

use of pigments or the painter's brush is called for.

The scheme for the Kingsley Club was not a very elaborate one. The club premises consisted of a couple of rooms in the basement of a block of model dwellings in Whitechapel. The members of the club, youths and young men living in the district, and mostly employed there during the day, themselves selected the name of the large-hearted Canon of Westminster as the title of their club; and this suggested that the decoration of the institution should in some way be connected with its name-giver. The smoking-room (really the parlour of the workman's little flat) was a small room with a fireplace set anglewise in one of its corners. The intention was to treat this as an "ingle-nook," in a way suggested by the old-fashioned fireplaces one sees from time to time in old farmhouses and village inns. Seats of deal, painted peacock-green, were placed as shown on the little key plan in the illustration. But the principal decorative treatment was with

regard to the panelled overmantel,\* the central feature of which was a portrait of Canon Kingsley. The woodwork was of deal, painted to correspond with the seats we have mentioned, and the frieze below the top cornice of "Lincrusta Walton," the pattern slightly emphasised in a lighter tone. The quotation is, as our readers will know, from one of Kingsley's poems. Such a scheme as this, where there is much use made of woodwork in seats, panelling, etc., is likely of course to be more expensive than one where we rely altogether on painted work. This latter is generally on one of the inexpensive materials we have learnt to use, and the artist's labour is invariably given to us. But in the former case the carpenter and his "little bill" have to be

\* Though writing on this decorative work as a completed fact, we may say that circumstances have prevented the scheme from being as yet carried out. It has so far progressed, however, that the portrait referred to has been executed by a kind worker for the society.

reckoned with. The cost of the Kyrle Club scheme would be about five or six pounds.

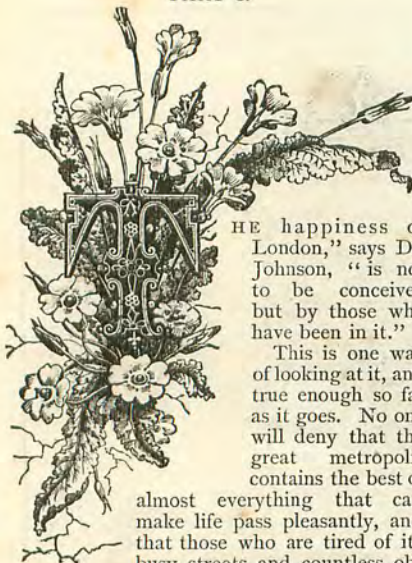
Our remaining illustration gives a bay of the ceiling of the parish room of Holy Trinity, Westminster. The room is about thirty-five feet long, by seventeen feet wide, and is used for all meetings and objects connected with the parish. The names of the various guilds, societies, etc., thus using it are painted on the shields. The material forming the background of the decorations is the Tectorium already alluded to. The scheme of colouring is bright, employing the primary or secondary colours. The ground of the panels is pale greenish blue, diapered with stars of various colours, and the Tectorium decorations are pasted on the panels. The moulded ribs, cornices, etc., are picked out in colours. It is difficult to say what the cost of this scheme will be, as the work is as yet not completed, but it probably will not exceed seven or eight pounds.

(To be continued.)

## HOW WORKING GIRLS LIVE IN LONDON.

By NANETTE MASON.

### PART I.



THE happiness of London," says Dr. Johnson, "is not to be conceived but by those who have been in it."

This is one way of looking at it, and true enough so far as it goes. No one will deny that the great metropolis contains the best of

almost everything that can make life pass pleasantly, and that those who are tired of its busy streets and countless objects of interest must be tired of existence.

But there is another side not to be ignored. To talk about happiness to many who live in London would be like talking about the comforts of some fine estate they owned away in the moon. To them the first city in the world is a place of hard work, little pay, and still less enjoyment. Victims of pitiless and incessant competition, they are struggling through life with small pleasure in the past and with but little hope for the future.

Now, in this battle for existence, in the fierceness of which there are of course degrees, women, though often heroic, seldom cut a victorious figure. The working girls of London form our present topic, and they, considered as a class and compared with other sections of the community, are remarkable for their difficulty in making both ends meet, for the strain on their health and energies, for their temptations, and for the risk they run of being drawn at last into the current that hurries along to ruin. To lead even a moderately happy and successful life as a working girl, and to get out of London even a small fraction of the enjoyment that Dr. Johnson suggests, one must

have a great deal of common sense and a large stock of cheerful and contented philosophy.

The subject of working girls in London, or indeed anywhere, is one the importance and deep interest of which cannot be exaggerated, and the claims which it makes on attention have been more recognised of late years than ever before. Every thinking person is beginning to see that the more healthy lives young women lead, the better in the long run for society. The weakness of women in most things is proverbial, but their mighty influence both for good and evil no one questions who knows anything. It is folly, therefore, not to do what we can to place them in such circumstances that all, even the humblest, will be a blessing and not the reverse to those who come in contact with them.

This is putting it as a matter of interest, but the voice of duty is even more impressive. More champions are wanted every day for our industrious sisters, and those who desire to help in making this a happy world may be recommended to take the bettering of the condition of such girls as a subject to work upon. The mission, however, is not an easy one, and requires in a marked degree the possession of worldly wisdom as well as of sympathy.

Our intention in this and the following papers is to bring together a few facts connected with the life led by this busy class, and under the term working girls we mean to include all who have, at any employment whatever, skilled or unskilled, to earn their own living, whether they be girls in domestic service, girls in factories and workrooms, girls at desks and counters, or any others that can be named. We propose not to speak of the industries they follow, but of how they live during their intervals of leisure. Thus will be seen something of their home-life, their life in lodgings, their friends and acquaintances, their amusements, perils, privations and discomforts, the expenditure of their too scanty wages, and the institutions started for their benefit, or in which they have an interest. We shall try to be practical, and give such hints as may prove useful to girls launched on the sea of life, with no friends to guide them and no knowledge to speak of, of their own.

