, its actual working must depend upon the material with which it has to work. Education does not consist in buildings, not even in work-shops, nor in grants of money from Parliament, or out of the rates; it consists in the desire and the capacity of human minds to teach and to be taught. To awaken this desire, and to create this capacity in a new direction, is the achievement not of years but of generations. Methods have to be evolved, and to become easy and familiar to teachers; an order of teachers has to be created, uniting experience with enthusiasm; the mind of the upper classes, as of the lower, has to be penetrated with a new sense of what makes life worth living. This, and nothing less, is the work in which we have the chance of helping, and any future organisation must entirely depend for its efficiency on the progress which this work shall have made."

Miss Thompson opened the discussion on Home Arts and Industries:—

Perhaps it may be of some interest to those present to hear a short account of what has been attempted in our village of Knotty Ash with regard to Home Arts, though it is, indeed, very little compared with many other places. We began the work in 1886–7, by calling together a few boys personally known to us, and proposing to them that we should form a class for wood-carving, and one for making china mosaic, undertaking the teaching ourselves. There were, I think, nine who wished to learn carving, and one china mosaic. I may say that the

latter fell through, almost at once, as we could not produce a satisfactory result—our plaster crumbled away, and the time it took to arrange the little bits seemed endless. I should be much interested to hear of someone who has really found it suitable for village lads to learn.

With the carving we fared better. We held the class once a week, in a little mission room which was lent us. We struggled through the usual difficulties of the inexperienced, sharpening our own tools as well as we could, drawing patterns, &c., &c. Each boy bought a few tools; we worked away, and, at the end of the season, had a sale, which, being patronised by kind friends who overlooked deficiencies, brought us in a small profit, £2 12s. 7d., which we divided amongst the workers.

Our second winter, 1887–8, showed improvement. In addition to the carving class, a class for joinery was started, under a joiner of the village, and held in the kitchen of an empty house. Tools and one bench were lent, and about five boys attended. The carving class was continued, and, after paying expenses of both classes, we had a balance of a few pounds, £5 19s. 7d., which we again divided amongst the workers.

I may say here that a joinery class is difficult, and expensive to work. To begin with, the ordinary joiner cannot, as a rule, teach or keep in order a number of boys. It wants a man who has been trained to teach, and it wants a system of instruction. Then the expense of plant is heavy, for to have a really good class, each boy should have bench-room, and a few tools for his own use. These tools being expensive, are quite beyond his reach to buy for himself, and must be provided and lent him for each lesson. They have to be kept in order, and beginners cannot be expected to sharpen.

The following winter, 1888-9, the joiners class was held in rather a better room, tools being given, and there was a better attendance. A class for bent iron was held also.

The result was, a gain on the carving class, a loss on the joinery class, and the bent iron paid for itself. We divided £4 19s. amongst the workers in the carving and bent iron classes; but it then struck us as unfair that some of the workers should benefit and not others, and we decided that the profitable classes should help to pay for the losing one. Working on this plan, the end of the next season, 1889-90, showed a loss on the whole of £1 10s. 1d., nothing being given to the workers. Up to this time the boys had had the lessons free of charge, and the rooms had been lent.

I now come to our last winter's work, 1890-91. We were able to get the use of an iron room, built on purpose, and fitted with benches and tools sufficient to teach twelve or fourteen boys joinery. I may say, incidentally, that the room cost about £100, and the fittings about £30. We had a lathe given us. The benches serve also for carving by being raised on props. We engaged a man to teach joinery who had gained experience in teaching. His charge was 5s. a lesson; and, for the first time, we had a professional wood carver in addition to our voluntary teachers for the carving class. We charged 1d. a lesson for the working lads, but this being, of course, insufficient to meet expenses, we formed a paying class for ladies and others (under the same teachers), the charges being calculated to cover, if possible, the cost of the two classes. We continued our voluntary teaching of bent iron work, and began to give lessons in embossed leather work. The result, on the whole, was satisfactory. We have a balance to the good of £4 16s. 11d.; but here, again, I may mention that no rent has been paid for our room.

I have now brought the story of our Knotty Ash endeavour after home arts down to the present date; and, for our classes this winter, I may refer to our printed syllabus. For the carving classes we have secured the services of a lady teacher, instructed in the South Kensington School of Wood Carving, and the joinery class (now very popular) is continued under the same teacher as before. We have ventured on a wider and much more expensive scheme, in the full hope that we shall soon receive some pecuniary assistance from the local board of our district, who have, I believe, some money at their disposal to be devoted to technical instruction. I have a strong feeling myself that we ought not to depend on sales, and that nothing but really well-made articles should be sold. I feel that we ought to teach our people how they can beautify the ordinary articles in daily use—shelves, cupboards, frames, etc.; but I think the very essence of the *Home* Art Movement is to teach people to do this in their own *houses*, and not to carve for the gain of a few shillings by selling their work. The sale of inferior work, such as most of it is bound to be, must be accidental, and, to a certain extent, dependent on fashion and charity. When the fashion changes, there must be great disappointment in store for those who think they see a permanent commercial value in the ordinary produce of our village classes. Let us suggest to our boys to make useful and decorative pieces of furniture for themselves or for their friends, or engage

them in executing some large work for the improvement of the village they live in—something that could be seen by all.

I now bring this report to a close, hoping that I have not given too much detail. It is just the simple account of what we have done at Knotty Ash.

SECOND DAY.

THURSDAY, NOV. 12TH, 10 A.M. TO 1 O'CLOCK.

10.0 Prayer Meeting.

LABOUR QUESTIONS.

1. *The Responsibilities of Employers.* Lady LAURA RIDDING (*Southwell*).

2. *Trades Unions for Working Women.* Mrs. LINDSAY (*Glasgow*).

3. *Co-operation among Women.* Miss BEATRICE POTTER (*London*).

The chair was taken at 10.30 by Mrs. ALFRED BOOTH, who called upon Lady LAURA RIDDING to read her Paper :—

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYERS.

BY LADY LAURA RIDDING.

The Lady's Vision.

IN a room, beautiful with all that art and riches could gather together, sat an anxious-looking lady reading the newspaper. The paper was heavy with social troubles, from a fiery correspondence between despairing housewives on the degeneracy of domestic servants, to accounts of socialist labour congresses, of strikes abroad and strikes at home, of distress among the locked-out hands of some of the factories in the lady's country town, of the rejection of their master's ultimatum by the hands of her husband's factory.

She put down the paper with a sigh. "Men may sneer at these silly housekeepers' letters; but there is a great deal of truth in them!" thought she, bitterly, "and we women are tried beyond endurance by our troubles as much as our husbands are by theirs. What makes the working classes so apparently hopeless to deal with? What demon possesses

them to distort their judgment and trust in their betters? Trade is leaving the town all through their suicidal folly! I would give anything to know how such people should be dealt with!"

Even as she uttered the wish the door opened, and she looked up to see two strange figures entering. Both were dwarfs, dim and uncertain in outline, the one who held the door-handle swayed about as if moving in her sleep.

The lady asked, in wonder, who they were, and the foremost answered:—

"I am Imagination, to whom this handmaid, Conscience, opened your door."

"Imagination! Welcome, indeed, most glorious guest. See how your thoughts are valued here," answered the lady, waving her hand towards her book-shelves. "But you are very different to what I pictured you."

"You see me thus, because you have dealt cruelly by me. You have stunted and starved me," said the wizen-faced visitor. "But delay not here. I am sent to lead you forth," and he seized her hand, and she wonderingly obeyed.

The next moment they stood in the lady's nursery. The mother's face lit up with joy, and she touched her guide's hand gratefully.

"Ah! you have often watched with me here before! How I have dreamt over these little children's futures. Look at them, lovely in their rosy sleep!"

But Imagination suffered her not to lean over the cribs.

"There is another here beside your children!" said he; then he brought her up to the table, where the young nursery-maid was writing to her soldier lover.

The lady leaned over the girl's shoulder and read her letter. The influence that made her do this prevented its feeling strange, neither did it seem strange when the girl raised her head and looked, as it were, through her; then the girl went on writing unconscious of any presence save that of the sleeping children.

The mistress read till indignation made her wring her hands in misery.

"To think that this wretched girl has been all these months with my innocent children! Why did I not dismiss her on the spot when I gave her warning last month?"

Imagination re-captured her hand, and then, suddenly, the girl's whole mind was laid bare before her mistress. The lady saw the blind state of sullen anger felt by the girl at her

dismissal for what she considered harmless flirting whilst in charge of the children in the park. She read the mute rebellion against her mistress' tyranny, the bewildered dread of the unknown future, the certainty that her stepmother would not allow her to return home in disgrace, and the determination expressed in the letter to ask her soldier friend to help her to lodgings and work. She saw with horror the medley of knowledge acquired by the girl during her short service: the revelation of the luxury of the rich, of the evil ways of the world, of stolen forbidden pleasures, all dazzlingly new to the village girl. Of higher teaching, nobler thoughts, real enlightenment, there were no traces among all this newly-acquired knowledge. The mistress shuddered at the sight, and cried aloud:—

"She must be lost inevitably when she leaves this house!"

"She has not left yet," remarked Conscience, who had taken her place on her other side.

Imagination drew the lady forward: "We have far to go. Come!"

Down the back stairs they glided, stopping on the way to let a hurrying maid brush by. She was dressed up in smart evening clothes, so that her mistress hardly recognised her. The same momentary glimpse into her inner heart came like a flash to the unhappy seer. A passionate craving for amusements and excitement was driving the girl to drink and sin. Then as she tripped away, a heavy approaching step made the three draw back once more. The obsequious housekeeper passed her mistress without any acknowledgment of her presence, and the lady saw revealed the nature of the woman to whom she deputed all the responsibilities of her household. Indolent, cringing, miserly, tyrannical, a slave to a strange startling code of thought, observances, and morals—this was the woman at whose mercy lay the welfare of the little community over which she ruled. When she had passed out of sight, the lady gave a stricken cry:—

"Let us go hence! I cannot breathe freely here!"

"We will go," answered the guides.

They passed into the open street; and, in a moment the rustling of summer leaves and the warm fragrant wind showed the lady that they were in some country glade. Another step, and she saw before her the well-appointed range of stable buildings of her own country house. Some idle grooms were playing at cards in the harness-room. She saw them through the open door. The trembling hand of one lad arrested her

attention, and, immediately, a miserable sight lay before her. The young fellow's life of idleness had led him to ruin; and, in his mind, she saw surging unresisted temptation to crime, through which he might make good his debts of honour.

The lady fled from the sight, and flung herself sobbing on the turf beneath the trees.

"It is despairing!" cried she. "What makes our home such a breeding place for evil thoughts and deeds? What can I do more than I have done to prevent such harm? I have been so careful always to insist on good characters; I have dismissed all who have been guilty of light conduct; and I know that all their bedrooms and dwelling-rooms, their plentiful meals, their fair wages are irreproachable. We always have family prayers, and insist on our servants going to Church once on Sunday. What besides could I provide for them?"

"Good thoughts, intelligent interests, friendly relations between you and them. These things they need for their souls and minds as fully as bed and board for their bodies. 'These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.'" Conscience spoke sternly. She stood there great and strong with an awakened look in her face.

The lady shivered and rose to her feet, and suffered Imagination to lead her away.

A throbbing, bellowing noise and a sound of hurrying footsteps rose around them.

"Where are we going?" asked the lady.

"To your third home," was the answer.

Her words: "We have no other home," were lost in the deafening din. She found herself in a long room full of whirling wheels and dancing threads, and a crowd of women, tired-eyed and faded bending over the machines. Imagination led the lady through the crowd, up high stairs, through another room and another and another crowded and dizzy with noise and dust, to a last room empty of all save the great wheels silent and motionless as in death.

The white-faced lady leaned against the wall and looked piteously in her guides' faces. They stood as giants before her, altered exceedingly from the moment when she had first looked upon them.

Again Conscience spoke: "This, then, is your first visit to your factory! You have seen the thoughts of many hearts here! You know now what they think of you; you know now how they contrast your life with the grinding struggle of their lives, your home with the squalor of their homes, your

prosperity with the galling poverty of their condition, your pleasures with the weariness and monotony of their existence. You see very many of them suffering from the foul ideas and evil temptations that swarm around them here. You see very many of them without hope, without God in the world. In this condition will the coming crisis find them. On Monday all the rooms will be empty as this, and the strike with its bitterness and suffering and terrible consequences will begin. And how will all these your women servants live? What possible wages can they earn? Most of them are only qualified for two kinds, the wages of this trade and *one other*. And if they are driven to that other, who can blame them, if no one has ever taught them the shame of it, and that while the wages of sin is death, there is a God who pities and will help the righteous in time of need."

With a smarting sense of suffering the lady cried:

"I have seen indeed! All you have shewn me is terrible, and I should be the brute they think me if I did not pity their condition. But who am I that I can alter such misconceptions, or alter such characters as theirs? One change is as impossible as the other."

"What have you *tried* to do for them?" demanded Conscience. "Where is the thought for their welfare here that you spoke of in your other homes? Where is the rigid enquiry as to the character of those who are taken into service here? Where are the family prayers? Where are the careful arrangements for meals and dwelling-rooms? Where is the protection of motherly women provided for the young girls? Where is the thoughtful care in sickness? All these points you prided yourself on in your other homes, why are they entirely absent here?"

"This is different. It is my husband's factory. It is *not* our home!" she protested in passionate defence.

"They are, you say, your husband's servants, working in your husband's house. The difference between domestic and industrial service does not do away with these servants' relationship to you, neither does it relieve you of your responsibilities. How can you, a woman, leave all these young lives whom God has called you to bless, alone, unregarded, because you have not chosen to acknowledge their claim? Come and see the results of your neglect."

Suddenly the lady with her guides entered a garret. There was no furniture in it. The walls were blotched with foul stains as if diseased with filth and poverty. On the floor

was a mattress quick with vermin, and on it crouched a girl in the last stage of consumption. One burning desire filled her mind as it glowed open before the lady: to drag herself down those long steep stairs, to creep to the river bank, and to end her sufferings and starvation there.

"What is her story?" gasped the lady.

"She was dismissed fourteen weeks ago for unsatisfactory work. The marvel was that she had kept on so long. She is absolutely friendless, a stranger in the town. But, see, here another of your former servants is dying. Come to her death-bed."

They were now in the bare ward of a Workhouse Infirmary. A screen shut out the other inmates of the room from the dying woman, so that now at the last she was separated from the depraved, diseased companions from whom she had been having the last lessons of vice during the few months that ended her life. A clergyman stood on one side of the bed, Death on the other. As the last prayer ended, the poor creature fixed her eyes on his and panted out: "If only some one had learned me how bad my life was, I would never have been the sinner I am. I never knowed it were wrong to drink and be a gay woman. You say God has mercy even for such as me. May He have mercy on my poor soul!" And then Death took her.

"She has died worn out by vice and disease at thirty. She grew up in a wretched home, and at fifteen she entered your factory. It was the unchecked evil influence of a set there that finished the work of contaminating her and dragged her at last into the worst gutters of the streets," said Imagination.

And Conscience took up her word and added: "Think not that all who serve you are corrupt like these, because we have shewn you only the sinful ones. There are bright holy Christians among them, whose faces you are not worthy to look upon, who are following Christ, fighting His battles as true heroes, without help or encouragement from those they serve, but to whom a little sympathy of Christian fellowship would be an unspeakable help. Lady! You and your husband have risen to prosperity. Have you ever thought how it might have been had it been otherwise with you, had you sunk into poverty and been servers instead of masters? Cannot you share some of the blessings with which your lives have been crowned with your less fortunate fellows?

The lady trembled as she answered: "How can I dare to speak to you, mighty Spirits. You have opened my eyes with

an agonizing flash! I see how we have sinned by our negligence, and I feel with bitter sorrow how different it might have been had we begun differently from the first outset of our married life. Now it is too late to change our ways; besides it would not be understood. The very fact of our having risen from a position nearer to theirs, would make our hands resent our coming among them. We cannot do it now. You see how they misunderstand us already, and this would only make it worse. You see that it is impossible!"

Conscience answered not a word, but Imagination took her hand as she looked appealingly on them. And behold she saw before her a great throne, and on it sat a glorious King surrounded by thousands of ministers. Through the throng, through the sounds of all their voices came from a far distance where his herdsmen were toiling, faint cries of suffering and trouble. The King heard the cries and he arose from his throne, he discrowned himself, and casting off his royal raiment he clad himself in the rough skins of a herdsman and went far away to help them. The lady saw him living among them in all things like unto them, toiling with them, teaching them, nursing them, trying to win them from their savage ways by his love and mercy.

"And what came of it?" asked she.

As she spoke the scene faded into darkness and through the darkness she saw the outline of a cross with the King, crowned once more, hanging on it.

"It is the Lord!" cried she, covering her face with her hands.

"Your Lord and your Master who suffered for you leaving you an example that you should do as He has done to you!" As Conscience spake the vision passed, and she, with her face still covered, prayed:

"Shew me how I must begin."

The answer came: "See!"

She looked up. The Guides were gone. She was in her own sitting room, and her husband beside her.

The discussion was opened by Mrs. CREIGHTON:—Lady Laura Ridding has made us realize the close ties which bind employers and employed together. May I suggest one way in which employers may be useful to the employed, and that is, while sheltering the young in their service, to encourage them to lead an independent life; this can be done partly through teaching them to be thrifty. Much might be done in the establishment of benefit societies for women; and

in this work employers may help. These societies should be controlled by the people for whose benefit they exist; but a little outside help is necessary at the outset. I will tell you something of one of these societies established for women.

It is called the United Sisters' Friendly Society, it was started some years ago, and is on the model of men's societies, such as the "Foresters" and "Oddfellows." This society numbers five or six hundred members, and has nineteen or twenty courts. A court can be started in any place as soon as twenty are found who will become members. Honorary members are suggested to assist with the expenses. Those who are under twenty pay 6½d. a month, and about 1d. towards management. Members obtain 4s. a week during sickness, and receive £3 for funeral expenses.

I have had a letter from the secretary saying that the yearly valuation has just been made by the Government. A bronze medal and diploma have been granted. We have investigated in every way, to be assured of the soundness of the society, and I can speak with confidence about it. The benefit of providing help in times of sickness is obvious, and also of teaching thrift and training in business habits. One very encouraging fact is the co-operation of the men's society, the members of which give a great deal of time and thought to it.

Miss Clementina Black, from London:—I think, perhaps, after Lady Laura Ridding's paper it may be of some interest to hear an account of a model factory. I know only one in which I should be comfortable at work. The one to which I refer is at Deptford. Everything is most beautifully managed for the comfort of the girls. There is a river close by, on which there is a boat kept for their use, and there is also a tennis lawn connected with the factory grounds.

The room into which I went, where the girls were working, was well warmed, and the walls were of polished pitch-pine. They were all talking as they worked, and I noticed that they did not stop talking when their employer passed through the room. In an upper room was a piano, and a library.

Once or twice a week the firm lends this room to the girls, where they have gatherings of their friends. No one is paid less than 14s. a week, and the working day consists of eight hours. These girls look young ladies in the best sense of the word. I asked the head of the firm how he made them come early in the morning, and he replied that he never had any difficulty. When I asked him if he imposed fines for being late, he replied "If I could not get them here early without

fines, I would not have a factory." He also said that he had to spend the greater part of his life among his work-people, and he could not live in comfort if they were not well looked after. He might have to spend a few more years in business because of many little outlays for the comfort of his people; but he would rather do so both for his own sake and the sake of his employees.

I am glad to have seen this factory, for it shows that there can be a feeling of home in such places.

Lady Laura Ridding said:—I should like to speak of a factory at Derby, where a large number of girls are employed in lace-making. A great deal of thoughtful care is taken for their comfort. They have a savings bank and classes for sewing; also almshouses, a chapel, and a room for entertainments, and separate messrooms for men and women. There is a pond of hot water outside, in which are goldfish and tropical lilies. The managers have arranged that the workmen can take shares in the factory. The factory hands stay there for years, and seem very happy. Amongst the workers are often found daughter, father, and grandfather.

Mrs. Rimmer, Southport:—The question of employers and employed touches us all on one point; we are nearly all employers of domestic servants. There is just one matter on which I want to speak. I am here as representative of a Birkdale Society for the Care of Girls, and I may tell you one thing that has troubled us very much is the fact that so many ladies, when they go away for their holidays, leave their servant alone in the house. I believe most ladies do this only from thoughtlessness; but bad results often follow. I know of one servant who went out of her mind through fright, and of another who got into great disgrace, and was dismissed without character. I feel that we all ought to think seriously about this.

Mrs. Booth:—As a model factory has been described, I should like to describe a model ship-owner's office in Liverpool. On the lower floors you find the gentlemen connected with the establishment; going up a flight of stairs, you are surprised to find a model kitchen; and on passing into another room, a table is seen laid ready for luncheon at one o'clock; in another room a number of women are at work mending sheets and linen, some of them stewardesses who happen to be on shore; one room is devoted to all the linen belonging to the ships; and in still another room may be seen a number of young girls, busy copying freight lists and manifests. The working time is from ten to about five or six. The lady who manages the estab-

lishment is found in another room; she has directed the domestic part of the business for twenty years, and her work is not confined to that building, for she helps the seamen's wives, finds situations for the grown-up daughters, and looks after motherless children while the fathers are at sea. There is a payment bureau for the wives, where they come, once a week, to receive half-pay while their husbands are at sea. This I call a model ship-owner's office.

TRADES UNIONS FOR WORKING WOMEN.

MRS. LINDSAY.

There is no subject more fitted to engage the serious thoughts of Christian women, meeting together for consultation as we are now doing, than the condition of the large and increasing number of women who support themselves by the labour of their hands. It is not necessary in the present day to enlarge upon the disgracefully low wages paid to women in many trades; the long hours many must work to obtain the barest subsistence; the insanitary and oppressive conditions of labour under which many suffer; the terrible alternative of starvation or sin that offers when work fails. From Hood's "Song of the Shirt" to Mr. Besant's "Children of Gibeon," the sufferings of working women have been made the subject of literary description, and what is worth much more, they are the object of investigation and of effort on the part of good men, and of women who feel, as they consider the condition of their hard-working sisters, that they, sharing their womanhood, cannot be indifferent to their toils and sorrows.

Besides the causes which tend to depress wages in general to the level of subsistence, there are special reasons for the very low wages earned by women. There is fierce competition among workers in our present state of society, but in the case of women there are special elements in the competition, forcing wages down. There is the competition of partially-supported workers: married women who wish to add to the family income, or girls living at home who only work for pocket money, and who will therefore undertake work at prices which could not support them if they had no other source of income, and by so doing drag down the wages of all other women.

The situation is still further complicated by the competition of women with men: women being employed at much lower

wages, often from one half to one third, to do what was formerly done by men; with the result that husbands and brothers may be unable to find employment, while their wives and sisters are doing the same work for less than half the money. Then the want of organization and mutual understanding among women workers makes it more difficult for them to resist reductions of wages, or unsatisfactory conditions of labour.

Employers are not alone to blame for these evils; there are many just-minded employers who would be willing to pay better wages than at present are the rule, but if they did so, while women still continued to compete for work in great numbers and without organization, less scrupulous rivals would simply elbow them out of the market by obtaining cheaper labour.

Combination and organization among working women seem then to offer a remedy for the present state of matters. It is no part of my subject to enter into the principles or the history of men's Trade Unions, I shall simply state the lessons that the history of the men's Unions taught the women in the earliest days of combination among them.

In one of the early leaflets published by Mrs. Paterson, the founder of Women's Trade Unions, the case is thus stated:—

WORKING MEN.	WORKING WOMEN.
Have for many years been united for trade and benefit purposes.	Have not united for mutual help and protection.
Their wages have been raised considerably.	Their wages have seldom been raised, and in some trades have been considerably reduced.
Their working hours have been shortened, without interference by law.	Their working hours although regulated by law are still much longer than those of men.
They have been enabled to arrange for arbitration in trade disputes.	They have had no means of appeal in trade disputes;
They have had constantly increasing means of interchanging valuable trade information, and of finding out where work may be had.	And no means of obtaining trade information.
Thousands of pounds have been paid from the funds of their Societies, in assisting the members when sick or out of work.	They have frequently suffered the deepest distress, sometimes actual starvation, when sudden sickness, accident, or loss of employment (owing to slackness of work, or other causes), have come upon them.

I have mentioned the name of Mrs. Paterson; it might be invidious to name other devoted workers still living, as no one person can be equally well acquainted with the work of all; but it is impossible to give any account of the history of Women's Trade Unions in this country, without saying something of this remarkable woman.

Born in 1847, she had been identified from her girlhood with movements for the amelioration of the political and industrial condition of women. The daughter of a schoolmaster and the wife of a cabinet maker, she was closely in touch with the working men's organizations, while she could take a wider wiew of the condition and needs of working women than if she had herself been a member of any one trade. It was in the spring of 1874 that Mrs. Paterson wrote a paper which was privately circulated and also published in the "Labour News" proposing to form a National Union for improving the condition of working women. A Committee for carrying out this purpose was formed in London in July of the same year, the objects of the Association being thus stated:— "to enable women earning their own livelihood to combine to protect their interests," and "to provide a benefit fund for assistance in sickness and other contingencies." These proposals were also adopted at a Conference held the same summer at Bristol. Finally, however, the original suggestion of Mrs. Paterson's pamphlet, to form a general union of members of all trades, which should separate into special unions as soon as the number of members and the state of the funds would permit, was abandoned in favour of the plan of founding separate Trade Societies, though keeping in view the desirability of ultimate federation. The Women's Protective and Provident League, which subsequently changed its name to Women's Trades Union Provident League, and finally to Women's Trades Union League, was formed, and Mrs. Paterson was appointed Hon. Secretary. In this position she continued to devote all her energies during the remaining twelve years of her life to promoting Trade Unionism among women. The Societies which the League brought into being owed their origin to her. She was the first woman admitted to the Trades Union Congress (in 1875) and she attended, and spoke or read papers, at all the subsequent congresses. Her death in 1886, at at the comparatively early age of 39, was an irreparable loss to the cause of Trade Unionism among women. Her warm sympathy, her calm judgment, her wise foresight, her width of view, her power of letting people work out things in their own

way while holding firmly to her own opinions, giving help and advice where needed, and holding back from those who could stand alone, made her an ideal leader, and the study of her reports and other writings during the early history of the movement cannot but be most helpful to those who are engaged in the same work to-day.

The first Union formed by the Protective and Provident League was the Society of Women engaged in Bookbinding, which was formed in 1874, and is still prospering. There followed in 1875 the Shirt and Collar Makers, the Upholstresses, and the Dressmakers, Milliners and Mantlemakers, and a year or two afterwards several unions of Tailoresses were formed. These are all in London.

A general Union of Working Women was formed in Bristol in 1874, and still exists and does good work, though it has undergone many vicissitudes. In 1881 a general Union was formed in Oxford, and in 1884 a similar one in Aberdeen—the first Scotch Women's Trades Union. To complete the list of general Unions, so far as known to me, a Women's Protective and Provident League was started in Glasgow just three years ago, which, besides several branches in Glasgow, has lately formed one in the neighbouring town of Greenock. Our Scotch League is formed, like all the general Unions, in accordance with Mrs. Paterson's original suggestion, that this is the best plan "at the first outset," because those women who are tolerably well paid can help those that are badly paid, but with the hope and intention of forming separate Unions in due time; and in Glasgow we have made a beginning in this direction by starting Trade Branches, which it is hoped will soon be working on their own account as independent Unions.

Till within the last few years all the Women's Unions, whether general or for special trades, had been very much of one type. Their provident side was as much emphasized by the founders, and considered as important by the members, as the protective; they were comparatively small, and were composed chiefly of skilled work-women, and they hardly touched the worst-paid trades, in which the need of organisation was greatest. It was inevitable that this should be the case at the beginning. Where toil is long and unceasing for bare subsistence, there is neither thought nor energy to spare for any attempts to improve one's condition, and therefore the pioneers of the movement had to be found among workers who, though they might endure hardships and privations, were still not crushed by absolutely grinding toil. And indeed many of the

best and most energetic unionists have been found among those working women who from special circumstances have never required the assistance the Unions give.

The summer of 1888 saw a "new departure" in Unionism among both men and women—the formation of large Unions among the unskilled labourers. The new type of women's union is generally larger and more rapid in progress than the old. As a rule it has no provident side, the Union is formed "for trade purposes only," its subscription is small, as there is no sick fund, and its chief object is to settle trade disputes without having recourse to strikes, or if a strike or lock-out should take place, to arrange matters as soon as possible, and in the meantime assist those who are thrown out of work. The first women's Union of this kind formed in London was that started among the Matchmakers during the summer of 1888, which was so successful in bringing to an end a serious strike. In Scotland, however, a similar Society had been formed among Mill and Factory workers in Dundee in 1885. This union now contains about 5000 members, and besides the parent Society in Dundee, has branches in seven manufacturing towns of the East of Scotland, and one in Barrow-in-Furness. A similar Union in Forfar and the neighbouring towns contains 2100 members (of whom, however, one third are men). These Unions exist primarily for Trade protection only, but in the Dundee Society, funeral and accident benefit has been added. This latter Union has about £2500 invested as provision for a possible strike, but no strike has as yet taken place; they have hitherto been averted by negociation. Several Unions of the new type have since been formed in London, *e.g.*, those of the Confectioners and the Ropemakers, founded by the Women's Trade Union Association, and that of the Laundresses, started last summer by the Women's Trades Union League. No doubt most of the ladies present are aware that unions among Tailoresses, Cigarmakers, Bookfolders and other workers, exist in Liverpool, and I may conclude this very inadequate sketch of existing Women's Trade Unions by stating that there are also women's unions in Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, Leicester, Belfast, and there are no doubt others elsewhere.

The large and powerful unions of the textile trades in the North of England—almost the only trades in which men and women can work on equal terms—in many cases admit women to their membership, but although they contain many thousand women, they can hardly be called Women's Trade Unions, as the management is, I believe, entirely in the hands of men.

What then have these Women's Unions accomplished in the 17 years that have passed since the first was formed?

They have in some cases settled strikes, and in many cases prevented them. It is now very commonly felt by employers that the existence of a Trade Union is for the advantage of employers as well as employed. In Mr. C. Booth's famous book on the condition of the London poor, he says, speaking of the Matchmakers' Union: "Such trade unions are really productive of good both to the members and to the employers. So far from encouraging strikes, they diminish the number of ill-judged disputes arising from faults on the part of employers. If employers are in the right, a practised committee, responsible for consequences, will much more readily yield to the force of logic; and if the employers are in the wrong, sensible representations made to them by the Committee of a strong union will be attended to and acted upon much more promptly than if put forward by girls on strike."

Women's Unions have in some cases secured a rise of wages for the workers, in many cases have prevented a reduction. In some cases they have secured better conditions of labour, in many they have resisted an extension of the hours of work, or the imposition of vexatious regulations. The sick and provident funds of the older Unions have helped hundreds of members to tide over times of illness and want of work, and the mere sense of sympathy, the feeling of being a member of a body, and not a lonely and uncared-for unit, has been of untold good to many a working-girl.

The benefits of this less tangible character, though they cannot be well reckoned up in tables of statistics, are not the least valuable. Whatever may have been the faults and mistakes of the men's unions, they have wrought into the hearts of the working classes of this country that thought of brotherhood which Christ brought into this world, and which is still slowly working its way among mankind. The motto of one of the great men's societies is: "All men are brothers;"—that of our own Women's League—"Bear ye one another's burdens;"—and these are not mere words. During the Scotch railway strike of last winter, when great inconvenience was caused among all classes of the community, and serious distress among the poor;—when, to give one example, the price of coals rose in a few days from 8d. to 2/6 a sack in bitter winter weather, and hundreds of persons quite unconnected with the railways were thrown out of work—I never heard a working man or woman complain. It was always;—"I would'nt mind

anything if the men could get the shorter hours." The complaints, so far as my experience goes, came from the richer members of society. And it cannot but be good for our working women to be brought into that community of interest and sympathy, not the widest—for there may be class selfishness as well as individual selfishness—but an immense step upward from merely fighting for one's self. The unions have thus helped to keep the men and women workers in touch with each other, and to bring about co-operation instead of jealous distrust. They have trained their members in habits of business, of forethought, of self-restraint. They have made them realise the tie that connects in a common sisterhood not only the members of one trade, but all women workers. They have helped by this sense of sisterhood to bind together women of all classes, and not least of their benefits is the insight which women of the richer classes have gained through their means into the lives of their working sisters.

I must now turn to what we may call the *problems* of Trade Unionism among women, and I should like to say to begin with, that they seem to me all problems of which there may be several solutions, and which can only really be solved in action.

We may think certain plans ideally the best, but we must remember the proverb that "the best is often the enemy of the good," and must frequently be content, not with the best imaginable, but with the best attainable, when it can be attained without sacrifice of principle, or of the main end we have in view.

1. *Should Unions be general, or of one Trade only?* That is, should Unions be formed of all the working women in a town or district, as has been done in Bristol, Oxford, Aberdeen and Glasgow, or only of the women in one trade, thus forming ultimately, in every centre, as many Unions as trades, as has been done in the majority of cases?

I think it must be confessed that the latter, with subsequent federation or co-operation of the Unions, is the ideal, at least the ultimate ideal. There is a mutual understanding between members of the same trade; their circumstances and interests are the same, and they can consult together and act together.

But on the other hand sometimes, especially at first, the general union is the only practicable one. I do not think that a general union should be content always to remain general; its object should be to "swarm off" its members into unions for

each trade, so soon as the members belonging to that trade are numerous and strong enough. But a general union makes it possible to take in women in trades where no union might be formed for years, and thus give them some of the benefits of combination, and have intelligent and experienced Unionists ready when the time comes for the formation of the special union.

2. *Sick and Benefit Funds.* One of the points on which there is most difference of opinion among the friends of Women's Trade Unions is, whether unions should have a provident as well as a protective side—*i.e.*, whether they should offer their members the advantage of a fund to assist them when ill or out of work, or whether the funds subscribed by the members should be used for "trade" purposes only, *i.e.*, to settle or avoid strikes; to resist a reduction of wages, or obtain an increase should the state of trade permit; to obtain redress for workers unfairly treated; to improve the hours and conditions of labour, &c.; all these points being settled by friendly discussion or arbitration between employer and employed whenever this is possible.

It is urged on the one hand that the Provident Fund is an attraction to many women who either on account of exceptional skill, or of unusually favourable circumstances, are not likely to need "trade" protection, and who are often women of much capacity, and enthusiastic Trade Unionists. Also that, some form of provision for sickness being admitted to be necessary, it is easier for women, to whom combination is a new thing, to pay Trade and Provident subscriptions at the same time, and take an equal share in the management of both funds, than to divide their interests between two societies. The Provident Fund also tends to keep the members together during the intervals when there are no special trade difficulties. The longer such intervals are, the better, but members are apt to become indifferent and drop off when there is no visible benefit coming, or likely to come, from their membership.

On the other hand it is maintained that the out-of-work benefit is unsafe for the solvency of the union; that a sick fund draws away money and makes members disinclined to spend the funds for Protective objects, that there is more singleness and unity of purpose when the object of the society is trade protection only, and that Provident Societies can carry on the business of insurance better than Trade Unions.

Perhaps we might agree that the question must after all be

decided by circumstances, and that each Union must judge for itself.

There are at present many varieties of arrangement. In some of the large Lancashire and Yorkshire factory unions (of women and men combined) there is out-of-work pay (under certain circumstances) and funeral benefit, but no sick pay. In the two large Women's Unions of the East of Scotland, the one only allows "strike pay," while the other gives funeral benefit, and help in cases of accident and stoppage of work. Some unions give both out-of-work and sick pay, but fence the latter by restrictions as to age. Some unions which began without a sick fund have started one afterwards. In the present very experimental state of matters, it is surely best that each society should work out its own plans, and at fitting times compare results with others, and profit by their example or mistakes.

3. *Relation to Men's Trade Societies.* At first, the men's Societies were not favourable to Unionism among women. In that paper of Mrs. Paterson's of which I have already spoken, she says that the men "might invite women to join their trade unions, or assist them to form similar societies, but they do not seem inclined to do so. At three successive annual congresses of leaders and delegates of Trade Unions, the need of women's unions has been brought before them, and each time some one present has asserted that women *cannot* form unions." That was in 1874, but times are completely changed. One of the best bits of work the Women's Trade Union Movement has done, has been to bring about a better understanding between men and women workers. As with any two classes whose interests are conflicting, there has often been much jealousy between workmen and workwomen. The men have been blamed for selfishness in refusing to admit women into their trades, but consideration of the circumstances will modify this opinion. For instance: a certain firm begins to employ women in a particular trade—the men's union objects, and, as it happens to be a strong one, threatens to boycott the firm. This seems at first glance one of the worst cases of "Trade Union tyranny," a new occupation is being benevolently opened to women, and the men selfishly refuse to admit them. But if on enquiry it appears that work for which men could get, say 30/- a week, is done by girls for from 9/- to 11/-, the conduct of the men's union does not seem quite so unreasonable. If the father of a family is thrown out of an employment which enables him to keep his family in comfort, it is very poor con-

solation to him that his sister or his daughter is doing the same work for one third of the pay.

On the other hand, the men accuse the women of selfishness in acting as "blacklegs," and taking their places, say in the tailoring trade, during a strike, and so making the strike a failure. But here again, can we blame the women, a widow with young children, or a girl without home and friends, if she accepts the first chance of work that offers, without pausing to consider how it affects her fellow-workers who are men? The remedy in both cases is surely organisation of men and women workers for mutual action. The ideal would be that women should for equal work receive equal wages with men, but till that can be realised, there can be much done by co-operation between the two classes of workers.

Of late years men have become more and more convinced of this, and there are now no truer friends of Women's Trade Unions than the leaders of the men's trades. Many of them are members of the various councils and committees which exist for the formation of Women's Unions; they give help in organising meetings, and in the more difficult task of training inexperienced workers in business management, and they have in several cases invited the Women's Unions to send representatives to the Local Trades Council. This last has been done for six or seven years in Aberdeen, where four women's representatives attend the council; more recently in Glasgow, where there are also four; in London where, I believe, there is one. Here in Liverpool an invitation has been given to all the Women's Unions to send representatives, and no doubt in other places also. This is most helpful both to the individual women who attend the Council meetings, who learn the mode of conducting business, and have their interests and ideas enlarged, and to the Women's Unions, which are thus kept in touch with those of the men.

4. *Outside help.* The question of the help given by men's Trade Unions leads to the wider subject of outside help in general.

It would seem the best plan, if practicable, for women's unions, when once started, to manage their own internal affairs. As a matter of fact, however, while the committees of management are mainly composed of working women, yet in the majority of existing women's unions some officials—the Trustees almost always—the Treasurer not infrequently—in one or two cases the President or the Secretary—are outsiders, *i.e.*, men or women who are not members of a trade. This arises

from the necessity of the case; from the fact that till lately working women have had no business experience, and though exceptional women are to be found in whom great natural capacity makes up for the want of experience, it is impossible at this early stage of the movement that there should be enough of these to do all the work required. But this outside help in management must, I think, be looked upon as a temporary expedient, and the helpers must make it their chief aim that they shall as soon as possible become unnecessary, and have their places filled by actual members of the Union. In some unions even at present there are no officials who are not members.

However much opinions may differ as to this point, I think every one agrees that in the formation of new unions, outside help is absolutely necessary. And in fact in connection with all women's unions we find a body of some kind, a Committee, a League, or Association, sometimes quite unconnected with the unions it forms, sometimes composed partly of their members and more or less connected with their management, which has for its object the formation of new unions, and the guiding of their infant steps till they are able to walk alone. I should like to press on the attention of this Conference that there is here a field for the work of educated women especially, which earnestly calls for more labourers, who will find themselves cordially welcomed by the workwomen (I may state that the wish for such help has been expressed to me on behalf of the Liverpool Women's Unions).

