

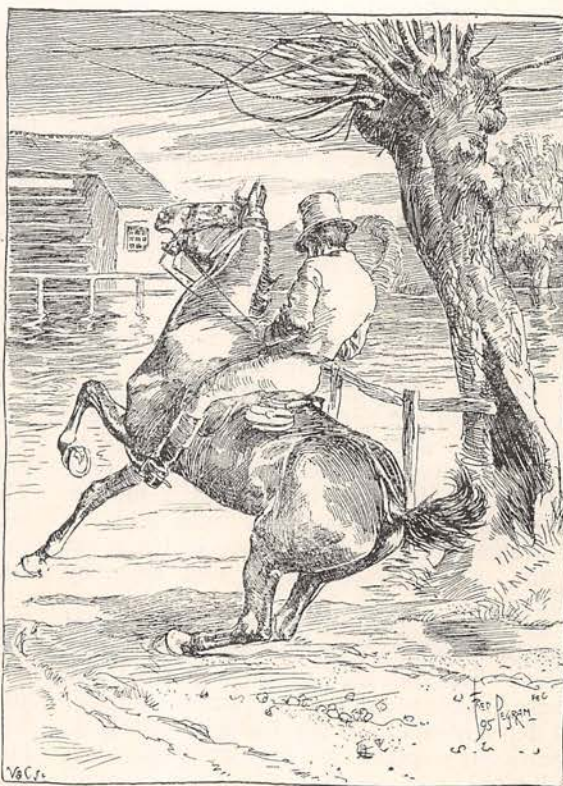
The girl falls back with a sharp scream, and is like to faint. The weakness is only momentary, for with a shuddering look at her "master," she rushes forth into the pitiless rain, hatless and uncovered. There is no stay, no hesitation. A dark shadow drives her onwards. The little lane to the Mill where the poor schoolmistress lodges, is now a babbling brook.

Does she remember in her terror that the waters are out—that the wooden bridge at the dip of the lane is no longer passable? and that the gentle singing streamlet of Summer, that sends the moss-covered wheel around with a lazy drone, is now a blood-red torrent, boiling in its fury, and carrying away the sapling alders that fringe the edges of the low-lying meadows?

I know not! I know not!

To-night the leading lights of the village will gather around the blazing fire of the village inn. Her misdeeds and shortcomings will be the all-absorbing topic of discussion, and Farmer Smallacre, redolent of shrub-rum and foul tobacco, will lead the van in the attack upon her good name.

To-morrow morning at dawn, if the swollen waters have subsided, the post-boy's horse will be thrown back upon its haunches, and stand quivering in every limb there, where the drooping branches intercept the purling waters as they chatter in unconscious merriment across the road where



"THROWN BACK UPON ITS HAUNCHES."

the harvester's team lave their weary hoofs in Autumn.

And the "old folks" will watch and wait in vain for the message which will never come.

T. J. MACNAMARA.



## WOMEN AND BUSINESS LIFE.

**W**OMAN is getting her liberty to-day. We cannot be too thankful that the false pride which vetoed women entering business, however necessitous, is nearly dead. The most conservative and jealous of men, after a good harmless British growl, have opened nearly every door for women to enter. Rightly or wrongly, we have drifted from the idea that woman's true portion is marriage. The emancipation of woman is a battle-cry which brings from hill and dale a large army.

Amongst these we would take our place. Yet it is the rank and file themselves that are hindering to-day that very emancipation which they are fighting for. This at first sight may not be apparent, but a little investigation will show it is true. A large number of the emancipations are at the expense of the enslaving of women less able to fight life's battles than those who have their freedom given them. This arises from women who have no financial need to do so entering business life, and crushing out of business life those who have urgent need of the money which business gives.



Remember, we have taken it for granted that emancipation is for all women. What degrades one woman is a bitterness to the whole; the exaltation of one is the glory of all. This being so, if a girl is provided for—even although not luxuriously provided for—if she is true to her principles, she dare not push herself into business if by so doing she is to injure another less-favoured sister who is compelled to enter the world of business.

This is where most of them fail. They cry, Why should woman be bound down to the idea of marriage being her only door of hope? Why should she be in the house looked upon as a drone? Why cannot she go out like her brothers and win her own bread? And those who get so eloquent, who have no need to face the toils of business, are the very ones who by rushing into business as a protest, make these less favoured ones look to marriage as their only hope, and stay at home as drones. We have met them by the dozen.

It is a fact that there are only a limited number of places for those who must work. True, situations are opening up here and there in unexpected quarters, but the number of departments in which a woman can work, with a due respect to her health and character, is limited.

On the other hand, every day the number of women who are compelled to work is becoming much larger. There are not situations for three-quarters of those whose duty or inclination send them into the business world. This is seen at once by the enormous number of applicants for anything like a respectable situation.

Now, for those who have no need to do so, to join in this crush is to do their sisters a grievous injury. It is throwing round them a heavier halter than that which these enthusiasts have taken off.

For remember, in the matter of competition the woman who has been brought up in comfortable circumstances is more likely to get a situation than one not so favoured. She has better social connections and influence. She is generally better educated. Hence the most needy, as a rule, is least successful.