It is difficult to estimate the number of girls employed in the various industries of London, and to say what fraction they are of

the five millions that people the great city. A writer of experience calculates that there are a hundred and fifty thousand factory girls at work every day engaged in making almost everything, from a beautifully bound book to a halfpenny box of matches. With that figure as a basis, readers of a speculative turn may hazard a guess at the total number.

A large proportion of these are not London born, but have far-away towns and villages for their native place. They have come to London, drawn sometimes by tempting promises, but more frequently by a too vivid imagination. They have heard that others have got on; why should not they? They have read of there being countless workers; why should not room be found for them? So they come to be hired to the market-place of the world, and often find, alas, that the great metropolis, whose streets from the distance seemed paved with gold, is little better than a monster with cruel appetite waiting to devour them. So far as getting on is concerned, many a country girl would be wise—and find it cheap and healthy besides—who preferred to a London lodging a cave or a hole in a tree with a bed of dry leaves, and a dinner of nuts and herbs.

The working period with many girls is no doubt only a time of transition between their leaving school and entering on married life. They engage in work only till they can find a young man eager to provide for their support. This, it has been often pointed out, is against their throwing themselves zealously into industry of any kind, and what is pursued in a half-hearted way can never end in anything approaching success.

Now, if there is one maxim of prudence that should in these days be impressed on the minds of working girls more than another, it is this, that they should pursue their calling, and guide their lives as if it were written in the book of fate that they were to die old maids. This maxim is weighty enough to act as ballast to steady even the most volatile.

The stern fact is to be considered that there are considerably more spinsters in the world than bachelors. There are more boys certainly born than girls, but the girls have the best chance of surviving. In London for every thousand men there are one thousand and one hundred and twenty-three women. This is higher than the average for the whole country, which is only one thousand and fifty-five women to a thou-



sand of the other sex. The extra number in London is no doubt largely due to the influx of working girls who flock there hoping to find employment.

If we leave out of account all under fifteen years of age, the total number of unmarried women in the metropolis was 545,653 in 1881, when the last census was taken; the total number of unmarried men was 462,550. If, therefore, some fine day every bachelor were to haste to get married, there would be a balance left over of 83,103 unmarried women.

It has also to be remembered that the marriage rate has been steadily falling for many years. In 1864 to 1868 it was 17.0 to every 1,000 of the population in England and Wales; in 1884 it was 15.1; in 1885, 14.4; in 1886 and '87, 14.1; and in 1888, 13.1. This last was the lowest marriage rate since civil registration began.

But whatever her future may be, the working girl who throws her heart into her work, and does her duty by her employer, has the satisfaction of knowing that she is thereby qualifying herself for being a business-like young woman, and doing her duty by a husband, if ever she gets one. He on his part will have the unspeakable blessing of securing a wife who can really do something. That something may be very different from domestic work, but she who can do something can learn to do anything if only she sets her mind to it. For a man with a limited income a working girl is likely to be a better helpmate than a superior creature who has never had the least need for exertion. She has had experience of the difficulty of getting money and keeping it, whereas for all the other knows money may be fruit that grows on a tree and falls into people's mouths.

The girl who by steady industry makes a living for herself need be in no haste to change her condition, and this independence is one of the pleasant features of a working girl's life. She looks on a lover in a much more sagacious way than one who dawdles away time in an aimless existence at home, ready to fall a prey to all kinds of sentimental nonsense.

Besides being independent, the life of the industrious is dignified. We may lower ourselves by many ways, but not by work. Indeed, she who goes out into the world to assert by industry her right to live, may hold up her head with the best, even though she be meanly clad and go to sleep under a humble roof.

But if working girls have some things to congratulate themselves upon, there are others, and not a few either, which tend to take the conceit out of us. The world, however, is advancing, and there is a time surely coming when the condition of many of the working classes will no longer be a reproach to Christianity and civilisation. That will be when capital and labour give each other fair play, and the reign of kindly feeling and common sense is universal.

A difficulty not to be lost sight of lies in the character of girls themselves. Their love of freedom and impatience of restraint has its weak side. Liberty is all very well when

accompanied by knowledge of the world, but till that knowledge is acquired young folks are the better of having someone to whom they are responsible for their actions.

Working girls who live at home or with their employers, and are under the watchful eye of parents and guardians, and with the natural companionship of their relations, have much to be thankful for. It is a great pity of those who, without experience, have to shift in all things for themselves and be their own schoolmistresses in lessons of duty and prudence. Life and example have a powerful influence, and, so long as old heads are rarities on young shoulders, an independent girl in lodgings with no model to copy but herself will be encompassed by dangers from which every well-wisher would desire her to be free.

The worst of it is that girls who have next to nothing to brag about often indulge in the pleasing habit of magnifying to themselves their little scraps of knowledge and diminutive excellences. All who do that need hardly be surprised if they fall into the hands of those who trade on their levity and ignorance.

Another great obstacle in the way of working girls is the miserable wages that as a rule they earn. No wonder that many of them look as if they never had a luxury in their lives. The average weekly earnings of girls engaged in labour of all kinds cannot be more, it has been estimated, than ten shillings.

As an example of what some of the poorest of them have to slave for, take the evidence of two young women, members of a deputation received during the winter of 1887 by the Home Secretary and Mr. Ritchie, President of the Local Government Board. These stated that they received sixpence for making a waistcoat, which they produced, but out of that sixpence they had to find silk, cotton, thread, and fire to press with. By working very hard all day the two girls could do four of these waistcoats, and that meant two shillings a day, out of which they had to find all these things.

No doubt such starvation wages are only paid for work which is the refuge of the destitute and incompetent, but even in the other extreme and amongst what may be termed the aristocracy of working girls, the earnings are such that one is often tempted to ask, how can they live, much less lay by something against a rainy day?