I do not say that it is at first sight very attractive work. There are many fields in which a visible harvest can be reaped with much less labour than in this. For the work does not chiefly consist of going round the country addressing enthusiastic meetings. Addresses by friends from a distance are of immense help in attracting attention, rousing enthusiasm, and giving the first start, but the real work is done by the constant "pegging away" of people on the spot; going to the hall or office night after night, week after week, meeting the few women who really mean business; telling them how things are managed in other unions; hearing the complaints and difficulties of individual workers, encouraging those who are apt to lose heart after a few weeks or months; all this has to be done, as I have seen it done both by members of men's unions, and by men and women of the richer class, with cheerfulness and patience and courage, but very often without any great immediate and visible results. It becomes most interesting

work, and it fully repays those who take it up by the friendships formed and the knowledge gained of the circumstances and difficulties of our working sisters.

Some women are deterred from engaging in this work from the fear of being supposed to patronise working women. But I think this idea of patronage is very much an artificial bogie, and that where there is an honest desire to help, to put what powers of organisation or speech we may possess at the service of the workwomen so far as they require them, working women will not imagine or resent a wish to patronise, unless indeed the idea has been suggested to them from outside. As a rule, one is rather surprised by the cordiality and gratitude with which very small attempts at help are received.

We have of course to remember that none of us are indispensable, that our ways of doing things are not infallible, that it may be better to let people make their own mistakes and learn by them, and that, as I said before, our great aim must be to enable the members of the unions we form to do without us. We shall make many mistakes, we may often misunderstand each other; but the bond of a common womanhood is very strong, and in spite of difficulties and discouragements makes it possible and even easy for us in this special field to fulfil the law of Christ by bearing one another's burdens.

Miss Clementina Black:—I think that most of us owe a debt socially speaking to the women who have entered the labour market, and it is therefore our duty to help them. The independence of women is largely due to the fact that many have begun to earn their own living; and so even their domestic position is improved. Women's work used to be disregarded because it was not paid for, but now those who do not actually work for their living have reaped the advantage of paid labour. I am bound to say that I seriously doubt whether the working class of England has gained anything in wages by women having entered the labour market. I believe wages have rather been diminished, The way to prevent under pay is not by shutting women out, but by preventing them being under-paid. Some think the evil could be remedied by the employers paying higher wages, but in many cases the employer is powerless. While women will work cheaply we cannot expect the main body of employers to pay higher wages. How is it that men are paid more? It is because they have united themselves together and refused to accept inadequate pay. If women are ill paid it is because they consent to be so. The poverty of working women is at the bottom of all their

trouble. The truth is that they are bad, unskilled workers, because they are never paid enough to keep their brains in good condition. How can a girl who works at six shilling a week keep herself in good health? The only way to bring women's work to a higher level is to prevent under payment in the lower classes, and then to work up.

But, we must go among the women in order to accomplish this and let them show *us* quite as much as we show *them*. The best way of organizing unions for these working women is by forming branches throughout the country for each trade. The provident side of unions is, I think, a mistake. I have doubts as to whether it is possible at twopence a week to make a really sound provident society joined to a trades union. The Provident Societies I hope to see are large Friendly Societies, which Trades Unions should be allowed to join as a body. This would appear to be more advantageous than joining individually.

In the matter of strikes. There are numbers of short strikes in women's factories in the east end, and the employers feel uncertainty as to whether all the hands will come to work each week; but these strikes do no good. In the early days of a union there is often a strike, but it is generally the only one, and it is to prevent the numerous little strikes that we ought to get women to join Trades Unions.

Miss Bulley, *Manchester*:—There is no way we can help our sisters better than by joining trades unions. We know that in Lancashire we have workers in the textile trades, and beneath them are all grades down to the rag-sorters. These intermediate grades require attention and help. I perhaps may mention that I think the largest Trades Union that admits women is that of the Northern Counties Weaver's Association. There are 47,000 members, of whom 26,000 are women. Another Association, the Card and Blowing Room hands, has 14,000 members, of whom two-thirds are women. The Trades Council know that some men refuse to work with women, for they know the consequence is—down go the wages. When it is not a question of equal wages they are very anxious to improve the position of women. I cannot say much has yet been done, but it is not the fault of the Trades Council. Time cannot be spared to organize women's unions, and it is in this way that ladies could help, though the work requires great tact and care.

Mrs. Fawcett:—I should like to say a word on these unions. Women have been to a great extent unaided by

Trades Unions, and yet the general level of women's wages is much higher than it was. I need only illustrate by mentioning one class—that of domestic servants. We cannot have a better test of the value of women's work in the labour market. Miss Black said that she thought it was a doubtful point whether the total wages of the family had increased owing to the entry of women into the field. We need only compare the wages of a family in the agricultural districts with those in towns to see that they are larger when women work. I also feel very strongly on the subject of the opposition of men to women entering Trades Unions. They not only resist the entering of women, but they try to get them turned out of those unions where they have been admitted, and turned out of the trade altogether. The book-binding trade in London is one instance. The trade of book-edge gilders had been in the hands of women for ten or twelve years, but men took upon themselves the task of turning the women out, and forbade any employer to employ women on pain of a strike. It is this exclusion of women from skilled branches of industry which tends to keep down women's wages.

MRS. PERCY BUNTING, *London*:—There is one class of women workers that has not yet been mentioned, about which I thought I might speak, and that is the class of shop women. There are some large employers of shop women who endeavour to do their duty by them, and those in their employ really do not require a union; but these are only a few out of the many. The National Vigilance Association enquired some time ago as to what could be done, and a good deal of information was obtained on the subject.

We find a good deal of difficulty in consequence of the different ways in which employers treat their employees. There are many houses in which no consideration is shown as to the sanitary conditions of the building, or to the length of hours the women have to work. I should be very glad if those who are experienced would try what can be done for the Shop assistants.

CO-OPERATION AMONG WOMEN.

MISS BEATRICE POTTER.

I FEAR the name given to the subject of my address is somewhat misleading. You have heard to-day of Women's Trade Unions, and in the course of these meetings we

shall hear of Women's organisations and associations in all their forms. But there is no such thing as a Women's co-operative society. In the great Co-operative Movement—one of the most significant and important movements of our time—there are no special societies set apart for women, no particular associations formed by women for women. In the co-operative store or in the great Federal Associations you will find no place or part in the establishment distinguished by the presence of women, and devoted to the service of women. But you must not imagine that because women are not provided for *as women* they are excluded from all share in the profits—all partnership in the work of the Co-operative Movement. Quite the contrary. Women play an important—an increasingly important part in that gigantic association of a million persons—in that "State within a State"—which we know by the name of the Co-operative Movement. But in this great Industrial Republic women take their place not as females with disabilities or privileges, but as citizens invested with the same rights and responsibilities as their brothers, husbands and fathers.

I am therefore compelled by the nature of my subject to describe to you in brief outline the Co-operative Movement as a whole, and co-operators as a body, before I deal with women as co-operators.

First I must begin with a definition. What do we mean by the Co-operative Movement? From the beginning of this century the word co-operative society has been used to describe two distinct, and I should say, two antagonistic forms of association. A co-operative society may mean a group of workers banded together to produce certain commodities in order to sell these commodities to the public. The ideal of this form of co-operation is what has been called the self-governing workshop—that is to say, a body of workers who own their own plant and capital, and who elect from among themselves the manager and the other officials of the establishments. The second form of co-operation is a group or community of persons who associate together in order to produce at their own cost, and under their own direction, the articles which they themselves intend to consume. The ideal of this form of co-operation is an Industrial Democracy, governed by the representatives of the people, administered by the officials of the people, and conducted for the good of the people.

But perhaps I can best describe to you the practical distinction between these two forms by an example. Supposing

that all the men and boys who are employed in the Gas Company of this town, bought up the plant and subscribed the capital with which to carry on the gas works. Then, if they did all the work themselves, if they elected from among themselves a manager and board of directors, if they retained all the profits of the establishment, they would be a self-governing workshop—they would constitute a perfect example of the first-class co-operative society. If, on the other hand, you and I and the other gas consumers of Liverpool decided to manufacture the gas we consumed, bought the necessary plant, elected a Board of Directors, chose a manager, and engaged labour of the description we required, then we should be a co-operative society of the second class.

Thus co-operative societies are divided into *Associations of Producers* and *Associations of Consumers*. You will see by this that the old and familiar classification of co-operative societies into Distributive Societies and Productive Societies is thoroughly unsound. The stores of Great Britain manufacture to the tune of three millions a year; the Corn Mills and Wholesale Societies—all of which are Associations of Consumers—produce another two millions worth of goods. On the other hand, there is nothing to prevent (though I believe it has never been attempted), the employés of a retail shop from becoming a co-operative society of the first type—a self-governing workshop—undertaking to manage the shop for their own profit and at their own risk.

Now I do not intend this morning to describe to you the first-class of co-operative societies—the self-governing workshop. From the beginning of this century we have attempted to establish this form of co-operation—during the last fifty years we have had thousands, or rather millions, spent in this attempt—with one uniform result—failure. I do not propose to discuss the reasons of this failure. But the fact of this failure is not to be disputed. Out of the £40,000,000 of annual co-operative trade, only £500,000 is administered by so called associations of producers. And out of the £500,000 only £50,000 can be said to belong to self-governing workshops. We will pass on therefore to the second form of co-operation usually known as the Co-operative Movement. It is this Federation of 1300 associations with its million members and £40,000,000 of trade that constitutes a "State within a State" and plays an important part in the lives of the working class.

I do not think that I need tell you that the corner stone of

the co-operative movement is the working-class store. If we were in any Lancashire or Yorkshire town except Liverpool, you would know by experience that the store is one of the most important institutions of the town. The Leeds Store, for instance, has a membership of 20,000, and a trade of some three quarters of a million. This big industrial organization is entirely managed by the representatives of these 20,000 working-class consumers. It is an open democracy, any man or woman may become a member of the store, may take part in the general meetings, may elect or be elected to sit on the committee of management. All share alike in the profits: all surplus over the cost of management being returned to the consumer in the form of dividend on every pound's worth of purchases. But this is not all. These open democracies scattered all over Lancashire and Yorkshire, Scotland and the Midlands, have combined together in a gigantic Federation. The representation of these stores form two Central Committees sitting at Manchester and Glasgow, who direct the policy of the two great Wholesale Societies. These two Wholesale Societies not only supply the stores with foreign goods, but are opening out in all directions manufacturing establishments wherein a part of the articles consumed by the million co-operators are manufactured. You will now perceive why I called the Co-operative Movement a great Republic of Industry. This federation of stores forms an exact counterpart of a state, or of a great municipality. This open democracy of a million members—a democracy which welcomes any man or woman, rich or poor, able-bodied or disabled—elects representatives to govern its affairs, and these representatives elect officials to administer them. In the Co-operative Movement we see realised in a voluntary form a Socialist State—a form of industry in which all industrial operations are carried on by paid officials—not for private gain—but for the good of the whole community.

It is hardly necessary for me to describe to you the enormous advantages of the store system to the working class. Fifty years ago the factory operatives of Lancashire and Yorkshire, the miners of Northumberland and Durham were the victims of the disastrous effects of the credit system as it is administered by small shop keepers. For even if the small shopkeeper be endowed with the highest morality he is forced by competition to give extensive credit and suffer bad debts. It is unnecessary to point out that these bad debts have to be paid for, and that the honest shopkeeper has to

recoup himself by exacting a higher price or giving a worse quality to the whole body of his customers. If the honest shopkeeper is forced to tax his customers for bad debts, the dishonest shopkeeper has endless opportunities for defrauding ignorant customers by every imaginable device and deception, from sanding the sugar to selling clothes at high prices which have been made in the fever-haunted den of the sweater.

No one who has lived in a working class quarter, in which the store system does not exist, can doubt that the income of the working class is diminished some 25 per cent. by the high price and bad quality of the articles they buy. But this does not end the tale. The employer or colliery proprietor of fifty years ago, used the retail shop as an instrument of oppression. By insisting on his employees buying all the necessaries of life from him or his nominee, he regained by high prices or bad quality part of the wages he had paid. In case of any dispute about wages, any attempt on their part to strike against reductions, he refused them the usual credit. In the combined character of employer, landlord and shopkeeper, he obtained a control over the income and expenditure of the worker amounting to the power of the slave owner. Hence all those innumerable attempts made by well intentioned legislation known as the Truck Acts. But the constant amendments and tightening up of these Acts show how ineffectual they have been in many of the worst instances. Now the store has swept away not only the credit system, but the indirect tyranny of the employer through the Truck System; it has not only secured the worker from the curse of habitual debt, but it has emancipated him from the thraldom of the Truck shop.

Freedom from debt and oppression, and better articles at a lower price, do not exhaust the pecuniary benefits conferred on the working class by the Rochdale system of cash payments and dividend on purchase. By the admirable mechanism of quarterly dividends, the housewife secures at the end of each quarter a sum of money for the payment of extra expenses. And it is a common saying in co-operative districts that "you may grow rich by eating and drinking."

In many cases these quarterly dividends are not withdrawn. The store becomes the poor man's bank. At the present time the co-operative workers have accumulated some £12,000,000 of capital in the stores of the United Kingdom. And through these banking facilities they have invested millions in cotton-spinning companies, building societies and house property.

But these material advantages which the working class have gained through the Co-operative Movement are to my mind the most insignificant part of the services of the store. "No one who is intimately acquainted with a north country or Scotch manufacturing or mining district, or with a Midland village, will underate the national importance of the store as a training school for citizenship in its widest sense. In urban districts, not yet become, or recently transformed into, municipal boroughs, the 'Co-op. shop' serves, or has served, as the sole form of self-government beyond the election of the Board of Guardians and the Vestry. Here you will discover the position of president or committee-man of the co-operative society is more prized than that of mayor or alderman in a wealthy city, and is accepted as the outward and visible sign of the esteem and confidence of the majority of the inhabitants. And exactly the same qualities of public-spirited energy, capacity for compromise, dogged persistence, and self-subordination, together with shrewd intelligence in choice of officials, watchfulness and generosity towards servants—precisely the same intellectual and moral gifts are needed in the members of a successful store as in the citizens of a well-ordered and enterprising municipality." *

Now let us consider what part women have to play in this state within a state. First you will note that the woman is the unit of the co-operative movement. Here the co-operative state differs from the Parliamentary State, or the municipality. At the present time the unit of the Parliamentary State is the Parliamentary voter, who is always a man, the unit of the municipality is the ratepayer, who is usually a man. In the co-operative movement on the other hand, the unit is the customer. And in all classes women are usually the people who spend the money. Hence the leaders of the Co-operative Movement have always shown a marked deference to the woman. There has been no attempt to disqualify women from full membership. Some of the early societies in their desire to secure to themselves the goodwill of the women insisted on the wife's permission before the husband became a member. This, however, no doubt was an exceptional rule. But forty years previous to the Married Women's Property Act, store managers, sublimely indifferent to the terrors of the County Court, habitually refused to consider the husband as the owner of the wife's savings.

* "The Co-operative Movement in Great Britain," (By the present writer) Swan, Sonnenschein & Co. Price 2s. 6d.

Thus, in the Co-operative State, women have been endowed by economic circumstances with the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The question we have now to ask is this:—Have they used their power well or ill? I regret to say that the experience of the co-operative store is purely negative. The woman as a rule has not used her vote, or her right to be elected. She has remained outside the practical administration of the Co-operative Movement. I do not blame the working woman for this inertia. She is too frequently the wage earner as well as the mother and the wife. She has too often to support the children as well as to bring them into the world and rear them. But this inertia of the woman constitutes a weakness in the very backbone of the co-operative structure which will, unless it be remedied, restrict this form of representative self-government to a comparatively narrow area. Here we see once again that the progress of civilization rests on the progress of women. Women must be emancipated by increased leisure, by a higher ideal of public service, and by greater freedom from that exclusive and absolute absorption in the immediate and material welfare of the family. Before we can hope for an active citizenship in the co-operative state, women must be taught to abandon the seeming expediency of the hour for those larger expediences which affect the condition of the class to which they belong, or the community in which they live. We shall not be less intelligent wives and mothers by becoming better citizens. Here it is that co-operation will need the help of the Trade Union Movement among women, of the clubs for girls, of the political education brought about by women's political associations; in short, of women's work in all its forms. It is here that Miss Llewelyn Davies, Mrs. Benjamin Jones, Miss Shore Smith, and the other women leaders of the co-operative movement are rendering such an inestimable service to the co-operative cause. And it is in this endeavour to stimulate the interest in public affairs and general principles among working women that middle class women, with education and leisure, may I think find one of their most useful occupations.

Miss Margaret Llewelyn Davies:—who was to have opened the discussion, was unable to be present, but she sent a short paper which was read by Miss Janes.

I feel no doubt that the great need for organization among women has been strongly brought out both by Mrs. Lindsay and Miss Potter. It is now becoming generally recognized among Trade Unionists and Co-operators that the right policy

to be adopted towards women is one of *inclusion* and not *exclusion*. Indeed, in the Co-operative movement, women have always had special opportunities, as its doors are as freely open to them as to men. They are able to hold shares, attend quarterly Meetings, give votes and serve on Committees. They have already availed themselves in some measure of these privileges. For instance, out of the 15,000 members of the Plymouth Co-operative Society, *10,000 are women*, and nearly 7,000 women hold shares in the Bolton Society. Women also serve on Educational Committees, and in a few instances on Management Committees.

Thus it is obvious that it is extremely important that they should have an intelligent knowledge of Co-operation. And this is also true as regards women who are not actually *members*. Because, having almost always the duty of laying out the money of the household, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that women hold the key of the co-operative position.

Apart from the question of their own individual gain, one of the chief reasons why it is desirable that women should spend their money at Co-operative Stores is, that this may become an effectual way towards abolishing what is known as the "Sweating System." The class who buy the goods produced under this system are, to a large extent, the wives of those who are striving with all their might to abolish it.

It is all very well to urge that no one should buy except at fair houses. But how can the wives of trade unionists, or other individuals, know or find out what really are the conditions of employment? There *is* a way by which this difficulty may be met, and that is by joining a co-operative store.

In Co-operation, the whole body of one million consumers have the power, through their organization, of directing from what sources the goods with which they provide themselves are procured.

And this gives no mean opportunity of moralizing trade, since the annual sales of Co-operative Stores amount to over £3,000,000,

The point is, that co-operators have the power of either making their goods at their own workshops (of which the production is estimated at £3,000,000 annually) or, of buying from houses where trade union regulations are observed.

A series of meetings is now being organized in London between Trade Unionists, Co-operators and their wives, with the special view of trying to show how the objects for which

trade unionists are working may be forwarded by their joining the Co-operative Movement. And the women are being invited as well, and will be urged to join the organization already existing for co-operative women.

This organization is called the Women's Co-operative Guild. It consists of branches in connection with Co-operative Societies. Any women shareholders, and wives and daughters of shareholders, are eligible as members. The branches are organized into Districts, and the Districts into Sections; and over all there is a Central Committee elected annually by all the members. The Branches now number nearly eighty, and the membership is between two and three thousand.

The men's committees are now warmly supporting the Guild, and the women are showing a remarkable activity in the work, and power of grasping ideas. Many would have been surprised if they had been present at one of our recent Sectional Conferences, attended by delegates from various branches, to hear the manner in which the women discussed the subject of the way in which Co-operative Workshops should be managed.

The branches usually meet at their Store premises once a week or fortnight. Each has its own Officers and Committee, the subjects are not exclusively confined to indrustrial questions. Sometimes paid lecturers give Sick Nursing or Cooking Lectures, which are attended by two or three hundred women. The Guild not only trains women in Co-operation and co-operative work, but is a means by which *they may themselves supply themselves* with any education or recreation they like.

The work is very varied and indefinite in amount. More help would be warmly welcomed; and if any one wishes for further information, I hope they will write to me.

In conclusion, I should like to say that there are two points that have impressed themselves very strongly upon me in my recent work.

The great working class movements seem to me to be the most important agents for social reform, and I think that as far as possible outside work should be brought into line with these. I would even add that, where individual taste and circumstances permit, social workers would help most by working *inside* the movements. The methods of work adopted ought, I think, to be those that are most free from the flavour or suspicion of *patronage*. (I feel if I myself were a working woman that I should dislike being "dealt

with" or "looked after" by my superiors, be they countesses or duchesses; but that I should welcome them to work with me on equal terms in any crusade). Working people know what their wants are. It is most important to recognise this, and if their principles and methods of reform appear sound and just, then, it seems to me that the best results are secured, not only by working *for* but *with* the working classes. And this is how those class distinctions that are merely based on wealth and intellectual exclusiveness will be most effectually broken down. Not by the attempt at artificial friendship in which it is all "give" on one side, and all "take" on the other, but by sharing common interests and joining in common work.

The other point that has impressed itself on me, is the advisability of a closer connection between the various movements and lines of work, and of a better understanding of the fundamental relations between them. This might be brought about to a great extent by the alliance of branches of institutions in different localities. This idea has been developed in a book lately published called "Neighbourhood Guilds," by Dr. Stanton Coit. As an example of what I mean, I would suggest Girls' and Young Men's Clubs, Trade Union and Temperance Meetings being held on the Co-operative Society's premises.

The Co-operative Stores naturally suggest themselves as centres, because they usually possess the necessary meeting rooms, money and members. And such a use of them would only be carrying out the original intention of co-operators, which was not only to reform industry, but to further the best life of the people.

Hon. Mrs. Maclagan:—The co-operation of which I have to speak is that between wage-givers and wage-receivers for the benefit of the latter when they are in distress, especially in relation to distressed ladies. I want to bring before you the existence of a guild which is called "The Working Ladies' Guild," formed about fifteen years ago by Lady Mary Fielding. Two new branches have lately been started, one in the North of England and one at St. Leonards, and the Manageress is anxious to have one at Southport. Ladies who join as Associates must be introduced by those who are already Associates. The Associates subscribe, but the main object of their existence is to introduce to the Guild those in need of assistance. Assistance in money is rarely given—only in exceptional cases.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12TH, 2-30 to 4-30 P.M.

1. *Women as Poor Law Guardians.* MISS CLIFFORD (*Bristol*).
2. *Workhouse Nursing.* MISS LOUISA TWINING (*London*).
3. *Pitbrow Women.* MRS. PARKE (*Southport*).

The Chair was taken at 2-30 by MRS. LUNDIE, who said :—

We may congratulate ourselves on having so many ladies among us so well able to tell us of their experience. We hope that our Conference will make us each more brave and more hopeful in our work. It makes life so much happier when we try and make other lives brighter.

We have no lady guardians here yet, but we are glad to hear of their work elsewhere.

WOMEN AS POOR LAW GUARDIANS.

MISS CLIFFORD.

IT is now about twelve years since the need of having Women as Poor Law Guardians began to be generally recognised. Though the number of women at present serving in this capacity in England and Wales is only 113—out of a total of over 20,000 Guardians, the call has, we believe, been justified. Work has been done which must have been otherwise left undone, and needs revealed, which women rather than men were fitted to discover.

I beg you not to think that this implies any undervaluing of what is done by good men, as Guardians. They are in every way as necessary, their presence often involves more self-denial than ours does, and without them matters would never go right. The point of having women lies of course in the essential difference between them and men, and in the fact that in Poor Law business, and especially in the Workhouse itself, there is a large portion which cannot be handled, as we shall see presently, by men.

I wish to deal with the subject, in accordance with our programme, from its aspect as a labour question.

The last twelve years, within which our experience as Poor Law administrators has been thrown, have been, in social questions, a time of absorbing interest as well as a time of crisis and of transition. Sympathy and understanding between classes have spread and are spreading still.

The old view that the province of the Poor Law was simply to keep destitute people, if they wished it, from starving, has given place to an intense desire to deal with pauperism aggressively, to check it, to separate the hopeful elements from the practically hopeless, to rescue and restore; to fight against hereditary misery. We know that in all this we are humble fellow-workers with God, and that therefore success is ultimately assured.

We are, under the Poor Law, in touch with about one-seventh of the population of England, and that, the portion which has sunk more or less to the bottom. Nearly all the destitution caused by wrong doing comes our way sooner or later, and with some of it we have enough authority or influence to deal effectively.

Time wtll not allow us to consider that very serious question, whether it is safe or wise for the State to undertake to retrieve the fortunes of able men and women who are in distress on account of the variations of trade. Pauperism is, as we know, slowly though steadily diminishing, and we cannot forget that this decrease is going on under the present law, which discourages state aid being used as a lever or a staff. Hundreds of thousands have been kept away from pauperism, and encouraged to industry, by the fact that they had to exert themselves or enter the Workhouse.

Practically, as the Poor Law now works, we have not to deal with healthy and strong, though unfortunate people, but with those who have fallen out of the ranks through sickness, moral weakness, vice, or the faults of others. We have, in fact, to deal with the great army of the vanquished, who, if left alone, will weight the England of the next century with a new criminal class, and continue to disgrace our Christianity. We women find that, as Guardians, it is in our power to help to remedy this huge evil. We look forward to seeing out-relief cease to act as a condonement of improvidence. We hope to see Workhouses afford (as they already do in many places), good nursing for the destitute sick, and especially for incurables; to see real training for the children, a safe and pure

refuge for the helpless, and we want them to be *doors* into hope for many others.

We may view the matter in two aspects :—

1st. The dealing with things as they are.

2nd. The new methods which, after ten or twelve years experience, we see to be desirable.

Under the first head, let me help you to realise what a Workhouse is. When one is elected Guardian, one enters upon a share of the control of an immense household, containing, except in the modern London and a few provincial Workhouses, many classes of inhabitants. Old people, sick, insane, idiots, children, mothers, babies, and men who are generally partially disabled. All these are governed by a Master and Matron, assisted by officers. The head officials are chosen by the Guardians, but when appointed are not removable except by an appeal to the Local Government Board. This adds much to the security of their position, and the temptations to an arbitrary use of their power are undoubtedly great. I shall always feel that the choice, and afterwards the encouragement, of good officials, is the most really important of all our duties. A new Guardian sometimes finds things very bad. I had the testimony of the chaplain of a Workhouse with which I was acquainted, that on the appointment of some ladies to the Board, the character of the management of the place at once imperceptibly altered and the old harsh things were not done. He said these unrecorded changes struck him more than the alterations authorised by the new Board. The advent of ladies brings a flood of interest. The Bumble type of management cannot stand before the light, and soon departs, not to return again.

Now the tone of this big household will of necessity depend on that of the officers. It is very monotonous work, often disappointing; it is lowering to be so much with people of bad character, or of a mindless earthly type. Any approval, sympathy, or brightness, we can bestow on the women officers will be a good investment on behalf of the inmates.

After ten years of office, I can look with great satisfaction on the staff of the Workhouse of our Union, and feel that they have in most cases a real desire for the welfare of the people. This they show by their hearty co-operation in our efforts in rescue cases, or in any pleasures we contrive for old or young, as well as in sometimes suggesting improvements which only officers would be likely to think of.

It is, however, by no means easy to get good officers. We

had actually to abandon the search for a laundress, and of this difficulty I shall have more to say under the second heading.

Another important sphere of influence is the proper care of the Sick by trained nurses. Miss Twining will deal with this part of the subject far better than I could do, and I shall therefore not enlarge upon it here. It will commend itself to you preeminently, as work for which our habits and experience as women ought to fit us.

I do not know whether she will touch on the care of Infants. My own conviction is that nowhere is a paid and responsible attendant more needed, but in few Workhouses is one found. Only the other day we read of an inquest over a baby scalded to death in a workhouse nursery, through the incapacity of a half imbecile attendant. The health and the habits of the children cannot be attended to by the pauper women in charge, who are seldom even the best women in the house, as the most efficient are generally required in the kitchen and the work-room.

There is not time in this short paper to go fully into the manifold opportunities for rescue work. The need is unhappily so great that little could be done effectually without the co-operation of Voluntary Workers. In Bristol we are rich in help of this kind. As Guardians, we have access to every girl and woman who enters the workhouse. We see them when they are more accessible to good influence, than ever before since their fall. I remember returning with much thankfulness to the workhouse rescue work, after the great London Mission of 1882, feeling the girls so far more open to repentance, than in the London Streets. Still there is here far more to be done than has yet been accomplished. The difficulty is immense, of dealing in any organized way with the young mothers. What we want, outside the workhouse, is the right people to receive the cases and deal with them individually.

Nor can I do more than touch on the hopeful and delightful subject of the children. Here it is certain that women's love of detail and interest in the children one by one can be of use and are a comfort to conscientious teachers.

Dress (I shall never forget the old mustard coloured sacks I have seen workhouse girls wear), food, washing and sleeping arrangements and industrial training, are all of vital importance in the education of a useful boy or girl. It is a matter of great gratification to me that the improvements in many of these matters are chiefly the work of our matron, but I may add that she depends on our approval and co-operation, and that the

gentlemen of our Board take a warm interest in the School, and have heartily initiated or co-operated in these many improvements.

It is admitted, however, on our Board, that boarding-out is the proper provision for orphan and deserted children, and some of our ladies have been able to encourage the formation of Committees in country places, so as to make it more possible to board-out all the eligible children. I must not attempt to describe the Voluntary Agency by which the School Work is supplemented. We give over our small cooks and house maids, who are as well instructed as it is possible for children of 13 to be, into the care of the Preventive Mission, and their care and general success have been admirable. This Society combines with the Girls' Friendly Society in helping the girls, but a similar provision is as yet lacking and is *needed* for the boys.

I must not begin to speak of the emigration of children, but will only add that the means which we are able to use to keep the children who go, in touch, by correspondence and by sending them books are specially a woman's province.

We come then to the second aspect of our work, the new methods that appear desirable. I shall of course only touch on a few of them.

Ten years of intercourse with Workhouse Inmates makes it clear that special treatment is required for some classes, who at present merely take their place with the ordinary paupers.

1st. The weakminded, both men and women, whose moral character is also deficient. This subject was dealt with last year, and a resolution was passed expressing the opinion that Voluntary Homes to which Guardians might contribute, should be established. In consequence of the attention then called to the subject, it is likely that two or three such Asylums will be set on foot. It is very desirable to interest public opinion in the matter.

2nd. We also see that Epileptics, who are not insane, sadly need appropriate provision. It is hard for them to be sent to live with lunatics and insane people, and indeed this is now illegal. They want to be under permanent care, which they would gratefully accept, and to have as useful and happy a life as their great misfortune will permit. Unions should combine and group these patients into not too large institutions. This is a matter to keep in view and try for.

3rd. Many of us, not women only, think that some better shelter than the able-bodied wards should be provided for the

hopelessly disabled men and women who are between the ages of sixteen and sixty. Many such poor creatures are paralysed, or half blind or maimed from childhood, or they may have drifted into that condition later, through no serious fault. It is hard that they should be subject to the same discipline as the few able men and women, who could work perfectly well, if they were not idle or intemperate. A special ward with more comforts, a better dietary, a little tobacco now and then for the men, and tea for the women, should console them, and reward them for their efforts to work as well as they can. It is likely that this is already done in some workhouses.

4th. The other new method I would suggest may be considered as an addition to the Workhouse Nursing Association. We have spoken of the importance of getting good officers and of the difficulty of doing so. Lady Meath has lately written an interesting account of the work of the Little Sisters of the Poor, and she proposes to found an institution similar to their houses, for our own aged poor, who would otherwise be in the Workhouse Infirm Wards.

We welcome any such effort, but, as a Guardian, it seems to me that, given the good and kind "Little Sisters," a Workhouse Infirm Ward may be as happy a place as a special Voluntary Home. For many years we have desired, and there has been a union of prayer with this special object, to have trained women who would devote themselves to this service. They should belong to an Association similar to the Workhouse Nurses Association, and be trained, as those nurses are, in a workhouse, they must be active, practical, willing women who would care to learn their duties humbly and thoroughly. Some would be needed as Caretakers of the Infirm. They should understand the elements of nursing, especially how to prevent bed-sores, they should be acquainted with the whole art of cleanliness, and have learned the proper routine of well managed Infirm wards, including the superintending of such work as the old people can do; this occupation being, as you may guess, a great solace to the old folks. A kind, bright, firm Assistant Matron makes these wards very happy. My old women call *theirs* "our little Queen," and I have never seen her greeted by them except with a bright look. She sees that the early cup of tea is made according to their wishes, and overcomes their extreme dislike to a periodical bath.

Others should qualify for Laundresses and Cooks and Training Mistresses for the girls, and as Infant School Nurses.

They should learn all this homely, hard work in one of the large well managed workhouses, just as the nurses of the Association learn their work. They must, or the head of the Society must for them, apply for the appointments in the usual way, and when they are chosen, carry on their duties like any other officer for a fixed salary, and in conformity with the usual Poor Law Regulations.

They would be helped and encouraged, as the nurses are, by the Association, and the *esprit du corps* of the whole thing would tend to foster the energy and zest, with which they would enter on their duties. The Salvation Army is rich in young women possessed of the spirit of devotion we need. The Church Army trains some thirty in the year. The China Inland Mission accepts many such. Surely there must be scores and hundreds of Christian minded, practical, young women who would take up this service. The plan seems to me quite attainable.

Since writing the beginning of this paper I have received a letter and circulars from a devoted woman in Cornwall, who seems to be about to start a scheme similar to Lady Meath's, in order to save people, she says, from "the hopeless misery of Workhouses." But we, as Guardians say, that hopeless misery ought not to be the characteristic of Workhouses, and while we are thankful for voluntary efforts of this kind, it does seem to us of still greater importance to make Workhouses what our Christian ratepayers and all our citizens wish, a pure and wholesome refuge for those who, from various causes have been beaten in the struggle of life, and a peaceful shelter for the Sick and Infirm. We cannot provide the privacy, the independence, the family life of a natural home, but we do not hesitate to say, we are quite sure that a properly managed Workhouse Infirm Ward is quite as comfortable, and as desirable, as the Asylums of the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Though I have spoken especially of the influence of good officials in the Infirm Wards, I believe them to be of the utmost advantage in the Able Wards and in every part of the House. Supervision and pure companionship are the antidotes to bad language and bad talk, rather than an increase of classification. If the right sort of women are cooks, laundresses and under matrons, there will soon be an improvement in even the lowest of the Inmates.

Let us therefore try to raise the standard of Workhouse morals in this way. Good Guardians, men and women combined, and good officials can with the Divine blessing bring about this result.

Mrs. Sherbrook opened the discussion:—

Some three years ago the advantage of having lady guardians was pointed out to the women of Southport, and I should like to give you a little account of the work that has been done by them.

A Society was started which began its existence in June, 1888, and originated in consequence of the strong feeling of some ladies that the presence of women on Boards of Guardians was of great benefit to the inmates of workhouses, and tended to rectify many of the abuses and grievances which exist, chiefly because there are details connected with household management which, being outside the scope of men's observation, are therefore better controlled if left to women.

A drawing room meeting was held on June 26th, at which an address on this subject was given by Mrs. Ashford, Ex-Poor Law Guardian, of Birmingham, and which eventuated in the formation of the Southport Association. At a subsequent meeting held about a fortnight later it was further decided to affiliate it to the original society existing in London, from which communication had been received suggesting that suitable women should be found to act as Guardians of the Poor. From this time active work began: (1) In endeavouring to secure the co-operation and interest of the neighbourhood. (2) In obtaining legal and technical knowledge with regard to the election of Guardians. (3) The organising of committees for canvassing for elections, which is an essential of success. (4) In striving to obtain as candidates suitable and properly qualified women. The result of these efforts was that four women were returned as Guardians in the election of April, 1889.

Although the Association is essentially non-political, it was found advisable to pay some regard to the political bias of the constituents whom the ladies were to represent.

At the first meeting of the Board after their election, two of the lady Guardians were placed upon the House Committee, and two upon the School Committee, in accordance with their own wishes, and all of them in virtue of their office had the right to attend North Meols Relief Committee, Southport. The New Board found that certain important changes in the Workhouse Infirmary were desirable, trained and certificated nurses were introduced, and pauper superintendence at night abolished, children were removed at an earlier age than formerly from the influences of the workhouse to the Industrial Schools. An extra teacher was appointed at the schools to take

charge of the young children by day and night, as well as to instruct them. Houses to which girls were sent for service on the three years' hiring system were inspected by the Women Guardians, and the servants were visited in these homes, generally to the satisfaction of mistress and maid.

The Workhouse School training for servants being found inadequate (they were frequently returned to the Board as unfit for service), instruction in simple cookery, laundry work, and the cutting out and making of clothes, were introduced.

For the boys—training in gardening, and cricket made a useful change in their ordinary routine of school work and shoemaking.

The inmates of the Workhouse and Schools receive the visits of the Women Guardians with much pleasure, and heartfelt thanks are often expressed for kindnesses received. The ladies have also had opportunities of helping many sufferers from misfortune known to them through attendance at the Relief Committee.

The boarding out of pauper children the Women Guardians failed to accomplish.

The Association believes that the Women Guardians have been the means of saving money to the ratepayers. Sick people discharged fit for work earlier than under the old system of nursing; children sent out to suitable homes better prepared for earning their own living, and consequently less likely to return to the Workhouse; and a closer attention to the choosing of provisions and clothing tend to useful economy; and many poor people have been kept off the rates by a personal visit with a little unofficial advice and help in times of need.

A kindly interest has been taken in unfortunate women, and work has been found for them when they have left the hospital.

Although, as this brief record shows, some reforms and improvements have been brought about during the last two years, the hands of the Women Guardians would be strengthened and their work more easily performed if more women candidates in the Union of Ormskirk would come forward for seats on the Board.

Miss Fowke, Delegate of the London Association for appointing women as Poor Law Guardians:—

I wish to say something about the essentially womanly part of the work. There is disappointment felt at the slow increase in the number of Lady Poor Law Guardians, but it is a great

thing that the Local Government Board now support having women. It would be a good thing to simplify the qualifications of candidates. With reference to the children, women's work is inestimable. I want to tell you what was said to me by a Poor Law Guardian. Speaking of a Manchester Lady Guardian, he said, "She is first-rate—she does not make speeches, but she knows every girl, and can trace and follow her."

Miss TWINING said:—

I have always said, "Why do we not have educated women at the head of Workhouses? I should like to enforce the need of the training of home officers in the Workhouse. It is difficult to get educated women to work under inferior managers, but with an educated woman at the head it would be easy to get competent workers. Merely from a monetary point of view many ladies would be glad of the salary. With regard to the qualification of candidates, it should be a strong point to do away with the property qualifications. There are numerous wives and grown up daughters whose services would be invaluable. Incompetent women will not come forward for such a post; it is only interesting to those who like it.

Mrs. SHEEN:

I am surprised to hear you have no women upon your Board of Guardians in Liverpool.

There are three classes in our Workhouses which lie very near my heart. These are drunkards, fallen women, and the insane. More should be done for these than has been ever attempted. In London, by permission of Boards of Guardians ladies are able to go in and work among fallen women. As regards drunkenness, 90 per cent of our pauperism is due to this cause. Drunkards are generally relegated to my charge, but by the help of the parish temperance societies I am able to pass on some of these people and get them enrolled in societies. Insanity from drunkenness is on the increase among women. The County Asylums are full of the consequences of drunkenness. I want to ask the ladies present if they can do nothing to mitigate these evils. I hope the County Council will sanction the visits of women for the purpose of showing their sympathy.

Hon. MAUDE STANLEY said:—

I wish to warn you as to what sort of Poor Law Guardians you appoint. Those who start good works are excellent people, but by degrees the best fall away, and in London it has been found that some have come forward as Poor Law Guardians

merely for the honour and glory of it. I was Guardian 14 years ago, and so I know what the work is.

