

WOMEN AND UNIONS.

WORKERS WHO SADLY NEED THE BENEFITS OF COMBINATION.

Some of the Reasons Why Women Wage-workers Are Slow to Organize—Failure of Ameliorative Measures—Chicago Girls Will Form Unions.

[Special Correspondence.]

The working girls of Chicago are awakening to a new enthusiasm for union and organization. Four hundred telephone girls are about to organize a union and as many stenographers have expressed a willingness to unite in fraternal fellowship for the good of each and all. This is an important movement in the right direction; hitherto the few unions to which women belonged were of those trades in which men also work, and they have been organized, carried on and led by men, such as the cloakmakers, tailors, shoemakers, etc. Aside from the woman's branch of the Federation of Labor, which is a mixed assembly, I do not know of a single trades union in the city which is composed of, was instituted and is kept in running order by women alone.

Women would scarcely be in the unions at all but that they are an accepted and inevitable factor in production today, and being so men who work in the same departments must in self defense induce and encourage them to organize. The only trade peculiar to women is housework, and there has never been a serious attempt to organize girls in domestic service. Aside from a few witticisms on the situation should our hired girls happen to combine for their own interests, the subject has never received any consideration worth mentioning, though why they would not be benefited it is difficult to say.

This reluctance on the part of women to organize and unite is due to several reasons. The first and principal one is that no woman starts out in life intending to work for wages all her days; vaguely, perhaps, she waits for something better, though she may not even to herself acknowledge it, is generally marriage and the great duties of womanhood which do and ought to exempt her from the obligation to toil at so many pence a day. While pursuing a trade as a makeshift it is not, she considers, worth while to become interested in her work as a branch of the whole industrial system, or in her sister workwomen as a class. Another reason is that instinctive feeling every woman has of keeping her struggles, her poverty, her little plans for making a respectable appearance, to herself. She believes in a misty way that no other woman is so peculiarly placed as herself; she has no faith in the similarity of circumstances that exists in thousands of cases or in the possible fraternity that would soften and share her burdens. Again—because of generations of seclusion—woman has not attained much of that quality we call "a business faculty," which leads men to analyze, organize, consult with each other and pursue a systematized course in regard to their relations with each other.

But the fact that every year fewer and fewer women step from the loom to the household altar, that fewer and fewer find themselves exempt from various heavy burdens, has awakened in women something of that spirit which inspires workmen who would be free and independent. Women have not been recognized as a permanent element in the labor field for more than twenty or twenty-five years. They have only begun to get in touch with the rest of the busy working world. Once in the way of organizing, and soon not an occupation which women follow will be without its union. Whatever tends to do away with "cheap labor" in any form cannot but benefit the laboring class as a whole, and miserably paid female and child labor is as great a threat to the rights of skilled workers as convict, coolie or foreign labor.

But there is a certain class of working women whom it seems impossible to reach by organization, and yet which needs the benefits of union more than any other—the sewing women of the sweater's dens. The trades assembly of this city has made public many of the abuses connected with this kind of work, been instrumental in establishing many improvements and in bringing to the notice of the congressional committee sent to investigate many startling facts that otherwise would never have been disclosed. Women make overalls, coarse shirts, pants, blouses and coats at a rate that compels them to run machines from daylight until a late bedtime at lightning speed to earn the pitiable sum of fifty cents; the less expert and young children work like slaves for \$1.50, \$1 or even 75 cents a week. They have the work in their own homes or in the dirty basement shops near by. There are not many strong, young, single women among them; these usually find opportunities to do a better grade of work.

The workers are generally middle aged women with sick husbands, drunken husbands or no husbands at all and numbers of small children to support, or old women left destitute in their declining years; women with feeble relatives depending upon them whom they cannot leave; women so poor that they take no clothing fit to wear down town to the larger establishments where they might be better paid. These women could not pay car fare or dues or even take time to attend a meeting; they would not go in their rags, and better clothes are impossible. How are they to be helped out of the terrible slough of want, drudgery, ignorance to which they have sunk? It is a question not easily answered.

Some of the shops in which these women worked have been closed by the influence of the assembly. Bad as they were they furnished a means of earning a pitiful living, and it was with a wail of despair they went out from the fetid dens where they had been slowly dying. What became of them? Heaven knows.