If low wages are a drawback, long hours of labour are about as bad. These are generally injurious and often ruinous to health, not to speak of their being fatal to all chances of self-improvement, or to the enjoyment either of fresh air or family and friendly intercourse. In the case of shop and warehouse girls a step in the right direction was taken recently by the passing of an Act of Parliament, which gives the more youthful of them a somewhat easier time of it. By this Act any shopkeeper who employs in his shops or warehouses any person under eighteen years of age for a longer period than twelve hours a day, or longer altogether than seventy-four hours a week, may be summoned by the assistant or, indeed,

anyone, before a magistrate, and if convicted may be fined. Under the Factory and Workshop Act, a woman's working day is ten hours and a half, but as wages are reckoned on a twelve hours' day, a working girl must, somehow or other, make up the deficiency in order to obtain the full wage.

From the ranks of working girls some noble women have sprung. To give only one instance, there was Sarah Martin, whose name as a philanthropist will ever be held in honour. When she entered on her prison labours and constituted herself chaplain and schoolmistress to the criminals who filled the gaol of Yarmouth, she was an assistant dressmaker, earning a shilling a day.

A London working girl who rose to a high position was "Nan Clarges," the daughter of a farrier who had his forge on the north side of the Strand. Nan had the good fortune to become sempstress to General Monk, and used to carry him his linen when, in 1647, he was a prisoner in the Tower. Monk married her in 1652, and on his being raised to a dukedom she became Duchess of Albemarle. Her father, the farrier, when that happened is said to have raised a maypole in the Strand, nearly opposite his forge, to commemorate his daughter's surprising elevation in the world.

A story worth repeating is told about another working girl of London who had good fortune almost within her grasp and yet missed it. She was servant to Thomas Guy, the founder of Guy's Hospital, and her name was Sally. Sally was of such frugal habits, and had so studied the wishes of her master, that Guy, who was a thrifty bachelor, promised to make her his wife.

Everything was got ready for the wedding, and amongst other preparations several repairs were ordered in and about the house. These included the laying down of a new pavement opposite the street door. It so happened that Sally observed a portion of the pavement, beyond the boundary of her master's house, which appeared to her to need mending, and of her own accord and whilst Guy was absent she gave orders to the workmen to have this job accomplished. The men objected, on the ground that her master had said nothing about it.

"Tell him I bade you," said she, "and he will not be angry."

She was mistaken. When Guy came home he noticed what had been done, and on asking the reason was told it was "by orders of the missus."

Guy thereupon called the foolish Sally and quietly said, "If you take upon yourself to order things contrary to my instructions before we are married, what will you not do after? About the wedding I have changed my mind."

These were not days of breach of promise cases, or Sally would have been able ever after to live handsomely on her damages. She lost a rich husband, and London gained the noble hospital which her master afterwards built and endowed at a cost of nearly two hundred and forty thousand pounds.

(To be continued.)





A year later and the village of Meadowfield is *en fête*, for to-day the new vicar has brought home his bride.

Again Ruth and Muriel are exchanging confidences, this time in the Vicarage garden.

"After all," Ruth says, "I'm not sure

that we have not attained the best of our desires, though they appeared thwarted. Certainly I'm not likely to become a professor," she adds, laughing; "but I'm one in a secondhand way. And you, Muriel; well, your little May will need good nursing yet."

Muriel looks fondly at the child, who

walks with feeble steps, holding her father's hand, proud of her newly-acquired powers.

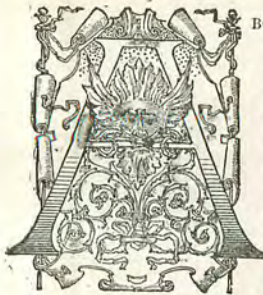
"Yes, Ruth, I think we have. At any rate, I know I have my heart's desire," answers Muriel, glancing at her husband with a glad light in her "happy eyes."

[THE END.]

## HOW WORKING GIRLS LIVE IN LONDON.

By NANETTE MASON.

### PART II.



ABOUT their place of residence a considerable number of the working girls of London have no difficulty whatever. They live with their parents, or find shelter under the hospitable roof of those on whom they have family claims.

As a rule such girls are fortunate. They are under watchful eyes—which is a good thing, though not always appreciated—and have those over them who are entitled to ask an account of their comings and goings. Friends are already provided; there is a fireside circle ready made, and in trouble and anxiety they have those about them in whom they can confide. A girl living at home has always somebody to espouse her interests; like one we met a short time back, who had six brothers, and when her young man tried to back out of his promise to marry, the six brothers went to him and threatened that if he did they would cut him into small pieces.

A marked advantage that girls often possess who stay with relations is, that they are not called upon to provide entirely for their own support. To find oneself in butter is not so difficult if bread come to us in the shape of presentation loaves. Not unfrequently they are set to work merely to keep themselves in clothes and out of mischief, and if they are sometimes made to contribute towards the expense of board and lodging, these payments are seldom more than a fraction of what they would be were they in the position of strangers.

This is pleasant enough for the girls themselves, but no one can say it is a good thing for the community. It tends to reduce wages, because those girls needing less are content to work for less. In this way life is made a harder matter for all who have none but themselves to look to for support.

Next to living at home, the simplest mode of existence is that in lodgings. It is far from an ideal form of life for a young woman, but there is not much of the ideal about London, and we must describe things as we find them. A girl with no friends in town comes up from the country, say, to a situation in a shop, and she drifts into lodging life from necessity, perhaps, more than from choice. Girls, too, who are London born not unfrequently find their way into lodgings, having had to leave home through no fault of their own. Their mother may be dead and their father have introduced a stepmother to whom their presence in the house is unwelcome. Quarrels, too, are sometimes at the bottom of their leaving home, and now and then we meet with a girl in lodgings who has been enticed

away by people influenced by motives of which the less said the better.

Life in lodgings has freedom about it. The restraints are few, and seldom more severe than that which our friend Lucy encountered when her landlady hearing her singing—Lucy is always at it—called upstairs and said, "Stop that bawling!"