Miss LIDGETT:—

I am a lady Guardian and have been one on and off for 10 years. I wish to speak of the pride I have felt in being associated with my sister Guardians from whom I have received fresh ideas of work. We have on our Board the first Jewish Lady Guardian.

NURSING IN WORKHOUSES.

Miss LOUISA TWINING.

Two thoughts occurred to me when I was asked to contribute a paper on Nursing in Workhouse Infirmaries, one was, the "oft told tale" I had to repeat; and the other, the startling fact of the still widely-prevailing ignorance of, and indifference to, the whole subject. It is now nearly forty years since the first revelations were made, and I feel inclined to apologise for the frequent repetitions during the subsequent years.

The first public notice that was taken of the subject of Workhouses and their inmates was, I believe, a paper read by me at the meeting of the Social Science Congress held in Liverpool, 1858, when the "Workhouse Visiting Society" was suggested and started. I need hardly dwell upon the immense advance that has been made since those days, in all matters concerning the care of the sick poor, and as a certain amount of knowledge is now obtained and made known to the outer world as to the present condition of affairs (chiefly, I may say, through the information given by the trained nurses, who are now employed in Workhouses), it may be well to go back to "ancient history," and describe the former condition of things, for the benefit at least of those of my younger hearers, who, amidst the many improvements of the present day, can hardly realise the state of things from which we have now happily, in a great measure, emerged. We will then glance at the present state of the sick, as seen in the light of modern ideas of nursing; and finally, endeavour to notice what still remains to be done in the way of improvement, both in our larger and smaller Infirmaries and Sick Wards.

Probably but few of my hearers are able to go back with me to the recollections of nearly forty years ago, when the now well-marked epoch of the Crimean War had not arrived, with its

crisis and revolution in the nursing world. Even first-class and old-established hospitals had not then emerged from the primitive ages of nursing (the first effort in the direction of reform had indeed preceded the year of Miss Nightingale's labours, as the St. John's House for the training of nurses for hospitals had began its excellent work in 1848); and I can venture to say that in those days, *no* thought had ever been bestowed upon the sick in *Workhouse* wards, however great and enduring were their sufferings; even had they been thought of, it was natural to supply the well-known hospitals first; *they* were open to inspection, they were attended by the first doctors of skill and benevolence, and a public outside were sure to hear, and be able to judge of the condition of those institutions which they were asked to support by their liberality. But none of these reasons existed in Workhouses, and their real state and circumstances could not be known.

It is nearly forty years since I paid my first visit to a large London Workhouse, one that no longer exists as such, but which at that time was the recipient of the poor, sick as well as able bodied, from several central and crowded metropolitan parishes. Perhaps it was fortunate, if I may be allowed to say so, that it presented the striking features, which, from the day of my first visit, were calculated to attract attention even from the most careless visitor; but though my knowledge at that time was limited to the one institution, I have no reason to believe that it formed an evil exception to others in the Metropolis, a belief which subsequent and extended knowledge confirmed. But there was another fact which may be considered fortunate, that this institution, shortly after I began to visit it, had the advantage of having a medical officer appointed, whose courage and perseverance induced him to fight against and endeavour to reform the condition of things which he found in existence. Those who wish to know further of the beginning of the long struggle, I would refer to the book, lately published, of the Memoir of Dr. Joseph Rogers, giving his reminiscences of Poor Law administration as regards the sick. I have sometimes feared that my statements and descriptions must appear overdrawn, and that the usual accusation of woman's exaggerations would be made against me; but since reading the remarks of an authority, so well able to judge and comprehend the matter, I have been convinced that I have not exceeded, even if I have reached, an expression of the truth.

I have often wished that the aid of photography could have

been obtained in those days as easily as now—for no words could speak so strongly as to facts concerning the nurses (if such they could be called) as "portraits from life" would have done. Nevertheless, the image of some is still imprinted vividly on my mental vision; but had I possessed such a representation of one of these officials, I would place it side by side with that of our present infirmary nurses and ask you to look on this picture and on that, and little more of explanation would be necessary. But I must, in default of this, say that no distinction was apparent between the so-called nurses and the other paupers, physical strength being the one requisite for the post. Now, strength and capability and *character* combined were not often to be found in workhouses in those days, any more than now, and to seek for such exceptions was hopeless; thus it happened that the individual selected for the post of caring for a ward full of twenty or thirty patients might be, in my recollection was, one who had lately come out of prison after a period of seclusion for drunkenness, perhaps many times repeated. No difference was made in the dress, and an allowance of beer was the sole privilege and emolument of the post; in the ward where she worked she lived, and slept, and took her meals; the low, degraded countenance proclaimed her character, ignorant, violent, and tyrannical, while the one visit of the matron and the doctor in the day was the only check upon her conduct, for in those days *no* visitors were allowed. I cannot now give the numbers of the sick in the workhouse, but the total of the inmates was over five hundred, and though there were then more of the "able bodied" than at the present time, the majority were the helpless, the sick, and the imbecile, for in those days all such (including the epileptic) were retained in the workhouse.

During the many years of my weekly visits to this building two kind-hearted matrons were at the head, but they were powerless as regards the system; between these two there intervened a period of sad rule, or rather misrule, when things could hardly have been worse; a man of the lowest standing and character being promoted from the post of porter to that of master, with a wife in all respects as unfitted for her position. My experience of two other London workhouses differed in no essential matters from the first; in one the nurses, by way of distinction, wore black caps, but whether this could be considered an improvement or otherwise I will leave my hearers to judge. I never saw a sheet that could be called white in those wards—and what then was the condition of the flock beds

beneath them? There was hardly an article of food (including the tea) that was not complained of, or that was fit for the use of the sick; the light of a gas jet over the door was the sole illumination of the long dark hours of winter; yet in such circumstances there lingered sufferers who had not left their beds for fourteen or more long years.

To the third Workhouse which I visited in Central London, we owe a debt of gratitude, for it was the occurrence of a grievous case of neglect and death in one of the sick wards, which called for an investigation and inquiry, resulting finally in the well-known "Lancet Commission," which in its turn, brought forth the beneficient Legislation inaugurated by Mr. Gathorne Hardy, in 1867. In two of the Workhouses I have named, so crowded was the limited accommodation, that basement rooms were used, and in both cases were given to the imbecile and epileptic classes; close, damp and dark, such abodes would hardly be considered fit, at the present day, for the occupation of *any* human beings, much less the mentally and physically afflicted.

I could fill pages with the recollections of at least fifteen years of this old regime, and of the efforts persistently made, to draw attention to a condition of things that was felt to be a disgrace to a civilised country, noted both for its charity and its wealth, but I must pass on to a consideration of the present conditions at which we have arrived, and which, in comparison with those on which I have already dwelt, may be said to shew such an enormous advance, that it may be asked, what more can still be required? There can be no doubt that the reorganisation of the Metropolitan Infirmaries, and their entire separation from the Workhouse, has in great measure tended to satisfy the public mind that *all* has been done in the way of reform, and this is much to be regretted, for while we may justly boast of what has taken place in the twenty-four Unions of the Metropolis, the smaller Institutions of town and country, outside this area, have been overlooked, with the exception of Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham, and speaking in Liverpool I cannot but acknowledge the deep debt of gratitude which we owe to its noble work, inaugurated by Agnes Jones, who gave her life to the cause. That I am justified in this assertion, I can give a proof in the recent publication of a remarkable report by the medical officer of the Halifax Union, a fact which may be considered to mark an epoch in the history of nursing the sick in these institutions. Let us see what he says as to the present condition of affairs, as it has existed up

to the present time, under his own enlightened and experienced care, rendering it, as surely we may be justified in supposing, not inferior to many others less happily situated.

In the Halifax Infirmary there are 345 beds, with 4 nurses, an average of one nurse to 85 beds; 70 being the least number throughout the year. I will quote Dr. Dolan's opinion as to the sufficiency of this system. "Each of the nurses is responsible for the cleanliness of the wards, for the distribution of the food for meals, and for the care and comfort of the sick by day and night. It is physically impossible for any woman to attend such a number of patients, and the consequence is that much of the work is done by pauper inmates, under the superintendence of the nurses. These pauper helps, who are designated wardsmen and wardswomen, not only make fires, scrub floors and windows, and perform other domestic offices, but also wash patients, make beds, and generally act as a sort of amateur nurses. They have no interest in their work, and although drawn from the same class, have no sympathies with the poor creatures they wait on. They are themselves paupers, some of them able-bodied men and women, who ought to be outside earning their own living, and if the truth were known, there is no doubt that many of them have drifted into pauperism through their own vicious habits." He then speaks of what we have all heard, "of attacks by wardsmen and wardswomen on the patients, or of gross carelessness whereby accident or death occurs." And this system has been in force ever since the Union was formed fifty years ago!

Considering that Pauper helpers were forbidden in Metropolitan infirmaries more than twenty years ago, it seems strange that such a system can have been carried on so long, not only in smaller and comparatively unimportant country workhouses, but in larger infirmaries of towns as well. Again, pages could be filled with well authenticated facts as to the doings and short-comings of these said pauper helpers, and of the injuries inflicted on the sick, but I cannot now give any further details. Let us see what are the remedies proposed for adoption in this particular Union in the North. First, pauper assistance should be entirely dispensed with, and able-bodied paupers are not to be allowed in the wards. The four paid nurses, hitherto employed, are to be replaced by four charge nurses and eight probationers, with a superintendent over them who shall be, as regards the management of the sick, entirely independent of the Workhouse, and amenable only to the House Committee and the Board. Thus we see that this scheme strikes directly

at the root of most of the evils and difficulties which have been continuously exposed during long years past, and it is with the greatest satisfaction that we find the Board of Guardians have already sanctioned the adoption of these plans. That their example may be speedily followed elsewhere, must be the most earnest desire of all who have the welfare of the sick and suffering at heart.

In confirmation of these opinions, I will add that of the Local Government Board Inspector, Dr. Downes, whose wise counsel is now helping so largely in the work of reform. He states he has found in Country Unions one nurse to fifty, seventy, and eighty patients, and he was convinced the employment of pauper inmates was a delusion. At a recent Poor Law Conference in the north it was resolved that, "in every Workhouse, however small, it was desirable there should be at least one trained nurse."

The enlightenment of Guardians on the subject of nursing the sick is one of the conditions essential to improvement, for too often, even in the larger Boards, entire ignorance prevails as to the condition and care of sick wards. (It was recently argued by one such member, on the appointment of a new matron over a large staff of trained nurses, that a trained lady matron was quite unnecessary, a "housekeeper" being all that was required, who would be kind to the sick!) A recent statement of the requirements issued by a Board, advertising for a nurse, may be named as a proof of this. She was to be trained, of course, and to nurse the sick, but she was expected in addition, to attend confinements and infectious cases, as well as to supervise the laundry and look into matters in the kitchen! Surely even in the smallest Union in the Kingdom all these impossible demands could hardly be supposed to be carried out!

We have now seen what the former condition of things was, and have glanced at some of the evils which, notwithstanding the advance that has been made, are still acknowledged to exist. Let us proceed to name some further matters on which improvements are still desirable and possible.

And first, I cannot refrain from alluding to one most important defect in the machinery of the Poor Law, viz., in the system of inspection carried out by the Central Board. It is impossible to reflect upon the number and cost of the inspectors employed throughout the country, without asking the question, how is it that such manifest evils and abuses existed, not only forty years ago, but are found at the present

time also? Then, as now, clever and highly educated gentlemen visited from time to time all these institutions, as we suppose, with the view of discovering defects, and at least of suggesting and recommending remedies. But we do not find this to have been the case. Had the grievous shortcomings and abuses in the Workhouses I have described been brought before the Guardians by the inspectors, they would surely have been heard of, and public opinion would have demanded reforms. The reason I believe to have been then, as now, that medical knowledge is not required for the inspectors of these Infirmaries and sick wards, there being but two of the medical profession for the whole country, one being for the Metropolis alone. Defects in nursing and medical care and hospital arrangements, can only be noticed by those who know what hospital wards should be, and this knowledge is wanting. The nurses complain of a lack of almost everything they have been used to consider essential in nursing the sick, and may we not inquire why the inspectors do not at least notice these deficiencies, and ask for them to be remedied, if the medical officer as well as the Guardians are indifferent to them? If they have not the power to do this, we can only say that their office, as regards the sick, is very imperfectly carried out, and the sooner some further powers are granted, the better it will be. And need I say, if, as is frequently the case, they are accompanied on their rounds of inspection by the master of the workhouse, they are hardly likely to discover defects and deficiencies, or to have them pointed out by the nurses?

Besides the suggestion that medical knowledge should be possessed by the inspector of a pauper population, now mainly consisting of the sick, we have been convinced of the need for women, who have been trained in nursing, being also employed in this service. Who can be so fitted as they to supervise the nurses' work, the untrained matron being the only one in authority over them? Can it be expected that the gentlemen should investigate the state of the beds and bedding, and clothing of the sick; yet this is a most important part of their duty? Long experience of the observation and quick insight of competent women in the care and inspection of sick wards, has convinced me that there is no more needful reform than this, and I earnestly trust that the beginning made so many years ago by the appointment of a Lady Inspector in another department of the Poor Law service, will ere long be still further extended. In confirmation of this opinion, I may be allowed to quote that of a Member of Parliament in a recent

discussion on Women Inspectors, in the House of Commons, when their employment was advocated wherever women were concerned, as "Women would give information far more readily to an Inspector who was of their own sex." It is satisfactory to add that "the Secretary of State viewed the matter sympathetically, and was giving it his best attention." We may also give the opinion of Sir John Gorst, who says, "if we are embarking on a course of social legislation we shall have to avail ourselves in the future, far more than we have done as yet, of the counsel and experience of women. There is much which a woman can see and understand and deal with, which is a closed book to men."

Then I would point out the absolute necessity, when a trained and efficient nurse is appointed, that in all matters concerning the care of the sick she should be independent of the matron, unless she also has had training. The strongest argument for the appointment of educated women for the superintendance of workhouses is, that such would, even when untrained themselves, co-operate with the trained nurses, instead of regarding them, as too often now, with jealousy, as interlopers who are to be thwarted. But as at present this aspiration seems to be hopeless, owing to the difficulty of the "master" of the establishment, we can only more strongly urge the point of liberty to be granted to the nurse. It must be trying enough to one who understands her work and has learnt it in hospital wards, to be accompanied on her rounds with the doctor by the matron who takes his orders, but what must it be to have the master instead, as is sometimes the case, not only in the female wards, but in the lying-in room as well? This is a fact, and I may add, that sometimes the nurse herself has not been included in these visits to the wards. It would be impossible to describe the endless cases of friction and misery caused by these arrangements when a trained nurse is first introduced.

Another point which must be named amongst the difficulties in the way of the nurse who would perform her duties faithfully, is the obtaining of articles and appliances absolutely necessary for her work. This, I may remark, is hardly to be wondered at, considering the salaries usually given to the medial officers, and the still too frequent arrangement of these, including all necessary drugs and appliances. From a return issued in 1877 by the Local Government Board, I have ascertained that out of the whole number of Unions, 184 salaries included *all* outlay, while in 155 cod liver oil and

quinine only are paid for by the Guardians. Under these circumstances we can hardly wonder when nurses complain that they have no thermometers to take the temperature of their patients, nor for the baths, neither cotton wool, nor indeed any of the articles usually considered essential to the efficient nursing of the sick; in one instance, salts was the sole medicine given, not even castor oil being an exception! We venture to think that such matters as these are worthy of the consideration and inquiry of an Inspector of the Local Government Board, as well as the addition of screens, and seats with some degree of comfort for the sick and aged, which surely ought to be provided by the Guardians. Should not the Inspectors also be expected to inspect the nurses, who, when scandals have arisen and have of necessity reached the Central Board, are suddenly discovered to have long been incompetent through age or infirmity, some being over seventy years of age and disabled by serious defects? Though I have so often urged the desirability of additional medical attendance on the sick in Infirmaries, I cannot refrain from naming it once more as amongst the more urgent reforms in the larger institutions, and which, so long talked of, still remains unaccomplished. Not only is it most important in the interests of thousands of the sick poor, but in those of medical science and knowledge as well, for where but in these wards can chronic and long-continued cases of illness and disease be studied? When we find 600 or 700 patients under the care of two medical officers, it is impossible to believe this number to be sufficient, and it is not easy to understand the reasons for delay in introducing a change so long and earnestly desired by those who best know the need of it.

I may thus briefly sum up the chief reforms that are still needed to complete the work of workhouse nursing:—

1. For the larger infirmaries, containing over one hundred inmates, entire separation from the workhouse, and in *all* cases a trained matron.
2. The addition of medical supervision by outside medical men and advanced students.
3. Probationer nurses, bound for three years.
4. For the country workhouses, increased *medical* supervision by inspectors, some of whom should be women trained in hospitals.
5. Pauper nursing to be discontinued, and at least *one* trained nurse for each workhouse, who should be, as regards the care of the sick, responsible to the doctor and not to the matron.

6. An increase of Lady Guardians on every Board, who would pay especial attention to the womanly work of caring for the sick; and, lastly, if the number is too small in some workhouses for a trained nurse, I would repeat the suggestion made elsewhere and some years ago, that there should be a concentration of unions for the care of the sick, as has long since been carried out for schools and lunatic and imbecile asylums. I must not enter now into further details of this plan, or of the arguments for or against this suggestion, but I may be allowed to add, that those who only theorise on this subject, little know the difficulty, if not impossibility, of retaining the services of thoroughly qualified nurses for the few and often uninteresting cases in the smaller workhouses of the country.

Miss HANNAN, of Manchester Parish Infirmary, opened the discussion:—Miss Twining has told us of the great progress which has been made in workhouse nursing during the last twenty years. Public opinion has been greatly educated in the matter, but there is need of still further progress. In the past it has been slow, but sure; now it should be sure and rapid. Many workhouse hospitals are still under the control of untrained women and pauper nurses. I know that in one workhouse in the south of England the matron is a trained nurse, but she has only paupers under her. She comes in contact with the medical men and the directors, but as there is no controlling power over a pauper she is literally helpless. These nurses have a day out once a month, and generally come back drunk, and then they fight even in the wards. Anyone coming to visit from the Working Nurses' Association is refused admission.

Progress can only be effected by public opinion, and that must influence those in authority. We must remember that these hospitals are State Hospitals though they are not looked upon as such. There are far more patients here than in any other hospital. The State has taken in charge the care of these poor people, and the question is how are they doing it? There is no proper medical or nursing attention. We want first an adequate supply of trained nurses. Without these nothing can be done. Then we want trained matrons for supervision; otherwise there is a constant fight and worry for the nurses to get what they want. The best means to obtain what we require is to get public opinion. The matrons are generally the masters' wives, but they should undergo special training before their appointment is sanctioned.

Mrs. SHERBROOKE (Southport):—In our Infirmary there

used to be one nurse for eighty beds, who was assisted by a pauper nurse; but now two trained nurses are obtained from London, and no one would recognise it for the same infirmary. The dinners which the sick people have been unable to eat are warmed up and given as suppers to the convalescent ones. Invalid chairs have been introduced for the benefit of those just recovering. I believe there is now about to be started a Northern Workhouse Nursing Association.

I would advocate having trained nurses in every institution in the country.

PIT-BROW WOMEN.

Mrs. PARK.

When I consented, at the wish of our beloved Bishop, who has always taken a deep interest in the subject, to write a paper on the labour of the Pitbrow women, I feared that he would scarcely be likely to be restored to the work of his diocese by the time that this Conference assembled, and I take this opportunity of saying how glad I am that he has made such progress towards the recovery of his health, and to express the hope that he may soon be as strong and robust as formerly, and may, for many years, be able to labour amongst his flock, who have missed him so much.

I think the most interesting way of presenting my subject may be to give a short account of the attacks made upon the women's work in 1886 and 1887, and the steps that were taken to defend them. In 1886 the miners of Northumberland and Durham attempted to insert into the Mines Regulation Bill a clause to prohibit the women from working on pit-brows.

The Rev. Harry Mitchell, Vicar of Pemberton, in whose extensive parish a large number of women gained their living at the pits, at once took up their defence, and called a meeting at the Central Schools, Pemberton, of all interested in the cause. No colliery proprietor was, however, permitted to come forward, as our opponents might think they were interested in retaining the services of the women to do certain work as ably as the men, and at much lower wages. Having heard me in an address on another subject publicly express sympathy with the women, Mr. Mitchell asked me to take the chair. I did so willingly, feeling that as Mayoress of Wigan I was the proper person to do so, especially as my husband had no pecuniary

interest in collieries. We had a most enthusiastic meeting; the platform was crowded with the women, many of them in their working dress, and those in the body of the room frequently expressed their sentiments on the subject with such exclamations as "Here is a widow with one child, another with five, and another bringing up four children by working on the pit-brow;" and again, "And there is this here and me, bringing up six"; and so on.

Mr. Mitchell then proposed the adoption of a petition to be presented to Parliament against the passing of the clause which sought to abolish female labour on pit-brows. This was carried with great enthusiasm, and I had the satisfaction of signing it on behalf of the women, and it was duly forwarded to Mr. Childers, the Home Secretary.

This meeting was held on a Saturday evening. On the following Monday, the London *Daily Telegraph* published my speech in full, and a good part of Mr. Mitchell's, and before a week was passed the whole country had taken up the question, and almost every paper had leading articles, and Mr. Mitchell and I were flooded with letters and offers of help from all parts. Meetings were held in other colliery neighbourhoods; the philanthropic ladies of London exerted themselves, and Mr. Childers was assailed in all directions. The consequence was that the obnoxious clause was dropped, and we thought that we were quite safe, and that the women might now work on comfortably, without any fear of further molestation.

But this was not to be. In May, 1887, a year later, we heard that a mine was about to be sprung upon us by the Northumberland and Durham Colliers' representatives, and that immediate and strong measures must be taken or the cause of the women would be lost. It was decided that a deputation should at once proceed to London, and that each colliery should send one, two, or three women, according to the number employed.

This was arranged on Friday afternoon, and on the following Monday morning, the girls assembled at Wigan at the Mayor's Parlour, ready to start, so there was very little time for preparations of any sort. Mrs. Burrows, of Atherton Colliery, who felt great sympathy with the women, joined us with four from their collieries, and we set off for London under the care of Mr. Mitchell, who on this and all other occasions proved a most kind, energetic, and capable conductor and paymaster of our party.

Talking of paying reminds me that the women wished to

pay their own expenses, and, for the interest of the cause, it was better so. The money was advanced for them, and they repaid it by weekly instalments, in many cases, the men helping. We had to be so *very* careful to avoid help from the masters, as interested motives were constantly ascribed to them.

I do not intend to give an account of our visit to London—that would occupy too long a time—I leave it to your imagination to picture the delight of the women and their surprise at the most kind reception that we had at the Girls' Club, Soho, the home at which I had arranged they should be boarded during their stay—and it is a coincidence that Miss Maude Stanley, who yesterday read a paper on Girls' Clubs at this Conference, was President of that Club while we were there.

We had quite a levée each evening—so many kind friends were anxious to have a chat with the girls, and to see what they were like, and in that as in every case, they were much pleased with them. We visited the Houses of Parliament, escorted by a large number of members and friends, who took the opportunity of talking with the girls, and seeing what sort of stuff the pit-brow women were really made of, and they were so agreeably impressed by them that, afterwards, when their case was discussed in the House, their opponents maintained that the deputation consisted of women selected for intelligence and good appearance, which certainly was not the case. Indeed, I have understood that they were ballotted for at each pit. Next day, as those who read the account of our visit to the Houses may remember, the papers were filled with praises of their sensible conversation and their healthy, pleasant appearance.

I daresay there are some present here who were with us at Whitehall, and they will remember the kindly reception that we had from the Home Secretary, Mr. Matthews, and how splendidly we were supported by different noblemen, Members of Parliament, and philanthropic ladies from all parts of the country—prominent amongst whom was our much esteemed, President of the Liverpool Diocesan Branch of the Girls' Friendly Society, the Countess of Lathom, who herself addressed Mr. Matthews on the occasion—and how the women spoke out for themselves, determined that no effort on their part to retain their work should be spared; and how successful we were, leaving the Home Office with light hearts, having had Mr. Matthews' assurance that he quite sympathised with the women, and saw no just reason why they should be interfered with, and that all his instincts and convictions were with them in the matter.

After showing the women as many of the sights of London as it was possible to do in so short a time, we returned to Wigan on the Wednesday very tired, but very happy, feeling sure that they were now quite safe, and free from all fear of interference in future.

But I regret to say that this is not the case. I do not know exactly how the matter stands now, but I have been written to once or twice this year by ladies in London who say that there are signs of a renewal of interference with the women, and to ask if I am still able and willing to work on their behalf.

As Mayoress of Wigan for five successive years, I have had occasion to visit frequently, for one purpose or another, the working women of all classes, and thus have been enabled to form an opinion as to the merits of the different kinds of work in which they were employed, and my observation of the women and their work on the pit-brows, both then and during previous years when I was resident in Wigan, convinced me that they were in their right place, especially under their peculiar circumstances. For several generations they have followed this occupation till it has become a tradition in their families—there are no other openings for them near home, as most of the collieries are outside the towns, and these women prefer remaining at home to going to domestic service.

Some may and do say—Why, if forbidden to work on the pit-brow, should not these women turn to the mill? That is easy in theory, but not so in practice, for cotton-spinning and weaving need their apprenticeship like other trades, and must be learned; and in these hard times, when workers are so much more plentiful than work, and there are so many skilled hands to be had, what employer would take girls who do not know the work? I am told that if a woman in a mill be absent for a short time through unavoidable reasons, her place is at once filled out of the ranks of the many waiting for work, and she may have to wait a very long time for another opening. Besides this, the work in a cotton mill is so different from that on the pit-brow that it would be most difficult for women to change from one to the other. Before I dismiss the subject of the mill-work, I may say that it is sometimes the case that girls who are threatened with consumption while working in the mills, if they take to the open-air work on the pit-brow, become strong and healthy again, and thus well able to continue to earn their living.

We all know the great risk that attends the work of the miners—should one of their women be deprived of her husband,

she can return to her old work and keep herself and her little family—or the husband may be laid aside by an injury or ill-health, and then again our pit-brow wife turns to and does her best to become the bread-winner of her family, and all who are acquainted with the working classes know well how nobly and in what a self-sacrificing spirit our Lancashire women do this, quite unconscious of the real heroism which often characterises their actions. And not only in cases of accident but in those sadly too frequent cases when the husband wastes all his earnings in drink, losing, as the drunkard always does, all love and care for his family, the wife has this opportunity of working for herself and children, and thus keeping the wolf from her door. I have also heard of many touching cases in which young women have supported their aged parents, or their young brothers and sisters—perhaps at the same pits at which their parents have worked before them.

No less than 4,205 women work at the pits in Great Britain, and their wages amount to, at the lowest computation over £100,000 a year, this sum all going to the homes, and not to the public houses.

The work of the women is very healthy. I have never, even in the country, seen women looking so robust and vigorous. They have been styled "The Colliery Amazons and Venuses," the former, probably on account of their strength; the latter, for their rosy, pleasant faces, and splendid development, and beautiful teeth. I have talked with them at meal times, and found them most bright, contented, and happy, and always quite satisfied with their work, and, as they informed Mr. Matthews, "They have no grievances."

Their work consists chiefly of screening the coal, which means that, when it is tipped on to a kind of grid, through which the small coal and slack drop, they pick out the rubbish, and this is done with a most wonderful rapidity, better and more conscientiously than by the men, though for so much less wages. They also help the coal, with their spades, to fall out of the tipped up waggons into the train, or canal boat below. At some collieries the women push the "tubs," which are the small waggons like large wheelbarrows, containing the coal, from the pit mouth, after the men have pulled them out of the cage, which is the kind of platform on which the coal is brought up the shaft to the edge of the brow, where they are tipped over. This is work that we would rather they did not have to do, but it looks more laborious than it is, as the tubs only contain a few cwts., and the plates on which they

run are so smooth. A well known American writer, Mr. Edgar Wakeman, who travels much in Europe, and, under the title of *Wakeman's Wanderings*, publishes the results of his observations of men and things in a large number of the leading American Journals, visited me this summer, and, after minute inquiries about the women and their work, he accompanied me to Col. Blundell's pits, at Pemberton, to see them actually at work. He conversed with them during their dinner hour, and afterwards watched them at work, and was both greatly pleased with the women as a class, and surprised at their healthy, happy appearance, and, what I particularly wish to draw your attention to, is how much astonished he was at their work, which was so very much easier, and more suitable than he imagined.

Some of the collieries have their brows roofed, and some are open—it must be much more pleasant for those who work on the covered ones. There is one very special point I must mention, which is this: that at every pit brow where women work, whether they wish to take their meals outside or not, they should always have a room, with benches and a good fire, and especially lavatory accommodation for their own separate use. This latter should be insisted on for every reason.

At the commencement of the agitation against the women, Mr. Ellis Lever, of Manchester, wrote a letter in, I think, *The Times*, in which he told us the work was "indecent, degrading and conducive to immorality." Amongst others, Miss Emily Faithful was so impressed by this statement that she wrote in her paper strongly against the work, but on hearing the statements made on their side, and visiting the women at their work, she acknowledged her mistake, and became one of their warmest champions. That ardent worker, the late Miss Lydia Becker, after making herself personally acquainted with the women's work, energetically espoused their cause, and was one of our supporters at our interview with Mr. Matthews.

As regards the statement that the work is indecent, that must refer to the dress, as the word itself cannot apply to the work. It is performed in open daylight, and when over, the woman, having spent her day in the open air, is glad to go home, and if necessary "red up" her room, and spend the evening quietly indoors, very differently from her poor sisters in the mill, with their white sickly faces, who, thankful to escape from the heat and smells and deafening noises amongst which they have worked, are generally out of doors at night to enjoy

the fresh air, and thus run risks not shared by the pit-brow women. The dress thus assailed consists of trousers of navy blue serge reaching almost to the ankles, over this, coming down to the knees a skirt of the same material, and over this again a large rough apron. A closely-fitting jacket of navy blue serge, cut short round the waist, completes the costume. The head is protected by a kind of hood with which the hair is closely covered. It is a somewhat peculiar dress, but necessary, because petticoats of the ordinary length would be in the way of the women's work, and there would be a possibility of their being caught by the machinery, and the work on the brow being of a rough nature they require the strong trousers, and also, as they work in windy and elevated situations, they are both warmer and more suitable. The costume I have described is that designed by the late Honourable Mrs. Blundell, wife of the much esteemed Member for the Ince division of Lancashire, and one is presented each year to the women of good character, and I have heard, through the clergyman, in whose hands is placed the distribution of these costumes, that he has only on one occasion had to withhold the gift. This speaks volumes. I think what I have already stated proves that the work is not degrading. It was so for the women to work below, but that form of labour was done away with many years ago through the efforts of Lord Shaftesbury.

The question of physical injury to the women is disproved by their undoubted health and strength, and it needs no further consideration.

As regards the question of morality which has been raised in connection with these women, I know well that they are as pure and good a class of women as those engaged in any other kind of labour, they are not even able to gossip together over their work, as is the case in more sedentary occupations, and it seems to me that open-air work is more elevating and inspiriting than that in a close atmosphere.

The Rev. Harry Mitchell, who had so many of these girls in his parish and Sunday Schools, at Pemberton, was most indignant at the imputations made upon them and their work, he having a very high respect for them. He started up at once as their champion, and never rested till their cause was decided in their favour, and I have found that other clergymen and ministers of all denominations have the same opinion of the women:

When in their company on the memorable visit to London, I found them all that I could wish in most respects.

It seems very strange that the opposition to the women should have proceeded from the Miners' Agents of Northumberland and Durham, as they really knew very little about the women—Northumberland having very few women working on the brow, and Durham only six. What had they to do with the Lancashire workers, and why meddle with them? Our own Miners' Agents supported the women. Mr. Burt and Mr. Atherley Jones really knew nothing about it, and it was difficult to imagine why they should interfere. What we ask is this. Let those who oppose the pit-brow women give us good and sufficient reasons for wishing to remove them from their work. At present it seems that the only reason can be that the men desire the women's work for themselves, and even *that* we cannot understand, for the men elsewhere than Northumberland and Durham, that is to say in the places where most of the women work, desire them to be allowed to continue, they must feel *so* thankful if they are ill or dying, that their wives have work to which they can turn to support themselves. It has been suggested to me by a very kind and liberal colliery proprietor that the accommodation provided for the girls should be annually inspected, in order to ensure their comfort and decency being properly attended to, and I think it is a suggestion of great value, which I trust may be adopted on all the pit-brows where women are employed.

In conclusion, let me say that it must surely be highly undesirable that adults, whether men or women should be interfered with by the State in the work which they have chosen to pursue, unless that form of labour be unmistakably injurious to health. If labour on the pit-brow be not an ideal occupation for women, it is at any rate an honest way of making a living. It is not indecent, and certainly not degrading. It is assuredly not immoral, and certainly not injurious to health, but quite the reverse, and as I have pointed out, it certainly does give the women a means by which, in case of one of the accidents so terribly frequent in colliery districts, they may maintain themselves and their children.

EVENING, 7 to 9.30.

1. *District Nursing—In Town.* MRS. MINET.

2. „ „ *In Country.* { MRS. MALLESON. / LADY VICTORIA LAMBTON.

The chair was taken at seven o'clock by Mrs. S. G. RATHBONE, who introduced the first speaker, Mrs. Minet, of London.

DISTRICT NURSING.

MRS. MINET.

THE comprehensive fullness of our programme points, as it seems at least to me, to two facts. First, that we have awakened to a knowledge and a sense of the suffering which lies around us, suffering which we feel we must do all in our power to mitigate; and next, that our ways of working towards this end are as various and as infinite as are our several characters and opportunities.

The net result, however, of such a gathering as this should be to co-ordinate our methods, and in the few remarks I am about to offer on the subject of District Nursing I shall ask your attention to a scheme in which, I venture to think, enthusiasm is so tempered with discretion, and zeal so balanced with principle, that workers of all shades of thought may be able to find in it something of their own.

Were I speaking to a Liverpool audience only, my words might well be superfluous, for it was here that, thirty years since, nursing generally, and District Nursing as one of its branches, was first raised to the dignity of an art. My Liverpool friends will, however, pardon me if, in the interest of others of my hearers, I briefly deal with the main points of their nursing plan of 1859.

Nursing, no doubt, had existed before this, but it had barely emerged from the desultory, or "Gamp," stage. "Till recently," to quote from a work on the organization of Nursing,

published in Liverpool in 1865, "sobriety was comparatively a rare virtue in the hospital or sick nurse, and consequently the inexperienced or ignorant care of any honest woman was preferred where attainable."

The main points which distinguished the Liverpool scheme of 1859 were:—

1. That Nurses should be drawn from a better class of society.
2. That Nurses should be thoroughly trained.
3. That Nurses should work under a responsible organization.

And while much has been learnt since 1859, and many improvements introduced, these principles have remained untouched.

Did time permit I should wish to speak in more detail of this Liverpool scheme; my limits, however, must confine me to district nursing in its later and more general development.

And first let me lay down the principles on which District Nursing should be based, principles which, I conceive, should form the foundation of all philanthropic work, and without which the action of philanthropy must cause more evil than good.

We admit that the highest qualities which make for the building up of the character of the individual, and so, necessarily, for the building up of the character of the community of which the individual is a member, are what I may call 'self' qualities: 'self-knowledge, self-reverence, self-control,' to which let us add self-help and self-reliance. Any form of philanthropy which weakens these qualities in the object of it, which, in other words, does for a man what he should do for himself, is therefore bad.

The test question then which you will, if you are wise, put to all who come to recommend to you any scheme of philanthropy will be: 'Prove to us that what you wish us to do for our fellows is what they cannot do for themselves.'

Now District Nursing will stand this test.

Our duty to ourselves and to our families is to provide for all the ordinary eventualities of life, and the organization of society is at any rate such, criticise it as we may on other grounds, that we can all, by exercise of due labour, forethought, and thrift, accomplish this much. But this very same organization of society makes it practically impossible for very many to do more than this—accidents must still happen—and

of these, to the working man or woman, sickness is the most disastrous.

Help in time of sickness, a wise and well-ordered philanthropy may provide, and yet escape, I think, the censure of the most rigid economist.

Having defended the object I wish to bring before you, let me now define it.

What is meant, then, by District Nursing?

By nursing is meant skilled hospital nursing by women who have been trained in the first-rate nursing school of some recognized hospital, and who have successfully passed examinations in the various stages of what may be called, in a word, scientific nursing.

By District Nursing is meant this scientific nursing brought to the poor in their own homes, under an organisation of defined areas, worked from appointed centres, called District Homes.

How then did the Liverpool System of 1859 develop into what we find it to-day?

In 1874, the Order of St. John of Jerusalem formed a Committee to provide more fully trained nurses for the poor, and a sub-committee of enquiry was appointed to ascertain how far existing institutions fulfilled the requirements of nursing the sick poor in their own homes.

The conclusions to which this Committee came were:

First. That nurses should not be taken from the same class as the poor among whom they had to work, for as a rule such women were lacking in the education and moral influence necessary to enable them to command the obedience and confidence of their patients, nor could they be teachers of nursing and educators in the elements of sanitary knowledge, as they should be, if their highest vocation was to be fulfilled.

Second. The large amount of relief given by nurses (and this formed a marked feature of the old Liverpool System) was found to be a grave mistake.

It was proved that District Nursing, when combined with relief giving, degenerated into nothing but relief giving, so that the real nursing work fell into the background, and the mistaken idea arose amongst the nurses that unless they administered relief, they were doing nothing for the patients under their care. Later experience has shown it to be a waste of time and strength for a highly trained nurse to devote her time to work which more properly belongs to other agencies.

It was accordingly resolved by the Committee to establish

an association for training and providing nurses for the sick poor, who should be taken only from the educated classes, and who should receive the highest possible training. These measures were shortly carried out, and in the year 1875 the central home of the Metropolitan and National Nursing Association was started in London, with Miss Florence Lees as its first Superintendent, and under the direct guidance of Miss Nightingale, who wrote as follows soon after its commencement:—

'The beginning has been made, the first crusade has been fought and won, to bring—a truly national undertaking—real nursing, trained nursing, to the bed side of cases wanting real nursing among the London sick poor, in the only way in which real nursing can be so brought, and this is by providing a real home, within reach of their work, for the nurses to live in, a home which gives what real family homes are supposed to give—materially; a bedroom for each, dining and sitting rooms in common, all meals prepared and eaten in the home—morally; direction, support, sympathy in a common work, further training and instruction in it, proper rest and recreation, and a head of the home who is also and pre-eminently trained and skilled head of the nursing; in short a home where any good mother, of whatever class, would be willing to let her daughter, however attractive or highly educated live.' *

Started on these wise lines, and to meet such an obvious want, the scheme has steadily grown, and the work of the Association has recently received a great impulse from its affiliation to the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute, which now enrols the existing associations, superintendents, and nurses without further question, and which entrusts the practical training of its own probationers to the superintendents in the various District Homes.

In 1887, it will be remembered, the women of England presented Her Majesty with an offering in commemoration of her Jubilee, of which the Queen determined to devote the larger portion to the encouragement of Nursing, and she requested a body of gentlemen, of whom the Duke of Westminster was Chairman, and Mr. W. Rathbone, M.P. Hon. Sec., to advise her as to how this could best be done. By their advice the fund is being applied to the further development of District Nursing, which is receiving, as a necessary consequence,

* Letter to *The Times*, 14th April, 1876.

considerably more organization than it has hitherto possessed.

A Royal Charter has been granted to the Institute, which seeks to incorporate the existing District Nursing Associations, provided these will agree to be bound by its rules, which have been drawn up with a view to insuring increased efficiency; while the funds at its disposal are applied to make grants in aid of new branches, and to meet the expenses of training probationers for the work, in the already existing Homes. By Royal Charter, bearing date 20th September, 1889, the "Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses" was constituted a Body Corporate under a President and Council, to take charge of the annual income of the fund, and apply it for the purposes Her Majesty had designated, viz: 'The training, support, and maintenance of women to act as nurses for the sick poor.'