Some found other "dens," some went to that blacker misery the street, some found ragbags and hunted the alleys with them on their backs, some died. So incompletely do our piecemeal, ameliorative measures ameliorate.

The Alliance papers say a great deal of late on the question and urge the miserably paid victim of the sweater's den to come to the country. It is claimed that farmers' wives cannot get the assistance they need, that sewing girls need no pity, because they will not change when they have a chance.

I certainly hope that every worn city woman who can get there and has strength to perform the work of a farm will take the chance of pure air and good food she will find; but I doubt about the situations being so plentiful, since \$1.50 a week is the most I have heard offered. I doubt if farmers' wives would accept the services of the pale, ragged women who most need the change, even if they could get to them. There is little possibility of their doing so with their families and pennilessness weighing them down.

Those who could find homes in the country would scarce make the difference of a drop from the bucket. And at most farm drudgery at low wages isn't a great improvement on city drudgery at starvation rates. Farmers and farm laborers complain of poverty, I notice, as loudly as the rest of us, and they have the added grievance of isolation, dreariness, lack of social and mental culture.

Changing about from one occupation to another is no permanent relief. All kinds of work has to be done by somebody, and the demand we should make is an equitable return for all useful labor performed, no matter what it is or by whom done. Poorly paid labor is an injustice anywhere and everywhere.

Chicago. LIZZIE M. HOLMES.

Their Spy Fooled Them.

It is a common thing for capitalists, assisted by detective agencies, to try to purchase a member or members of a union on strike, so that the proceedings of the strikers' meetings may be known to their enemies, and that attempts of the detectives to put up jobs for getting the leaders into trouble may be materially aided. The latest attempt in this line which has come to light was made in Chicago, and it is a pleasure to know that the capitalists and detective agency were hoist with their own petard.

William A. Beck, a member of the Chicago Waiters' union, which has been on strike against most of the restaurants and cafes in the city, made affidavit the other day to the effect that while supposedly acting as an employee of the detective agency he kept the strikers fully informed concerning the movements of their opponents.

When approached by a detective and urged to act as a spy, on the advice of President Pomeroy of the union, Beck agreed to report the proceedings of the strikers to the agency, for which he was paid nineteen dollars a week. Pomeroy wrote his reports for the agency. Beck swears that the detective agency and Steward Glennie, of the Union League club, tried to get through him information that would justify the arrest of Pomeroy and the strikers' committee.

Miss Conners is twenty-eight years of age, and has exhibited since early childhood a decided talent for music. She plays the piano, banjo and violin, and is not "slow" on the harmonica. She could also whistle at an early age, but did not exhibit that remarkable talent "before people," because she was so often reminded by older members of her family and other friends that—

Whistling girls and crowing hens Always come to some bad ends. One day while out driving with her brother they passed a little boy sitting by the roadside, whistling with his finger in his mouth. "Hattie, try that," said her brother. She did so and was delighted to find how much more power she had over her voice by so doing. From that time her fame has been steadily growing.

Miss Conners has been a student at the normal school in Castine, and a teacher of excellent repute, but during the past few years she has devoted herself to the care of the postoffice.—Lewiston Journal.

A Child in the Queen's Seat. When Lady Henry Somerset was four or five years old a ball was given at Buckingham palace to be attended by none except the first born of peers. She went with her parents, the Earl and Countess of Somers. Being an independent little thing she strayed off from her guardians and went on a tour of observation through the great hall, and finally when Queen Victoria and Prince Albert left to go to the banquet table she seated herself on the cushioned seat the queen had vacated.

She had on a white tulle dress, with real daisies pinned on or fastened to it, and a wreath of natural daisies rested on her chestnut brown hair. When Queen Victoria returned, behold the little girl was in her seat, whereat the queen seemed quite amused and said, "And this is little Isabel." The child answered, with quite a toss of her head, "This is Lady Isabel." When Lady Henry was eighteen years of age she was presented at court and wore a white dress covered with natural flowers as before. The queen bent to kiss her fresh young cheek, as is the custom with the daughters of peers when they are presented, and said, "Daisies again, Lady Isabel!" She had remembered the circumstance of the ballroom all those years in the midst of her greatly preoccupied life.—London Letter.