Taking in lodgers is an immense industry, no doubt because it is a convenient way of eking out a small income. In the London Post Office Directory lodging-houses and boarding-houses are classed together, and there are about eighteen hundred of them. This, however, fails to give any idea of the actual number, for a great many people—the majority in fact—who keep lodgers and take in boarders would never think of inserting their names in the directory under this heading. Forty advertisements of apartments to let taken at random from the daily papers were recently compared with the list in the Directory, and out of the forty only two gave addresses which appeared in the Directory.

In lodgings an independent girl sometimes lives all alone and keeps company with none but herself. But to live alone is dreary unless one has at command considerable mental resources and a world of philosophy, not to speak of its being dangerous. It is all very well to talk about the advantages of solitude, but there is no question about its being a good thing that nature has made girls disposed to fly in flocks.

Union is not only strength but economy, and even from the point of view of making the most of scanty wages girls are sensible in clubbing together as they do in twos and threes for the use of the same apartment. Sometimes we find sisters living together in this way; in other cases they are friends hailing from the same country town, who have come to London together to encourage each other in the struggle for existence.

It is often a difficult matter to get suitable lodgings, especially for girls. Many people who have rooms to let object to women folk on any terms whatever. A standing objection is that they give more trouble than men; then, having narrower means, they are less liberal in their settlements, and have too keen an eye on every item in the weekly bill. Other reasons, too, will be found suggesting themselves to every landlady of prudence.

The recommendation of friends is the best thing on which to go in taking lodgings, and there are Christian and benevolent institutions from whom girls can now ask advice in the matter. Let them beware of relying wholly on their own judgment, for there are many dangerous lodging-houses, the characteristics of which might not at first be recognised by the inexperienced.

"It is impossible," says a writer in the *Leisure Hour*, "to be too particular about the character of the inmates of the lodging-house in which one purposes to stay. A word on this point is enough to the wise, but that the word may be rendered more emphatic, we shall supplement it by an anecdote told by

Mr. James Nasmyth, the famous engineer, in his biography, about his first coming to London.

"On arriving from Edinburgh, quite a lad, he was accompanied by his father. The two looked for lodgings for young Nasmyth in the neighbourhood of Waterloo Road, so as to be near the engineering work in which he was to be employed. One of the houses they visited was situated immediately behind the Surrey Theatre. It seemed a nice, tidy house, and the father appeared to have a liking for it. 'But when we were introduced,' says the son, 'into the room where I was to sleep, he observed an ultra-gay bonnet lying on the bed, with flashy bright ribbons hanging from it. This sight seemed to alter his ideas, and he did not take the lodging, but took another where there was no such bonnet. . . I afterwards asked him why he had not taken that nice lodging? 'Well,' he said, 'did you see that ultra-gay bonnet lying on the bed? I think that looked suspicious.'"

Even when we are satisfied as to the character of the people living in the house, there are many points remaining that call for the exercise of judgment. In taking lodgings one must be all eyes, ears, and nose. The appearance of the house from the street should be noted, and it is folly, unless driven by sheer necessity, so much as to knock at the door of a house the windows of which look as if they would be the better of being cleaned, or the blinds and curtains of which seem as if they should, long ago, have paid a visit to the washtub. It is true that a lean purse cannot command a palace, but poverty is a lame excuse for dirt.

A man who had an extensive experience of London lodgings, hit on a plan, which he claimed to be infallible, for discovering the amount of attention paid to cleanliness. When he went prowling round looking for apartments, he always made up an excuse for asking such an unexpected question, and said, "I should be glad to have a look at your frying-pan."

That was the test he applied. A greasy, dirty frying-pan, he had found by experience, indicated general dust and disorder, both upstairs and down, and the sight of it saved him the trouble of further investigation.

The distance of lodgings from one's work is of considerable importance. Cheap railway tickets to suburban districts have done much to send girls farther afield than of old; but to many even these small fares are an impossible expenditure. Those who are obliged by their occupations to be late of reaching home should look upon a near-at-hand place of residence as a necessity.

It goes without saying that the cost of lodgings varies with the locality and the accommodation. Lodging-house keepers, like other people, know their value, and if you want to be comfortable you must pay for it. A humble street off an East-end thoroughfare furnishes, perhaps, the extreme of cheapness, just as the other extreme is to be found in the streets off Piccadilly. A working girl who has to cut her coat according to her cloth will find that not much is to be got for three



shillings and sixpence a week—a box of a room maybe at the top of a house, cold in winter, hot in summer, and with little furniture, save a bedstead, a table, and a chair.

In connection with rent, it ought to be pointed out to girls who have little to spend and want to get good value for their money, that a neatly-kept house is as a rule cheaper to live in than one managed in a slovenly fashion. People who have not observed much often think the reverse, and jump to the conclusion that when a house has not much care bestowed upon it, the landlady can afford and is willing to let apartments at low rates. It is not so. The character of slovenly landladies is this: what they lack in tidiness they make up for in audacity.

Girls who take rather dismal lodgings may do much themselves in the way of beautifying them. If a room is bare a very little taste will often make it bright. It is wonderful what girls sometimes do in this way, and with such simple materials as a flower in a flowerpot, or a few engravings cut from an illustrated newspaper, and it is worth observing that such efforts are in a woman's line of usefulness. Those who have to earn their own living cannot be expected to have much leisure, or energy either, for housework, but domestic instincts should not be entirely neglected. A girl is quite wrong who thinks it will make her an old woman before her time if she tries in the narrow sphere of lodgings to act as a model housekeeper.

In taking lodgings it is well to have a clear understanding—and understandings should always be in writing—as to charges, not only for the room, but for "extras." There should be no chance of a disagreement as to the price of gas or coals or anything else.

When meals are taken in lodgings, one of two plans may be followed. The landlady may supply whatever is required and charge only her outlay, or meals may be set down in her bill at a fixed price. The latter plan certainly pleases the landlady the best, as she makes most profit out of it; the lodger gains

nothing by it, and, in fact, loses one of the delights of independence when she ceases to have command of stores which she can call her own. The most economical way is certainly for everyone to do her marketing for herself.