The Institute was further connected with St. Katherine's Royal Hospital, the master of which has been nominated by Her Majesty as President of the Council. And here I may perhaps say a word on this ancient foundation.

The Royal Hospital of St. Katherine owed its origin to the piety of Queen Matilda, wife of Stephen, and was founded by her in 1148.

The foundation consisted of a master, three brethren (seculars), and three sisters who were under no vows and did not take the veil. Their time was to be taken up in hearing mass, praying for their benefactors, attending the sick (we may fairly assume in their own homes) and doing other charitable acts.

The Queen Consorts of England are by law its perpetual patronesses; this hospital being considered as part of their dower. They nominate *pleno jure* the master, brethren, and sisters, and may increase or lessen their number, remove them, alter any statutes or make new ones at pleasure, for their power here is unlimited.

The business of the house is transacted in chapter, by the master, brethren, and sisters, and it is singularly remarkable that the sisters have therein a vote equally with the brethren.*

Although, so far, the connexion of the two bodies is little more than one of antiquarian sentiment, we may venture to hope that ultimately the revenues of St. Katherine's may be allowed to swell the Women's Jubilee Offering, and that the Queen's Nurses, as they are now called, may become the

* *Account of the Royal Hospital and Collegiate Church of St. Katherine.* J. B. Nichols, London, 1824.

legitimate successors, in the fullest sense, of this ancient sisterhood.

Such then is a brief outline of the history of District Nursing, and of its present position.

Let us now, therefore, in conclusion, turn to the work of the District Nurse. Her training consists :—

First. Of hospital training for at least one year in some recognised school, such as the Nightingale School connected with St. Thomas's Hospital, or the Training School connected with the Liverpool Royal Infirmary.

Secondly. Further training in District Nursing in some District Home for at least six months, during which period she attends courses of advanced lectures on hygiene, anatomy, physiology, etc., in all of which subjects, examinations have to be passed.

Any person may send for the District Nurse. When summoned to attend a case, the superintendent, in company with a nurse, visits the patient, decides whether it is a proper case to be taken up, and makes all necessary arrangements for the daily visits of the nurse. The next step, unless it be the doctor himself who has sent for the nurse, is to see the doctor who is attending the case, and to obtain his directions as to treatment. After the first visit the nurse goes alone, and, until her services are no longer needed, she sees the patient twice daily, if suffering from any acute illness ; one visit sufficing for merely chronic cases.

The time devoted to each case necessarily varies; but, upon an average, one nurse can attend to some seven or eight cases in the course of the day.

It will be readily understood that the entire time of a nurse cannot (save under the most exceptional circumstances) be devoted to a single case of illness, however severe. Two visits daily generally suffice for the most essential skilled services, and the nurse must carry with her whatever appliances the nature of the case under her charge renders indispensable. She will often be called on to practice the invaluable art of making shift with scanty or inadequate means, under emergencies with which the ordinary hospital nurse need never contend single-handed. Her position is, in short, one which calls forth in an eminent degree, alertness, promptitude, and fertility of resource.

Certain sanitary precautions have first to be attended to in most cases. Only those who have nursed among the poor can fully understand the urgent necessity for such prelim-

inaries. The filth and neglect encountered are sometimes indescribable and appalling,

At the first visit the room is put in 'Nursing Order.' The patient next claims the nurse's attention, and the orders from the doctor are strictly carried out. The temperature, pulse, and respiration, are duly entered upon the chart, which the nurse carries in her bag, with any other notes of the case which may be gathered from the reports of the patient's friends, or the nurse's own observation. Before leaving, she instructs the friends what to do in her absence, and how to administer the food and medicine ordered by the doctor. A well-trained nurse thus becomes in every house that she visits a teacher of more than mere nursing, for good nursing depends on good surroundings, and it is part of her duty to see that the home she visits is raised to her ideal of what a patient's home should be.

What the presence of such a nurse means to the doctor, let a doctor himself tell us. 'The hasty visit of the doctor will be of little avail if the diet and regimen are not attended to; if there is no one present who can form an intelligent comprehension of medical directions; if the unfortunate patient be breathing a poisonous atmosphere in a close, unventilated dwelling, amidst dirt, confusion, and disorder; if there is no one present who possesses any knowledge at all of the first principles of sanitary science or the laws of our common nature.' *

Every District Home is under the management of a superintendent; herself, of course, a fully trained nurse, but the work demanded of the superintendent requires that she should be more than a mere nurse. She must have the gifts of method and of organization;—within the home, to be able to allot the work of those under her, so as to economise their time and strength;—without the home, to enable her to keep in touch with all the numerous agencies whose province it is to supplement and help her own special work, as, for example, charity organizations or relief societies, or convalescent homes to which her patients may be sent when sufficiently recovered. †

The mention of the superintendent leads us naturally to speak of the home. Where homes should be placed depends

* *On the Employment of Trained Nurses among the labouring poor, considered chiefly in relation to Sanitary Reform and the Arts of Life.* By a Physician, London. 1860.

† See *Organisation of Nursing*, with an introduction by Florence Nightingale. Liverpool. 1865. Miss Nightingale lays special emphasis on the value of convalescent homes to the sick poor.

on local considerations; but roughly speaking, in towns where the population is dense, a radius of about one mile and a half is sufficient for a home of from five to six nurses—a larger district than this can hardly be worked to the best advantage. The material advantages of the home itself should be such that each nurse may feel that the name 'home' is not misapplied. But more than this will be needed to make the feeling real; and that it should be a home in the fullest and highest sense of the word will depend to no slight extent on the superintendents. It must be hers to see what a home spirit fills the house, for so, and so only, will grow that *esprit du corps*, and those traditions which alone can insure success, and without which the nurse's work will be lacking its mainspring of encouragement and interest.

Gathered in such a home as this, with the advice and experience of a wise superintendent in all cases of difficulty, with the change of pleasant companionship when the day's work is over, and with the impelling power which comes from working with others for a common cause, the nurse's strength is increased, and her work becomes far more effectual.

I trust this 'noble art of nursing' may enlist your sympathy and win your help, and especially that form of it which it has been the object of this paper to bring before you, and for which I claim one special and peculiar merit—that it aims at restoring the bread-winner to his family, and the helpless and suffering mother to her little ones, and this without breaking up the home.

Of this 'art,' then, which is dear to me, and I trust to many other women, we may surely say, as Dean Stanley once said of the kindred art of compassion, that 'if we have eyes to see, we need only strength to reach.'

Mrs. Gilmour opened the discussion:—Our Liverpool District Nursing, which was publicly inaugurated in 1862, is formed on rather a different plan from other towns. The town was from the first divided into districts under the superintendence of one or more ladies; the nurses were supplied from the District Home, and the control of the institution is in the hands of an honorary superintendent. The responsibility has been lightened by a grant from the Hospital Sunday Fund. We have now four District Homes; the head of each home is a district matron who is a fully trained nurse. She visits the homes with the nurses. The Superintendent keeps the records of work done, and by her sympathy and general interest lightens the nurses' labour and brightens the patients' homes.

Taking into consideration the grants made to each district, about one-third must be provided by the lady superintendent.

Miss HERTZ (*Manchester*) :—I have been asked to speak about what we are doing in nursing in Manchester. The institution has arrived at years of discretion. It was formed in 1865, and from a small beginning, with only four district nurses, it has increased until there are now three homes, two of which have nine nurses and a matron, and the other four. There are also four nurses lodging in their own districts; thus the original four have increased to twenty-six. At two of the homes each lady of the committee has her own special nurse and a district which she visits, and she is responsible for part of the funds required for the nurses. The system of homes is to be commended, because if a nurse is ill, the other nurses can take her duties. A year ago our institution was affiliated to the Queen's Jubilee Association. There is increasing difficulty in getting satisfactary nurses, perhaps because trained nurses are so much in demand.

Hon. MAUDE STANLEY :—I have seen nurses working in the most wretched homes, and I do not think I have ever admired the work so much as under these circumstances. It is heroism in every-day life such as we do not often meet with. To be a nurse in a hospital is as nothing in comparison with one of these nurses, and in watching them I cannot help thinking of St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

Mrs. CREIGHTON :—In the matter of these district nurses the funds are constantly a difficulty, and I want to ask whether the time has not come when a small fee might be asked for the services of the nurse from those able to pay. I am sure there are many who would be glad to give something, if only to show their gratitude.

In reply to the last speaker, Mrs. Minet said that there were constantly free-will offerings made by the patients and their friends.

A lady from the body of the Hall said :—At a mothers' meeting, with which I am connected, the women felt so much gratitude for the services of the District Nurse, that they proposed to contribute to the funds of the Society, and raised £1, which they sent to the home. And again this year they are preparing to send another contribution.

Mrs. BOOTH :—I want to say a few words about our Liverpool Ladies' Sanitary Association. Last March this Association was started. At the inaugural meeting several doctors expressed surprise that there had not been one before,

and the reason assigned was that the District Nurses had done so much in Liverpool. The object of this Society is to prevent the necessity the nurses have to attend so much to sanitation. We have engaged the lady for the purpose of giving lectures on the importance of sanitary arrangements.

In respect to the question of payment, MISS HERTZ said that many of the patients are willing to give small sums. In some cases they are offered to nurses as personal gifts, but the nurses always susgest that they should be given to the homes. Last year we had over £10 from the patients.

MRS. CREIGHTON said she did not like the idea of begging at a mothers' meeting. She suggested that there should be free nurses and paid nurses.

LADY LLEWELYN:—I wish to give my own experience in Swansea. We tried having paid and free nurses, and found it answered very well.

A lady in the Hall said:—In a town in the north of Scotland, everyone who is able to do so, pays something every week into a fund, according to an arranged scale. These amounts vary from 2d to 1s.

RURAL NURSING.

MRS. MALLESON.

I ESTEEM myself happy in being allowed to touch upon the subject of Rural District Nursing in Liverpool. Here I believe the idea of nursing the sick poor in their own homes originated. The illness in an individual home, with the anxiety and distress attending it, led to the thought of homes where sickness existed with poverty, and was unalleviated by comforts and skilled nursing.

The idea of a trained nurse visiting patients in such homes was the "precious jewel" discovered in this adversity—a system of district nursing in towns became elaborated, and the preparation of women for this particular department of nursing was set on foot. This treatment of patients, unfit for various reasons to go into hospitals, this supplementing of medical attendance, seems as economical in the adjustment of means to ends as it is far-seeing and philanthropic.

Within the last two or three years the adaptation of this idea to country life has been promulgated, and it is rapidly extending; for if the need of skilled attendance on the sick is

great in towns, a much greater need of skilled nursing exists in country places, where people live far from medical help. The Commissioner who, within the last few months, has been reporting his observations on "Life in our Villages" to the *Daily News*, speaks of this remoteness from the help of doctors as one of the difficulties and disadvantages of country life. He has written under the disability of an outsider, not as a dweller in the country, and in consequence we get from him outlined sketches rather than detailed pictures. To the matter in hand, I think he has scarcely given sufficient weight. In a scattered agricultural population the doctors necessarily live at places distant from many of the inhabitants. They are hard worked men, who, riding or driving for hours at a time, attend patients over large areas of country, and who, therefore, when wanted by one sick person, may be visiting another, miles from home on the other side of the county.

Prompt attendance may be an impossibility. And when the doctor comes to the sick in the majority of homes there is, as a rule, no one who can intelligently obey his orders, or fulfil directions. We know that even in the houses of the educated, amateur nursing is often of the most painfully ignorant and unskilful description. What must it be therefore in homes where there is the densest ignorance, want of judgment, and no appliances. I have found in village homes the orders of the doctor for a fire, in the case of a patient with severe bronchitis, disobeyed for hours—the suffering of those with broken limbs painfully enhanced by the want of skilled handling—and all kinds of barbarous interpretation of medical orders. The case of the mothers is still worse; for here skilled attendance in childbirth is quite the exception. It is very much the custom to ignore this tremendous fact; people vaguely believe, with no data to go upon, that the maternity cases amongst the poor are under the care of those who have the proper education and skill for the work. Those of us who live in the remote country are rudely shaken in this comfortable belief.

At present there is no law to restrain absolutely ignorant, untrained women acting as midwives; and we are told by authorities in these matters that from 10,000 to 15,000 women are so acting in England and Wales, with the result that out of the total number of mothers giving birth to children each year, one out of every 200 dies in childbirth, while the deaths in mothers attended by the skilled midwives of Lying-in Hospitals amount to one in 600 births. From sorrowful

experience, in the cottages of my poor neighbours, I know how unfit these women are for the duties they undertake. Medical men have assured me they have no power of discriminating between normal and abnormal cases. They eke out their livelihood by working in the fields, and doing other rough work; they have no knowledge of even the elementary principles of nursing, they are completely paralysed in emergencies. And yet to the unscrupulous attendance of such women, the lives of mothers, and of little children beginning life, are entrusted at the most critical times. We cannot wonder that as results of this state of things there are numerous patients in the women's wards of hospitals, puny ill-developed children, cases of lifelong suffering.

To meet these two classes of needs in sick-nursing, and in midwifery, an organisation to extend District Nursing to country places was begun about three years ago under the title of the "Rural Nursing Association." The idea of this extension was submitted to Miss Nightingale, and approved by her, by sundry matrons of Hospitals, and doctors, and others well known as taking interest in the subject. Beginning to work from a small centre, the Association, touching needs which existed in very many parts of England and Wales rapidly awakened wider interest, and was appealed to for advice and assistance. A few districts were formed, and trained nurses set to work in them, while isolated places, where good sick nursing had been established by the benevolent efforts of landowners and others, joined the growing society.

The organization of Queen Victoria's Institute for Nurses, out of the funds subscribed by the women of England to celebrate the Jubilee, had largely stimulated public attention to the whole subject of nursing the sick poor, and had touched feeling with sympathy akin to the Queen's tender consideration for the suffering. This has probably been a potent influence in the extension of trained nursing to country districts. The Institute, indeed, in the scope of its work, included the needs of the sick poor in the country as well as in towns, and recognizing the work begun by the Rural Nursing Association, gave it generous appreciation and encouragement.

Early in this year it constituted the Association its branch for rural district work, and has helped it by grants of money, by the official inspection of districts, and by the most friendly co-operation. Gathering up the views and experience of the most able experts, the Institute has also rendered the greatest possible service to district nursing by placing before it an

admirable standard of efficiency for this department of the profession.

Within the last twelve months, county centres of the Branch have been formed in Devonshire, Hampshire and Yorkshire, with dependent districts. Twenty new districts have been formed since March, some under these county centres, some dependent upon the central committee of the branch—making a total of fifty-four rural districts altogether. Of the number of nurses we have set to work, six are Queen's nurses, while twelve or thirteen more employed in our districts are qualified to apply for the honour of the badge, and to be enrolled on the register of Queen's nurses. Many more districts are upon the point of formation, or are already formed and waiting for nurses. Indeed, the demand for properly trained women has been lately so much increased that the supply cannot keep pace with it. It takes from eighteen to twenty-one months at the very least to qualify a nurse for country work, and although women are to be sometimes found with part of their training already done, the finding of the proper nursing material, and the completion of the requisite training, must be a slow process. The Rural District Branch is finding this material, and training it as fast as is possible, but it happens, spite of every endeavour to support the efforts of localities, that enthusiastic workers, who have done much to awaken the interest of their neighbours in trained nursing, are compelled to delay the actual work of the district until a nurse is ready.

The branch in these circumstances has been compelled to restrain rather than to stimulate the multiplication of county centres and districts, but it has every hope that the supply of nurses for rural work will gradually equal the demand. And while women who love hospital work and the stimulus of numbers, will not accept the isolated position of rural nurses, there are others to whom a quiet country home is very attractive.

Within the last week or two, the subject of country nursing has been brought before the Diocesan Conferences of York and Hereford, and there is every reason to believe that the discussions which took place in both cities have greatly stimulated interest in this matter.

In presenting the subject to the members of this Conference, I think it may be useful to notice some of the chief difficulties to be met with by those who are already convinced of the want of skilled nursing in rural districts. Of the needs themselves I have spoken; they are palpable and urgent. Any

one who lives sympathetically among poor neighbours in a country place can easily become convinced of their existence. And although opinion necessarily grows slowly in places, where educated persons live far apart, the perceptions and convictions of even one worker are gradually communicated to others, and wishes grow into plans, plans take shape. The doctors in a neighbourhood are sometimes most helpful from the first, in the establishment of a nurse, sometimes the reverse. In some cases they fear that the trained woman will diminish their not too abundant earnings, will usurp responsibility, will not be amenable to direction. In actual experience I believe they find their distrust ill-founded; they discover that their own work is very materially helped, and their directions faithfully carried out. Prejudice has at once been broken down by experience, and I have known a doctor grateful for the trained help to say, that every village in England should have it.

This is also the case with cottagers, who at first have a very natural dread of strangers, and, like their well-to-do country neighbours, are prejudiced against innovations. The comfort, security, and ease which, however, come with the presence of the trained nurse in pain and lonely suffering are wonderful and very obvious teachers, and as far as I know, actual experience dispels prejudice, and evokes general appreciation and thankfulness. Other difficulties to be overcome in establishing and maintaining a trained nurse in rural districts are the money it costs, and the difficulty of getting about in a sparsely-populated place. This latter difficulty of course depends a good deal upon the nature of the district. In many country places no trains or public conveyances are available, and the nurse must either walk or drive. She may have patients who require her daily care in villages, or lonely houses three or four miles apart, and it is manifest that her strength would be too much tried if excessive habitual walking be added to the standing and strain of her professional duties. I hope Lady Victoria Lambton will give us her experience on this matter. I find that with occasional hire of carts for night journeys, the donkey and rough governess cart provided for the nurse in our district answers excellently.

Now with regard to the Nursing Fund of between £65 and £70 a year. This presents so great a difficulty in some country places where there are perhaps but one or two wealthy inhabitants in a stretch of some miles, and scarcely any others above the class of small farmers, and cottagers earning agricultural wages, that those seeing the need of nursing of some sort,

lower their standard and try to get nurses of the cottager class who will be content with lower salaries.

The Hon. Mrs. John Dundas tells us there is in Norfolk and Suffolk an association of fishermen who subscribe amongst themselves towards the support of a nurse. And I think it is not unreasonable to hope that our rural populations may gradually come to see the force of associated action, the comfort and good for the many that may be obtained by the union of a number of small individual sacrifices and savings. I have heard of a nursing fund in one of our districts in Devonshire being materially helped by subscriptions of sixpences; of another getting as much as £10 or £12 by pennies. I know another district which is arranging for collections in all the churches and chapels within it, and organising a local horticultural and garden show in several of its villages for the benefit of the nursing fund. The midwifery fees earned by a rural district nurse also add considerably to the nursing funds.

Thank-offerings from the sick, and subscriptions of any and every small amount from cottagers and tradespeople, should also be actively set on foot and encouraged. All this I believe to be worth doing, because while it helps to make up the nursing funds, the process itself is educational.

Meanwhile poor country districts situated at a distance from towns, and including one or two well-to-do residents, have to provide for their nurses as they can. To some of these, when especially poor, the Rural District Branch gives small grants, or it gives a sum for starting a nurse with appliances for her work. Such help is necessarily limited by the public support we receive. We shall give with rejoicing as our means are replenished and increased.

There is a strong tendency in many of us to take the paths in life which present the least difficulties and offer the easiest sort of success. This tendency besets, as a matter of course, the subject we are discussing. Those workers who have become convinced that the present state of things must be replaced by something wiser and better, are often tempted to believe that if cottage people have had until now nothing at all that can be called nursing, nursing of any sort will be a boon to them; it will be cheaper, and more in accordance with their habits of life.

But there is little real satisfaction in supplying an acknowledged need by a compromise of means and trouble.

If we endeavour to do anything in the best way, our success may be apparently slow, but it will, at all events, be of the right kind when it comes.

In Miss Nightingale's introduction to Mr. Rathbone's admirable *History and Progress of District Nursing* we find an ideal of district nursing which makes our hearts burn within us to emulate. "We hear much," says this teacher, "of contagion and infection in disease. May we not also come to make health contagious and infectious? The tendency becomes upward under the divine law of moral progress; and how does it do this, but by the *living influence of individuals* acting in these outward means and machineries and organizations. *The good of an organization depends on every individual* who is in it. A good nurse must be a good woman, with sympathetic insight. She cannot be a good nurse without. Her training must continue all her life—her efficiency increasing with every day—her district nursing must be an outcome of the 'living life and love which she puts into it.'"

Our village life would indeed show different results if such teachers and workers among the country populations were abundant. We may worthily aspire to the privilege of hastening their increase.

DISTRICT NURSING IN THE COUNTRY.

Lady VICTORIA LAMBTON.

The subject of District Nursing in the country, and in Wales especially, on which I am to speak to you this evening, is one very near to my heart, and in which I have taken great interest for some years. In the early days of my own motherhood, I was struck by the risks run by less fortunate mothers in their hour of pain and peril, and also by the misery and discomfort caused by improper nursing, and, when I came to live in the country, I did not rest until I had established a certificated midwife and trained sick-nurse in the neighbourhood. This was about twelve years ago.

Mrs. Malleson has spoken of the need for trained nurses in country places. The crying need for certificated midwives can be best shewn by relating facts which may shock the hypersensitive, but which should not be ignored if we wish to know what other women have to endure. The common practice in Pembrokeshire, and doubtless in other places (but I am careful to speak only of what I know) was, and is now, when no midwife attends, for the woman to be delivered on the floor in all her clothes (I have heard of women being delivered hanging on

to the door) and then to get up, undress, and go to bed! We do not need an accoucheur to tell us what risks these poor creatures run, nor what a fruitful source of after-troubles and disease this custom is. Women have often been injured and suffered all their lives from this cause who, with proper care, should naturally have been strong and healthy.

The mismanagement did not end here, for the unvarying rule seemed to be that they should always get up on the third day, as "to lie in bed made them weak," according to the dictum of their nurses. Of course this was also fraught with danger.

The gross ignorance and the audacity of the so-called nurses who attend the lying-in women is quite appalling. They have no training at all, and the risks those run who trust their lives to them are terribly great. I know instances where these women undertake critical and dangerous cases which no certificated midwife would be allowed, or would venture to attend, except under a medical man. Only last month, in my own village, all these risks were run by a mason's wife who preferred being attended by her mother-in-law, who had never learned anything (but was as good as any nurse, if not better, in her own estimation) sooner than pay the nurse's very moderate fee, and submit to her rules. Unfortunately, one cannot yet compel women to be attended by a certificated midwife, though there may be one within easy reach, but I hope before long it will be penal for anyone to act as a midwife who is not duly qualified, and, pending legislation on this most important subject, we ought to try and provide midwives for our fellow women, and endeavour to protect them from the consequences of their own ignorance and the presumption of the village "Gamp." One of these self-taught nurses went to a maternity hospital to be really trained, and when she learnt in the course of her training to what risks she had formerly exposed her patients, she was so horrified that her nerve quite failed; and on completing her training she was never able to attend a confinement, though she had previously attended very many.

Why the case of the mason's wife had no immediate bad result I cannot think. There might so easily have been a case of manslaughter.

The first midwife we employed, found some difficulty in persuading her patients to go to bed, and submit in other ways to what was for their good; but firmness and kindness prevailed, and there is seldom any trouble about that now. In fact,

several women who had refused to employ the midwife, preferring some relation or neighbour, and who have gradually, on different occasions, been brought at last to do so, have in such cases always declared that they did not at all know what a difference it would make to their comfort to have a real nurse, and that they would never in future employ any other. This we always consider a small triumph, and likely to advance the employment of the midwife by others. Many women cannot say enough of their thankfulness for the nurse's services, and speak of her with real gratitude and affection.

I speak of the midwifery cases first, and of the need of midwives, because in a healthy country place they are certainly most wanted, and there will be many more cases of midwifery than of sickness as a rule. I consider that a country district is best served by a trained sick and surgical nurse and midwife in one.

But there is also great need for trained sick nursing in the country; to attend simple cases of illness and prevent them by neglect or mismanagement from turning into serious cases; to persuade people to send for the doctor when necessary, instead of putting off doing so till so late that he can do little good when he comes.

Much infant mortality is caused by thus putting off sending for the doctor till too late to do anything for the poor babies, but people will generally call in the nurse, especially if it is for a child at whose birth she assisted.

A nurse is required to make and apply poultices and fomentations, which are miserable applications very often in a cottage. She has also to regulate feeding, which is little understood by the poor, who generally allow the patient to do as he likes, whether good for him or not.

The nurse can also insist on the sick room being ventilated, and so kept sweet and wholesome, combating that dread of fresh air in a bedroom so unaccountable in those whose lives in health are spent in the open air. To be able to make the patient's bed, and change his linen without exposing him to needless risk of chill or fatigue, is what their own people have no idea of doing, and is a great boon. To the bedridden, a nurse's visit, if only twice a week, brings many alleviations of their hard lot.

In every district there are, alas! poor people afflicted with that most terrible of diseases, cancer, and a trained nurse can do much to mitigate their sufferings, and, if the cancer be external, to keep it clean and sweet is a boon not only to the

patient, but to others of the family. There are always old folk with bad legs to be attended to, and whose pains can be soothed, and their wounds dressed by the nurse.

Many people seem to think that surgical training is not wanted in a country nurse, but a knowledge of strapping and bandaging, of how to place a broken limb, or how to arrest arterial or venous bleeding, is very useful, it may save much time (which sometimes means saving life), while the doctor is sent for. Though I have no acquaintance with the colliery or mining districts, nor with those centres of industry in smelting and rolling of tinplates in Wales, where, doubtless, accidents and injuries to workers must be frequent, still, even in the agricultural parts of the country, mowing and reaping and threshing machines cause accidents, and surgical knowledge is useful.

I remember one case where a young man fell among the knives of a reaping machine. He was fearfully cut, and the other men were all so frightened that they simply left him lying in the field covered by an old coat. After some delay, they sent to a farmhouse for help to get the poor lad removed, but they did not quite understand what had happened, and sent a gig to move him. It was impossible for him to lie down, so he was driven in the jolting vehicle for nine miles, to the Infirmary, sitting up. Need I say that he died that night. There was no nurse in the district, or a great deal of this suffering might have been spared.

With the memory of this case and many others, I cannot agree that surgical training is unneccessary for our nurses.

As some ladies with whom I have corresponded and talked seem to have rather vague ideas of what a nurse does, or should do, may I give a picture of a nurse's typical day in the country. I will not select one when she is called out before daylight, and has perhaps to go two or three miles in rain and darkness, though even in that case I should like to say that her comfort is secured as far as may be by a lamp or lantern for her cart, a waterproof driving coat large enough to go over any warm wrap or jacket, and a waterproof knee-rug. So that she goes into her patient's room quite dry, and probably warm also.

We will follow the nurse on a fine morning, when about 8-30 a.m. she starts on her rounds in her pony-cart (for the distances are too great for her to walk). For the pony she will take a rug, a halter, and nosebag with chaff. For herself, the waterproof coat and rug. For her patients, a bag containing

various simple medicines and dressings, varying according to the needs of those she visits that day. Her uniform, about which so many questions are asked, consists in bad weather of an ulster and a stalking cap tied down over her ears. Her first cases will be the lying-in mothers, probably not more than two, but they may be two or three miles or more apart, anyhow they are her first care, and must be made comfortable for the day, the baby washed and dressed, and the mother given some food, gruel or broth, before nurse leaves her. After these will come one or two sick people. A farmer's wife with a terrible abscess on her foot, is one she visits to-day; the farmer's daughters have done their best, but it is a very bad abscess, and really makes them ill to dress it, and the patient is glad when the nurse has time to call on her. There is another farmer's wife, about two miles off, who has broken a blood vessel, and who is not to be moved, so nurse must go and make her as easy as may be without lifting her. The widow in the almshouse expects the nurse to come and renew the carbolized tow pad with which she supports the breast affected by cancer, and this brings the morning to a close. Nurse and her pony go home, and in the afternoon the nurse goes out again, to visit a girl of sixteen, near her cottage, who is laid up with rheumatic fever, and whose sick room is kept sweet and fresh because the nurse has persuaded them they may safely open the window for twenty minutes every fine morning ! !

One day, at least, in the week, nurse calls on the Lady Superintendent to report her work and visits, receive her salary, account for fees paid, and often, to make known the wants of her patients, and also the wants of her pony, and she somtimes carries off in her cart chaff or hay sufficient for a day or two, until a larger supply can be sent her.

Locomotion has been spoken of as one of the difficulties connected with the nurses. In large villages this is not felt, the distances between the patients not being great. In some places there will be local facilities, but in my own district, with an area four miles by nine or ten, we were obliged to have a pony and little cart for the nurse. It adds at least £15 or £20 to the annual expense of keeping a nurse. It is difficult to manage, the pony requiring a certain amount of attendance. (For the last two years we have had a strong young widow used to farm work as stable-woman. She also acted as servant to the nurse, and worked in the garden.) The pony cart also makes it more difficult to engage a suitable nurse, as some who

would otherwise suit us, will not undertake to drive. I mention these difficulties as they will probably occur in other places, and it may be encouraging to know that they can be overcome. One gentleman gives the hay and straw for our pony instead of a money subscription. The cart is very often useful to patients; convalescents are sometimes taken a drive, patients are taken to the infirmary or into town to see the doctor.

As it costs from £50 to £60 to keep a nurse, it will cost from £65 to £75 to keep a nurse and a pony. Want of money prevents a nurse being started in many places in England, and in Wales this difficulty is still greater, for Wales is poorer than England. The squires, clergy, and farmers are all poorer than in England, and £60 or £70 is a large sum to ask for in country places. If the Rural District Branch could give help to start nurses, I think often the money would be found to carry them on, but for this more subscriptions to the R. D. B. are needed.

District nurses should be a help to the medical man, and this makes the opposition of the doctors the more to be regretted. One would have expected doctors would be the first to know the value of trained nurses, and it was an unpleasant surprise to find that they were opposed to them.

It must be acknowledged that the midwives do take some of the doctor's fees, and as a country doctor's practice is not always very remunerative, they have perhaps a little reason to complain; but on the other hand the nurse saves the doctor many a long drive or ride to attend patients who would probably never pay him. She should never supersede the doctor, but help him by carrying out his orders intelligently, and so making his visits of real use, which they can hardly be when his instructions are misunderstood and his orders disregarded; and the nurse can help in another way, by sending him proper, intelligent, and intelligible reports of the patients' state and symptoms, so that he can judge if his presence is needed or not, and continue or alter the treatment with more confidence than is possible when a neighbour who is going to town brings him a verbal account of the patient. What these reports are likely to be we can judge by one given by a carpenter, quite a superior man, who complained he had been very unwell, and that "his stomach had got right up under his armpit." One wonders that any doctor can venture to prescribe with such information as this to guide him!

Not only do the doctors oppose the establishment of trained nurses, but ladies who have no moneyed interest in the matter

sometimes hinder this, to my mind, most benevolent work, and seem to think that the neighbours can do all that is needed in sickness. I had a letter from a rich lady, a landed proprietor, and one who certainly intends to look after and help her poor neighbours and tenants, but she would not attend a meeting called to consider the question of having a trained nurse in her neighbourhood. She would give no money or help, and wrote to me saying: "We have two or three women in this parish who are always ready and willing to help to nurse their neighbours when needed, and all the instruction we have gained by attending ambulance classes, we have endeavoured to impart to our poorer neighbours, but a trained nurse is quite unsuited to this district, which is a very poor agricultural one." Over and over again it has been said that the neighbours are kind and helpful, and this is given as a reason for not attempting to have trained nurses. One is inclined to wish, not that the neighbours were less kind, but a little more distrustful of their own powers, especially in lying-in cases. If we could have trained nurses and certificated midwives in every district we should still need the kind services of the neighbours, for I maintain that no nurse can be expected to do the home work and washing. That they often do a great deal of menial work is true; but they should not be expected to do it, and may not have time to stay so long with one patient. The kind neighbour is invaluable, but she is also ignorant to a degree, and cannot, or should not, supersede nurse or doctor.

The ladies who oppose having a trained nurse for the poor would probably send for one to attend themselves or any of their family in illness, in addition to the doctor's daily visit, and the well trained servants already in attendance, and yet they seem to think it quite superfluous to send a really trained nurse to a cottage, where there is illness, and where there are are no comforts, no knowledge of even the simplest rules of nursing, no alleviations to the pain, weariness and weakness of a sick room! I cannot understand it. This opposition or indifference on the part of some of the educated classes, the open or veiled opposition of the medical men, added to the difficulties already spoken of by Mrs. Malleson, the ignorance of the poor, who, till they have actually experienced it, cannot realise what comfort a nurse can bring them, and the difficulty peculiar to Wales of the language, might almost discourage the most ardent advocate for trained district nurses, but it does not do so. There is an increasing stir, activity and interest shown in this matter in South Wales, so that it is

no longer an impossible or impracticable ideal to look forward to the time when every district shall have its trained nurse, as it seemed to be but a very few years ago.

Tenby has within the last few months started a nurse. *Haverfordwest* is ready to do so before the year is out, or early in the spring (these two places do not require Welsh-speaking nurses). *St. Clears* is starting a nurse, aided by a grant from the R.D.B. *Ferryside* and *Tally* are both beginning to agitate the question. *Brecon* is desiring to form a branch. At *St. David's*, *Carmarthen*, and *Llandilo* they are wishing for a nurse, and these last seven places will require Welsh nurses. I say Welsh nurses advisedly, for there is not only the language difficulty to be overcome, but the Welsh have an innate dislike and distrust of strangers, and to get on really well with them, one should be a native.

What an opening is this for young Welshwomen in these days of demand for work for women. The life of a nurse is a noble life, calling forth all a woman's best qualities : patience, courage, tact, self-sacrifice, gentleness, readiness of resource, sympathy, love.

The life of a district nurse is full of interest, full of change, the walk or drive between each visit is very healthful, and the power to go about relieving suffering, and succouring the sick, is a great and pure happiness.

It seems a higher life than dressmaking or serving in a shop, and yet so far, one great difficulty has been to find probationers, *i.e.*, young women to train. But we hardly doubt that when the demand for nurses becomes known, there will be a supply of bright, intelligent young Welshwomen, who will come forward and offer themselves for training, that they may earn their own living, and benefit their countrywomen at the same time.

We ask for sympathy and real tangible help, money to train and support nurses, and very particularly do we ask for young women to train as midwives and sick nurses.

THIRD DAY.

FRIDAY, NOV. 13TH, 10 A.M. TO 1 O'CLOCK.

10.0 Prayer Meeting.

1. *Temperance Work.* HON. MRS. MACLAGAN.
2. *Rescue Work.* MRS. PERCY BUNTING.
3. *Rescue Work among Children.* MISS LLOYD.

THE chair was taken by the Hon. MRS. MCNEILE at 10.30, and the first paper, on "Temperance Work," was read by Mrs. Maclagan.

TEMPERANCE WORK.

HON. MRS. MACLAGAN.

ON considering the best way of bringing this subject before an assemblage of thoughtful and educated women, I have been struck by the necessity, the paramount necessity, of strength to combat the tremendous forces arrayed against us. Moral and physical strength, self-denial, and self-control. It is true we women cannot aim at mighty strength of body, but have we not many ways of producing and fostering it in men? The illustration I have had in my mind is the story of Samson, not as being in himself an example of either self-denial or self-control, but as an example of the demand for those qualities in the mother that bare him, to produce that unparalleled physical development which was at once his glory and his destruction. Think of the quaint old story so familiar to us all in the thirteenth chapter of *Judges;* the childless woman sitting alone in her husband's field, pondering on the blessing so ardently desired by every Jewish wife, yet withheld from her, and praying, surely we may believe that she, like Hannah, prayed that a child might some day gladden her husband's heart, and bring to their home that unspeakable brightness that only a child can bring. A mysterious visitant suddenly appears, and tells her

that her desire is to be granted, and more than that, he gives her detailed instructions as to her own manner of life during her waiting period, and the future education of her son. She hastens to tell her husband, on his return, the wonderful news, but he, evidently deeply impressed with their new responsibility, and longing to hear for himself how he is to act, falls at once to earnest prayer that the vision may be renewed to them both, not because he discredits his wife's story, but that "Thou, O Lord, mayest teach us what we shall do to the child that shall be born." The humble, earnest prayer is heard, and the messenger of God graciously condescends to wait while the woman calls her husband to listen to his words. Eagerly he asks: "How shall we order the child, and how shall we do to him?" and the angel repeats, not the directions already given to the expectant mother, that the child is to be a Nazarite from his birth, but the stringent rule for her own life—that henceforth she is to drink no wine nor strong drink, not even to eat anything that cometh of the vine. She was to be a rigid teetotaller during that trying period of life when so many women feel a craving for the support, as they think, of alcohol, a craving, the yielding to which has, alas! sown the seeds of intemperance in many a life, even among those who could not plead the excuse of poverty or despair for giving way to temptation. The repeated warnings against intemperance in the Bible lead one to think that it was as great a snare to God's ancient people as it is to our own land. It is mentioned among the sins in Gal. v. that exclude from the Kingdom of Heaven, and yet men and women pass it by, and think if it is no temptation to their own lives they may ignore it, and make no effort, still less any sacrifice, to aid those who, on all sides, are falling victims to this sin. And its advances are so insidious that many are perilously near to becoming its votaries who would be indignant if such a word were whispered to them.

A discussion like this is nothing if it be not practical. I therefore ask your indulgence while I put before you some few suggestions as to ways in which women of the upper classes and mistresses of households can work unobtrusively in the cause of temperance. First and foremost, if their bodily health permits, by joining the Church of England Temperance Society in one or other of its sections. I must honestly say that I do not think anyone can do actual work among inebriates, or hope to have the crown of reclaiming a drunkard, unless they are willing to make the personal sacrifice. No doubt, it is

a sacrifice. Not a very great one, if one enjoys the blessing of good health; still, after sixteen years' experience, I have the right to speak, and it is a constant self-denial, especially in winter, when non-alcoholic beverages are difficult to obtain, and the typhoid scare makes many people afraid of the so-called "pure element." But I cannot claim any special immunity against disease, and I have drunk water in all parts of the Continent, even in Holland, without experiencing the slightest ill effects. But again, many who have no call to work, can give material help to the Church of England Temperance Society by being merely subscribing members under the lower section. No work can be done without money, and those who give of their best—their time, their prayers, their very lives—are often those who are least able to give their money as well, although I have often blushed to hear of the (proportionately) noble gifts they have made to the cause they had so much at heart. The expense is considerable, for you must begin by coaxing and wheedling people away from the scenes of temptation, and you must have counter attractions to offer, which cannot be paid for, like the gorgeous gin palace, by the very life-blood of its frequenters diverted from the legitimate channel of providing for the wants and comforts of the home. The money ungrudgingly lavished on the rescue of one soul whose degradation might be directly traced to the demon of drink might, a few years sooner, have saved that soul and twenty of its companions from falling into the snare. But it is the old story in this as in almost all work for God. Preventive work cannot be tabulated. Results, results! is the cry of the nineteenth century, and we need to learn again and again the teaching of the Apostle: "Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts." (James v., 7, 8.)