Arkansas' Woman Delegate. Miss Kate Cunningham, editor of the Arkansas Woman's Chronicle, was a delegate to the national convention of the People's party at Omaha. Miss Cunningham was elected by acclamation at the state convention. She said in response: "The one woman delegate avails herself of this opportunity to thank the convention for the honor conferred upon her—not so much for the personal distinction (though that is not underrated) as for the recognition it accords to women in general, that the people gathered together at Omaha may know that there are women in Arkansas, and that the men of the People's party there recognize them as persons, and therefore in the scale of human beings, above the idiots, lunatics and criminals of their state."

English Bachelors and Woman Suffrage. It is curious to note that it is the bachelors in the house of commons who interest themselves most persistently in the woman's suffrage questions. Sir Henry James is a confirmed bachelor of sixty-four, and Mr. Woodall, an equally confirmed bachelor, not quite so old, on the other side. Mr. Balfour is a bachelor of forty-four, and Mr. Haldane, the philosophic Radical who wants to give the vote to all women and make them eligible for all offices, is also a bachelor, hovering on the verge of forty.—Yankee Blade.

It is reported that the new cotton reaper of the Southern Harvester company will be introduced in the south next season, and that it will displace 700,000 colored workmen.

Women Cyclists in Paris.

Ladies in this country are keenly alive to the pleasures of cycling, and even young girls of birth and breeding are taken to riding schools where they can compete in cycle races against lady professionals. In the grounds of many chateaux there are long board alleys made up for purpose for cycling racing, in which brothers and sisters are often rivals. Doctors order cycling as a holiday exercise for the young people. The French neologism for the amusement is "veloce sport." The cyclist is a "veloce man," and the lady cyclist a "veloce woman." There are "veloce tailors," and, it may be added, "veloce dressmakers" and "veloce hatters." It is agreed that the last half of no matter what composite word relating to trade connection with cycling should be English. One can even say "veloce factory."

In the fresh, early morning, when the weather is good, one finds the broad alleys of the Bois de Boulogne alive with veloce men and veloce women. Americans prevail among the latter. But young French married ladies, as well as professionals, are intent on the sport. Most of them do full justice to the veloce tailors and hatters, and are at ease on their steel horses. A scarf arrangement of lace, technically known as "angels' wings," adds wonderfully to the impression of fleet, graceful motion of the veloce women. Nun's veiling, made up into a blouse and a short skirt, is just now the favorite material for the outer garments of the lady cyclist.—Mrs. Crawford's Paris Letter.

Maine's Whistling Postmistress.

The home of Maine's sweet whistler, Miss Hattie E. Conners, is in Sullivan, county of Hancock, but she spends the greater part of her time in Sorrento (a growing rival of Bar Harbor), where she serves as postmistress. Her appearance and manner are those usually thought distinctive of an American woman.

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GEMS IN VERSE.

Grief.
There are despairs which seem to blast and kill,
That when day and rob the stars of light,
That make the unlit weep as women might,
That bend the valor of the human will—
Despairs which burn like hopeless love; and still
Love can transfigure while it seems to blight;
Strong hearts feed faintly on their grief, despite
A world where hearts can ever thrive but ill.
Sweet love and laughter are the dream of youth,
And soft contentment is a golden bar
Which shuts a life within its commonplace;
But the old world grows wiser in the truth
That sorrow fashions us to what we are
And rouse the invincible genius of our race.
—G. E. Montgomery.

"Sleepy Hollow."
O place of beauty, place of rest! Above
Thee high the mountains crest, the river rolls
Beside, the peace of God broods over thee.
Like benediction falls his smile upon
Thy face. "Tis like the gladness of the heart
When sunset is done, like rest that follows toil,
Like sleep "he giveth his beloved."

When earth and skies were drear, and autumn winds
Moaned shrill, and dark the threatening river
rushed
Betwixt the banks all strip and bare, in dull
November day a train of mourners, sad
And slow, brought one to thee and laid him
down

In his last sleep. A good, great man was he,
Of length of days. Honors he had, and friends,
And that mysterious spell which men call fame
Was his. A good, great man, whose name will
No wonder, then, that men like pilgrims come
To thee, seeking his resting place, as to
A shrine.