Girls who worked in lodgings at their business and had a little property there in the shape of tools and apparatus—a sewing machine, for example—were several years ago liable to a great hardship. Their effects might be seized to help to satisfy the claims of the superior landlord, even though they had paid their own rent regularly. This very unfair state of things has been done away with, and a lodger who pays her way need no longer fear having her "furniture, goods and chattels" disposed of to pay a debt with which she has nothing in the world to do.

The law now runs that "if a superior landlord levies a distress on any furniture, goods, or chattels of any lodger for arrears of rent due to him by his immediate tenant, the lodger may serve the superior landlord or the bailiff or any person employed by him to levy the distress with a declaration to the effect that the immediate tenant—that is to say, the lodger's landlord or landlady—has no right of property or beneficial interest in the furniture, goods, or chattels so distrained or threatened to be distrained upon, and that such property belongs to or is in the lawful possession of the lodger. The lodger must also state how much rent, if any, is due by her to her landlord or landlady, and may pay the superior landlord or the bailiff any sum so due."

If the superior landlord, in the face of this notice, is so foolish as to persist in levying the distress, he is guilty of an illegal distress, and the lodger may recover her goods by application to a stipendiary magistrate or two justices.

Working girl lodgers, it is to be feared, however, are much more frequently behind-hand with their rent than their landladies. With the small wages that ordinarily prevail, a girl, once she gets in debt to the landlady—and the first steps in that direction are remark-

ably easy—has often the utmost difficulty in getting out again. It is an uphill fight indeed, in which few come off victorious.

We remember well a girl we once met in lodgings who had not taken to heart the golden maxim, "Pay as you go, and what you're worth you'll know." She got behind a week's rent. The next week's rent she paid. The week following she satisfied the landlady with fair promises, and so the one week owing became two. The fourth week she paid, after which she missed another week, and thus it went on, till at last she was several months behind. The landlady, a simple, good-hearted soul, was gulled by her plausible excuses, and entertained no suspicions that Mabel would play her a trick instead of settling her now considerable bill.

One fine day Mabel announced that she was going out of town, *her employer having given* her a short holiday. She took away—if we remember rightly, it was a box and a bag, but she left in charge of the landlady two considerable sized brown paper parcels marked with her own name and "with care" written conspicuously in the left-hand top corner. These parcels, she said, might as well lie, if the landlady would kindly permit it, till her return.

Week passed after week, but Mabel never came back. The landlady at last thought she would open the parcels, which she had comforted herself by estimating as good security for the unpaid rent. We were with her when she did so. The contents of both were much the same—two bricks, fragments of pasteboard boxes, pieces of brown paper, and a dozen or so of old newspapers.

In such shabby actions people too often take refuge when they begin to flounder in the quagmire of debt. So, girls who live in lodgings, whatever your income, let there be impressed on the minds of all of you the maxim which Mabel forgot: "Pay your landlady what you owe, and what you're worth you'll know."

(To be continued.)



## THE HILL OF ANGELS.

By LILY WATSON, Author of "Within Sight of the Snow," etc.

### CHAPTER IV.

"'Tis pleasant sure to see one's self in print."

With eager eyes Evelyn watched for her first proofs. Her book was to be hurried through the press that she might see it complete before the projected departure of herself, Mrs. and Miss Lancaster, to Switzerland early in August. There was so little of it, it would not take long to set up, the publisher had assured her.

One morning at breakfast-time the anxiously-expected packet arrived. Evelyn seized it with kindling eyes and broke the wrapper. Yes! there were her own verses on the long strips of paper.

"Your poems? Oh, do let me see!"

cried Dottie, rushing round to peep over her cousin's shoulder. "How lovely they look! You needn't push me away, Evelyn. But what is this?"

'Far, far and wide resound amain  
The tuneful snores of Arcady.'

And Dottie burst into a peal of laughter.

"How stupid you are, Dot," replied Evelyn, a little crossly; "can't you see it ought to be *shores*?" Of course there will be mistakes; there always are in proofs."

The embryo authoress gathered up her papers and departed to her own little sanctum in mid-breakfast.

"Dot! Dot!" said Mrs. Lancaster, reprovingly, "your spirits run away

with you, my dear; you have quite put your cousin out."

"She'll soon come round again, mother dear," responded the imperturbable Dottie; "it did look so funny I really could not help laughing."

"Well, she is a very clever girl, and in the main a very good one; I will say that for her," observed Mrs. Lancaster; "but her uncle doesn't like this publishing at all. 'You ought to exercise more control over her,' says he to me as plain as plain can be the *other morning* when he called, and you were having your debating society upstairs. But I told him straight out that I couldn't do it; she's too old and too set in her ways to be said by me. I did show him her



## HOW WORKING GIRLS LIVE IN LONDON.

By NANETTE MASON.

## PART III.

INSTEAD of going into lodgings girls sometimes become boarders, either in regular boarding-houses or with families who either have more accommodation than they themselves require, or who find it desirable to make a little money by opening their fireside circle to strangers. Girls out at business all day seldom, however, arrange for full board anywhere. In most instances it is only partial board—breakfast and tea during the week, and full board on Sundays.

Boarding is preferable to lodging in this, that there is more supervision, and that it keeps up the feeling of family life which it is desirable we should never lose. It only proves undesirable when the boarder finds herself treated not as one of the family, but as an intruder, whose very bite and sup are regarded as a dead loss to be resented, even though she has paid for them.

"An objection to some boarding-houses," says a London bachelor, "is that they are conducted on penurious principles, and that their tables are so economically provided that one never gets enough to eat. Not only is there a scant supply, but the landlady grudges, or seems to grudge, every mouthful, and her terrible eye follows you as you dip into the marmalade jar or help yourself to butter. A boarder may feel bound to eat as much as possible to get the worth of his money, but it is hard to do that in some houses."