I have spoken of personal sacrifice, in abstaining and giving; I come next to education and example, which must ever walk hand in hand, if either is to succeed. Thank God! it is a rare thing now to see children in our rank of life brought up on alcohol. When I was young, it was given to us all, disguised in various forms, and often swallowed with great reluctance, for happily, the taste is not a natural one to a healthy child, but it is very soon and very easily acquired. Mothers, may I not urge upon you to keep your children from it as long as you possibly can; not to bind them with unwilling vows, or to turn loose upon the world self-opinionated young

prigs, making a good cause hateful by a pharisaical assumption of superiority; but teaching them that the restraint has a real motive, and that those only are fit to rule who have first learned to obey. Doubtless we shall often fail, our boys especially will be laughed out of their mothers' teaching, but we shall have done our best, and the seed sown may ripen and bear fruit long after our lives have closed in apparent failure. That nameless mother of Samson's must have shed many bitter tears over her wilful, passionate son, but at least she had done her part, she had obeyed the message of the angel, and the strong man she had nurtured wrought the deliverance, however temporary, of his people, even in the hour of his failure and death. Education does much, and example does more. In these luxurious, self-indulgent days, I have read with shame of whole cellars of wine poured out at a garden party. A coachman or a footman dismissed for drunkenness, might say, "I first yielded to the temptation when I heard the champagne corks popping as I waited in the hot sun on my carriage box, or, as I handed the glasses to the ladies and gentlemen, who had done no harder work than saunter under the trees, or join in a game of lawn tennis." What could we reply? That we had been careful not to take too much. But what is "too much"? Surely what we do not need, and if we cannot endure the fatigue of an afternoon party without the support of strong drink, I venture to think we had better remain at home, and at least, we can make a stand against the abuse at our own parties. Another powerful example, which is both difficult and disagreeable, is to protest against the indiscriminate giving of beer to every one who comes into the house. "It is expected" you will be told, if you raise your feeble voice against this pernicious custom, and many heads of households yield to it from the dread of being thought stingy or puritanical, and so the weak-minded young footman or helper, carrying round notes or parcels, or gifts of flowers or game, is plied with beer in every house he enters, and almost unconsciously acquires the habit of "soaking," which is perhaps more detrimental to health and morals, than an occasional debauch. Only the victims themselves know the power of resistance imparted by a Church of England Temperance medal, or a little scrap of blue ribbon, but I have heard of coachmen in grand houses who confessed, after their reclamation, that they had often and often sat on the box returning from the country town when they were so drunk that only the intelligence of the horses saved them from a smash, that they had been "treated"

ten or twelve times in one afternoon, and that they never should have had strength of mind to refuse, but they could shake their heads and point to the bit of blue ribbon.

Another form of woman's work is to warn invalids, who begin to take stimulants under (perhaps necessary) medical orders, and not only continue, but increase the habit after the need has ceased. I am no bigot. I am not one of those who boast that they would sooner die than swallow a dose of alcohol, but I have myself seen most distressing results from yielding to the craving whenever the sensation described as a "sinking" is felt, and from one poor victim, after her cure, I heard a description as graphic as any of those awful pages in that powerful story of George Eliot's *Janet's Repentance*, of her own sensations when a true friend had the courage to tell her that she was, quite unconsciously, on the verge of delirium tremens, and of the fearful effort it cost her to resist and conquer the craving.

My friends, it needs very real courage to speak to others of these things. A drunken man or woman is a far easier task. When they recover their senses, they cannot deny the fact. but those who are only yielding to dangerous habits will indignantly deny the imputation, and one must be prepared to face very disagreeable answers if not actual insults. Still more is this the case with poor people, whom one may see in railway carriages, or outside public houses, offering the deadly drink to mere babies. It does require some nerve to speak on these occasions, courage and great tact, but one is more than rewarded if one sometimes succeeds in awakening a slumbering conscience, while one is pursued by pangs of regret if the impulse to speak is stifled by cowardice.

It seems almost an insult, in such an assembly as this, to point out the necessity of prayer that God may strengthen the people of England to overcome this national sin which brings so many others in its train. But I may be permitted to suggest the help to oneself in systematic prayer for this object, in one's own words, or those of others, but on fixed days and at fixed times. I have found Saturday morning the most suitable, as a weekly reminder on the day when our poorer and weaker brethren most frequently fall victims to the demon of drink, and I have been suprised to find how many people seemed grateful for the short and very simple prayer I use, a copy of which I have sent, and would gladly send to any one asking for it.

The promotion and support of coffee houses, temperance clubs and religious and social meetings, these are too obvious

to need any comment in a paper like this. Indeed I regret that want of time has prevented my visiting any of the cocoa houses for which your great city is famous, and which I am told, are better worked and more financially successful in Liverpool than in any other town except, perhaps, Glasgow. May I, however, in conclusion, plead that the advocates of temperance should remember the command to be "temperate in all things," in food as well as in drink, in amusements, above all in language. If anything has ever seriously tempted me to break the self imposed rule of many years, it has been the unreasonable claptrap talk of those who inveigh so bitterly against non-abstainers. I cannot do better than terminate this paper with a quotation from Canon Ellison's farewell address to the Society over which he presided so long. "The Church of England Temperance Society freely advocates total abstinence, as indispensable for some, as desirable for others, but *not as a new commandment;* not as putting on a lower level any one of those who, in the exercise of their Christian liberty, decline to abstain; it is assumed that all who come forward to take part in the great crusade will fulfil the obligation of their baptism to keep their bodies in temperance, soberness and chastity, but the dual basis exists as a standing protest against the indefensible position that no Temperance work can be done without total abstinence; and that it may gather in one spirit all who present themselves as recruits in the Temperance Army of the Church." I have tried to show this, but I feel I must apologise for my paper. It has been written in scraps and shreds, under the pressure of other work so heavy as almost to make me inclined to register a vow that I will never again consent to undertake a written paper for an assembly like this, which has a right to demand sustained thought and careful writing, and it was only finished at midnight yesterday, after three days of meetings, so I must throw myself upon your lenient judgment, and hope that the discussion will bring forward worthier advocates of the good cause.

The discussion was opened by MRS. MACALLAM, (*Nottingham*), who said:—Perhaps I ought to apologise for coming from Nottingham to address a Liverpool audience on this subject. I have heard a great deal about your work and success, and I must confess that in this we are behind you in Nottingham, but I hope we shall not rest until we at least equal your work, if not excel it. This subject ought to be very near the hearts of women of all classes. Intemperance is perhaps *the* greatest curse of our country. It is true there are many sins besides

intemperance, but it is also true that many sins are caused by it. Our children inherit from us either a temperate or intemperate spirit, mentally and physically. I think if women knew the effect it had on their children they would forswear alcohol. I was not brought up a teetotaller, so that in becoming one I have exercised a little self denial, but it is more than repaid by the result. I feel this is a question which, if once seriously thought over, must lead either to joining the temperance or the total abstinence section. Stimulants are not good except in very extreme cases—and, used as a medicine, are more likely to be effective if not taken otherwise. It is not much use preaching against drink unless we practice what we preach.

Miss Mason (*London*) :—I have given attention to the physiological aspect of this subject for some years. There is a great deteriorating moral effect produced by alcohol. No other drug has the same evil effect in lowering the moral tone. Dr. Richardson says that even as a drug it could be better spared than any other. If we recognised the terrible effect it has upon the spiritual nature, I think we should do our best to banish it from our midst.

Miss Johnson (*British Women's Temperance Society*) :—It has struck me very much all through this Conference, that all the papers have directly or indirectly alluded to the subject of temperance. It seems to me that we have been thinking too much how to prevent evils, and not enough of the cause of those evils. General Booth says that nine-tenths of the miseries he has to contend with are caused by drink. I think if the educated ladies of England would take up this question as they have in America, they could do very much in this matter. We have been discussing the question of hospital nursing, and do we not find that a vast number of the cases are caused through drink.

Mrs. Shaen (*Poor Law Guardian, Kensington*) :—Intemperance is at the bottom of all the questions we have to deal with. It stops our best efforts at religious teaching, and prevents the moral progress of the nation. I should like to say a few words as to what women may do :—

I. They may bring up their children and servants in principles of abstinence.

II. Women should visit public houses and endeavour to prevent mothers giving drink to their little children.

Public houses abound and this makes all temperance work very hard. I think that a non-abstainer has no influence over a drunkard.

Miss Agnes Wilson (*Liverpool*) :—In connection with our Church of England Temperance Society in Liverpool, a Shelter was opened four years ago, and I am here to say that there are those who were very low sunk, and degraded, but who are now living godly, righteous, and sober lives. It would be well if such Shelters could be started in other towns. I do not think we can measure success by the results we see, yet these results have been sufficient to encourage us to go forward. We hope to move soon to a larger house.

I would urge all here to take an interest in this work, remembering that we cannot do anything without prayer. We must be very persistent, and not easily daunted, and we shall be more than repaid for the effort we make.

Mrs. Percy Bunting :—Many young men at Oxford drink without seeming to think the habit a very bad one. I know one young man who said that the only way he could keep himself free was by becoming a total abstainer, and that, at the Colleges, total abstainers were despised. They were in the minority, and this state of affairs has increased during the last ten years.

Mrs. Creighton :—I wish to add one word of warning as regards the training of our children. There should be no rule, law, or order, only recommendation, and the pointing out of the evils arising from drink. In relation to servants, many are accustomed to give them beer money, but in preference we should give them higher wages. I would like to remove the impression that undergraduates are, as a rule, in the habit of drinking. I have never known one who was intemperate.

Mrs. Booth :—I do thank Miss Johnson for having returned to the question of causes. There are two questions I should like the consciences of the audience to be occupied with during the coming year: *first*, as to the attitude we, as Christian women in a Christian community, are to take towards the brewing and distilling trades; and *second*, as to the influence we may exert over our husbands and sons who are magistrates. We may do a great deal to uphold them, and help them to be firm in keeping down many of the evils that exist.

RESCUE WORK.

Mrs. PERCY BUNTING.

Rescue Work! Who are those to be rescued? What are they to be rescued from? Who is to do it? By what means?

These questions instantly suggest themselves as we come to the consideration of a very difficult subject complicated by all sorts of conventionalisms, hedged in by much secret despair, thought of, even by the best, with anxiety, and by the devoted, who are also experienced, with but modified hope.

Who are these to be rescued? Our first idea is of the poor women who for bread give themselves up to a life than which death would be better. Or we think of the innocent girl, decoyed through her own ignorance, vanity, wilfulness, or through the fraud of others, into a life of degradation which, even though it be reckoned by those who have led her into it as far superior to the life of the pavement, yet is only a trifle less vulgar and debasing, and eventually with certainty leads to it. There is still some room left for self-delusion in this life which there is not in the life of the streets; consequently, girls of this kind, who are called "kept mistresses," often look down with disgust on the class previously described, and flatter themselves that by good management they shall keep away from that last step of despair. These are very hard to move to any feeling at all.

Then there is still the girl who, through what might have been her highest blessing—her love and self-abandonment—has been betrayed into sin almost at the moment of her waking up to the depths of life. She never thought to go 'wrong,' but the new passion of love had been taken advantage of by one who knew how to work on it, and she found herself ruined—she, who would have given her life for the one she loved, waked up to find all that made life worth having—gone. She knows she is blighted. However much she may recover outwardly, and seem to regain her place in society, she knows there is this deadly secret within which may at any moment come out, and which shadows her to her dying day. For these cases, condemnation seems less needed than intense compassion. Wrong and moral weakness there have been; but the consequences of this form of moral weakness are, to a woman, so greatly more fatal than many a moral failure of which we are conscious in ourselves, and which is perhaps more sinful in the eyes of the Just and All-seeing Father, that we must hold the natural severity of our judgment very strongly in check.

While we think of these poor women and their sins, we are driven to ask why it is that so many get wrong, and whether there is not some social duty in which we all must take our share, which has been forgotten or disregarded, and to which we must go back if rescue is to be anything more than a name.

While we pick out one here and there, and send her to a Home, or tide her through a time of suffering, or find her honest work, we feel that we leave the majority untouched—not because they are entirely without offer of help, for I think in England, at any rate, now-a-days few of these girls go on long without some sort of proposal of reform and rescue being made to them. But they are proposals for the most part which to them appear impossible. The idea of a two-years' Home, to a girl who has never any settled idea of life for twenty-four hours together, appears to her worse than death itself. And, indeed, so reckless and hopeless is she, that she is accustomed in her talk with her companions to speak much more lightly of death than we, who have a hundred reasons for wishing to keep alive, can possibly understand.

Then some will say: "If I change my life I shall still always be looked down upon, and one will whisper to another about me, and I shall never hear the last of it. In this life, at least, we keep each other in countenance, and some of the girls *are* kind to me."

Then, again, girls say: "I know what those Homes are. You have to keep so quiet, and it is so deadly dull, and you have to work hard and no wages, and then, when you are put out to service, you have to go to hard situations for scarcely any money."

Others feel that they cannot get on without the drink. They have become so enfeebled in will through giving way to their passions, that they feel that there is no cure for them, and, humanly speaking, they are right. We may think that we can cure them of the craving for drink, but hope of this in them has died long ago, and they have not even the desire to be cured.

I believe that statistics will bear me out in saying that fully half the girls that get wrong are under the average in the matter of intellect.

We recognise them at once as feeble-minded. In many cases they are girls who never ought to be allowed full liberty, because they are incapable of taking care of themselves.

A poor girl whom I knew for years, and who was again and again helped into service, was seduced by a very bad man, a widower. She had a respectable mother, a widow, who had to work hard for the bread, leaving this girl alone all day. The girl never meant harm. She was quite incapable of judging of the character of the man. Almost under her very eyes he was acting immorally to his own daughter, a child of thirteen.

Eventually these two were married. She has had three more or less imbecile children, and is a spectacle of misery herself.

Is it not the duty of the State in cases like this to step in for the protection of those who are so obviously deficient in the power of taking care of themselves? I know there are dangers in this matter, and only under the most careful restrictions and inspection ought we to deprive even this class of their liberty. But we are informed that, both in Germany and in the United States, institutions have been started and successfully carried out for the care of this class, and for those suffering from epilepsy, which are a long way towards being self-supporting. The inmates are taught domestic work, knitting, washing, the sewing machine, gardening.

At Newark Asylum, Wayne Co., New York State, girls are admitted from fifteen, and, if need be, retained till they are fifty. They try to secure for them as natural a life as is possible under the circumstances. A good-hearted, common-sense man and his wife are at the head of it, and I am told that the girls very rarely wish to go away.

But setting this class on one side, what are we to do for the others?

And here comes in the tremendous question of those who share the sin and degradation of these girls, but who do not share the consequences, either in loss of social position, loss of the world's esteem or of their own, and who only partially share the physical consequences. I do not lose sight of the fact that there are a certain number of these who have been first led into evil by designing women or men, who, corrupt themselves, are always striving to bring down the innocent of both sexes till they make them as much the children of hell as themselves. But there are numbers of young men who have not been lured into the life of vice, but have gone into it with eyes open, taking it as a usual thing, and scarcely even looking upon it as vice. Are not we women partially responsible for this? Would these things be as common as they are if we exacted anything like the same standard of moral life in boys as we do in girls?

Do we not begin wrong from their very cradle?

I do not here allude to the mother's duty with regard to such habits of her children as may eventually lead to physical excitement of a dangerous kind, because, at any rate while children are small, an ordinarily good watchful mother will be very careful to look after both boys and girls in these matters. But I allude to that habitual under-valuing of all that concerns

the girl's life, as compared with the boy's. A girl is expected to be ready to give up engagements, purposes, work of various kinds, if the brother's convenience is thereby interfered with. The daughter of a most excellent mother, but with the old-fashioned idea of the great superiority of sons, once told me that I was the first person that had ever made her think that anything she did, or work she undertook, was of equal importance with anything her brother undertook, and it had been quite a revelation. She did not know that any one ever thought so. Well, now, this sort of idea of the general second-rateness of the position of girls runs through all a boy's conceptions. He does not respect the sex as such. Public opinion is not at all hard on him if he only does things with an outward aspect of propriety. Even good men say quietly that the sin of impurity is far worse in a girl than in a boy, because she has not such strong physical temptations as he, and so, while they might condemn individually a young man whose life was impure, yet they are really helping to keep up that false dual standard of morality which is the despair of those who are striving to put forward a truer ideal. But suppose for a moment we admit that the sin is equally bad in both, what about the selfishness with which it is followed up on the men's part? What has made it possible for men coolly to forsake the girls they have brought into evil, the moment they are tired of them, or when they begin to fear consequences involving expense? This is so constantly, so habitually done, that we must go further back and consider where this selfishness began. It did not begin when this outward expression of it became most flagrant.

It begins when the boy is taught by example that, so long as there is money enough, he is to have all he desires, whether it be eating, drinking, amusements, life at college, (I do not say education), travel; and, negatively, when no thought is put into his mind of self-denial for the sake of the many whose lot in life makes it impossible for them to have all *they* need of anything.

We bring our boys up selfishly, and selfishness of the most dastardly kind is the result. What is the use of talking of rescuing poor girls while we ruin the boys?

Parents ruin their boys partly in ignorance. They do not see what they are about until it is too late.

Then, when the boy has run through a lot of money, or got mixed up in some disgraceful row, or been brought before the court by some unfortunate girl who has had spirit enough to

summons him, the parents wake up in astonishment, wondering how, in their quiet, apparently well-ordered home, such results should be possible.

But indeed it is not *all* their fault. It is the fault of *all* the excellent people who think lightly of the rights and position and responsibilities of women, as compared with men. This habit is so subtle that it is found even in some of those who publicly advocate women's rights, and it goes down into all classes of society. The teachers of religion have been by no means the least offenders in this matter. How often have even Christians in the old days acted as if they thought women were the handmaids of the Evil One, and we find this idea insisted upon with most cruel results in some of the Pagan religions to this day.

People who profess to be followers of Christ daily tell you by their actions, if not by their words, that they do not believe His standard of purity for men, or of justice for women, to be possible.

And so, when they start work for the so-called rescue of women, they get all wrong, and their work is a miserable failure.

I think in order to get on right lines in rescue work, we must keep in touch with all these questions bearing on the rights and duties and position of women. Otherwise, in our desire to bring about immediate results, we may inflict on them laws which deprive them of their rights as human beings, as was done in the infamous Contagious Diseases Acts (now happily repealed), or we give them wholly false ideas of abstract justice, so that they in their turn perpetuate ideas which lead to more sin. We who work for women should keep ourselves acquainted with all questions relating to women's trades and wages. We should have some knowledge of the special laws relating to women, of which there are some good and some bad. In fact, to carry out rescue work well, we must keep up an intelligent interest in the world outside, and thus be the means of giving those we try to save a safe interest in it also, and of a very different kind from what they have known before.

I think we must have "Homes" for girls, although they are by no means an unmixed good. It is not natural to put together for any length of time a number of people of one sex only. The family element, which in its perfection consists of both sexes, is impossible. We must resort to these artificial arrangements, because the girls are in a condition of moral disease. But we must never forget that they are artificial, and

so the length of time to stay should not be unduly lengthened. While we hope that by prolonged stay the evil habits of drink, passion for excitement, wild temper, and many other things will be overcome ; on the other hand, the hot-house shelter is to some extent enervating. Many a girl, whose case seems most hopeful while in the Home, breaks down at the first blast of the outer world. We hoped that self-respect and self-restraint had been growing, but the real test is when the girl goes out. A girl often falls again and again before she gains strength to walk firmly in the midst of temptation, even though she has had good intentions.

Still, if we are aware of the dangers of Homes, we may yet do a good deal with them. Given that the Home is small, so that individual care can be constantly exercised ; given a good sympathetic matron with firm, calm will ; given a suitable house and garden in the country, and good domestic teaching, alternated, if possible, with some open-air work, as gardening, care of poultry, etc. ; such a Home may prove a blessed haven for many a sin-sick soul—a convalescent home for the mind. But the time spent there must not be allowed to stretch on too long. Fix a minimum, say six months, and then be guided by the patients' individual peculiarities.

I would here say a word about the matron. Let her have change and access to some outside life. However devoted she is, it is not wholesome for her always to be shut up to this one deeply depressing kind of soul-sickness. She needs freshening up occasionally, both for her own sake and for the sake of the girls. Provide her with interesting books (not always religious) to read aloud to the girls when the work is done. Those who are on the Committee of the Home should enter sympathetically into her plans for the girls, as well as communicate their own. She has, after all, the lion's share of the work, and this should claim recognition.

For the girls, the first thing to aim at is to put new thoughts in their minds. Do not let them dwell on their past sins for the sake of humiliation. Even if they have good intentions, their thoughts are sure to be more or less unwholesome. They need to have a vision of the Best, a vision of the Holy One, before they can at all understand how hateful is their sin. You will remember the words of Job, " I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth Thee, *wherefore* I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." True, there must be a certain turning of heart in order to see the good at all, but this comes by slow degrees. It was not until Job with unveiled

face beheld as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, that he could be transformed into His image.

And here let me protest against giving the girls, as they enter the Home, a false name. They are called "Penitents." But, as a rule, they are not penitent. They are tired and miserable, and glad of a little respite from their sickening life. And this is the chance we seize, hoping to lead them to true penitence. But, in the meantime, it is an untruthfulness to give them such a name, and must be, even to themselves, misleading. We want to awaken hope and self-respect in place of the morbid self-consciousness which every worker among these girls knows to be such a frequent feature. Once the self-respect begins to appear, the battle is at least half won. You will then begin to put trust in them, and show them that their lives can be of some value again. They have so adopted despair that it has become a part of their nature clad in a garment of recklessness. They must be taught that even their poor lives are precious, and that they have their part to perform, a part not transferable to anyone.

Some will perhaps think that I have said too little of the need of direct religious influence. But it is partly because this goes without saying.

If our work is not based on profound faith in God, and in the redemption that He has provided for His miserable, sinful children, it may as well be let alone.

At the same time, I would say a word of caution as to trusting too much to religious emotion. These girls are very easily moved, and they really enjoy the excitement of "a conversion" provided they are the centres of interest. Experienced people learn to distrust these crises very much. But we must not go to the other extreme. While we want to lay foundations of principle we must prepare the heart to receive them. We want all the life and feeling possible, but we do not want the effervescence with which they so easily deceive themselves, and deceive the unwary who catch too easily at these signs.

Hitherto I have spoken only of Homes for the grown up. But in the Homes for depraved children and very young girls the same rules would apply, only that still more provision should be made for play, exercise, and out-door life, and there should be no reference to the past. The more the children can forget, the better.

But now, there are a large class of girls who have a better chance of redemption by not going into a home at all, or, at all events, only for temporary shelter, until suitable arrangement

can be made for them. There are many who only want a good opportunity of leaving their wretched life to embrace it. For these, suitable work found, and a small outfit provided, will probably be sufficient material help. But do not let the girl think that, having done that, you drop her. Write to her, encourage her to come and see you, let her feel that you stick to her through thick and thin, or as long as she needs you.

Many of the girls are wholly unfit for service, and these are a very difficult class to provide for. For those who go to factory work, the miserable wages (at least in London) lay them terribly open to temptation. Shop-girls, dressmakers, costume hands, feel the long hours in close atmosphere, and the return to the lonely lodging at night, as sore tests to their newly returning virtue.

The Salvation Army seem to have more systematically faced these difficulties than anyone else, first, by training the girls in some trade while still in the Salvation Army Homes, and then, when they are able to earn their living, boarding them out with their own people as far as possible, so that they may still be looked after, and still have safe companionship. Is there no other body of workers who will take a hint from this work of the Salvationists, and plan something which shall meet this very great need?

Some occupations present peculiar difficulties. The actress, for instance, often feels that it is impossible for her to return to her work and keep straight, yet she seems wholly unfit for any other work. These cases must be dealt with individually. If you can induce such an one to pin herself down to domestic work, of course, that is best of all, as she is very likely to marry, and you thus give her a possibility of that married life being a success and being happy. This chance the ordinary undomesticated stage girl almost always misses.

But some girls are bent on keeping up their connection with the stage in some form, because they find all else so dull. Only a week ago I was talking to a girl of sixteen in the Workhouse Infirmary, who had been a dancer on the stage since she was seven years old. Her health is now delicate, worn out by the late hours and constant colds she has caught. She has no home, as her mother has disappeared. She is no longer attractive on the stage, but when other occupations were proposed to her, she said, "I take no interest in anything else. I should not think of going to service, nor to factory. I never took to sewing." One almost hopes that kind death may come soon, and so save her from making some terrible

plunge into sin, which seems her only alternative. Of course we should try to show the girl that even on the stage she may keep straight, and that we will do what we can by friendship. But we all know how hard it is to keep sight of a girl of this sort. Another occupation, beset with difficulty, is that of artist's model. These girls are as undomestic and helpless as stage girls. After twenty-five years of age, no one wants them as models, and they are generally unfit for anything else.

It is not necessary to go further into details, for every worker will supply these from her own experience.

And now, I would appeal to all women to take their share of responsibility in this work.

We must not get out of it by saying we are not fitted for it. As wives, as mothers, as sisters, as daughters, this question of the rescue of society from its foulness and impurity *is our* business. To say we have no call to touch it, is to say that we have never waked up to listen to the call that is dinning into our ears.

How dare we shut our ears and blind our eyes to a question that cannot be solved without us?

It goes undone if we don't each take our share in doing it.

Do not think because we are bound to tell off a certain number of people, specially gifted and fitted for the work of looking after the girls in Homes, Hospitals, Workhouses, or otherwise to attend to their cases in detail, that there is nothing further for us to do. No woman has a right to be alive without doing her part.

Shall a girl engage herself to a lover and be allowed to be so idiotic as lightly to laugh when she is told that he has sown his wild oats, and is now likely to settle down to be a model husband?

Shall she get married without knowing about the relation of the sexes and of the sins that arise through their misuse?

Dare she bring a child into the world, and give no thought of how it is to be guarded from sin and temptation, nor what her business is with regard to the question of purity?

Shall a sister be in daily intercourse with her brother and feel no interest in the secret difficulties that beset him, and the temptations that meet him every day of his life, when wise counsel from her might be his saving?

Is it no business of the older women, whether married or single, to think these questions out and influence their younger sisters to know the truth, and act upon it in all purity, and to

encourage the young men to be champions of purity, guardians of their own honour, and of that of all who are weak and easily tempted?

Surely this will be the truest rescue work, and not till we women realise and act upon this can we hope to see the promise fulfilled that this wilderness of earth "shall become like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord, wherein shall be found joy and gladness and thanksgivings."

Mrs. RAWLINSON:—As one who has had some experience in this work, I should like to point out two dangers which seem to beset rescue workers.

1. Want of delicacy and refinement. It is a great mistake to think that these poor girls have lost all delicacy of feeling. They shrink from inconsiderate plainness of speech, and are most influenced by loving tact and gentleness.

2. Over-experience. There is some fear of professionalism—of using cant phrases, of speaking of these poor girls as "cases," often as "hopeless cases." Let us think of them rather as living souls, to whom we must hold fast through good report and evil.

Miss GILPIN (*Liverpool*):—There were once only two Rescue Homes for girls in Liverpool, and I think the work was better done then. Now we have five Protestant homes, and some which we call short-time homes, as well as one Roman Catholic. We ought to be careful where we send our girls from the Homes. Dare we send half-reclaimed girls into a pure home where boys and girls are growing up? We are surrounded with difficulties. As to the Homes, we need to fill them with brightness and love. We must get interested friends to love our poor girls; and the matrons must also be full of love. I consider two years too long a time to keep a girl. There is no need to retain any against her will; each one should be told she can leave any time she wishes. This will prevent the Homes being looked upon as prisons. In some cases, however, two years is not enough to uproot all the evil. This work requires abundant love, and where can we get it but from Him who followed the poor lost wanderer till He found it.

Miss STACEY (*Birmingham*):—We do not like to write the word *hopeless* against any scheme for bettering the condition of our fellow-creatures, but there is one class of rescue work over which we must write it, except under one condition. Many girls have no will at all; they are morally deficient, and the only hope for these seems to be in providing permanent

homes where they may employ themselves with remunerative work, and remain all their lives, if they like. One such home has been started in Leicester. We are trying to start one at Birmingham, but it will never be self-supporting. These homes are not to be prisons where the girls are compelled to remain; there is to be no power of detention, but those who have worked most among these girls think there are a number who would be so thankful for a loving home provided for them that they would be glad to stop. We hope a new clause may be passed in Parliament, appointing the Poor Law Guardians to pay for such girls as these in a home, but the charitable world must also take up their cases.

Mrs. WALKER (*Bath*):—My work is specially preventive, but I have had a good deal to do with rescue work during the last three years. At this time the number of rescue homes is being largely increased in the country. I wish more attention could be paid to the classification. The Union girls should not be put with those who have sunk low. I think in all Homes there is one great fault—there is no gradual preparation for return to the ordinary life. With the prospect of a home being started for the feeble-minded, I would suggest that penitentiaries should not be so strict in dismissing on the exact day, whether the girl be ready or no.

RESCUE WORK AMONG CHILDREN.

MISS BUTLER.

READ BY MISS H. M. LLOYD.

THE subject on which I have been asked to write, is perhaps the saddest which can be brought before this Conference—that of Homes for quite young children who have been led into immorality. There are others who could plead their cause better than I, and could give better advice as to detail and management, but I cannot refuse the task which has fallen to me, and perhaps the simplest method will be to give my own experience of the last eleven years. It has been represented that no such Homes exist either in the North of England or in Scotland, and that the need is but little realized.

It is now many years since I saw for the first time an account of Miss Agnes Cotton's work at Leytonstone. She superintends what was then almost the only Home in England for "little girls under twelve years old, some, alas! only six,

who had been so grievously dragged into terrible sins of impurity, that they could no longer be kept in village schools, or orphan homes intended for the training of comparatively pure Christian children." I never forgot the impression made by the pamphlet, and when, about twelve years ago, similar cases were brought before me in a town parish, I discussed the subject with the late Bishop of London and the present Archbishop of York, and obtained the sanction of the latter to start what has now become known as S. Saviour's Home, and more than a hundred such children have passed for a longer or shorter time under our care.

The first necessity is to grasp the facts of the case. At the time of which I write, I do not think that a single district visitor, school-teacher, or worker in our large parish, had any idea of the existence of such evil among children, and even at a conference of ladies engaged in penitentiary and rescue work, it was difficult to convince them that what I had to tell was not quite exceptional. Even now, we are constantly asked by those to whom we thought that our yearly reports must have made our work clear: "What is your work for?" "What class of children do you take?" And when we explain yet further, are met with a response hardly more sorrowful than surprised. Yet the fact remains that Miss Cotton has had for many years an average of forty or fifty inmates in her "Home of the Good Shepherd;" Sister Emma, at Southsea, about fifty; Sister Selina, at Newport, Monmouthshire, about fifty-six; we, in our own small Home, sixteen or seventeen; and there are others, some in the care of the Society for Waifs and Strays, some in private hands; and all could tell the same story of children refused for want of room.

There is no reason to doubt that similar need for help exists in the North. I have received children from Newcastle, Edinburgh, Scarborough, Sheffield, Manchester, and Liverpool, and have quite recently refused some from Alnwick, West Hartlepool, Manchester; and of two places, Newcastle-on-Tyne and your own Liverpool, I can speak with some assurance.

I have seen a letter from a well-known clergyman of much experience in Newcastle, testifying to the great immorality of the class of little girls who sell sticks, etc., in that town; and in the Select Committee before the House of Lords, in 1882, similar testimony concerning the children of Liverpool was borne both by Father Nugent, the Chaplain of the Borough Gaol, and by Commander Eaton, R.N., one of your School Board officers, who adds: "With all these children the thing

which appears to me to have most power is the personal effect of the influence of good women." In 1867 there were in Liverpool alone 48,782 children between the ages of five and thirteen who were going to no school, and 25,000 of these children were supposed to be living upon the streets, and had no natural protection.

When all allowance possible has been made for the improvement of twenty-four years, and the result of the Education Act of 1870, this still leaves a large margin for evil influences of all kinds.

With regard to the children themselves, it is a mistake to suppose that all the little half-wrecked lives which drift into the shelter of our Home belong to the children of bad parents, or to those who are friendless and utterly neglected. Perhaps one of the saddest things is to see how much "evil is wrought by want of thought," and how often the children of respectable parents (whose work takes them away from home duties) are led into sin during their hours of loneliness.

It happens too, sometimes, that one bad man succeeds in bribing and decoying with pennies or with fruit, children too young to understand (at least at first) the nature of the sin into which they were led. I knew a quite small district where eight children, between the ages of five and twelve, were so decoyed, and the moral evil done incalculable. Others, in low and degraded neighbourhoods, lead a life of promiscuous immorality among boys a little older than themselves, and the most entirely shameless language I have ever heard has been from little girls of nine or ten under these circumstances.

Others, like the town children before referred to, are street-sellers at all hours, and under cover of their trade fall easy victims, and find readier ways of earning money than by their newspapers and their sticks. Some drift into sin through the overcrowding of their homes, and the drunkenness of those who should have been their natural protectors. Some have been brought up in houses of bad repute; some have learnt evil in our schools, where the compulsory education throws children of all classes together; while there are others who are indeed sinned against rather than sinning—innocent children who have been entrapped, but who, in many cases, require very special care and training if they are to forget the knowledge of evil with which their sad experience, followed by the cross-examination of an assize court, has endued them. All of those who do this work could tell of pitiful little mothers of thirteen,

where a woman's experience and suffering has been forced on the ignorance and innocence of a little child.

In all these cases one sin has led to others. Truth is almost always terribly warped. Many of the children have scarcely any power of self-control and obedience, and in most cases their lives are weighted with a serious bias towards evil. Here and there, the life they have led seems to have dulled them mentally; more often, some slight mental deficiency has made them the more easily influenced in a wrong direction. Many, again, are bright, clever, lovable—full of great possibilities, but all are more or less poisoned, and if left without some antidote will sink into yet lower depths. They have learnt knowledge far beyond their years, have been accustomed to talk openly of things, the very meaning of which they should not understand, and have grown up in the practice of sins which are only called "little" because they are little known and little punished.

They have a deadly power of contaminating others, and are rightly excluded from all ordinary schools and training homes. Yet many of them may grow into good healthy-minded women, useful servants or happy wives and mothers, and when one of our former girls writes and asks us to be godmothers to her child, and another writes, that she hopes "to bring up her own children to serve the Lord," and another is described as "the best servant we ever had," and another is a Sunday School Teacher, etc., it makes up for many disappointments among those who will not be helped.

There can be no doubt, I think, that wherever it is possible the Cottage Home system is the best method of dealing with these children. It allows for selection, though such selection is not as simple a matter as might be supposed. For instance, it might appear desirable, at first sight, that the most innocent should be as much as possible kept apart, but then it is not so desirable that all the worst should be congregated together. I think my own ideal would be two cottages, one in which children under fourteen and all new comers should be placed, and the other, for those from fourteen to eighteen, who had had some length of training, and began to show themselves trustworthy; no thoroughly badly-disposed girl should be allowed to pass into the upper cottage. If, by the time she was fifteen or sixteen, she appeared incorrigible, she should be removed, and passed on to a different home where there were no children; but the tone of the older girls' cottage should be kept high, the dress a little different, the privileges greater.

It would then become an ambition to the younger children to enter it, and the change of house, and discipline, would obviate one of the greatest difficulties of a single house, which lies in the natural dislike of a girl of sixteen to being classed with the little ones, and her consequent restlessness and desire to leave before she can be safely trusted with the guidance of her own life.

A large home (one house, that is, containing forty or fifty children), unless the staff is also large, must necessitate less supervision and larger dormitories, both of which seem to me unmixed evils. But here again I speak with great deference, knowing well the large experience of Sister Emma, at Southsea, whose children are, I believe, all gathered under one roof. The difficulty of Cottage Homes is in the multiplicity of matrons. Unless the home is under the management of Sisters, or of some lady living in the home, I should strongly urge the necessity of having matrons exclusively from the upper and educated class. Kindliness, honesty, strong personal religion, good influence of many kinds, may of course be found in what is known as the working class ; but I think the history of homes would show that very few can be found among them who can be trusted with a heavy burden of personal responsibility unsupervised. Home after home tells of work defeated by the want of high tone in the matrons—few of us have not to some extent suffered in this way, some of us very heavily, and the special work of which I am now writing, peculiarly requires refinement and education, both as an influence over the children, and as a safeguard against the necessary contact with so much evil. Two matrons are necessary in each cottage of twelve or fifteen girls. I have been fortunate enough for the last two or three years to have both from a refined class, and the influence on the children is unquestionably good ; but that the upper matron should be an educated person of superior position is a real necessity.

In many homes, the children attend the parish schools. This hardly seems right. Either they must be sent to and fro in charge of a matron, and kept apart during recreation time, which stamps them in an undesirable way, or risk is run both from the harm they may do and the harm they may receive. We tried the experiment with our most trusty children, but found that it was impossible to prevent their striking up acquaintances going and coming, which tended greatly to undo our work, by keeping up the very memories we were anxious to cast out. On this ground also (as education must be carried

on in the home) it is necessary to have a matron capable of teaching.

It is impossible to lay too much stress on the necessity of supervision, especially in the dormitories. Each room should have a window (not so small as to have the effect of a mere spy hole), looking into it from a matron's room, which can be left open at night. This supervision should be as little obtruded on the children as possible. I have deep sympathies with the boy at the French school who dug a pit for himself in the garden because he could not get away from his master's eye, but I believe untiring watchfulness to be absolutely essential to any really good work. It is not "suspicion," but simple knowledge of facts and possibilities which leads to this expression of opinion. It is perfectly compatible with the higher sort of trust, and the fullest and most hopeful belief in the possibilities of goodness in the children. I should at any time be glad if, in this, or any other point of detail, I could be of use to any fellow-worker, and would gladly answer any questions on points which a conference paper cannot enter into.

Our children are often invited to various kinds of treats, and, within certain strict limits, I usually accept such invitations for them. I believe I have been sometimes blamed for doing so, but it must be remembered that they have for the most part led lives of great freedom and excitement before coming to the constraint of the home, and a certain amount of it in a happier and truer shape has become a necessity. If possible, every home should have a piece of playground attached, or a little garden. There cannot be too much of open air, skipping, well managed games, long walks, singing. "A hymn," or even a song "is a singing angel and goes walking through the earth scattering the devils before it."

With regard to the managing body of such homes, they must vary with circumstances. A small committee is desirable for finance, household arrangements, etc., but in these homes the actual working and decisions with regard to receiving and dismissing children, the fitness of matrons, must be most easily and fittingly in the hands of one or two only; the histories of the children, and the special difficulties of the work being hardly subjects for discussion in committees.

S. Saviour's Home has been from the beginning under the sanction of the Bishop of the Diocese, and it is affiliated to the Society for the Care of Waifs and Strays. A certain number of gentlemen of influence in the town and neighbourhood are willing to be referred to as to its general work, a small

committee of six ladies has been recently appointed for questions of finance, but the real management falls exclusively on my cousin (the reader of this paper), on the matron, and on myself. The Vicar of the Parish acts as chaplain to the home, gives Bible lessons, and prepares the children for confirmation, but the religious teaching is also, of course, carried on within our doors with regularity. Our children go to church on Sunday, and to children's afternoon services. After a certain amount of training they are allowed, before going into a situation, to work out by the day, returning to the home to sleep. They are trained in needlework, and all kinds of house work, and there is no difficulty in obtaining situations for them. Our last year's Report shows an expenditure, including rent, taxes, salaries, etc., of about £18 a head.