O stars, can you beam the livelong night?
O flowers, can you open in morning light?
O sails, can you flick the river white?
O water, can you murmur so bright?
O birds, can you sing your midday token
When she lies dead and a heart is broken?

O place of beauty, place of rest! The good
And great had made his bed with thee. And
was
Not cruel death strike her, the young, the
brave.

The fair? Oh, she was fair, and she was good
As she was fair. And she had hope and love.

O place of beauty, place of rest! Cruel
As beautiful thou art. I charge thee keep
That which to thee was given that summer
day—
That early summer day whose sunshine struck
Me blind. Keep as a sweet and sacred trust
That which to thee was given "until he come."
—Sarah De Wolf Gamwell.

Columbus.

Columbus was, they tell us now,
A man of flaw and fleck—
A man who steered a pirate prow
And tread a slave's deck.
In narrow, bigot blindness curled,
Cruel and vain he was—
To such was given to lift a world
From out the darkened sea.

Though weak and cruel, vain, untrue,
From earth's high and low,
God picked this man his work to do,
Four hundred years ago.
There in the distance standeth he,
Bound on his mighty quest.
This rough old mariner of the sea
Still pointing toward the west.

There stands he on his westward prow,
A man entirely strong;
So great, the bald truth spoken now
Can never do him wrong.
There slaves his pirates might be,
He had that gift of fate—
That wise and sane insanity
That makes the great man great.
—Yankee Blade.

Letting His Soul Loaf.

I don't spend none of my good time in politics
an sich;
I ain't a makin' folks grow poor, an me a-gettin'
rich;
I ain't a-pesterin' any one—jes' livin' at my
ease,
A-huntin' when I want to, an fishin' when I
please!

Jes' let 'em take the offices an run 'em for an
high.
I'd ruther have a violet from a girl's hand—
sweet and shy.
Than run the whole United States! So, brethren,
let her roll,
For a streak o' April sunshine is jes' lightnin' up
my soul!

Give me birds a-singing in the sweet, salutin'
trees,
A-lavin' an-wavin' all their blossoms in the
breeze,
Give me my daisied meadows, jes' a-smilin' to
the blue,
An the headin' trees above 'em jes' a-bowin'
"howdy-do!"

An the country girls—God bless 'em, an dress
'em plain an sweet.
Jes' like he does the violets that purple at
their feet—
The girls a-huntin' honey in their bonnets an
their curls—
Oh, what is all your money to the red lips of
the girls?

Sing sweet, O birds o' April! Sing sweet o'er
hill an plain,
While the winter world is tangled in the
snow,
We ain't a-pesterin' any one—jes' livin' at our
ease,
A-huntin' when we want to, an fishin' when we
please!

Average People.
The genius soars far to the fountain
That feeds the morning in the sky;
But though our wings break in the flying,
And though our souls faint in the trying,
Our flight cannot follow so high;
And the eagle swoops not from the mountain
To answer the ground bird's low cry.

The world has a gay gaudier ready
To lead the fleet foot in the race;
But on the dull highway of duty,
Aloof from the pomp and the beauty,
The strife and the chance of the chase,
Are toilers, with steps true and steady,
Pursuing their wearisome pace.

False prowess and noisy insistence
May capture the garrulous throng,
But the "average" father and brother,
The home keeping sister and mother,
Grown gentle and patient and strong,
Shall lead in the future, for 'tis these
Whom life's awards have been wrong.

Then here's to the "average" people,
The makers of home and its rest;
To them the world turns for a blessing
When life's hard burdens is pressing.
For stay-at-home hearts are the best;
Birds but if they will in the steeples,
But safer the eaves for a nest.
—May Riley Smith.

The Essence of Life Is Divine.
Space is as nothing to spirit, the deed is out-
done by the doing;
The heart of the wooer is warm, but warmer
the heart of the wooing;
And up from the pits where these shiver, and
up from the heights where those shine,
Twain voices and shadows swim starward,
and the essence of life is divine.
—Richard Realf.

What of That?
Hard! Well, what of that?
Ditst fancy life one summer holiday,
With lessons none to learn, and naught but
play?

Go, get thee to thy task! Conquer or die!
It must be learned! Learn it, then, patiently.

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