"This is an objection, however, that applies more to small establishments than to large. When there are a dozen or more at table the effect of the terrible eye is distributed. Besides, wise landladies know very well that pinching is the worst possible policy, and that even if every boarder were a glutton and ate till he could eat no more, there would still be a good profit over." Girls of sense and spirit, when they find themselves in niggardly houses, will soon pack up their traps and seek for more liberal dwelling-places.

Admirable institutions started for the benefit of girls engaged in business in the metropolis are found in the Homes for Working Girls, in which readers of *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER* have, by their liberal contributions, already shown a deep interest. The object of the committee who manage these is, to quote their own words, "'to help those who help themselves,' by providing homes in the various districts of London for those who are earnestly striving to gain an honest living, but who are 'homeless'; at the same time to afford them profitable recreation, and above all to surround them with Christian influences and friendly guidance at the most critical period of their lives."

They are founded on the idea that woman's sphere is the home, and that girls who are to become wives should never lose touch of home life, or have any chance of feeling like fish out of water, when happy fortune sets them at last to govern households of their own. In the Homes girls are able "to live like sisters under the loving care of a Christian woman as superintendent, with dining, sitting-rooms, and library in common, and all arranged so as to secure that well-ordered freedom and cheerful independence which family life means."

The payments in the Homes are small, but everything is paid for, so that their benefits may be partaken of without the slightest lowering of independence, or the uncomfortable feeling on the part of any girl that she is the recipient of charity. The rules for conducting the Homes—and every community must observe some rules—strike one as the product of common sense. They are such as every wise girl will cheerfully obey, and praise, too, for their recognition of her reasonable personal freedom.

In the case of many establishments girls live under the roofs of their employers, board and lodging being provided for them; several large houses are indeed conspicuous in this way. How this answers depends very much on the employers. If they recognise their duty all goes well. Some, however, take little pains about either the food or lodging they provide; and in the regulations they impose, and the practices they shut their eyes to, show little knowledge of the wants and eccentricities of human nature.

A class of working girls who have practically no choice in the matter of living is that which includes the thousands in the metropolis who are engaged in domestic service. These are in the hands of the people who employ them, and they are comfortable and happy or miserable and discontented just as it happens to be a good or bad master, or, what is much more important, a good or bad "missus."

How servants live and how they have a right to live, are subjects which have been a good deal written about, and that from two points of view—that of maid and that of mistress. The fact is not to be ignored that domestic service is unpopular with the class who might be supposed to find in it a congenial occupation. It is looked down upon as not so genteel, for example, as waiting in a shop, and being there called "Miss," as if people lessened their gentility by any sort of useful labour whatever.

Another reason for domestic service being held in abhorrence by girls is the restraint which it imposes. Their nature rebels against confinement; liberty, evening liberty especially, is what they want, and no occasional "days out" will make up for the loss of it. To be independent and free, a girl rejects what at first sight one would think the best thing in the world for her, and joins the hungry army of workgirls, with its underpay and excessive competition.

"What is her freedom after all?" asks Mrs. Monument in "The Children of Gideon." "She's free to walk the streets and get into bad company; she's free to learn bad manners, and she's free to go hungry and ragged."

Faults, it must be allowed, are to be laid to the charge both of mistresses and maids. The perfect servant is a rare bird, and so is the perfect mistress. Mistresses are often over-exacting, full of whims, and with an unfortunate and irritating inclination to nag at these over whom they have control. The rules they lay down are too frequently only petty restrictions, in which the fact is lost sight of that servants are of the same flesh and blood as themselves. "The counsels of woman," says the proverb, "are cruel," and to judge by the want of consideration shown by some mistresses, there is a good deal of truth in it. A few mistresses, however, err on the side of over-indulgence, like one we met recently, who had no belief in class distinction, and showed her disapproval of them by allowing her servants to sit for a certain time in the drawing-room every afternoon and play on the piano.

General servants are in most respects the worst off. They have more difficulties than those in larger establishments of getting time to themselves either for exercise in the open air or for seeing their friends; then they are more isolated, and what with sweeping, dusting, cooking, and answering the door-bell, they are much harder worked.

Of all general servants the hardest wrought are the "slaves" in lodging-houses, as many of our working girls may have observed. The traditional character of the lodging-house domestic is not a good one; it represents her as tricky sometimes, forgetful often, discreet never, and slovenly always. "But," says a

writer of experience in London life, "she has seldom had justice done her. Our observations on servants of this class confirm the conclusion that the number of people trying to do their duty in the world is much greater than is generally made out. We have known all sorts, from a girl fresh from the country and as 'green' as her native grass, who, when she brought up the tea-things, instead of setting them down and opening the door, would stand and kick at it till it was opened, to one of an ambitious turn, who aimed at being a lady's maid, studied French out of a well-thumbed grammar, and would conjugate 'avoir' and 'être' in a low tone to herself as she polished the grates or blackened the shoes. The difficulties of a lodging-house servant, often a single girl waiting upon a dozen unreasonable and exacting lodgers, must be pretty considerable, and she deserves some consideration if her memory is occasionally at fault and her appearance is seldom as fine as if she had just been taken out of a band-box."

When servants are out of a situation they often take refuge till they find something to suit them in the lodgings provided by some registry offices. There they may have to sleep five or six in a room and two or three in a bed, but the price is low—about sixpence a night. But sensible girls will be slow to go to lodgings about whose respectability they are not quite certain, and about some registry offices the less said the better. Those who know their way about prefer when in difficulties to knock at the doors of such institutions as the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, the Young Women's Christian Association, and the Girls' Friendly Society. An account of the Servants' Home in connection with the Young Women's Christian Association was given in one of our numbers for January by our valued contributor Miss Anne Beale.

Many foreign girls have found a welcome oasis in the desert of London in Gordon House, one of the Homes for working girls which was founded for the purpose of receiving young women who had come from Germany for domestic service in England.