I spoke of keeping girls till they were eighteen. We do not find it possible to do this with the children all under one roof. I have been told that it may be much more possible in a larger home, even though not on the cottage system, as there would be a greater number of older girls, and, as I have said before, they would not feel so much classed with the little ones. But there can be no question among workers as to the desirability of having some control over our girls until that age, even though they may not remain under our immediate care. We all know well that from fifteen to eighteen is the most irresponsible period of a girl's life, the time in which her independent will seems strongest and her reason weakest, and yet, just at that age, the law bids us set them free to their own government (or return them to the charge of parents from whose unfit guardianship they have been taken). Miss Agnes Cotton has been endeavouring to get the opinion of workers as to the age up to which it is desirable that we should retain some legal hold on girls. In Australia it exists up to twenty-one, but the general opinion seems to be that here we should be contented with eighteen, and I think that most girls who had developed no self-control then, would not have attained it three years later. The "Custody of Children Act" of this year (54 Vict. ch. 3) may be of great service to us, if properly carried out, by preventing parents from withdrawing children at will from a home where they have once consented to place them, and the Bill brought in by Mr. Howard Vincent and Mr. S. Smith, for allowing the emigration or apprenticeship of children in Reformatory or Industrial certified Homes, before their time of detention has expired, will be of much use in other cases, as the term "apprenticeship" can legally apply to

laundry work and other industrial work for girls. Immoral parents, who have connived at the degradation of their children, can also be deprived of their guardianship, under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, Part I., Sec. 12, and guardians appointed by magistrates. But we need still greater facilities for the guardianship of girls. This is a matter which touches all preventive and rescue work, and there must be many in the room more able to deal with it, but it cannot be too often brought into notice among us.

There is, however, one point concerning legislation which immediately touches the special branch of work on which this paper bears. There may be far greater difficulties in the way than I am able to see, but I am sure all who are working for children must deeply regret the necessity for their cross-examination in full court, in such cases as bring them to our special Homes. It is impossible that a child's mind can pass uninjured (if comparatively innocent) or without deepening harm (if already depraved) through such an ordeal, and we must all wish that some means could be found for allowing children to be examined in some more private and more considerate manner. I do not think there is any other special point to bring before the Conference, but I would greatly urge the desirability of increasing the number of these Homes northward, and I shall only be too glad if I can in any way assist anyone who is wishing to do so. For among all His little children, the pity of our Lord must fall most deeply upon some of these.

Miss Steer: The subject of these poor little children is one near to my heart, and one on which I cannot speak calmly. I have a little Home for these children which is situated in a park. This Home accommodates twelve children and two matrons. You know this kind of work is very different from rescue work among women. When we speak of children who have fallen, remember a crime has been committed against them. The injury done is not only physical, but all kinds of bad habits have been fostered, and they are often subject to demoniacal bursts of passion. We need to come to this work with great love, having always sought God's wisdom first that by it we may be guided aright.

Mrs. Creighton spoke of the custom of examining girls without the presence of any woman in the court. She said we should use any influence we might have that in such cases the court should be cleared of men and boys, but that some women should be allowed to stay in order that

their presence might be a help to the girl under examination.

Miss Richardson (*a worker in Bombay*): I am glad of this opportunity just to say a word about the very great need that exists of rescue work in India, and to bring home the fact that whilst in England we are attempting to meet this need, in India scarcely anything is being done. I have come to England in order to make known our want of help.

AFTERNOON, 2.30.

1. *The Self-Education of the Worker.* Miss Janes.
2. *Valedictory Address.* Mrs. Henry Fawcett (*London*).

The closing meeting of this interesting Conference was held in the Young Men's Christian Association Hall, as the room at the Royal Institution was not large enough. The hall was very crowded, some ladies having to sit on the steps of the platform. The chair was taken by Mrs. Booth, the President, at a quarter to three.

THE SELF-EDUCATION OF THE WORKER.

Miss JANES.

I cannot acquit myself of presumption in venturing to speak to you on a subject of so much importance as this, of the self-education of the worker, but it seems to me only fitting that after discussing the philanthropic work of women under varied aspects, we should devote some little attention to this home question, and ask ourselves how far we are endeavouring to train ourselves for that which we have taken in hand. If this were a sermon, and I a preacher, I might well find a text in the words of the Apostle, "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" but being only a woman, painfully conscious of having profited far too little from the shaping and moulding influences of life, I dare not preach, but would only remind myself and you of certain truths, likely from their very familiarity to be insufficiently borne in mind.

And first—How greatly we suffer from the amateurism that characterises much so-called "work." Surely, whether paid or unpaid, nothing we do is worthy of ourselves, or as an offering to our Divine Master, which is not whole-hearted and thorough as far as it goes. Have we not all groaned over this amateurism in others? Miss A., for instance, will teach at the Girls' Club, but you must not depend upon her if it is cold or wet, or

if some unusual attraction in the way of entertainment turns up; Mrs. B. will be delighted to look after a little maiden in her first place, so long as the child gives no trouble, otherwise, "she really cannot undertake any responsibility;" Miss C. will take a Bible class (the odd thing is that everyone supposes herself capable of explaining the mysteries of the Faith), but you cannot expect her either to attend weekly lectures, or to make up for the want of definite preparation by regular home-study; Mrs. D., poor lady, thinks it would be an easy and pleasant way of getting a living to take the superintendence of a G. F. S. Lodge, or a training school for young servants, and is surprised to find that it is not sufficient to walk round the house in the morning to see that it has been set in order, and then to devote the remainder of the day to mild gossip and the study of three-volume novels from the circulating library round the corner; Mrs. E. credits herself with being a philanthropist on the score of a few guineas given in answer to sensational appeals, and a few tears shed as she reads by her comfortable fireside of the woes of little children and of despairing women; Miss F. turns hospital nurse for a few weeks, because her imagination is fired by the idea of wearing a becoming dress and sitting in interesting attitudes by her patients' bedside, "the cynosure of neighbouring eyes;" Miss G., dear soul, hopes to fit herself for mission work in China by the study of Hebrew and the theory of music; Miss H. takes up slumming in a violent hurry, because it is the fashion, and drops it again as quickly; and Mrs. J., whose feeble, goody-goody fiction does not, alas! all find its way into the waste-paper basket,—are not all these types you and I have often met with, camp-followers, as it were, hanging on to the rear of those fighting under strain and stress, and sorely hindering real progress?

I wonder if you and I are so very much better than these over whom we smile and sigh—these people with mixed motives, and low aims, and slow perceptions? Are *we* thoroughly to be depended upon to carry out to the utmost of our ability any work we may have undertaken? Are we humble enough to become "hewers of wood and drawers of water" rather than let the work we profess to care for languish? Are we brave enough to bear responsibility if it becomes our duty to lead? "The beginning of wisdom is to know a little truth about ourselves," says George Eliot. Our unlikeness is so great, our "personal equation" the sum of all that time and circumstance have done for us, so various; our aptitudes, our

opportunities, so diverse, that we have enough to do to judge ourselves in this matter of faithfulness without presuming to judge others. Excuses we should doubtless find in plenty for them, had we more insight and more love, but for ourselves, we must make no excuses, but strive to be true to the Ideal self, shrined in the very heart of God—the self which only exists in relations, and is bound by countless ties of duty to God and to man. "A little thing is a little thing, but faithfulness in little things is a very great thing," said St. Gregory; and still, for the most of us, it is through thoroughness in small ways that we get our training for the more difficult work that may be in store for us.

Akin to want of thoroughness is a lack of the sense of honour, leading to a practical belief in the virtue of doing evil that good may come, which sometimes gives me more of a feeling of despair than almost anything else. I have known matrons not merely incompetent, but even cruelly hard in their treatment of subordinates, and to the children under their care; intemperate women; women, too, of doubtful moral character, passed on with sufficiently good and even flourishing testimonials by well-meaning people, anxious to give them another chance, to those sorely in need of trustworthy helpers. Girls, again, the torment of every Home they entered, passed on without a word of warning; girls of bad character who had given no true evidence of a changed heart and life, sent as governesses and nurses to little children; thieves, again, stealing in every place they go to, passed on without a qualm of conscience by those whose pity or good-natured indifference out-weighed their sense of justice to the community. I do not say such cases are common, but they are sadly too frequent. It hampers us terribly, this sense of the doubtful value of testimonials, the smooth phrases of which seem to bear out the truth of the cynical saying, that "the art of language is to conceal the truth."

These are cases in which we err from a silence which is the reverse of golden, but very perversely we often speak when we had far better remain silent. Because we should be true to ourselves and our neighbour, and in the best interests of the wrongdoer, who cannot really be helped by evasion or falsehood, we need not discredit the sacred name of charity by an unloving betrayal of confidences which should have been held as a trust, nor by talking in the drawing room or at the dinner table of details of committee work about which we had better be praying on our knees. Surely, if we must train ourselves to

uncompromising truth-telling, we need also to cultivate a wise reticence?

Then, again, we must "study to be quiet." "I always tell my nurses to do the next thing, and to make no fuss about it," said a Hospital Matron. It may be better to wear out than to rust out, but fuss and friction are not fair wear and tear.

Again, it needs clear insight and much self-control to hold the proportion of things, and while giving due weight to organization, to remember that after all it is but a means to an end. Some of us spend so much time in tabulating results, and writing reports, and sitting on committees, and are so eager for the success of our party, or our cause, that we fail to see the trees for the wood, fail to see that it is the influence of a true life that really tells, and that the worth of an organization is only the sum of its units, of you and of me. Are we in personal touch with our brothers and sisters? Are we helping souls sinful and sad, to hope and to faith, to love and to life? Are sick folk made the happier by our care? What ignorant folk are we instructing? What girls are gaining inspiration from our loving guidance? What children are we saving from cruelty and vice? What men are we helping to a belief in God and good women? Ah! this is what no reports can show. You will often have done most when you least knew that virtue had gone out of you. It is only by self-sacrifice that the world's redemption is bought. It cannot be effected by simply giving our names to societies, nor by what Walter Besant calls cheque-charity, nor by sentimental platitudes, nor even by regular attendance at committees. Life can only come from life, it can never be produced by clever mechanism.

But, bearing this in mind, ninety-nine women out of every hundred will do well to discipline themselves by combination. The great value of associated work is that it furnishes the willing helper with a fund of experience, that it supplies comradeship, that it allows all gifts to have fitting exercise, and that it provides for continuity. It economises labour, it corrects false impressions due to our imperfect vision, it expands our sympathies. It is like the line of metals on which the heavily laden train is drawn easily and with the minimum of danger to its destination, as compared with the pathless bush through which the pioneer has to take his steps in uncertainty and difficulty. Now-a-days it is comparatively easy to get this definite training through associated work in teaching and in nursing, the two professions so largely represented in the present Conference. It is so to a very marked extent also in

those great voluntary associations formed on the basis of church fellowship in the Sisterhoods of the Anglican and Roman Communions. Wonderful things have been done in all the five continents by the Loretto Nuns, in teaching; by the Order of the Good Shepherd, in rescue work; by Clewer, by Wantage, by Mildmay, by Kilburn, and by kindred bodies of devoted women. The Wesleyans, the Primitive Methodists, have now their Sisterhoods; the Congregationalists will probably soon follow their example. I do not think the Salvation Army would hold out long where it not for its women "officers"; and the Society of Friends could ill spare its women "ministers." It is right and fitting that women who owe so much to Christianity, should thus strive in some small measure to acknowledge it by unstinted and loyal service, and if it be a real vocation, taken up not lightly or unadvisedly, not in self-will, not in neglect of the plain duties of home, we may well believe that God blesses the sacrifice, and that the bright faces we see under the wimple of the sister, aye, and the poke bonnet of the Salvationist, are a true index of the hearts at peace with God, and full of abounding love to man. In teaching, in nursing, in the care of the fallen, we shall not be inclined to undervalue the variety and extent of this work of which the world knows so little, nor the self-devotion of the workers.

But for the most of us, the conviction that we are to be as lights of the world, and as leaven in the world, the claims of family, the sense of the blessedness and sacredness of the common life decide our vocation. To many there is the necessity of finding a profession which will enable them to be self-supporting. Already keen competition makes it difficult for the imperfectly trained woman to find a post in which she can earn an honourable and sufficient subsistence. The struggle is the harder because so many gentlewomen, with small means, are ready to work for "cake" rather than for bread and cheese, and so undersell their more needy sisters who have to be content with a starvation wage. We are told that many of these poor ladies lack resource, lack perseverance, and are unreliable. It is useless to speak to them of training, they lack the money which might provide it for them, and very often they ignore the necessity for such training altogether. Those who are punctual and industrious, intelligent, capable and reasonable, and can do some one thing well, need have little fear, if they give a fair day's work, of receiving a fair day's wage. There is still work to be had for those fully qualified to do it.

We have been hearing that in district nursing, both in town

and country, good nurses are much needed. In elementary schools, in our workhouses, and I may add, in our lunatic asylums as well as in Voluntary Rescue and Preventive Work, there is scope for the activities of earnest, devoted, Christian women of the educated classes. I wish the volunteers were more numerous than they are at present. It is the isolation they may have to bear which is the greatest stumbling-block to many, but this would lessen year by year as time goes on, and we should do well to minimise it as much as possible by friendly sympathy, and by honouring the faithful worker, be she paid agent or volunteer.

But I want to come nearer home. We are not so much representative of the professional classes of women, as of that much larger body of keepers at home, who have the more difficult task of combining our duty to our own people with that care for others which we are exercising either individually or as members of a society. Need I say how strongly I feel that home should come first, and that the influence of Christian home-life on husband and children, on servants and friends, is of quite incalculable value? "Civilization," says Emerson, "is the power of good women." Well for those, safe in the shelter of their own small paradise, if its brightness is radiating warmth to those out in the cold, if the law of the household is the law of love, if sons and daughters are trained to self-restraint and generous self-giving, if the house-mistress is not too absorbed to deny sympathy to those whose lot is cast in a less fair ground! Such an one may have little time for committees, and may never appear on a platform, but surely, in the truest sense, she works for righteousness and the bringing in of "purer manners, purer laws."

We, however, have been able to give some time to these organizations which are multiplying so rapidly on either hand—organizations working for the improvement of the conditions of life, and for the religious, the moral, and the social elevation of the people, with an especial care for women and children. Busy lives are ours. Our danger is of growing narrow from the very intensity with which we throw ourselves into some given line of action—"like rabbits in a warren," (to quote from Ellice Hopkins)—"each with our little burrow of good works, one way in and one way out." And we live much too fast in these days. We read and we think,—and we pray far too little. If we would avoid one-sidedness and eccentricity, and that "professionalism" which is infinitely more odious in a woman than a man; if we would win a hearing from the busy world,

with its manifold interests, we must keep due spaces for thought and meditation, for study and for recreation, and for the influences of poetry and of music, of nature and of art. We should know something, too, of the science of life and the science of mind if we would learn how infinitely complex are the problems we have to consider, and how important are the issues hanging on our lightest actions, and be saved from rash, and hasty, and uncharitable judgments, and from mechanical methods of working.

We are not here to play the part of a mutual admiration society. You and I feel strongly enough our limitations, our hindrances, the poorness of performance which has followed upon our early hopes. In much labour there seems to be but little profit, and the night of doubt, of sorrow, and of sin seems to be of pitchy darkness. My sisters, why should we cry because we cannot anticipate the dawn? Its coming may be slow, but it is sure; nay, is it not here if our eyes are but opened to see it? Was there ever a century in recorded history when you would rather have lived than in this Nineteenth century? Was there ever a time when a woman could better lead a noble life than now? Was there ever a country in which a woman's position and opportunities were greater than in our England of to-day?

> Look up, and not down,
> Look forward, and not back,
> Look out, and not in,
> And lend a hand,

and you will be too busy to be dull; too sane to grow morbid; too humble for discontent; too full of goodwill to imagine coldness and neglect; too thankful for the good found in unexpected places to despair of any; too grateful for undeserved mercies to dare to judge harshly of others.

I think none of those who have taken part in these meetings can have failed to be impressed with the advantages of such a Union of Workers as has made them possible. I have a vision of a time to come when every large town shall have such a Union on the simple lines of Liverpool and Birmingham. It might in time have its office in a central position, with an experienced secretary, who should be in touch with all its branches of work, to focus, as it were, the necessary information, and to supply ready help. A reference library, a complete catalogue of reports, a registry for well-recommended workers, might form part of such a plan.

Then, year by year, the general Conference of associated women workers, which we propose to hold in the great centres of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, would serve, as I believe the present Conference has served, to strengthen our purposes and to quicken our zeal, by bringing us together for quiet discussion of our needs and our difficulties. Our Central Conference Council would form a link between these gatherings of workers, and would hand on our accumulated experiences. We should not interfere with the independence of the Local Committee formed in the town inviting our visit, but would work with them on the same broad lines which we have found so eminently practicable both at Birmingham and Liverpool.

The Standing Committee will have for its president Her Grace the Duchess of Bedford, and for its chairwoman our good friend L. M. H., the well known editor of *The English Woman's Year Book*, which we should have a common interest in keeping up to date. My own little magazine, *A Threefold Cord*, I will gladly supply to the committee at cost price, and I would make it the Conference organ, while I would also undertake to speak on behalf of those who may desire to start a Union of Workers, or to aid them in organising the Annual Conference in their locality. Miss Maskell, Emanuel Hospital, Westminster, is clerk to the Committee, *pro tem.*

The plan is neither costly nor impracticable. We should enlist the help of experienced ladies as referees in different branches of work, so that the best advice obtainable might be easily procured. As a little fund would be necessary for postage and other expenses, it is proposed to ask for small subscriptions for the expenses of this Standing Committee and of what may grow into the much needed Enquiry Office.

It is often said that we women cannot combine. Upon us it devolves to prove the contrary, and to develop the resources at our disposal, to utilise all agencies for the common good, to use the talent we have, and to exercise the privileges we possess, that we may be the better prepared to exercise the extended possibilities the future has in store for us. In these busy days we must needs concentrate our energies, and life is all too short to enable us to take up with advantage one tenth of the subjects which might well demand our attention. Mr. Herbert Spencer reminds us that there are few minds capable of grasping the gradual processes by which ultimate results are reached. The more reason for us to try to lay foundations upon which others may build by the patient study of facts, by the interchange of experience, and by the recognition of the

truth that our work is but a little bit of a great whole, that if the temple made without hands of living stones, of faithful men and women, is to stand for beauty and for glory, for shelter and for service to the faint-hearted, the sinful and the weary, we must be willing to be used as God wills, and "to follow our vocation, which is to learn and to do His will." Love knows no load. Love alone can sustain us through pain and perplexity "until the day break and the shadows flee away." Happy they who can rest in the love of the All-Father, and trust Him whatever betide, for themselves and for the world, sure that "His power never created what His mercy cannot embrace."

If we would graduate in the school of the Divine Master, we must train ourselves to mount, step by step, St. Peter's Golden Ladder, adding to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. Then, profiting day by day by all life's varied experiences, willing as a child to learn from all sources the lessons of love and of life, we shall see old things pass away, and behold all things will become new. Whether with many helps or with few, the worker will be educated. "NOT UNTO US, O LORD, NOT UNTO US, BUT UNTO THY NAME GIVE THE PRAISE."

An appropriate Valedictory Address was delivered by Mrs. FAWCETT, who ably summed up the main points dwelt on by the previous speakers during the Conference.

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

MRS. HENRY FAWCETT.

I FEEL it a great honour to be called upon to give the Valedictory Address at this Conference of Women Workers, which is the first at which I have been present. I have watched and followed the Conference with great interest, and I will endeavour to tell you several ways in which it has impressed me. There is one verse in the Psalms that I cannot help thinking of. In the Old Version it reads: "The Lord gave the Word: great was the company of the preachers." But in the New Version it is: "The Lord gave the Word: the women that bring the tidings are a great host."

Now as to the way in which the Congress as a whole has impressd me: What has been the keynote struck throughout?

First, and most obvious, the word that gives the keynote to the whole of this Conference is RESPONSIBILITY—responsibility or duty. It was struck first by Mrs. Booth in her Opening Address, when she said: "We are profoundly conscious that we are our sisters' keepers." Mrs. Creighton, in her paper on the "Responsibility of Parents," gave the warning that modern philanthropy often tends to make parents rely on others. We are probably doing more harm than good if we step in between the parents and their responsibilities to their children. We should never lose sight of the fact that the parents are primarily responsible for providing their children with food, education and moral training. We are responsible if our so-called benevolence does harm, even when it is performed with good intentions.

The next kind of responsibility that was touched upon was the social responsibility devolving upon women in helping and befriending young people when they leave school. The Hon Maude Stanley spoke of girls' clubs as one way in which this responsibility is fulfilled. She gave one very interesting instance of the development of responsibility of women to each other, when she told us that members of her Working Girls' Club in Soho were now busily occupied in spreading the advantages they had received among poorer and more neglected working girls in Spitalfields. Lady Laura Ridding also told us that the same sort of efforts had grown out of the Working Girls' Clubs in Nottingham.

In arranging for continuation classes and home reading, women find another way of discharging their responsibilities. Miss Petrie spoke of the responsibility of every cultured woman to share her educational advantages with others. The next speaker, Miss Huckwell, represented that this should not be looked upon as an amusement or pastime, but as a debt or duty. In the same spirit, Miss Jebb, in her paper on "Home Arts and Industries" spoke of the managing of classes in these technical subjects, as another direction in which women could discharge their duty to society.

Another kind of responsibility, touching parents, was also referred to in the evening, viz., that of encouraging and helping their children to be useful to others. We often find it easier to be courageous for ourselves than for those who are dear to us; and parents are perhaps apt to be selfishly timid with regard to risk to their children. A lady speaking on this point described a picture in the Liverpool Art Gallery, in which a dying mother bids her son leave her and take his place as coxswain of the

lifeboat; and she contrasted the readiness of this mother in sparing her son to do his duty, with the reluctance of many mothers in allowing their daughters to take part in useful work. She said there was too much anxiety expressed with regard to fear of infection, exposure to cold, etc. Our President, Mrs. Booth, spoke words which found an echo in many hearts, when she also censured the timidity of mothers for their children. There were certain risks, she said, to be faced in all useful work but it was better to die and stand in God's presence, than to live an idle, useless life.

On the second day of the Conference, Lady Laura Ridding spoke of the responsibilities of employers; and Mrs. Lindsay on the responsibility of working women to each other, in obedience to the command, "Bear ye one another's burdens." The subject of her paper was "Trades Unions for Working Women." Miss Potter and Miss Davies spoke of the responsibility of women to the great co-operative movement; Miss Potter told women of their sins, and Miss Davies helped them to mend them. She spoke of a co-operative guild of women and shewed how working women could help one another by becoming members of it.

In the afternoon Miss Clifford spoke of the responsibility of women for good poor-law administration, and shewed how nobly many women have fulfilled these responsibilities. In appointing ladies as poor-law guardians, something is done to give pauper children mothers as well as fathers, and improved methods of caring for them can be tried. The duty of caring for the sick and aged in workhouses was referred to, and this is essentially women's work, and work, too, which no sensible woman need be afraid to undertake. We cannot all be Miss Cliffords or Miss Twinings, but immense numbers of women know enough of child life and the care of the sick, to be of essential use in Poor Law administration. Women should not be timid in presenting themselves for election as Poor Law Guardians. The mere presence of a woman on the Board, even if she never opens her lips, is enough to cause the interest of girls and women not to be entirely over-looked.

Miss Louisa Twining read a paper dealing with the subject of workhouse nursing. She said that the reform of this work had first been started at Liverpool, and was associated with the names of Agnes Jones and Mr. W. Rathbone, with whom it originated, and whose names would always be honoured in connection with it.

Mrs. Minet, Mrs. Malleson, and Lady Victoria Lambton

read papers dealing with district nursing in town and country, and last, but not least, the deep responsibility of women in rescue work was dwelt upon by Mrs. Percy Bunting and Miss Lloyd.

Taking a rapid glance at some other aspects of these various kinds of responsibility, the first that should be named is educational in its widest sense, as touching parent, teacher, and employer. The first duty is not so much to take care of and do for, as to teach the child self-government and its own personal responsibility. The ideal which the parent or the teacher should ever have in view, is not the supremacy of his own will, but the cultivation of the will of the child, so that it may intuitively desire those things that are lovely and of good report, and hate and shun all that is vile. "It is not *I* must take care of you, but you must have an inward monitor which will be ever present and protect you." Several speakers touched on this subject of self-government. Miss Stanley said: "Self-government is the object to be aimed at." The child is to become a free citizen, not part of a machine. Parents should be constantly looking for opportunities of withdrawing their authority as the children get old enough to do without it. The development of responsibility is a most important part of education. If grown up girls are treated like children, never allowed to go about by themselves, hardly trusted to buy a pair of shoes or a yard of ribbon without some elder's advice, how can you expect their character to develop and strengthen. Mrs. Creighton also urged that an independent life, a capability of standing alone, was the object to be aimed at. She said that practical success in governing servants, children, and factory hands depends not in overriding the will, but making it coincide with yours. Conflict and friction are thus avoided, and increased momentum is acquired. A model factory was described by Miss Clementina Black, the manager of which had practically adopted this principle, and had said that he would not run a factory if he could not do it without fines.

The same principle was prominent in Mrs. Bunting's paper on rescue work. Unless a sense of responsibility and power of self-government are awakened, any attempt at improvement resembles water poured into a sieve. Bolts and bars will not advance moral growth, but the soul and will must learn to reverence purity. Without this inward monitor, any amount of outside protection may fail in its object. With it, the boy or girl, man or woman, may pass scatheless through a host of dangers. If the will seeks what is good, though "Thousands

may fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, it shall not come nigh thee."

It is necessary, however, to give one word of caution on this subject of the development of the will; for a rather discordant note was struck by two ladies who appeared to believe that the first thing to do in educating a child was to conquer its will. It seems to me that this course is full of dangers. You do not want to weaken the will, but to strengthen it, and to make it temperate and reasonable. There is great risk in this process of "conquering the will" of a child, that you may make it either feebly submissive, or passionate and sullen. An intelligent child very quickly understands that obedience is necessary to an orderly life; that domestic, like political, life could not go on except authority were vested in certain persons. A child in a family has frequently to submit his will to the will of his parents, but care should be taken not to weaken the force of the child's will. The will is a most invaluable quality, without which other gifts are wasted. I have heard people talk of breaking a child's will; I would as soon break its back. All here present refer to will—the will of God—as the ultimate power which governs the universe. The will of the individual is a divine gift, to be guided by reason and nourished by constant exercise, never to be broken, as it is called, and turned to bitterness and rebellion.

As the first—the keynote—of this Conference is responsibility or duty, so the second, in harmony with the first, is love —love and sympathy.

Unless duty is inspired by love, it is apt to become harsh and hortatory, and to fail of its object. With the best will in the world we cannot help people much unless we love them and sympathise with them. This is surely the fundamental truth of Christianity, more wonderful than any miracle, in itself the miracle of miracles,—that love redeems the world. All great, good and lasting victory over evil comes through the power of love. It is the greatest moral force we know of. This lesson is taught us over and over again, embodied in different forms at different periods of the world's history. One of its latest artistic embodiments is contained in Wagner's sacred drama, *Parsifal*. The central idea of that great drama is that love redeems the world. *Parsifal*, the guileless fool, weak in everything that wins worldly renown, is stronger than the strongest. He has power through purity and compassion to overcome evil by good, and to raise the fallen man and the fallen woman to spiritual life and strength.

All the various forms of work that have been discussed at this Conference are dead and lifeless without sympathy, and the tact that comes of it. If we have sympathy, we shall avoid the pernicious spirit of patronage. Care should be taken not to let the poor think that you imagine you know their business better than they know it themselves. Work should be *with* rather than *for* them, and should be inspired by love as well as duty.

Many consequences spring from these two watchwords, love and duty; but I will only refer to one which is ever in my mind and heart. There can be no high development of responsibility without freedom. Unless the will is free we are not responsible for our actions. We Englishwomen have won a large measure of freedom, more, probably, than the women of other nations, alike in educational, social, and industrial matters. This Conference, and the good work that has been described by the various speakers, show that we know how to use our freedom. Do not let us be afraid of extending it. To make part of the State, to influence the course of legislation on matters in which we have knowledge, is already an ennobling influence in many women's lives. I wish it could be extended to the thousands of women capable of using it rightly. There are so many improvements in the state of the law, relating to subjects that have been discussed here, that are urgently needed, but which are extremely difficult to obtain because the present constituencies do not care about them ; the people who do care for them and know about them are, to a large extent, women, and they have no votes, and they consequently find it very difficult to gain attention from our law makers. I could not help thinking how much activity on all these subjects would be stimulated, if members of Parliament had women among their constituents as well as men. Perhaps some ladies present have never considered the subject of women's suffrage from this point of view. They may have regarded it simply as the claiming of a right or privilege. But I think it should also be regarded as a means of the fulfilment by women of their social duties. We need more consideration given to the amendment of our laws as they touch home life and child life, and one means of securing it would be to enfranchise those to whom the care of children and of the home has been specially entrusted.

One of the great writers of antiquity has said of the State :— " That it is a brotherhood of equal men, who are able and purposed to rule and to be ruled, not brought together by force

or fear, but animated by a single aim to live the noblest life of which men are capable, in the unimpeded exercise of the highest qualities, moral and intellectual. The State exists not for the sake of life, but of a good life, which is the end of man." It is because I believe women could and would help to realize rather than to retard this grand conception of the State, that I most earnestly wish to see their present capabilities for good supplemented by some degree of direct political enfranchisement.

In closing, Mrs. Fawcett bade farewell to all the many workers present, and wished them God-speed in their work.

Mrs. Alfred Booth then said a few parting words. She thanked the ladies present for their attendance at the Conference, and referring to remarks made by her in her opening address, she said she had then thanked the ladies who were going to read papers for the help they would give. Now she could express her thanks more sincerely for those papers, each of which had been helpful in its own branch of work.

The Hon. Maude Stanley proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs. Alfred Booth, which was seconded by Mrs. Bunting, and enthusiastically received, and unanimously carried. A vote of thanks was also given to the two Secretaries of the Union, Mrs. Allan Bright and Miss M. M. Graham, and to Mrs. Rendall, the Secretary of the Hospitality Sub-Committee.

During the afternoon the following resolution was put to the Meeting and carried—"That we who have attended this Conference will endeavour to put a stop to the sweating system, by refusing to deal at shops were we believe underpaid work to be sold."

The successful proceedings of the Conference were appropriately terminated by a Conversazione in the evening, given by the President, Mrs. Alfred Booth.

MEETING OF LADY MANAGERS, MISTRESSES, AND ASSISTANT MISTRESSES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS,

On Wednesday, November 11th, 1891.

The chair was taken by Mrs. Gilmour, supported by Mrs. Creighton (*Peterborough*), Miss Sturge (*Member of Bristol School Board*), Miss Lumsden (*late Head Mistress of St. Leonard's School for Girls, St. Andrew's*), Miss Burton (*Member of Edinburgh School Board*), Mrs. Lindsay (*Glasgow*) Miss Yelf (*late Principal of the Edge Hill Training College*), Mrs. Hallowes (*Birmingham*), Miss Davies (*Member of Liverpool School Board*), Mrs. S. G. Rathbone, Mrs. Hawe, Mrs. Healey, Mrs. Rendall, Mrs. McCunn, Mrs. Sprunt, Mrs. Reg. Bushell, Miss M. Graham, Miss Hale (*Principal of Edge Hill Training College*), Miss Tucker (*Board Inspector*), Miss Coombe, Mrs. Dyson, Mrs. S. Schwabe, Miss Stevenson (*Member of Edinburgh School Board*), Mrs. Byers (*Belfast*), Miss Florence Melly, and other ladies.

Mrs. Gilmour, in taking the chair, said it gave her great pleasure to preside over such a large and important educational meeting, and after a few more words she called upon Mrs. Creighton to speak.

The subject of Mrs. Creighton's address was: "The Teacher's Aim," and while fully recognising the difficulties which a teacher has to encounter in her daily work, she proceeded to point out what, to her mind, was the principal duty of a teacher to her pupil. A teacher's duty was to fit the child for the future battle of life, to impress upon it a sense of duty and of the dignity of work, and of the superiority of the mind over the body. A teacher must not look upon the child's mind as a kind of mental portmanteau to be stocked with a certain amount of knowledge to last it through life, but to try and implant in its mind a love of knowledge, to teach it to discriminate between good and bad, and so to mould the child's character that it would appreciate the necessity of daily com-

munion with the thoughts and teachings of great men. To do that, however, teachers must themselves have a love of their work, and a true appreciation of what they seek to implant. The next point was that a teacher must endeavour to get such an influence over the child that when she goes home from school every day, that influence would still be with her in her home life; and that she should go to her daily lessons with a higher sense of the importance of them. Of course, in this, the teacher may be in a measure handicapped by the action of the parents, and this was one of the greatest difficulties.

THE TRIALS AND DIFFICULTIES OF A TEACHER'S LIFE.

Miss STURGE.

Though not a teacher myself, I am a member of a Board with some hundreds of teachers in its service, and thus I cannot help getting to know something about the trials and difficulties which teachers have to encounter, and I am glad to have the opportunity of expressing my sympathy with them in their arduous work. Their difficulties may be divided into two classes, those which come from outside the school, and those which arise within it. In the first category we find that terrible Code, which is so complicated and difficult to remember. The worst of it is that no sooner have we got used to it, than suddenly it is all changed, our ideas are all upset, and we have to accustom ourselves to a quite different state of things. It is impossible not to wish sometimes that there were some finality about the Code, and that we could be set free from the bondage of perpetual changes.

Then there is the annual worry of the Inspection. I know how teachers look forward with dread to this ordeal the whole year, and sometimes almost work themselves into a fever about it. And when things do not go quite as they wish, they are tempted to blame the Inspector. Now, I believe that, as a rule, Inspectors are thoroughly fair and impartial. I know that they consider most carefully, and hesitate for a long time before awarding the mark which may obviously affect a teacher's future. I think teachers are inclined to fear the Inspector too much. After all we can but do our best; let us do it, and leave the rest.

Many mistresses have much to put up with from the parents of the children in their schools. I know that often parents, especially those of the lower class, resent what the teachers are doing for the good of their children, and show their resentment by coming and abusing the mistress, sometimes with very bad language, and causing her much annoyance. I think every teacher should try to cultivate good relations with the parents, and, generally speaking, if, after a short time, the latter see that a mistress is not capricious, but really anxious for the children's welfare, they will come round to her side, and support instead of thwarting her efforts. Managers will always back up their teachers in any just and right exercise of their authority over the children in their schools.

Then come the difficulties from inside the school. The first and greatest of these is that of dealing with the children, who often enough come from the worst of homes, and who are naturally utterly untrained, and with the seeds of evil already implanted in them. The teacher must act a mother's part to these children, and try to train them as they cannot be trained at home. In Board Schools, at any rate, however bad children may be, it is impossible to expel them, and the question has to be faced how to manage them without the excessive use of corporal punishment, which we all deprecate. We need moral force in dealing with such; that power of influencing others, which some possess in so great a degree. I suppose that in all schools there is some kind of religious teaching; and I think that a good teacher, even if she be debarred from inculcating dogma, will yet take the opportunity of the Bible lesson to instil lessons of truthfulness, honesty and uprightness into the minds of the children under her care. Another difficulty, which may seem a minor one, but which is sometimes a real trial, is the lack of cleanliness among the children. I am sure that teachers have often to go through a great deal on this score, especially in schools situated in the poorer parts of a town, and it is not to be wondered at, if we have seen the sort of homes they come from. But I speak from experience when I say that teachers have this matter to a considerable extent in their own hands. I have seen a school where the girls were dirty and ill-cared for, quite change its character after being placed in charge of a mistress who made a point of the girls being clean. Even in schools in the most neglected neighbourhoods a mistress can do much in this way. And a most beneficial influence may be exercised on the homes near such a school; for when the mothers find that their children are

expected to be clean, they begin to take more care of themselves and their houses, and thus a mistress may become a real reformer in her district.

Then with regard to the monotony of the work. It cannot be said that the work of the head teachers is exactly monotonous. They are liable to only too many interruptions, but for the assistants it really is so. It must be most tedious to go over the same ground so often; no sooner to have carried one class through a standard, than to have to begin the weary round again with another, only to see them pass to another's care just as they are beginning to make a little progress. I think that head teachers might consider their assistants a little more in this matter, and allow them to change their classes from time to time, so as to give a little more variety to their work. It would be better both for them and for their children.

But after all, in spite of its trials and difficulties, the teacher's is a noble work. Parents and teachers together have the making of the England of the future in their hands, and often the share of the teacher is the larger. The children who are by-and-bye to take our places are ours to influence for good or evil. We wish that every generation should be better than the last; that our children should grow up better men and women than we are ourselves, and there can be no greater or more inspiring work than doing all that lies in our power to bring about this end, and so to help to make the England of the future a better, brighter, happier country than the England of to-day.

Mrs. Healey next spoke. She said there was one thing of which she wished to speak, and that was the Examination. She wanted the teachers to try and put the examination out of their minds, and work with another object than merely for a good return. She remembered once putting a question to a bright little girl in the fourth standard as to why she was to mind her pronunciation, and the answer was, "For the Examination." Another answered, "For the Inspector!" She wished the teachers to feel that they had a higher duty than this, that their duty was to the child itself. Teachers must remember that they are the mental custodians of the nation. They must remember that they have to a certain extent a special influence over the children, and must strive to make little men and women of them instead of little brutes; and only by constant teaching can they be brought to understand this.

Mrs. Byers (*Belfast*) remarked that to her mind the work of a teacher was a holy one. She thought that all

sympathy should be extended to teachers. She was thankful for the larger sympathy which was to-day extended to the teacher, and also that she had lived to see their work being better understood and appreciated.

Mrs. PARROTT said that being the oldest teacher in Liverpool she had much experience, and she quite agreed with the remarks made by the ladies who had spoken previously. She, as a teacher, knew what power a teacher had to correct the faults in the children. Certainly, that formed a great portion of the teacher's work, "but there is," she said, "that terrible Code which was spoken of, which must be studied, or at the end of the year your managers will say: 'Your report is not what it ought to be.'" Teachers were willing to do their best for the children, but they must hurry on, the reading must be perfect, the pronunciation must be perfect, and the children are so keen that they know they are taught for the Inspection and for the Examination. But at the same time, many teachers did spend time in correcting the faults of the children; and she herself, notwithstanding all the trials of a teacher's life, still loved teaching, and loved it for its own sake. She concluded her remarks with the observation that a meeting like the present one should inspire the teachers with the thought that in the future they would have more sympathy, greater scope, and pleasanter times.

Miss YELF said she knew it was hard work preparing the children for the examination. She had long known Mrs. Parrott, and knew that she certainly thought far more of the children's welfare than she did of the Inspection. She had also had a great deal to do with teachers, and she thought that the most tiresome day might become pleasant if begun by prayer. If a day was begun with prayer it could not go on badly. The school goes on in the morning for a few hours, and then a hymn is sung, and the children are dismissed. Again, the afternoon is begun in the same way, and when with the hymn and the prayer the closing comes, and the teacher goes home, she will say her trials have been great, but they have been for the good of the children, and her work will bring its own reward.

ON THE PLACE OF LITERATURE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

Miss LUMSDEN.

Compared with the many weighty subjects which are under discussion at this Conference, it may perhaps seem that the subject on which I have chosen to speak to-night, "The place of Literature in Elementary Schools," is but a trifling one, and, indeed, I greatly fear lest, in my hands, it may fail to establish its claim to any higher consideration. But if my fellow teachers who listen to me now are in sympathy with me, I trust they will fill up for themselves, in thought, what is wanting in my spoken words.

We are all agreed, I suppose, at least in theory, that the main end and aim of education is, not to cram our children with information, but to make them good men and women, in a word, to build up character. But if we grant this, the claim of literature to a high, if not the highest, place in school teaching is granted too, for no other subject which can be taught has so direct an influence on character as literature. Not history, for history, untouched by the magic glow of literature, may be a mere dry record of facts. Not arithmetic, arithmetic may make a boy or girl a good clerk, or book keeper, but it has no tendency to make them good citizens. No more, it may be objected, will literature of necessity make them good citizens. No, but yet it is much that this, nothing less, is its aim, and it is hardly likely to fail entirely in what is its direct and definite aim.