Then, naturally, competition reduces the wages. Women have done more to reduce each other's wages than all the masters in the world. They crush in. The needy are anxious to make 10s. a week, if possible. They will work for 9s. rather than lose the chance. So the thing goes on. A lady cashier was needed in a co-operative store. The wage was 15s. per week. Amongst the applicants was a woman of a good substantial family, whose income was good. She

informed the committee money was no object. She wished to be free.

She took 10s. a week. Thus she not only reduced the wages, but kept out one who had need of a weekly wage. This is common. The liberty of entering business life is dearly bought if it is to bring only poor wages, long hours, and every form of temptation to women who *must* work.

We know there are many answers to what we have said. None, however, are fatal objections to what we urge: let those who have no need to enter business refuse to do so, for the sake of their sisters.

It is a species of greed—very unlovely—that makes many of these enter business life. They wish to have plenty of pocket-money for books, dress, travelling, opera, and so on. Their allowance does not permit their desires in these directions being fully satisfied. If they only made a wage they could then satisfy their cravings.

To hear a woman breathe a passionate longing for more books would at once commend her as a very studious person. But we cannot commend the aspirations for these things under the circumstances. No girl who has a spark of love for her sisters would accept these additional luxuries if they mean robbing others of necessaries. It is wonderful the amount of selfishness that can be wrapped up in what appears a very high and worthy aspiration. Many need to learn contentment: to make the very best of what they have; to be thankful for their advantages, and refuse to be pampered, until amongst their sisters there is an all-round receiving of necessaries.

Many, of course, wish to be independent even of their parents for their means of living. This may or may not be commendable. It may be the most empty vanity, and only worthy of execration. Wages are given for work done. What difference can there be if your father or somebody else's father pays you? The wage is as worthy in the one case as the other if the work is done.

Is the mother's girl less worthy of a wage than the mother's help? Is the girl who helps to make father's life easier by attending to his comfort less worthy of a wage than the girl who tries to make his life easier by attending to his books in the office? It baffles us to see why it can make any difference either to our liberty or dignity to receive an allowance from our own parents or from some other girl's parents.

We know many girls object to staying at home. For reasons of their own, they wish to be out. We find nothing commendable in this. Are your inclinations to rule your conduct or duty? If mother needs you, your



first duty is to stay at home, whatever your inclinations.

To push inclination before duty is to pass out of that rank of noble women that their protestations make us believe they belong to. But there are many ways by which you can assist others outside your own home without entering the wage market, if you are certain your *duty* calls you from home. There are poor children that need teaching, needy business men who would bless you if you aided them in their book-keeping.

They do not understand it, nor can they pay for a clerk. There are hundreds of ways by which a girl can show her love for

humanity without making humanity worse, if she is of the spirit.

The crush to-day is terrible, and the cries of bitterness horrible to listen to. Woman after woman is falling in the struggle. Domestic peace and comfort are getting more and more impossible in certain directions, and one great cause of so much ruin and bitterness is the thoughtless selfishness and mistaken notions of very many girls of comfortable homes and means crowding into the labour market.

In the spirit, not of Socialism, but of the Good Samaritan parable, which teaches we must not hurt our neighbour nor allow others to do so, we say to these ladies, "Don't."\*



## A BARGEMAN'S VILLAGE.



HE village is not inhabited by the bargee, but it is the home of the bargeman, who belongs to quite a different race of man.

The bargee is familiar enough to us: on the towing paths of our rivers, on the banks of our canals, and in the pages of our literature, both light and serious—the

magazine and the official report. He is popularly associated with a short pipe, an ill-used horse, wife, child, or other domestic possession, and a vast store of "language."

He may be a much-maligned person. I am inclined to think he is—at least, in some instances; for I no more believe in drawing up an indictment against a calling than against a nation, provided the said calling is not, in itself, dishonest.

The bargeman, on the contrary, is such an unfamiliar figure, that it is doubtful whether one person in ten among educated people—say the ordinary inhabitants of a London drawing-room—would be able to differentiate him from the bargee.

The passenger who stops, as he crosses over London Bridge, to take a look down the Thames, may admire the stately barge, with

its brown-red sails, its black hull with its touches of emerald green, and the high-piled load of softly-tinted hay. He may watch her gliding through the water with an easy motion, recalling the graceful carriage of the Hindoo woman as she balances her water pitcher on her head, and presenting almost as great a contrast to the bustling, tossing, puffing life around her.

But the chances are that the onlooker will scarcely notice the inconspicuous little figures who man the Dutch-looking craft—far less ask himself who they are and whence they come.

It was quite by an accident that we discovered the home of the species, and that the bargeman's village revealed itself to our delighted eyes.

We were walking along the top of the sea-wall, by the side of one of those wide-mouthed rivers which are the most interesting feature of the eastern half of Essex.

There are five, at least, of such rivers, but this one was our favourite among them all. On one side of us the salt water was lapping in little wavelets against the miniature beaches, and into the lilliputian bays and creeks, which lie between the sea-wall and the river. On the other side the gold-green marshland meadows, dotted with white and brown groups of cattle, stretched towards the shaggy hedges, where long lines of elm-trees were outlined against the soft blue sky.

Straight ahead, where the river seemed to take a bend to the left, a bit of rising ground tempted us forward, with the attraction that clings to the unknown.

I don't know why one always climbs a hill,

\* The author is alone responsible for the views expressed in this article.—Ed.