Amongst the difficulties of working girls not the least are those connected with eating and drinking. Certainly in nothing has the metropolis advanced so much within the last few years as in the facilities it affords for obtaining good food, well cooked, and at moderate prices. But the real obstacle in the path is the empty pocket. Many, because of their miserable earnings, have to be contented with the commonest and scantiest food, and lead lives of semi-starvation. What sort of fare can be had, say, by a mantle finisher who, when fully employed, can earn only eight shillings a week after providing her own cotton and needles?

So far as wages are concerned, girls run small chance of hurting their constitutions by eating either too liberally or too daintily. But the injury to the bodily system arises in other ways. Working girls forget that when the requirements of health have to be satisfied on a very small sum, great judgment in the selection of food must be exercised. It won't do, for one thing, to drink tea to excess; indeed, for girls with narrow finances if the teapot were thrown out of the window and the porridge pot made to reign in its stead, they would be happier and healthier beyond telling.

Girls in lodgings often find it a cheap and excellent plan to do their own cooking, and, by means of a little cooking stove burning mineral oil, this can easily be accomplished. Such stoves are now made to great perfection and cost



only a few shillings; they are easily carried anywhere; the oil gives no smell; they burn at marvellously small expense, and when the cooking is over it is a simple thing to put out the fire.

By way of furnishing an encouraging example, we may quote from the autobiography of James Nasmyth, the famous engineer. When Nasmyth came to London he had only ten shillings a week, and he resolved, he tells us, that his wages should maintain him in food and lodging. He therefore directed his attention to economical living. "In order," he says, "to keep within my weekly income, I bought the raw materials and cooked them in my own way and to my own taste." He got a little stove made by a tinsmith; but in these days there is no necessity for that. "I put the meat," he goes on to say, "in the pot with the other comestibles at nine o'clock in the morning. It simmered away all day until half-past six in the evening, when I came home with a healthy appetite to enjoy my dinner. . . .

"The meat I generally cooked in it was leg of beef, with sliced potato, bits of onion chopped down, and a modicum of white pepper and salt, with just enough water to cover the elements. When stewed slowly the meat became very tender, and the whole yielded a capital dish which a very Soyer might envy. It was partaken of with a zest that, no doubt, was a very important element in its savouriness. The whole cost of this capital dinner was about fourpence halfpenny. I sometimes varied the meat with rice boiled with a few raisins and a pennyworth of milk."

It has been said that the passion for dress in women is like that for drink in men. How it is satisfied on the low wages of working girls constitutes one of the mysteries which meet the inquirer at many points of our present subject. Too often it takes the direction of indulgence in cheap finery and pinchbeck jewellery, and many a girl may be seen hurrying to business with imitation diamond earrings—"only a shilling"—and with feathers, flowers, and ribbons that in proportion are no higher priced. And all this outside show, too, whilst not improbably her underclothing will not bear inspection, and her boots are in the last stage of decrepitude.

Sometimes the decorative tendency even leads girls into what for them is a ruinous expenditure. Take the craving for ostrich feathers which is common among very many classes of factory operatives in the metropolis. "A girl," says Mr. David F. Schloss, writing of women's work and wages, "who has not attained to the coveted dignity of an ostrich feather (*Indicium atque insigne fortuna*, as Cicero says of the golden *bulla* of the Roman nobles) is esteemed of small account by her

comrades. The cost of one of these highly prized decorations is never less than 4s. (the price of a very inferior specimen) and runs as high as 17s. The necessary amount of self-denial requisite to their purchase is in many cases supplied—as the present writer has ascertained—by elaborate machinery in the form of 'feather clubs' with weekly contributions, like those of that well-known institution among the working classes, the 'goose club.'"

The instinct for making oneself attractive is not to be run down. Love of dress may be wrong, but regard for it and attention to it are certainly praiseworthy. Let every girl then try to go tastefully clad. But there are one or two points she ought never to lose sight of. For one thing, dress should suit one's occupation. It should be of the quietest possible colour and of a really serviceable material, something that will stand brushing or washing. There is not the least need for its being in the fashion. "Better out of the world than out of the fashion" is a maxim that has nothing whatever to do with the industrious.

In many businesses girls have to appear what is called "respectable," and that is to be done by taste and simplicity, both of which are cheap, and not by tawdry attempts at personal adornment, which only get people laughed at. A clean collar is really better than all the lockets, brooches, clasps, and buckles in the world, and a dress can hardly be called shabby that is neat and spotless, without holes and complete in the way of buttons. If low-priced finery is put on to hide poverty it completely fails in that object and only makes it more glaring, not to speak of the ridiculous spectacle it presents when it grows draggled, limp, and faded. The true method for looking respectable, and charming into the bargain, is to wear the ornaments of neatness and simplicity.

So long as wages are at a point which provides for nothing but bare subsistence, we can hardly expect working girls to do anything in the way of saving. People cannot be saving who have nothing to be saving with, and the problem of keeping soul and body together to-day often leaves neither time nor spirit for solving questions about how to live to-morrow. In a few cases girls who have acquired the difficult art of managing money in microscopic quantities put by a little in the Savings Bank against a rainy day, but they are quite exceptions.

It does not happen, however, that even with wretched pittance saving is impossible. We have just seen what girls can do when bent on ornamenting themselves with ostrich feathers, and we remember the case of two dressmakers' assistants, who by painful effort saved up a considerable sum, which they spent in the hire of a carriage for a single day. In it they went to the Park and elsewhere, one of the con-

ditions of the hiring being that whenever either of them addressed the coachman he was to touch his hat and say "My Lady!"

The Post Office, with its aids to thrift, is at everybody's door, and the benefits which are thus conferred on those inclined to make the future secure and comfortable, cannot be too widely known. In the Post Office a girl can invest her savings, insure her life, and lay up something to be an annuity in her old age. The terms, too, on which the business is conducted are frequently better than those of any private company, and the security is the best in the world. Even pence can be saved by means of the forms that are to be had at any Post Office, on which forms penny postage stamps can be fixed from time to time, and when there are twelve of them they are received by the Post Office as a Savings Bank deposit of a shilling.