But does literature seem too big a word, an absurd word to use when we speak of the education of small children, the children too of poor parents, artisans, factory hands, ploughmen, men and women who live, as we say, from hand to mouth, battling daily to keep the grim wolf, poverty, outside the door? Is literature only a luxury for the rich, and have the poor neither time, aptitude, nor necessity for it? But if the end of education is to mould character, no means to this great end can be neglected by the poor any more than by the rich. Nay, the poorer a child is, and the shorter therefore is the time which he can spend in school, the more imperative is it that no moment of this time should be wasted over mere childish babble, not worthy of the name of literature, but that from the

first good literature, the best of its kind, should be set before him. Now it is a question whether our school manuals will bear criticism on this point. I was lately looking over the six Readers which are in use in the schools of Scotland. I do not know whether the same manuals are in use in England, probably not, but the standard of the literature in the manuals of both countries is no doubt much the same, and it seemed to me that not until Standard IV. is reached, is any good poetry whatever set before the children. The manuals for the younger standards are full of trash. Little didactic verses, supremely dull and uninteresting, about early rising, or about sowing spelt with an "*o*," and sewing spelt with an "*e*," rhymes which tag "Mamma" and "*are*" together, are neither inspiriting nor improving. With Standard IV., better things begin; and yet one cannot but wonder on what principle pieces like Moore's "*Peri*," and L. E. L.'s "*Soldier's Grave*," have been selected for Standard VI., out of the vast mass of our splendid English poetry. Nor is it a small thing to desire that the spirit of our best and noblest poetry should be, as it were, wrought into our children's characters, It is on the contrary, a thing more than ever needful in our times. For, if I may say it without offence, without being misunderstood, it seems to me that our great towns, and London above all, are at this moment pouring out a flood of vulgarity over the whole country—a flood which, unless our schools do yeoman's work in stemming it, will before long disastrously affect our national speech, and with it our national literature, and that which is bound up with it—which is at once the creator and the creation of our national literature—our national character. Let me read a few words of Ruskin's on the point, taken from his lecture on the "Relation of Art to Morals." "Every beauty possessed by the language of a nation is significant of the innermost laws of its being. Keep the temper of the people stern and manly; make their associations grave, courteous, and for worthy objects; occupy them in just deeds; and their tongue must needs be a grand one. . . . . All great languages invariably utter great things, and command them . . . . the breath of them is inspiration because it is not only vocal, but vital." Do not misunderstand me here, I am not saying one word against dialects. Dialects express, as it were, the national life and character in detail. It is, I think, matter for regret, it is the one harm that schools do, that where schools are established, dialect seems doomed to die. The nation will be the poorer when all its varying richness of dialect is gone.

I wish teachers would make themselves the friends of local dialects, and by any little device in their power, such as requiring from a child dialectical synonyms for the classical English of books, try to keep the old racy words and idioms alive. Dialect is never vulgar, but slang constantly is. Slang expresses the vulgar thoughts of a vulgar mob, whose ideals of beauty and of enjoyment are too often those of the gin palace.

We hear a great deal now-a-days about Technical Education, and we do not hear too much. Its importance we must all admit. But technical education, after all, can do no more than develop the lower faculties of the brain, together with deftness of hand and quickness of eye. It cannot develop imagination, and sympathy, all those higher powers of brain, and all those moral qualities of the heart, without which the lower faculties themselves become stunted. Literature alone, of all the subjects we can definitely teach, can do this. And if we neglect this higher development, we shall fail even of that material success at which we aim. But even supposing that, through devoting ourselves to technical education, we once more headed the march of material progress in Europe, would this make us a happy, would it even make us a great nation? In an age of material prosperity, with its terrible contrasts of enormous wealth on one side, and grinding poverty on the other, we must all desire to fill up, as far as may be, the gulf that yawns between classes, especially between the wealthy and those hapless toilers who are as truly sacrificed to the luxury and superficial refinement of our times, as was the great army of the slaves, with their unspeakable, unimaginable sufferings, to the culture and luxury of the ancient world. But to speak of filling up that gulf entirely, of levelling up or levelling down, is a dream, and more vain than a dream. The truth is that to be rich, to be even comfortable, as the phrase is—for comfort is as relative a term as wealth, and must remain so—is not the be-all and the end-all of human effort. Poverty is not the worst of evils. From among the ranks of the poorest have arisen names which are the glory of nations. What we want to find is some secret which shall deliver us, poor and rich alike, from this dependence upon the beggarly elements of material well-being. That secret is a great one. I cannot do more here than just touch upon it. But is not a part of this secret to keep the mind open to all good impressions, armed against all bad ones; to care for and be interested in things which are worth caring for; to learn how to employ leisure delightfully; and to find amusement which is profitable for mind and character? Is not this

what Sir Walter Scott called "the education of the heart," without which, he said, "everything else was moonshine?" Let me remind you, too, of another wise saying—you will find it quoted in Mr. John Morley's admirable essay on the Study of Literature, which I should like to recommend all those of you to read who do not already know it—that of Vauvenargues: "Great thoughts come from the heart." And from what source shall we draw this education of the heart more naturally than from noble literature? Do not let us, in the struggle for worldly advantage, and in the culture of those faculties which may, we hope, command material prosperity, forget or neglect that unrivalled instrument which in our national literature we possess for the building up of character—character which, after all, is the one essential thing both for our children themselves, and for our country, to whose citizenship they are born.

Miss BURTON (*member of the Edinburgh School Board*), was the next speaker, and her subject was "Elementary Technical Education." Miss Burton advocated technical education in the schools, as, to her mind, the children were capable of being taught in this manner from their earliest years. As an illustration, she cited the baby in arms who would throw down his toys again and again that they might be handed back to him. This was technical education. Nature teaches the child; and even the little gutter children who immerse their leathern suckers in the puddles, and stick them to the sidewalks, show a certain amount of technical education. Much could be done in this way to make the child useful; and if the boys were taught rough carpentering, and the girls the working of a sewing machine (how to take it to pieces and clean it), and other household mechanism, it would tend greatly to develop in them useful habits. Kindergarten was also a very useful mode of instruction for the children; and Miss Burton expressed great satisfaction that it was now so much used, and that the Liverpool teachers had made such good use of it.

Mrs. LINDSAY, in opening her remarks, said she did really not see why she should be called upon. She had never been a teacher, nor a member of a school board, nor a manager of a school. She had hoped in the morning that she might be able to say a word about school children, but the ground had been cut from under her by Mrs. Creighton's paper, and there was really nothing left for her to say, excepting that it seemed to her that some people seemed to think that parents should be at a discount with their children, and that the best thing which can be done for the child is to let the parents have as little to

do with it as possible; and on one point a great many seem to agree that if you have taken the children away from the parents you have done a great thing; but this was not right, as the parents and the teachers should work together. The teacher's duty was to improve the mind of the child, and to teach it to be useful, so that when it left school it might still carry with it a beneficial result of her teaching. The teacher should play a great part in the lives of the children, and not owing to what they say, but by what they are themselves. In small country places one good teacher will stamp a whole generation of children. She called upon teachers to remember their high calling, and to remember that we have the men and women of the next generation in our schools and in our homes. Some people say thirty years is a generation; and when thirty years have gone, if we are here, we shall have done our best work. God has put these children into our hands, and parents and teachers must work together in sympathy, and train up these children's lives for God and for their country.

Miss Davies (*of the Liverpool School Board*), and Miss Flora Stephenson (*Member of the Edinburgh School Board*), spoke a few words.

MEANS FOR KEEPING UP INFLUENCE OVER GIRLS WHEN THEY LEAVE SCHOOL.

Miss YELF.

The pleasure I feel in once more meeting old friends, fellow-workers, and pupils, is heightened by the fact that this gathering of managers and teachers forms one of the strongest and most important in connexion with the Conference.

None will recognize more fully than they that "Union is strength," and that *workers*, as well as those with whom they work, need sympathy and encouragement. The object of the Union is to afford both.

There is no need to dwell on the work of those connected with schools, the few words I have to say is to be more on the outside of school influence—"On the means for keeping up influence after school is over." No matter how the subject is looked at, there are difficulties on all sides, which fall under one of two heads:—(1) Lack of time and opportunity, however strong the wish, to follow up those who leave school. (2) Lack of desire on the part of scholars to be looked after.

Great, however, is the necessity for not allowing these obstacles to stand in the way. Remember that: (1) Old friends are better than new ones. (2) Earnest teachers make great strides in girls' affections, and can more easily influence them than strangers. (3) When the character of a girl is understood, it is only a matter of tact in influencing for good. (4) The age at which girls leave school is the most critical of their lives, and *needs* to be watched, in order that the feeling of independence may not lead to thoughtlessness. (5) The many openings for the employment of girls foster this independence, and often place girls in dangerous positions. (6) Long hours at work, distance from home, a craving for some excitement after hours of work, tend to lessen *home restraint*, and need to be considered in order to maintain influence over girls. (7) If lack of restraint, thoughtlessness, or ignorance do not lead to absolute wrong-doing, or into perilous positions, they often result in a feeling of desolateness, a longing for sympathy, a craving for a friend who might set matters smooth and right.

This is especially brought home to workers among girls who are friendless. As a delegate from S. Michael's Home for Friendless Girls, in Salisbury, I might tell you many sad stories all tending to prove that sympathy and help at the right moment often saves soul and body.

And what could be reported of S. Michael's is only a grain of sand in the great mountain of distress that needs to be removed by co-operation of workers.

Look down the list of institutions represented at this Conference to get some idea of what has to be done, and is done, and then, the thought will return that under all these efforts there must be a strong stream of sympathy to carry individuals to a safe haven. Indeed, the one great need is sympathy. Managers and teachers have the high privilege of being the *first* friends of children (apart from the home, of course, where children are blessed with good parents).

Now comes what is the most difficult point to settle, and what will give the opening for discussion on this matter. *How* to carry on the influence once started in the schoolroom?

In *small* districts this is not difficult—personal intercourse with parents, friends, and employers, and the ease with which old scholars can be reached, adds a great pleasure to managers and teachers.

In *large centres* the difficulty amounts almost to an impossibility, as far as the teacher is concerned, but here comes in

the value of our Union. Teachers cannot follow up individuals, societies and unions do. Teachers cannot be at hand to rescue from danger, other helpers can.

Meetings and Conferences make known what can be done, and among managers and teachers there will be thankful hearts that such agencies for good exist. Miss F. Melly will kindly tell you of the scheme at Harrington School.

The practical outcome of a meeting of workers in schools must be, that there shall be an endeavour to :—

(1) Establish such sympathy during school time that girls will always feel the managers and teachers to be friends to whom they can come at any time.

(2) To prepare the older girls for the future by specially urging to habits of self-control, of self-respect, of respect for the good opinion of others, of a desire for self-improvement, of a wish to aid others in what is right and true.

(3) To allow no girl to leave school without enquiry as to what she will be doing afterwards (here school managers may be of great assistance).

(4) To encourage communication by visits, by letters, messages through friends, by a word in the street, by recalling to school treats, lending books.

(5) By recommending girls to the different agencies at work for their help. (See list of Union Continuation Classes, Recreation Classes, Clubs, Guilds, Girls' Friendly Societies, Young Women's Christian Associations, Libraries, Reading Rooms).

This meeting should give us comfort individually. Those whose lot it is to train the bright, happy girl, with means and leisure, after her school-days, will find ways of helping her into fields of usefulness. Those with the harder task before them of training our working girls and women will, I am sure, be encouraged—the younger students training for the work to enthusiasm; the older teachers, whose enthusiasm has often suffered rude wrenches, may take fresh heart; and the lady managers of schools may feel that work opens round them on all sides—work which, helping others, will help ourselves.

> Seeing good we follow good;
> Hailing light we are ourselves enlightened.

Mrs. Hallowes (*of Birmingham*). As the hour was late, Mrs. Hallowes made but a short address, in which she endeavoured to draw the attention of the teachers to the morals of the children themselves, and spoke of how in many ways the

little ones might be contaminated by bad companions and impure conversation, even when very small children. She spoke of the girls when they left school and went out into the world, of the temptations which assailed them, and how the mind of an innocent girl might be polluted, if there was not something done to teach them to guard against all such evils. For this purpose there had been formed a little band, called "The Snowdrop Band," which met on certain evenings, and in which the girls were taught to live good and pure lives; to avoid all companions whose conversation would tend to demoralise them. They were invited to bring all their troubles to their teachers, and were brought to talk of their homes and their sweethearts; and a full confidence was thus established between the teachers and the girls.

Miss FLORENCE MELLY then spoke of an "Elder Girls' Society," worked in connection with the board school of which she is a manager. The girls at present at school meet once a month under the auspices of the Liverpool Kyrle Society, to spend a "Happy evening," and the Society would be glad to arrange for such evenings at any school that would like them. The next set of girls, those from fourteen to seventeen, meet every other month in the school-room, have tea, and play games, etc.; and the next set, those from seventeen to twenty-four, meet on an evening in the alternate month for the same purpose. Each girl, during these evenings, sees the lady who is at the head of her Branch alone for a few minutes, so that she may ask for any advice or help she may require. One of the managers sees her girls at her own house any Tuesday morning, and the girls often come up in the evening as well, and the other lady sees hers at the school one morning in the week. It was impossible, owing to the numbers (now some 250 to 300) to visit every girl. Practically, all the ladies said to the girls was: "If you want any help, come to me; you have known me for many years. If you want a friend, I am ready to be yours." This offer had been made to every girl on leaving school for eight years, and the answer made to it showed how deeply these girls needed a friend, and how much good could be done with a very slight expenditure of time and labour.

The Meeting then terminated by Mrs. RENDALL proposing a vote of thanks to MRS. GILMOUR for presiding, which was carried unanimously.

REPORT OF WORKING WOMEN'S MEETING.

THE Meeting for Working Women, arranged by the Liverpool Ladies Union of Workers, took place in the Rotunda Hall, at half-past two o'clock, on Thursday, and was in every respect a most successful gathering. The Hall, which accommodates 1,500 people, was crowded to excess, many being obliged to stand. It may be useful to those who are interested in the organising of meetings of this description to know that the Hon. Secretaries of the L.L.U.W. were assisted in their efforts to reach working women and ensure their attendance by the Liverpool Bible and Domestic Mission, and by the Agents of the Town Missions and the Scripture Readers. Admission to the Hall was by ticket. Almost all the Mothers' Meetings in Liverpool were represented, and each group was accompanied by a lady in charge.

Mrs. CHARLES LANGTON *(Liverpool)*, was in the chair, and the Meeting was opened by singing the first hymn in the leaflets which had been distributed among the vast audience; after which Mrs. Langton introduced the Hon. Mrs. Maclagan in the following appropriate terms:—

In introducing Mrs. Maclagan to this large assembly, I desire to say a very few words respecting her. She is, no doubt, known to you all as the wife of the recently appointed Archbishop of our Northern Province, in which the See of Liverpool is included, and we thank her most sincerely, for sparing time to come amongst us and give this, the first Woman's Conference held in the North of England, her most valuable aid and countenance. Mrs. Maclagan's work on behalf of her poorer sisters must be known to many present, and when one in her position does so much for others, ought it not to be a stimulus to us all to go and do likewise. She has long been connected with the G. F. S., is a member of the Central Council, has devoted much time and thought and also rendered much valuable assistance to that Society. Then her work on behalf of Mothers' Unions has been admirable, and the

fact of her having, in the course of two years, 1888 and 1889, enrolled as many as five thousand mothers in Unions in different parishes in the Diocese of Lichfield, speaks for itself.

I should strongly advise anyone who has not read Mrs. Maclagan's "Earnest Words to Mothers," to do so.

Personally, I am very much indebted to Mrs. Maclagan for many valuable hints gathered from her books, and for her kindly counsel and help in connection with starting a Mothers' Union.

I hope Mrs. Maclagan will excuse me saying thus much, because we wish all here present to be aware that she speaks not only with authority, but also with a familiarity with her subject which few can claim.

The Hon. Mrs. MACLAGAN then rose, and made an address of some length, in which she spoke particularly of home life and the influence of the wife and mother upon the husband and children. The personal influence of each individual must be for good or for evil, and the responsibility of the mother, as the upbringer of the children, was strongly and plainly urged. Mrs. Maclagan begged the mothers to endeavour to carry out these ideas of responsibility in a practical manner, and referred to the duty of praying with their families, recommending a short form of prayer for daily use. She also spoke with emphasis of the importance of truthfulness on the part of the mother when answering the natural questions of her children in reference to the mysteries of life, and made an earnest appeal that young children should be brought up in habits of decency and temperance. Mrs. Maclagan touched the heart of the meeting by referring to her own home life, and to the interesting fact that she was speaking to this great audience of Liverpool working women on the anniversary of her wedding day.

Mrs. WILSON *(Sheffield)*, followed, and spoke earnestly in reference to social purity, pointing out that while much remains to be done in enforcing laws which already exist for the protection of women and girls, still, the moral sense of the community is becoming quickened, and it is the duty of working mothers to train their sons and daughters to higher standards of morality than usually prevail among the working classes.

Mrs. PERCY BUNTING *(London)*, next spoke. Her address was filled with deep sympathy for the hard-worked mothers of the industrial class, but impressed upon her hearers the benefit to the worker which follows work done, and its effect on her

conscience and heart. Mrs. Bunting urged excellence in all work undertaken by women, and referred to the improvement which has taken place of late years in the position of woman legally and educationally.

Mrs. ALFRED OSLER *(Birmingham)*, gave the last address, and called attention to sanitary matters, more especially with regard to child life. In Birmingham, the number of deaths under one year old, in 1890, was 2,592, and this enormous death-rate was exceeded by that of four other towns, Liverpool, Salford, Manchester, Sheffield. In explanation of this appalling state of things, Mrs. Osler mentioned several causes: drink, child insurance, and wrong feeding; and eloquently urged the necessity of wider knowledge of the needs of human life, and the spread of proper sanitary appliances in the homes of the working class.

Between each address hymns were sung, and there were no signs of flagging interest on the part of the women.

Mrs. BOOTH *(Liverpool)*, offered a few words of thanks to the Hon. Mrs. Maclagan and the other ladies for their addresses, and after a vote of thanks to Mrs. Langton for her very admirable occupancy of the chair, Mrs. Maclagan dismissed the meeting with the Benediction.

YOUNG LADIES' MEETING

HELD IN THE

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION LECTURE HALL,

ON FRIDAY MORNING, NOV. 13, 1891.

The chair was taken by MRS. RENDALL, who said:—I have a very few words to say to you in opening the proceedings this morning. We hope that no inconvenience has been caused by our having to change the advertised place of meeting, Mrs. Birt's Sheltering Home, for this much larger hall, kindly lent to us by the Young Men's Christian Association. And seeing so large an attendance (700 or more) I feel glad that we did decide to do so. I want to say one thing that may sound rather strange, to express our thanks to the mothers and the older ladies who have stayed away from this meeting (though some of them wanted very much to come), because they knew it to be the wish of the Conference Committee and of the speakers who are to address you, that this should be really a Young Ladies' Meeting. We all agree, do we not? that it is unsatisfactory when a "Sermon for Young Men" is attended chiefly by women. And our speakers to-day will be glad to feel that they are addressing a genuine audience of girls.

The following addresses were then given:—

1. PAPER BY MRS. ARNOLD TOYNBEE, (of *Oxford*).

ON

"THE RIGHT USE OF MEANS AND LEISURE."

YEARS ago a very simple answer would probably have been given to the question on which I have been asked to address you, "What is the right use of means and leisure?" I hope most of you are not unacquainted with that most charming little book, now nicely re-printed in its original form, "The Renowned History of Goody Two-Shoes." The old fashioned answer is given there, and a very good answer it is, "Turn not

away thy face from any poor man—give your money to feed the starving—your time to teach the ignorant." Curiously enough, it also is a strong plea for part of the more modern answer upon which I shall dwell later on—*justice*. In the quaint little pictures you see Goody Two-Shoes trotting round on works of benevolence; she teaches her ignorant childish companions under an impossible tree, dealing however with nothing much further advanced than the alphabet: the good rich man delivers her from a very cruel and wicked farmer, eventually marries her and carries her off in a coach and six. The moral of this delicately humorous story is, with many capital letters, "The Good we have is but lent us to do Good with. We receive all from the hand of God and every Person in Distress hath a just Title to a Portion of it." Very good and very simple is this; we feel ready at once to trot off and do likewise, and are sure we shall find the world rearrange itself, and wrongs shake themselves to rights.

Larger experience adds nothing to the *principles* which should guide the use of means and of leisure as shown in this last century story-book, they are as old and as changeless as that sun which shines upon the evil and the good. *Be* good—be a Goody Two-Shoes if you will;—*Do* good—give your leisure to thinking about others and their needs; then run with open hand to supply those needs as soon as you discover what they are—there you have your leisure and your means fully employed. I feel you may have already resented my reference to Goody Two-Shoes as mere trifling; but depend upon it, if you have not grown up to the habit of putting your hand in your pocket constantly for others, so constantly that you find sometimes nothing left when your hand goes in again for your own wishes, you have not yet got as far as the Goody Two-Shoes stage, and are very much behind those old-fashioned times, by no means in advance of them.

But it was the simplicity of the answer to our question in former times that I began by noticing; the change that has come to us now-a-days is that though our motives must be just the same as those old fashioned but divine ones, love to God and to our neighbour, the right way of putting them into practice we have come to see is much more difficult than it used to be. Any one who has had experience in benevolent and philanthropic work, in simple language has tried to help the poor and ignorant, knows full well the extreme difficulty of rightly using time and money on their behalf; but I think the *extent* of the difficulty will be rather a new idea to young people. There

are so many good works going on all around, that many may think they have only to cultivate the necessary self-denial, and they are sure to be able to spend their time and their money well. What the present day is really teaching us is on the contrary, the extreme difficulty of wisely spending our money, the extreme difficulty of really helping others without doing as much harm as good. Because you must understand we do not want to give money just to keep people alive and make them a little more comfortable, we want *not* to keep them as they are, but to help them to become something much better; and if giving them money keeps them in their present condition, enables them to live just as they are living, it does them harm.

I hope I shall not be getting too abstract for you to follow me, if I add what is a very constant thought with me, that our modern difficulties in doing good, which press upon some of us so heavily, come not from the world having become much more wicked, as some people would have us believe, not from the degeneracy and rottenness of the whole of modern Society as others insist upon, but from our Christian and philanthropic aims having grown so much larger. We want to do so much more now than anybody ever dreamt of in former days, our realm of action has grown as rapidly as other realms of modern life, we set ourselves a giant task—we are getting impatient that there should be any abject misery and extreme poverty amongst us, any brutalized and stunted residuum. I honestly believe that this is largely the cause of our frequent discouragement, of our painful sense of failure and difficulty; we are attempting a much bigger task than our forefathers ever took in hand, we lay hold of the most unpromising and the most degraded, and we try that they also should be turned into good citizens. In old days people acquiesced in the existence of a lost class. Had they spoken out they would have said, Some of the lower orders must be ignorant and brutal and miserable; their rough share of the world's work makes it inevitable: we'll give some of them some money, we'll even build almshouses for a few of them, but of course they'll remain much in the same state as a whole—the dirty and hard work of the world has got to be done. Yes, and so it has still to be done—but we have roused ourselves and have said in these modern times, one man's soul and body are as sacred and as precious as another's, and have set ourselves the giant task of sweeping away the degraded and the poverty-stricken as a class, saying to ourselves they must be only the exceptions, we will allow of no recognized mass of human beings leading inhuman and ungodlike lives. This

giant task—and giving away any amount of money remember, will not accomplish it—this giant task, my dear young friends, is pre-eminently *your* task to take in hand: it is you young ones who must do it—it is the task of the future. Look it well in the face and understand it for your encouragement, for it is the biggest and grandest ideal that the world has yet had—the realization, not the mere proclamation to the poor of the kingdom of heaven; and remember what I have said of the greatness of your task, against the time when in working you shall be oppressed by its difficulties and failures.

To return more specifically to our subject, we have to remember at the outset that means and leisure have in these days to justify themselves; we can find no *right* in the matter that we few favoured people should have nothing to do for our livelihood; that we should find ourselves born to leisure and a plentiful meal every day. Work at any rate *is* work however poor and humble and even dirty and loathsome it may be; work of any sort gives the world back something in return for its keep. It's a very wholesome thing to ask ourselves what are we giving back to the world in return for our very comfortable maintenance; if nothing at all, we must own within ourselves that any slatternly maid-of-all-work, though she have a smutty face and make the toughest of pastry, any coarse careless baster at a factory is of more value to the world than we are, she gets through some work at any rate, gives something for her keep—what do we give?

You might think from this that I want you all to rush off and do something—never mind what. I heard the other day of a young lady who had gone off to make matches—lucifer matches I mean—not matrimonial alliances. I am bound to say I think she had better have stayed at home. I want to advise you in exactly an opposite direction. As regards your leisure I want to suggest that you spend it first of all on yourselves. More evil is wrought from lack of thought, we know, than from all else put together. Now leisure is the one thing that gives us the opportunity to *think*, and this is why it is such a precious gift, a talent of inestimable worth. Carlyle has said "the way to save the world is to save thyself."

Not forgetting that giant task of which I spoke just now, yet believe me that the first right use of leisure is to make ourselves reasonable, thoughtful human beings,—real individuals, not a collection of atoms hurrying along together, ant-like, all after one or another little bit of business. Many men and women have from their necessary work, mechanical

work which lasts from morn till night, literally no time to think; from them we do not demand a strong individuality, though oft-times endurance and patience will give it. But of those who have leisure we expect that they should think, mark, I do not say read or study or learn sciences or master philosophy: I merely say stop and *think*, pause and just look forward and back, realize yourself as an independent unit in this great universe, isolate yourself now and again. Yes, just *think*,—I cannot say it more plainly or otherwise. In watching modern life I am more and more appalled at the number of people who do a good deal of work of one sort or another, yet who never seem to turn back on their own personality, to make themselves stand alone, in fact to *think*; and very uninteresting they all are in consequence. Leisure therefore is given us to be ourselves—to possess our souls, in Bible language. Yes, the difference in the strength and help a person may bring to others from having individuality, from standing upright upon his own legs, is extraordinary; and I believe that this strong personality, so refreshing and so helpful to come across, a wise use of leisure is the means of cultivating. Reserve time to yourself; be alone pretty often; don't always be doing things in herds; but determine that your leisure shall be leisure to make yourself deep and true, not leisure filled up with so much trivial occupation that no leisure remains. "There are some people who are busy" says Jeremy Taylor, "but it is like Domitian in catching flies."

Further, a great friend of mine who knew I was coming here to speak to you, said to me "Never mind what else you say, but tell those young people, to be sure and make themselves *charming*, that's what I always say to young people, I tell them that to be charming is their business in life." Indeed it's true that the first business of youth may well be said to be the brightening and freshening of all around them, "always put on a bit of pink ribbon" my friend would also say. Of young people we may well expect that they should make life seem pretty and gracious and hopeful and pleasant—who is to do this if not they? Leisurely employ your leisure then in being charming; put on your bit of pink ribbon; and find leisure from your own concerns to let the old share in your brightness and fun; don't make the mistake of thinking that older people do not like to sympathize with you and to have you sympathize with them. That the young should make a class to themselves, as they are rather disposed to do, is all wrong—let your leisure be leisure for the old, leisure for your

home, leisure for yourself, to make you a thinking rational creature looking straight out on God's universe for yourself, not through a thousand and one teachings and nostrums.

I have not forgotten however that I am speaking here in connection with a Conference of workers among women, that is of persons engaged in actual endeavour to do the giant task which I said was before us all; that we are met here not to exalt the contemplative life, but to confer together on the best means of actively helping the poor and depraved. But when I am urging such a use of means and leisure as shall make you thoughtful and self-denying in your own life, I am working for the same end; for believe me the very greatest hindrance to the reformation of the poorer classes is the luxury, the frivolity, the sensuality and bad taste of richer people. To go forth from a home full of thoughtlessness, of costly dress and vulgar display, of waste in eating and drinking, and expect to win young factory hands to wisdom and thrift and purity by "working among them" as the phrase is, by any number of classes and teachings and entertainments, is a sham and a delusion. I should like to make you see why this first use of means and leisure, to make ourselves wise and thoughtful and strong to bear one another's burdens, is supremely necessary in our modern society. We saw that the age which believed that just to give away money was the right use of means, is passed away. Depend upon it, all that will now do the world any good is personal service; our idea now of helping others should be to help them to do without our help. Our aim in all we do and all we give should be to enable people to do without our gifts in the future; don't imagine that the relation between you and your fellows should ever remain one of dependence; with democracy has come to us another attitude of mind. I would that the young should start with the principle of a true equality well ingrained in them. In the excellent words of the American General Sherman to his daughter, "think yourself as good as any, but never think yourself better than the poorest child of all." Your service to your poorer fellow-citizens must be that of direct friendly intercourse and sociability; you must go to them not as possessed of superior advantages which you are to pass on to them, but as one human being to another, each of whom is fighting his or her way through life with the same temptations, the same difficulties; for who shall say that there is less frivolity, less sensuality, less dissipation among the rich than among the poor?

As to friendly personal intercourse, let me turn aside for a minute to one example close at hand. We sometimes hear it said that it is so difficult for rich people to understand the feelings and the wants of another class, the two are so removed one from the other. Now are two classes far removed when they live together in the same house? What about all our domestic servants? Are not their fathers and brothers and future husbands the artisans and labourers and navvies and farmers or peasants whom we discuss and talk about, as if they were unknown people whom we had to study. Talk to and make friends with your servants—I don't say gossip with them—but establish friendly personal intercourse with them, and from them you will hear of difficulties and wants and of labour questions, why a father failed and where a brother succeeded, how a sister needs help, nay even occasionally the inside of a strike, how the quarrel first arose. While people have domestic servants in their houses, it is absurd that any should pretend they cannot get knowledge of the working classes; but it takes time—expenditure of leisure not on ourselves. Here we are at this Conference, women workers among women; alas! it is what we see of the vanity and pleasure-seeking and lack of discipline among young girls for whom we work, that makes us afraid whether we ever do any good; and alas! alas! do not servant girls see all these same defects among their young mistresses? Do you not see how you can, all of you however young, help us by a right use of your means and leisure?

To give away money directly is *not* the right use of means—the one thing I wish you to remember from all this, which I fear you must have thought a regular preachment, is to give *thought* to the expenditure of your money. You must take a great deal of trouble; you must give your own personal friendship and kindly human interest; you must think carefully that your gifts shall be such as in the long run conduce to the recipient's doing without gifts. The right use of means—the very best use of means—depend upon it, is *justice*. Do you ever grudge to give the full and fair price for a thing? full and fair wages? The right use of means is not to mind an enhanced price as the result of a rise in wages; to avoid cheap articles on the face of which is written a starvation wage; to take some trouble to find out how and where your things are made; to be liberal in your own payments, just and more than just if you can command good work.

A right use of means is to try to raise rather than lower the scale of payment for many forms of women's work, it is to encourage thorough as opposed to scamped work; real skilled handicraftsmanship, things of beauty and of excellence cannot be produced *cheap*, if you have means pay for them worthily, encourage their makers. Use your means to see justice done; has it not been known that pounds have been given in charity, and by the same person a full wage to a workman or servant refused? It has been wisely said of late years that the poorer classes don't now-a-days want charity, but they want justice. Put yourself in their place—which would you like best, a gift of money or higher remuneration? Use your means and leisure by offering means of education, technical and other, to enable better work to be produced; raise the tone and standard of your poorer neighbours, by your example and your personal intercourse; if you help them to produce more efficient work, if you give them higher aims and increased knowledge, a better wage will follow. The higher the moral worth and the personal dignity of any working man or woman, the higher remuneration he or she will soon command, the less of our gifts will he or she require; the money for this may come all the same out of our pockets; but that our working population should be better off than they are, that they should cease to require our gifts, is what we have to set before us as the distinct object of our modern civilisation. The time for all patronage is at an end—to my mind the modern patronage of the rich, posing as the cultivated who are civilising the poor from the higher level of their own accomplishments, is more offensive than the old fashioned patronage of the lord or the squire to his actual dependents, for each then knew his position, and at any rate there was no affectation about it. You must often have heard talk about modern democracy; it need be no bugbear; but it does mean that we should treat men and women in friendly intercourse as our equals, that we should first and foremost with our money *do justly*.

To right the world, which we are yet all striving to do, is a hard task, my dear young friends; don't be in too great a hurry to rush into any work, take care how you touch another human being except with the touch of simple brotherly love. Well has it been written "It's an awkward thing to play with souls, and matter enough to save one's own;" see to it that your leisure goes first to this, your means first to *doing justice*. At the end I can but come back to the simplicity of motive

with which we started; as old Jeremy Taylor wrote "No man is a better merchant than he that lays out his time upon God, and his money upon the poor."

2. Paper by Miss ALICE MALLESON *(of Croydon)*

ON

HOME READING CIRCLES.

I desire, in the twenty minutes at my disposal, to place before you as clearly and succinctly as I can, the aim and object of the National Home Reading Union—to tell you exactly what this Union is, *what* we are trying to do, and how we hope to achieve our end.

First, then. The leaders of this movement, those who three years ago started the Union, perceived that reading is not yet made the efficient means of true education that it ought to be. There never has been a time when the *facilities* for reading were greater than at present, owing to the abundance of good and cheap literature, the spread of education, and the opening of Free Libraries,—never a time, perhaps, when the rousing and vitalizing effect on the mind of good reading was more needful to counteract the deadening and numbing effect of the routine and mechanism, the hurry and pressure of modern life. Maurice says, "Every good book helps us because it makes us understand the world, ourselves, and God better, and that is what we should prize it for." Matthew Arnold says, "Culture is indispensably necessary, and culture is reading," and yet to many, the well-known words written at least two thousand years ago about "of making many books there is no end," and much study of them being a "weariness to the flesh," express I fear the secret feelings of not a few to-day! Who cannot call to mind a number of well-to-do people who never read anything, except perhaps the newspapers? Do we not all know many a comfortably-furnished house where few books indeed are seen, and those few symmetrically placed on a table, and evidently for show, and not for use? Have we not noted the curiously prevailing idea that to spend money on a book is an extravagance? How many benighted people have never experienced the quiet joy that comes from what Maurice so happily calls the "*Friendship* of Books." If in such minds the keen love of reading could be suddenly awakened, would not the way be opened to one of the highest pleasures of human life? But,

given a thirst for knowledge, a desire to read, are there not many difficulties still to contend with? With the enormous number of books to select from, especially where the time to spare in busy lives is very limited, is it not difficult *so* to select that there should be continuity, and that each book should throw light on the others, and make the reading not desultory but really profitable. Matthew Arnold qualifies his statement that "Culture is reading" with the important clause, "but reading with a purpose to guide it, and a system." It is with a deep sense of the value as an educational influence of *Home*-reading (not reading for examination but for the simple delight of self-culture) and with an earnest desire to *animate*, *foster*, and *direct* this love of reading, and to give it the vital human interest of co-operation, sympathy and mutual encouragement, that the N.H.R.U. has been founded.

I will now endeavour shortly to explain the plan adopted by the Union, but this will be found more fully enlarged upon in the programmes and papers of the N.H.R.U., obtainable at Surrey House, Victoria Embankment, London. Dr. Paton, of Nottingham, was the originator of the movement, and inspired with his spirit and purpose those who plan and work with him; Dr. Percival, Head Master of Rugby, and Dr. Hill of Downing College, Cambridge are our Chairmen, and the list of Vice Presidents and Council contain the names of many men and women notable in science, literature and education. It is with their valuable assistance, and after long and careful deliberation, that Reading courses for the year are drawn up on different important subjects adapted to the tastes and requirements of different classes of readers. These are specified as—Young People's Section, General Readers' Course, and Special Courses.

The Young People's Section is intended chiefly for readers from fourteen to eighteen who have left the Elementary and National Schools. It comprises a list of simply written but first rate books on *Natural History*, and the *Elements of Science*,—not text books, but such books as will give interest in the world we live in, and develop faculties of observation. *Biography*,—brightly written stories of lives of men and women who did noble service, and showed courage and fidelity. *Fiction* and *Poetry* of real healthy interest, and *History*, so written as to give an idea of the growth of their own nation. The Biography, Fiction and Poetry are selected, as much as possible, to illustrate the period of History given.

The General Readers' Section is intended for young

people of the more educated class, for working men and women, and for those readers who have no wish to specialize, but desire to acquire the rudiments of several subjects before attempting a more detailed study. This section also takes Science, Literature, Biography, History and Political Economy. The History, Biography, Literature and Fiction all as far as possible treat of the same period.

In both these Sections there is a list of *required* books, and a supplementary list intended for those with more leisure, but six books at least, one from each subject, must be read.

Finally, there are Special Courses designed for readers requiring a curriculum that includes the chief branches of a liberal education, Literature, Science, History and Philosophy, and contains advanced books on those subjects. Members of this section can take up one or two subjects at discretion. The courses cover three years of consecutive study, but are arranged so that they can be taken up at the beginning of each year.

Besides suggesting these carefully planned courses with their admirable lists of books, the N.H.R.U. prints each month three magazines, one for each Section, which give articles by high authorities on the six prescribed books for study, forming introductions to the books, answering questions, and solving difficulties.

Slips are also given on which members can state any difficulties that they cannot solve for themselves by encyclopœdias, etc., and send them to the Head Office, when they will be answered by some real authority on the subject.

The Union, however, aims at organizing its reading members as far as possible into Reading *Circles* under suitable leaders. These form a band of fellow students all following the same course and reading the same books. Circles are very varied in character; sometimes a band of friends—former school or college friends—unite in taking up one of the presented courses, elect a leader, and meet at each other's houses; others are formed from those who live in the same neighbourhood, especially in the country, and have met previously for other mutual interests; some have been wishing for a University Extension Course, and have not been able to form one, or are preparing themselves and their neighbours to start one.

Circles often start among Girls' Friendly Society Candidates, Girls' Clubs, and Recreative Evening Classes, these are led by someone possessing more culture—are often held by invitation at the houses of the Leaders, and are thus the means of starting valuable bonds of help and sympathy between students

possessing different intellectual advantages; while the Young People's Section enables cultured ladies to see more of and to help onwards the brighter girls who leave the Day and Sunday Schools and Evening Classes. Circles should meet once a month at least, and read together the articles in the magazine bearing on their month's study, discuss some question or problem agreed on beforehand or suggested by the month's reading, and read an essay on the subject by some member, and talk together informally on the books read, discussing any point of difficulty or interest, and agreeing what to read during the month in the books appointed.

The payment is exceptionally small for each Circle Member. In the Young People's Section 1s.; in the General Readers' 1s. 6d.; in the Special Course 3s.; and this includes the Magazine free. The books—those *required*, can be had—Young people's 3s. 4d.; General Readers' 3s. 1d.; and Special Course 3s. to 5s. for each subject.

The Special Courses are delightful for women living at home who have time at command, and for those who have just left school or college for home life. The leader does not there need to be much in advance of the other members of a circle, but merely presides. I can say from personal experience that joining a Circle adds zest, and gives a helpful stimulus and continuity to one's own reading, while the monthly meeting of the Circle gives opportunity for social intercourse with a definite object, and gives rise to interesting talk, stimulates thought and suggests new ideas, giving practice also in expressing ideas. We find that it tends to make every member read carefully, and in a way to prepare themselves for explaining their own views and predilections.

The General Readers' Circles, especially where formed of Members of Girls' Clubs, Girls' Friendly Society members or Artisans, need, to be successful, a leader rather in advance of the Circle in knowledge, one who can throw light on difficult passages, and knows where fresh information can be got. It is often helpful to get at pictures or engravings of places, buildings or celebrated people referred to in the month's reading,—to provide good maps, classical and biographical dictionaries, etc., and to stimulate members to be thorough and exact; but this must, of course, be all done in cheerful good fellowship, and what a splendid education for the leader to feel the difference between knowing and being able to make others know!

I think, however, that this Union has the Young People's Section most at heart. Its founders felt keenly that reading

may be used for evil as well as for good—that there is a large supply of debasing and pernicious literature ready to excite the curiosity and attract the imagination of the young people, if we do not give them the taste for something better.

It is no slight responsibility to have given the facility and to have awakened the appetite for reading in many millions of children in our elementary schools alone, and we have no right to leave them to themselves directly they leave our schools, without any guidance as to what to choose and what to reject.

Here is surely a very pleasant and valuable employment for those endowed with youth and leisure. I have been greatly impressed during this Conference with the amount of valuable work done by young ladies in Liverpool to brighten the lives of working girls, and I hope they may find in the N.H.R.U. a valuable adjunct to such organizations for spreading culture. For example, they can get together a number of the young people of both sexes who have just left school—these are at a most critical age, when character and future destiny are often decided—try to refine their taste and to quicken their intellect, and to give them delightful associations with good reading. You must dispense with everything that suggests lessons and schoolroom, you must appeal to their heart and imagination, and have a ready sympathy and a quick understanding of where the difficulties lie. We have to remember what St. Dunstan said, that though a key may be of gold, it is of no use unless it fit the wards of the lock; we must get at the hearts and minds of the class. Language is the only instrument to education, and yet the partially educated have such a scant vocabulary, and are quite ignorant of the meaning of half the words you would naturally use. If you find that they have not understood the book, take any passage that puzzled them, and encourage them to translate it into the simplest Saxon words they can find. This is capital practice. It requires thought and organization to take such a Circle; it is well to vary the meeting in all sorts of ways, by reading aloud passages they have admired, by showing pictures and photographs that illustrate. It is well to prepare bright descriptions of the foreign places mentioned, to ask what surprised, or pleased, or puzzled them in the books, to tell them all you can about the authors, and in fiction to bring out by easy talk the meaning and intention of the book. It is very helpful to give Magic Lantern illustrations of the subjects of the books. This is sometimes done for a gathering of a good many Young People's Circles on an opening or closing night. It is also useful to let them get up a few

Tableaux Vivants, making them pick out suitable historical subjects, and find out for themselves what the costumes and surroundings should be.

Many suggestions are given in our Young People's Section's admirable papers, which I should recommend those to read who think of taking classes. I may remark that, small as the 1s. subscription is, we have found it necessary with poorer members to take ½d. a week instead, and to lend the books, or get them placed in the School Board Library.

In closing I would reiterate the need of sympathetic guidance to make *reading* as useful and attractive as it might be to the young and partially educated. Edward Thring says—"If I had the power I would, during the first years for high and low, banish lesson books in the ordinary sense of the word, for reading books, only carefully selected, carefully edited, with plenty of supplementary notes, and *teachers*—teachers, not hearers of lessons;—and teachers," he says "are a rare product, a combination of heart, head and favouring circumstances."

The N.H.R.U., then, is intended to be a friendly association for mutual help and sympathy among those who value the friendship and the company of books. Its head centre is in London, where the most earnest work and thought is given to suggesting a valuable choice of books, to enable young students to make the best use of their precious reading hours, so as to give a continuity and definiteness to study and prevent waste of energy. Every member can do something to forward the aims of the Society he has joined by making it known, by carrying out its purpose, and by holding out the hand of fellowship to others less cultivated than himself. It is quite possible to be a Member of one Circle and a Leader of another, and thus when a member thoroughly realises the delight of really making use of books, and assimilating the ideas and thoughts which ennoble and dignify human life, he will feel, we hope, bound to try and guide some less fortunate fellow-traveller into the same delightful free road to richer mental life and knowledge of God's beautiful world.

I close with Mazzini's fine saying:—"The best education will ever be not what teaches most, but that which imparts the greatest capacity for thought."

Mrs. Rendall, speaking on this paper, mentioned the case of a Girton girl, now married to a Professor in one of our manufacturing towns. This young lady, at the evening club of factory girls which she attends, has a small circle of girls whose great delight it is to read with her scenes from the plays

of Shakespeare. It seems wonderful that factory girls can enter into and enjoy Shakespeare; of course, as suggested by Miss Malleson, part of the pleasure consists in dwelling upon the plot and its surroundings, putting the difficult language into other words, etc.

3. Paper by Mrs. MOLESWORTH.

on

"FICTION: ITS USE AND ABUSE."

I must confess when I first read the words—"a twenty minutes paper on modern Literature," I felt somewhat appalled. A subject so vast and wide-reaching, so intimately connected and interwoven with every part of our modern life, would take more than twenty *years* to grasp in any efficient way; would require certainly more than twenty *months* of study and reflection, before any one could hope to have anything worth listening to to say, even on any given department of it.

And the more I thought about it the more I realised the impossibility of even satisfactorily discussing a single book—were it but a modern novel of any worth—within such limited bounds. And in the end I decided that the little I could say must be restricted not merely to a survey, however superficial, of the special section of literature of which perhaps I could say the most—I mean fiction in general—but to still more defined and narrower compass—to one aspect of modern fiction, namely: its influence on girls. In other words I propose to give you a few hints, a little simple advice, perhaps one or two broad rules for your guidance and consideration, as to the use to be made of this great and important part of nineteenth century literature.

And simple as these suggestions may be I trust you will find them sound, so far as they go. They are based on my own experience, and there are cases in which I do not altogether agree with the rather depressing old saying that "experience" is a boon each human being can "only buy for him or herself." I personally come across many owners of young shoulders now-a-days, willing, and not only willing, but gratefully ready, to weight their heads with some of the convictions arrived at by those of their older friends.

Fiction, as we all know, in the sense in which we use it in the present day, is a new growth. One does not need to go

very far back into the social life of the past, or to read much in any history to be satisfied as to this, and like all influences, new and old, it has its good side and its bad—its use, but also its grave possibilities of abuse and misuse. I have more than once heard it said that it would be by no means a matter for regret, but in many ways the reverse, if during one whole year no new books were to be written. I certainly think it would be a great cause for congratulation if for some such given time no new *novels* were to appear! There would be leisure then for a thorough weeding out of those already in existence, which would, I think, be salutary for authors as well as for readers; weeding-out always *is* effected in time, it is true, but the ever increasing mass of publications renders it more and more difficult. And meanwhile it is melancholy to reflect on the enormous waste of time and energy on books that are even less worth reading than writing. For after all, though I would be the last to encourage or urge young people with no special gift, or no special reason for imagining they may have such a gift though dormant, to rush into print, still the doing so is sometimes a very wholesome lesson. *No* book can be written without a good deal of patience and toil, and except in wrong-doing, patience and toil are never altogether thrown away. And nothing tests the reality of literary powers like seeing one's productions in print—unless, it may be, the humiliation of finding the result of one's labours ruthlessly cut to pieces, or still worse, altogether ignored. For where there is real talent these trials often serve but as a spur to renewed effort.

This increase of books of fiction—tales and stories of every kind, more especially novels, not to mention children's books with which just now we are scarcely concerned—is almost incredible. Even forty or fifty years ago, when the three-volumed novel was already fairly launched, and circulating libraries on a small scale had been for some time in existence, the number of tales and stories was infinitesimal compared with to-day. And in another way fiction was of much less importance as a factor in social life. Novels, as a rule, at that time, were so poor. With the exception of the works of a very few leading authors, the run of them was both dull and uninteresting, exceedingly untrue to nature, badly written, and *terribly* sentimental. The word "romance," which tells its own tale, had not yet altogether gone out of fashion. I do not think many of these second or third-rate—no rate at all, we should now dub them—productions would find much favour with the girls of the present day. There is no doubt whatever

that the whole level of fiction—the higher ground having been first sighted by some great pioneers such as Charlotte Brontë, Dickens, Thackeray, Harriet Martineau; a little further back by Sir Walter Scot, Miss Austen, Miss Edgeworth (whose "Helen," a novel of almost typical excellence, is far less known than it should be); a little later on by Mrs. Gaskell, Anthony Trollope, Charles Kingsley, Miss Thackeray, Charles Reade, Miss Muloch, Miss Yonge, Mrs. Oliphant, Dr. George Macdonald and by that time already many others—the whole level has risen incalculably. Now-a-days it would take nearly all the minutes at my disposal merely to enumerate the *names* of existing novels of unquestionable merit, both English and American. And among the authors of these, I may remark parenthetically, not a few good judges place women writers, led by George Eliot, in the foremost rank. These greater novelists are followed by an innumerable crowd of smaller ones, and many a one whose productions would earlier in this century have been looked upon, and rightly, as a masterpiece. And it is *because* the level has so risen, just because there are so very many books of fiction worth reading, that the subject requires such serious consideration; that it behoves us, out of much that is good, to choose the best, and not only the best in the abstract, but to find out what is best for *us*; and that we are left without excuse if ever we are guilty of reading a book that is in any sense *bad*. For, of course, the bad has come with the good. With the improvement both in matter and literary skill has crept in a great wave of false cleverness, of writing for effect and notoriety, instead of from any higher motive or true love of art; of pandering to public taste already satiated with too much light and ephemeral literature, and ever seeking for new excitement—in a word, what has been called the "sensational school" in fiction, though in using this well-worn expression, I do so only in its objectionable sense. For it covers a wide field, and I should be very sorry to be supposed to refer to the many wholesome and harmless as well as clever novels which yet, as is rather to be regretted, must, technically speaking so to say, be classed as belonging to that school.

There are a good many things I should like to impress upon girls with regard to novel or story-book reading. I can only touch on the most important. And first of all comes a very common-place piece of advice, almost, indeed, a truism. Never forget that reading fiction is to be looked upon as a *recreation*. There are, it is true, some novels—among them I might mention Mr. Pater's "Marius the Epicurean," perhaps

Mr. Shorthouse's "John Inglesant"—which are hardly to be ranked as such. They are certainly not "light" reading, however beautiful. Such books are the product of immense learning and research and profound scholarship. To be read, understood, and admired as they deserve, they must be *studied*. But as regards fiction in general, if it is to fall into its right place as an influence for good on a girl, it should be looked upon as among the sweetmeats of her life. Otherwise it not only unfits one for graver reading, and most probably interferes practically with duties not to be set aside, but it actually loses its own charm if indulged in too much or at unseasonable hours. First thing in the morning and last at night seem to me very prominent among these unsuitable times. Not only do we owe our very first and last waking thoughts to the best and highest interests of all, but besides this, a habit of novel reading in the *forenoon* leaves one in a curiously unready and desultory condition for the day's work, and sitting up late at night over an interesting or exciting tale is equally sure to make one's brain unhealthily tired and listless.

As to what fiction to read, I would, to start with, strongly advise a girl on first beginning to feel her own way a little in book-land, to read some of the best older novels. Sir Walter Scott is sadly out of fashion I know. Young people find him woefully dull. But I cannot believe that young human nature has changed so extraordinarily as all that in half a century or less. I fear the mischief is almost entirely due to premature and perhaps indiscriminate indulgence in novels while still very young; even in some cases before childhood is really past. If girls had as few books as their grandmothers in *their* youth, fresh from school-work and with unspoilt taste, I think most of them would be as susceptible to the wonderful charm of the great northern wizard as were these grandmothers in their day. Indeed, I have seen it tested—some young people I know were brought up on the continent under rather "old-fashionedly" strict surveillance. Story-books of any kind were rare, novels unknown. Just as they were growing up, a return to England opened out a wide field to them, and as they were wisely directed, the Waverley novels were almost their first pasture-ground. I can scarcely exaggerate, and shall never forget, the delight and enjoyment these boys and girls found in them. Nor has this freshness of taste ever been altogether lost. I think the restricted story reading of their earlier youth has not proved a subject of regret.

And close upon the Waverleys come others, varying so

widely that no one can complain of monotony in our older fiction, though its amount may be limited. Dear Miss Austen for one; "The Newcomes," "Pendennis," the almost embarrassing wealth of Charles Dickens' books, leading us on gradually to the later novelists of this century, who one by one have been canonised by the slow but sure decision of time as "standard authors" whose works will "live." Along with this reading, or interspersed with it, it may be well to divert yourself now and then, in anticipation as it were, with a present day novel. But when you begin with these, I would earnestly advise you to ask advice and direction. Do not be in a hurry to read a book just because "everybody" is reading it; do not feel ashamed *not* to have seen the book of the season. It may sometimes prove a very blessed thing for you never to see it at all. Far better miss altogether the reading of the cleverest book that ever was written, than soil your mind and memory in *the very least;* far better even to be laughed at as prudish or behind the day, than risk any contact with the mental or moral pitch which is so *very* hard quite to rub off again. For though, taken in the mass, our English fiction is not often, thank God, open to the terrible verdict that must be passed on that of some other nations, there are a great many novels that are not *good*, where no real belief or nobility of principle underlies the cleverness which leaves a young mind confused as to what is "good," or what the writer means one to think so,—or worse still, insinuates a strange chaotic distress as to whether right *is* right any longer, or wrong wrong. I think, though they may not be obtrusively so, we who are Christians *must* call such books "bad." For remember, it is not writing about bad things that is necessarily bad. As girls grow older they have to face evil in many forms in real life, and even sometimes its delineation in fiction. But it should be recognized *as* evil, as the powerful yet miserable thing we have to do battle with while life lasts; never as a skilfully draped and dressed-up figure which is to be misnamed "good." Nor, even when *recognised* as evil should its deformities be unnecessarily dwelt upon: the doing so is one of the worst of the morbid tendencies of present-day fiction, and can do us no good. It may possibly in some cases bring home his own degradation to the hardened and stupefied conscience of a drunkard to see it portrayed in its dreadful reality—though even this is an open question—but supposing it were ever our painful task to help any such unhappy ones, I do not think we should do it any the better from having studied some morbidly accurate picture of this terrible vice in a novel—

French or English. For, to my sorrow, I could name some recent English novels, written I am assured with the best motives, and supposed to be suited to young readers, which I should shrink from putting into the hands of such, almost more than an honestly coarse mediaeval romance.

But having sought and received wise and at the same time sympathetic counsel as to your choice of books, do not keep yourself too much in leading strings. Do not be afraid to form and to hold—while always open to correction or suggestions, or readjustment of your views—*your own opinion.* You have several things to consider, not only what is good in the abstract, but as I said before what is good for *you,* what you really enjoy, what you feel you profit by. Nothing is more pitiful or absurd than to hear a young person, parrot-like, praising or trying to be enthusiastic about some book he or she neither admires nor understands, just because it seems the thing to do. One of the very cleverest and most cultivated women I know, is not ashamed to own when the subject comes up, that she has never been able to derive any kind of pleasure from the writings of Charles Dickens. And, to me personally still more astonishing, I *have* met people who found "Pride and Prejudice," and "Northanger Abbey" very flat. I myself feel the same want of attraction in some American novelists whose genius is incontestable. We are not all made alike, and even if one's own want of appreciation of books that should be admired is somewhat humiliating, it is better to be humiliated than not to be honest; though at the same time good taste and true humility should prevent one's obtruding those eccentricities of taste, another little danger of which I would warn young readers. For mental powers and perceptions change as well as develop. *Fontaine, je ne boirai jamais de tes eaux,* is a rash declaration; the very books you cannot like now, may become your greatest friends in later years. Say you do not care for them if your opinion is called for, but beware of inferring that they are unworthy of being cared for.

Then you have to find out what books have the best effect on you; some people cannot stand very exciting or thrilling stories, just as some people are better without any wine. If you find it so with you, if certain novels so engross your mind and imagination that real life becomes dreamland, and you go about your duties in a sort of sleep-walking, then give them up, or indulge in them but rarely, and at judicious times; unless, indeed, you can train yourself to sufficient self-control resolutely to keep their fascina-

tion under mental lock and key—a grand piece of self-discipline in itself.

Many people object to reading stories that appear in serials. I think there is a good deal to be said in their favour, unless, of course, one reads too many at a time, which cannot but lead to confusion. I have often noticed that the tales one reads in parts are those that remain the longest in one's memory; they mellow there, as it were. During the interval, one seems to live with the characters, to get to know them, to distrust some, to feel increasing affection and admiration for others. We wonder how they are getting on, what will be the next news of them, and so forth, almost as if they were real acquaintances at a distance. And it is often a pleasant and not unprofitable subject of conversation to discuss the incidents of a serial story between-times with others who are following the gradual unfolding of its plan, much in the same way that one of the good results of reading aloud is the common interests it brings into family or friendly life. I wish reading aloud were more in fashion. I am always sorry when I hear girls say that they "hate" it, or declare, ungraciously, that they have never been able to read aloud well. I know it calls often for patience and unselfishness—on the part of the listeners, sometimes, as well as the reader—but is that any real objection? Are not pleasures shared the truest? And from another point of view, as regards the reader, who can tell what may be before any of us in the unseen years to come? If not darkened vision, enfeebled physical powers of some kind are the lot of most before the end; you may come to be very thankful to have acquired the art, for a real art it is, of reading a story aloud well, before there was actual call for doing so. And later on still, when the time comes that you yourself may be dependent on the kindliness of others for anything to cheer or brighten monotonous days, will it not be pleasant to remember that, when your eyes were keen and your voice clear, you grudged neither in this often welcome service?

To return to the choice of books of fiction, I should like to say a word or two about *foreign* literature of this class, notably French or German. It is most advisable not to limit your light reading to English. Most girls, now-a-days, can read both French and German, the former especially, with ease and pleasure, but even in the rare cases where it is not so, I should recommend good translations. For it is not only of self-improvement, as a linguist, that one should think. The variety, the *newness* to you of the life of other countries, when

well depicted, are most wholesome and widening in their influence. Nothing, next to actual foreign travel, takes one more out of oneself than a story of which the scene and characters are entirely unlike one's ordinary surroundings, provided, of course, that the essence of *all* good fiction, the magic "touch of nature" be not wanting. And one of the greatest services fiction can render us all—brain-weary men and women as well as young girls—is *this taking us out of ourselves.* It is one of the reasons why historical novels, or stories of long ago, are often so refreshing; it is a great part of the secret of the charm of fairy tales. I remember, not long ago, asking a woman, who is really a deeply-read scholar, what kind of fiction she enjoyed the most. Her reply was, "Well, on the whole, I think I would choose a good rollicking story of adventure, such as Mr. Stevenson's 'Treasure Island.' It is such a *change.*"

And as regards foreign fiction, do not be surprised at my recommending some French as well as the many excellent German tales. It is a grave mistake to imagine that *all* French novels are objectionable or unwholesome. There are some already "standard" ones—beside the two or three, "Paul and Virginia," and the "Exiles of Siberia," which our grandmothers were restricted to; a few of Georges Sand's; one or two of Balzac's, and some others, which I really think everybody who reads at all, should read. And a fair number of modern ones, pre-eminent among them, perhaps, those of Mrs. Craven—whose death her many friends are still mourning—no mother need object to a daughter's reading, though of course they must be chosen with care and knowledge. As works of art, too, as models of literary skill, French novels stand unrivalled. There is no such thing as slovenly or slipshod writing in French. The exigencies of the language, its poverty of *words* as compared with our own, necessitating extreme variety and delicacy of *expressions* or combinations of words, and partly from the same cause, the much greater precision of grammar, make it impossible for uneducated or half educated authors to exist. It is to be regretted that our own standard in such directions is so much less stringent.

In closing, I should like to say a little more about what seems to me one of the dangers of fiction for the young, one of the shoals to be avoided. I have already alluded to it in speaking strongly of the advantage of those tales which take us out of ourselves. These need not necessarily be laid in far-away places or long-ago days. Such a book for instance as

Miss Lawless's admirable Irish tale "Hurrish," a story not not only of present-day events but of, in one sense, actually our own countrymen and women, transports us to scenes as unfamiliar to many as those of the middle ages, thereby not only refreshing our imagination but marvellously widening our sympathies. But still, when all is said and done, I fancy girls, as girls, prefer stories of the life they themselves are actors in. And this is natural, and to some extent when one takes into account the eager anticipations, the vivid hopes, the vague wonderment as to the unfolding of the drama of your own future, without all of which youth would no longer *be* youth—to some extent this preference is not to be objected to. But keep it well in hand, beware of reading *yourselves* into all you read; try to avoid sentimentalism, as distinct from true sentiment, in every form; while sympathising with your heroine let it be with *her*, not with yourself under her name; try to treat her objectively, so to say. Nothing is more dwarfing and enervating than to make all you read into a sort of looking-glass, and often a most misleading one;—to measure, and judge, and criticise solely by your own personal feelings and experience.

And even with regard to the very best works of fiction, remember they *are* fiction. It is highly improbable that your own life, taken as a whole, will resemble the most life-like story in three volumes. Art must *be* art, to restrict it to literalness would be to destroy it. Thoroughly to enter into the explanation of this would lead us into very abstruse regions, and would be on my part presumption to attempt. I can but hint at it. Fiction cannot be biography; an oil painting cannot be a photograph. In the former the characters must be true to life, the situations and actions never—in ordinary story-telling that is to say—impossible, and but rarely improbable, but more than this one cannot ask. Into all fiction, if it is to serve its purpose, must be infused a breath of the ideal, it must be touched by the wand of Hans Andersen's "Spirit of Fairy Tale." It is the attempt at literalness, the exaggeration of the "realism" we hear so much about, that is degrading and distorting art in so many directions. Pictures on canvas or in books must be "composed"; subjects striking or beautiful selected; all must be grouped, harmonised, re-cast by the poetic genius of the artist, the "maker." For poetry in the widest acceptation of the word is the soul of all art. We must see with the artist's eyes; it is his power of seeing as others do not,

and of partially communicating this power, which makes him what he is.

And after all, as regards our own experience, I doubt if any human being, even at the close of the longest life, really feels at the end of the third volume. Not only do we live again in the interests and hopes and fears of those around us, but we feel our own life still. We are not *meant* to close the book of ourselves, it seems to me, for surely all that *makes* us, will live on; not only our few good deeds, our two or three completed tasks, but better still, the teaching of our failures, the clear vision of our mistakes, of the fitfulness of our best efforts, of the scantiness of our self-renunciation, the influence of all this training on our characters, which are ourselves, must last. And above all, the love for God and for one another, which, however imperfect now, is yet the germ and mainspring of all true living. All these will be found—"continued"—in the book of golden letters waiting for us to read when this poor stained first volume is done—in the new Life, "whose portals we call Death."

4. Paper by Miss LUMSDEN, *(late Head-Mistress of St. Leonard's School, St. Andrews)*

ON

"THE STUDY OF LITERATURE."

Why to me, of all mortals, the pleasant task of addressing you on the Study of Literature should have been entrusted, I cannot imagine. For I am not worthy to be even a doorkeeper in that palace where the Immortals dwell. I should fail hopelessly in many an examination which girls of our modern High Schools could pass with credit. How then do I dare to speak to you at all on this great subject? Perhaps just because I being so ignorant and so unworthy, it may all the more encourage those of you who may be still hesitating on the threshold of that palace, to know that one who is but a few steps ahead has found so satisfying a treasure there; not alone music to delight the ear, and pictures to enchant the inner eye, but the quickening breath and the abiding strength of thoughts that sweeten life through all its chance and change, and give help to live it worthily.

For literature is no trifling thing to be taken up for mere pastime. What, in a word, is Literature? Ah! there is the

rub, to put so much into a few strong, terse words, which we can carry away easily. Emerson perhaps came nearest the mark when he called it "a record of the best thought in the world." As Mind ranges over every field, so Literature, belonging to no special province but free of all, finds material for its creations everywhere, stamping on all it finds the impress of man's thought, or clothing it in the glory of imagination. What shall I say to you on this vast subject? Shall I try to give you a list of the best books to read? For some selection we must make out of the miscellaneous and continually increasing mass of modern literature. And besides there is always the old, the creations immortal and splendid of former civilizations, Oriental, Greek, Roman, Mediaeval. There is the literature that "fills the spacious times of great Elizabeth," and the later age of Anne, and there is the literature of other tongues than ours, and much besides that I cannot enumerate.

But so often has the question "What are the best books in the world?" been asked and answered that you must not expect me to contribute my very small quota to the sum of the answers. Perhaps I may even doubt whether the question is of much practical worth. "What is one man's meat is another man's poison." We can all count among our acquaintances, for instance, devoted admirers of George Meredith, others who detest him, and a residue who have never even heard of "Rhoda Fleming," or "The Egoist."

Nor shall I try to give you rules for the study of Literature. Even were I qualified to do so, which I am not, it could not be done in twenty minutes. Besides, there are plenty of text books which will give us all the dry bones of facts we can possibly want, and which are very useful in their way. But it is not by cramming text books and summaries that we shall enter into the spirit of literature. Just as a text book of History or Geology gives us certain facts, a useful increase to our knowledge, so does a text book of literature. But all this is merely learning about literature. It is not getting a glimpse of, far less steeping our spirit in

"the light that never was on sea or land."

And there is another thing with which we have nothing to do here. To take up a book to kill the time, to stop as it were the ache of the mind's own emptiness, is not to study literature. Nor is it to glance over the pages of some book or article which happens to be the fashion of the hour, for the sake of not seeming ignorant in Society. That

belongs to a philosophy of life with which it is hard to feel any sympathy. To seem to have read what we have only read about, to value that for which we don't really care a straw, that is not honest. This is perhaps the special temptation of an age rich in ephemeral literature. True, that ephemeral magazine literature is often excellent. Not only does it give us valuable information about new facts and discoveries, but it often throws fresh light upon old, but ever interesting questions. Yet it is too fragmentary, too disconnected to be the staple of our reading. The mind which is satisfied with it, or worse, which desires mere material for displaying its own cleverness, or which simply takes its books, as most people take their clothes, according to the dictum of Fashion, will never get the best out of the more delightful fields of literature. As in Plato's often quoted myth, the horses of its chariot are unequally yoked. One is indeed celestial, but his earthly comrade drags him ever earthward, and the heavenly world of beauty is no abiding place for such a soul.

Instead, then, of attempting to give you lists of books and rules for study, let me rather try, however feebly, to find out what we should look for in all literature, and the finding or not finding of which should be our rule in choosing or rejecting books. To do this exhaustively is far beyond my powers, but three gifts which literature gives us in return for time and labour—labour which is also keenest pleasure—lie open to the most superficial eye :

1. The widening of our mental world by increased insight and quickened perception, by training through the imagination our powers alike of criticism and of sympathy.

2. The unconscious purification and strengthening of our characters by the contemplation of Ideals.

3. That repose and refreshment which, in our modern days of hurry and excitement, become ever more and more necessary for us.

> We see all sights, from pole to pole,
> And glance, and nod, and bustle by,
> And never once possess our soul
> Before we die.

First, then, the study of literature widens our mental world. Rosegger, in his "Schriften des Waldschulmeisters," tells us how a German peasant woman believes, as an article of faith, which to doubt is a moral fault, that at some limit or other, not very far from her mountain forests, the world is

boarded up with planks. What lies beyond this imaginary hoarding it never enters the peasant's head to ask. And once, in my childhood, I had a strange dream. I thought I had reached the verge of the world. I stood in grey twilight on a high cliff, a sheer fathomless descent at my feet, and below rolled Chaos—a sea of mist, of wind-swept tossing clouds, ever forming, changing, vanishing, never a gleam of sunlight above, nor one point of solid land below. Now, is not the mental world of a great many people, as the peasant fancied the material world to be, shut in as with a huge hoarding, beyond which they do not even try to peep; or, as in my childish dream, does it not soon reach its limit, and they plunge, helpless, floundering, into a sea of mist and shapeless chaos? Ignorance, or the wall of stupid indifference, hems them in. What we want is to dissolve the mist, to pull down the wall, and to enter into the wonderful and beautiful world which lies beyond, waiting for us to possess it. We deprive no one else of a share by our possession; on the contrary, each one who enters in helps another to follow. You remember how, in Hogg's lovely pastoral, Bonnie Kilmeny strays into the world of Thought. Thither we too may go, may we not, if we will, and books may be our guides.

It is, of course, true that we may miss the path into that fairy world, and find ourselves, instead, in a very different sort of world. Our guide may be false, and may mislead us. There is bad as well as good literature. It is not true, as some assert, that Art has no canon but beauty—that it, like Nature, is unmoral. It might, indeed, be so, were man nothing other or greater than nature. But seeing that he is greater, that, as Arnold says, "Man must begin, know this, where Nature ends, must be all that Nature is, and more"—Art must be true to its spiritual origin. Just as man cannot escape from the moral law, except at his utmost loss, so the creations of his imagination cannot be free from those bonds in which, after all, freedom dwells. Of course, by the moral law we do not mean the rules of conventionality. These belong to an altogether lower stage, and Art must constantly disregard them if it is to do its finest and most lasting work. But we need not waste time now over the seamy side of literature. If literature ought to widen our mental world, have we not in this a rule by which to try every book, even the "shilling shocker"? If we feel, on laying it down, that we have gained in human sympathy, in insight into character—our own, above all, for nothing searches out our own weaknesses so

keenly as a clever novel—then the book is not utterly useless. But, by the very effort of trying it by our standard, we shall become conscious of a want in it, and of a want in ourselves which it cannot satisfy. That is the moment to try another book, and, this time, to try a better. The divine hunger for knowledge and beauty is then just awakening within us. But if it never awakens! What does that mean? Ah, that means that we, the "heirs of all the ages," are dead to our birthright, that we who should be leaders and helpers of others less fortunate than ourselves in outward circumstances of leisure, education, refinement, are, under all our veneer of civilisation, mere barbarians, with the barbarian's vices; childish, lazy, indulgent of our lower selves, so that the higher nature within us is hardly conscious of its own existence. Of such a soul, so stifled by the body with its ceaseless cry, "What shall I eat, and wherewithal shall I be clothed?" was it that Shakespeare said—

> Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
> Fooled by these rebel powers that thee array,
> Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
> Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
> . . . . . .
> Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross,
> Within be fed, without be rich no more.

I am, of course, far from meaning that our souls can find food only in books. That is the mere bookworm's mistake, who finds, as Wagner says to Faust, the whole of heaven in a parchment scroll. By books, after all, we only draw at second or third hand from the wells of Thought. Nor should we draw too frequently or too copiously for our own powers of reflection and assimilation. As in the German fairy tale the false magician bids his elves bring water, and they bring it, fountain on fountain, stream on stream, until, forgetting the wonder-word, and unable to stop them, he is drowned, so it may be with us. "Reading," says Bacon, "makes a full man," and unless we leave ourselves leisure for thinking, we may become so stuffed and crammed with other people's thoughts as to be unable to digest even these, not to speak (to vary my metaphor) of growing some little plants of thought in our own garden of the soul.

Yet books should be to us, some as friends, dearly loved and closely known; others as counsellors, grave monitors, at whose feet we may sit and learn wisdom; and yet again others as acquaintances, to be sought for an hour's pleasant chat, for

fun and the tonic of a hearty laugh. But where a book is barren of thought, and of all stimulus to thought, or even of refreshment, like a cool breeze from a moorland brae, let us fling it aside.

Literature, we say, leads us into a world of ideal beauty. But what right have we, some might object, to enter there? Self-culture, they tell us, is merely selfish. The evils of our sad perplexing world are crying out to Heaven, and while our sisters and brothers are perishing for lack of bread, how can we linger listening even for a moment to some "idle singer of an empty day"? With such a feeling as this, I have, I own, a great sympathy. But our answer might be, culture like every other gift, natural or acquired, tends to action. Whether we light a lamp or a farthing candle it must shine. "Spirits are not finely touched but to fine issues." This is indeed but a form of the puzzle, Is it better to be than to do, or to do than to be? and has no practical side whatever. We cannot do save in proportion to what we are. If we are small our work will be small also. I do not mean as the world counts smallness, that is nothing—to sweep a room, George Herbert tells us, may be fine,—but in itself. If we are large hearted and large minded must our work not be the better? And what can help us to grow large in heart and mind more than the teaching and inspiration of great souls? Poetry, in especial, owns such training as her high vocation. A poet of your own chides our modern poetry—I think perhaps a little too sharply—for forgetting it. He asks,

> "Where is the singer whose large notes and clear
> Can heal, and arm, and plenish and sustain?"

Nay,

> "Little masters make a toy of song,
> Till grave men weary of the sound of rhyme."

True indeed is it that if Poetry, if any art, seeks pleasure only as her aim, this, to become a toy, a trifle, is the Nemesis which righteously awaits her. But if Poetry is at her best, she is our highest teacher. It is by the poet, says Shelley,

> "In the light of thought,
> Singing hymns unbidden,
> That the world is wrought
> To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not."

A hundred illustrations of this power of poetry to win the unheeding world to sympathy occur to us at once. A mouse

scuttles into the grass as we go by, and that instant, by one flash of memory, we are in sympathy with it, the "wee, sleekit, cowerin', timorous beastie," and with a greater than ourselves. He is its

> "Poor earth-born companion,
> And fellow mortal,"

and so are we. His perfect choice of the most wonderfully descriptive words in his strong, pathetic, homely tongue stirs us to insight and to sympathy. And are we not thus led to enter a little into that Divine Pity, which spite of

> "Nature, red in tooth and claw with ravin,"

we, from this witness in our own hearts, believe will

> "Let no life be cast as rubbish to the void."

Dwelling with such thoughts as these is to be awake to ceaseless promptings towards a higher life. And the wider our reading the wider becomes our mental world, and the more infinite the influences which in the secret alchemy of thought work upon our characters.

And this brings us to the second claim I made for literature, that it sets before us Ideals which unconsciously mould our characters into their likeness. Thus Ruskin, in his Lectures on Art, says, "The highest thing that art can do is to set before you the image of the presence of a noble human being"—in other words an ideal.

To live with ideals is to live with the good. We may choose them as we choose our friends—only more freely. For in the choice of friends the circumstances of life often hamper us sorely. But in the choice of our ideal friends no insurmountable barriers of circumstance hem us in. To love literature is to have our friends among the wisest and greatest of human-kind; and yet more, all the creations of moral beauty which they have bequeathed to the world may be our familiar friends also, to be loved, studied, and, unconsciously of course, followed. True, Fiction does not often dare to give us perfect human beings, but it gives us hints for the ideal.

The word ideal however, frightens some people. To them it seems but another name for the unreal, the absurd, reminding us of Medora Trevillian's famous advice to her friend Araminta. But to idealise is not to falsify, though in a sense this may be sometimes partly true. In a sense, the

ideal is the only complete truth. Aristotle meant it for praise when he said that "Sophocles painted men as they ought to be." What we are is not an unchanging quantity. For good or bad, it is continually shifting and altering. A bit of rough marble hewn from the quarry, the great, seemingly inexhaustible quarry of Spirit, are we, each one. The sculpturing of a statue, an ideal character, is our work, and our tools are manifold. The circumstances which surround us are, as it were, atmospheric conditions. Rains may wear away the stone, sea fogs corrode, smoke of cities befoul, frosts break away at a hundred tiny fissures. For the damage of circumstances, we may or may not be answerable. Our tools remain, and for our use of them we are always answerable. And one of the mightiest of these is surely Literature.

Lastly, just to touch, in conclusion, upon the third gift which Literature brings to us, if we seek her with a single mind. Literature, like Nature, laps us at once in a peace, a rest, in which we may forget the cares and worries of life. It will be our own fault if we do not come forth the stronger for that repose. To most of us, life brings troubles enough, for petty worries are more wearing than great, solemn sorrows. It is hard, with Browning, to

> . . . "welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough."

The calm which we seek is not the absence of feeling or of life, but the pertect harmony of all life's elements. What a help it is then to escape from time to time, to regain the balance of our soul, to that retreat

> "From whence the enlightened spirit sees
> The shady City of Palm trees."

Literature, then, to sum up all that I have attempted to express, is the seed of thought, the nurse of action, the cherisher of the ideal, the House Beautiful in which, on the pilgrimage of life, we may tarry for awhile, to find repose, and strength to go onward.

5. The Hon. Maude Stanley then spoke on the subject of "*Girls' Clubs*":—

I felt some hesitation when asked to say a few words to you about Girls' Clubs this morning; because I don't lay claim to be a talking woman, only a working woman.

However, it is as a working woman that I am glad to have the opportunity of speaking to this large meeting of girls about the subject of Girls' Clubs, in which you may know I have been interested for a great many years.

When first I began to organise a Girls' Evening Club, there were many difficulties in the way: girls of our class did not go about as freely as they are now able to do, and there was a great idea among mothers that their daughters would meet with rudeness and incivility in going out at night. Now, I want you to tell your mothers, if any of them still have the same idea, that I have never met with anything but the greatest kindness and politeness during all the years I have been out in the evening to the Club; and I really don't think there need be any fear of that.

The feeling of fellowship with and responsibility for the working girls, who often have such hard, dreary lives, is already wide-spread in Liverpool, and has led you to form many of these Evening Clubs, which are the very best means of helping them and getting to know them. I have visited some of your Girls' Clubs, and I said the other night at the Conference how glad I was to see them so efficient and successful—especially glad because in some cases they really seem to have got hold of the lower class of the working girls, which it is so difficult to do. But those young ladies who work the Clubs have to work very hard; and they say that more helpers are urgently needed to ensure greater regularity and to enable them to enlarge their work in various directions. All that we can do seems little when compared with all we have received and all that we enjoy—but on the other hand, a little coming from a great number will do much to increase the happiness and the well-being of those we are working for. So I want to appeal to you for more help this morning. Here in Liverpool you have the great advantage of being more centralised than we are in London; the feeling of citizenship is stronger for you, the means of communication with the poorer districts a great deal easier. And one cannot help feeling what advantages of education you girls have now-a-days compared with what we had! All these classical attainments of yours, think how you might turn them to account for those other girls whose lives are so different; what beautiful stories you could tell them, for instance, of the Greek myths, or of poetry or history. Some of you may like to teach the more serious subjects; some to help them to sing or to drill or to play games; all will be equally welcome.

This work for others need not hinder, it will only enhance, your own enjoyment of life. I suppose I have been to as many balls in my time as any of you are likely to go to, and I don't call dancing frivolous! What I say is, the girl who enjoys her balls and makes herself so pleasant that every one wants to dance with her, is just the girl to make herself pleasant and charming at the Girls' Club too; a girl of spirit and character who can take the lead in helping others. But one thing I would urge upon you—give up one evening *weekly*. Once a fortnight is too little; your club girls do not get to know you, and without personal knowledge of them you can't do much for them. Do try, if you can get leave at home, to have small tea parties of six girls from one of your clubs; let it be on Saturday afternoon, their half-holiday from work; have little games, singing, talk to them, and get them by your friendliness to talk to you, and I promise you that you will make six girls very happy.

But I know that all this is impossible for some of you, though you may be eager to work for others, though you may be filled with enthusiasm and have a most true and earnest desire to help, yet you must wait—the time has not yet come. I have been told by girls in London of the regret they felt from these unfulfilled desires, and I have said to them, as I would say to you, your years need not be wasted though you are doing no active philanthropic work. Remember the long waiting of Moses in the land of Midian, preparing for his great and all-important work of the Exodus. In like manner you can prepare yourselves by the cultivation of your talents, by learning business habits, by studying political economy, the poor laws, elementary education, and through those studies you will be more capable workers when the time has come for you to put your hand to the plough.

Well, I have come to the end of the time allotted me. In conclusion, I will only say to all those who can, send in your names as willing to lend a hand in this good work, and begin next week.

Miss Grayson then proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs. Rendall and the authors of the very interesting papers (which was most heartily responded to); and offered to supply printed papers and all particulars with regard to the Liverpool Union of Girls' Clubs, of which she is organising secretary.

DATE DUE

DUE	RETURNED
APR 9 1960	MAR 30 1960
FEB 20 1970	FEB 9 1970
NOV 23 1973	NOV 23 1973
DEC 08 1973	MAR 08 1974
DEC 10 1975	DEC 10 1975
FEB 21 1977	FEB 18 1977

FORM 211A: L.J.D.