Nothing gives a pleasanter feeling of independence than the knowledge that one has a few pounds at one's back in the Savings Bank. At any time the fluctuations of fashion, and many other causes, may throw a girl out of work, and unless she has saved something, what is she to do before finding new employment? There is a discipline, too, in thrift of a very valuable kind even when the income is of the smallest.

Something saved is handy also in the event of illness when the cost of medical advice has to be faced, for many have praiseworthy scruples about obtaining such advice gratis. A wise provision against ill-health is made in the Homes for Working Girls by means of a sick fund, which has proved a great success. Every resident in the Homes is required to contribute a penny a week towards this useful fund. In all cases of sickness medicine is supplied free for twenty-one days, and in the event of any resident being confined to the house on account of illness, a shilling a day is allowed for a period of not more than fourteen days.

It is not everyone who can convert illness into a profitable investment like a working girl we once met in London, who made her ill-health or pretended ill-health a means of obtaining many privileges which would otherwise have been denied her. She got on very well till one fine day when in a fainting fit one of her fellow workers was all of a sudden struck with an idea, capsized the smelling salts into her mouth, and exclaimed—

"Sally, you are shamming!"

The taste of the smelling salts made Sally forget her part, and she started to her feet spluttering rage and revenge. After that there was no more attempts to excite compassion by means of pretended ailments, and there is a moral in the incident for some girls if they have only cuteness to discover it.

(To be concluded.)

## LONELY.

By AUGUSTA HANCOCK.

WHEN the ev'ning bells are ringing, ringing out their solemn chime,  
And the mists creep o'er the valley in the peaceful, gloaming time,  
Comes the breath of wafted odours from the almond and the lime.

Comes a rush of memories stealing, stealing o'er my tired breast,  
And the touch of loving fingers that mine own have softly pressed,  
Now, indeed, in tender keeping, "where the weary are at rest."

Comes a dream of days far-fleeting, fleeting to the silent past,  
Days of bright and golden sunshine, all too strangely sweet to last,  
As the rainbow-tinted foam wreaths on the wave-washed shore upcast

Comes a voice in eager pleading, pleading, urging to the light,  
Saying, "Work while time is given; yonder, yonder cometh night,  
And within the gates of heaven sadness melts in rapture bright."



## HOW WORKING GIRLS LIVE IN LONDON.

By NANETTE MASON.

## PART IV.



WE all crave for companionship, and a working girl must have friends and acquaintances. What is the use of a woman's tongue unless she have someone to talk to? This craving, being common to everybody, is easily satisfied; indeed, the only difficulty is to have the companionship of the right sort.

Girls often club together in lodgings, finding that not only an aid to economy, but a more cheerful arrangement than solitude. The proverb is not always right which says that two women together make cold weather, though it may be hard for girls of a certain temperament to avoid petty jealousies and get on with each other like philosophers. We have met some beautiful examples of working girl friendships, in which, without any claims other than those of kindly feeling and womanly sympathy, girls have gone for many years like Rosalind and Celia in the play, "coupled and inseparable," aiding each other in trouble, and loyal to each other in all the ups and downs of London life.

As a rule, however—explain it in what way you please—girls hang loosely together, and their most lasting intimacies are with those of the opposite sex. Into such intimacies working girls plunge with careless ease. Emily going to business every morning frequently passes a young man also bound for business. Looks of recognition quickly grow to words; then he says, "If you are disengaged such an evening, and will meet me at the lions in Trafalgar Square, I shall take you to a concert, or to anything else you please." She agrees, and they meet, though she knows no more about him, his position, or his family than what he has chosen to tell her himself, which is probably nothing.

No doubt this often comes of pure thoughtlessness and ignorance of the pitfalls of life. A girl does not know that for one good-natured and well-meaning man she may encounter, she has a chance of meeting with a hundred designing characters from whose companionship she can get nothing but harm. London is no worse than other great cities, but unfortunately it does not seem to be any better.

If a girl wants to find a husband, he is not to be picked up in the street. We have, it is true, known several instances in which men have married girls whose acquaintance they made in this way, but without exception the matches have proved unfortunate. Either something was afterwards discovered that had been carefully concealed, or there was a screw loose somewhere, and the result was lifelong unhappiness.

We remember the case of a girl who ultimately married a young man who lodged on the opposite side of the street, and whose only introduction was that they both happened to look out of the window at the same time. The young man deceived her as to his expectations as much as Claude Melnotte did Pauline, about his palace by the Lake of Como, and when that deception was seen through the music of their married life came to an end.

Chance and dangerous acquaintances would not be so readily made if working girls were not often deficient in self-respect. They make themselves too cheap, and forget that as things go the world usually takes people at their own

valuation. Nobody sets a high value on a girl who acts as if she did not estimate herself as worth much.

"Ah, wasteful woman! she who may  
On her sweet self set her own price,  
Knowing he cannot choose but pay—  
How has she cheapened Paradise!  
How given for naught her precious gift,  
How spoiled the bread and spilled the wine,  
Which, spent with due respective thrift,  
Had made brutes men, and men Divine!"

What leads girls astray is not their good qualities run wild, as Goethe suggests when he says—

"Poor things! poor things! the best and kindest  
Fall soonest, for their heart is blindest,  
And feels, and loves, and does not reason,  
And they are lost—poor things! poor things!"

Now and then it may be so, but the real cause is their insatiable vanity. It does not need very close watching to see that there are grounds for the reproach of another poet who said that woman would be satisfied if one only gave her a looking glass and a few sugar plums.

Working girls have, as a rule, two or three hours every evening to themselves in which to seek for relaxation. From morning till evening they are human machines, but when turned at closing time into the street they take up again the part of human beings. What, then, becomes of them, and how many make a profitable and praiseworthy use of these leisure hours?

The need for amusement everyone acknowledges, and to none is it more necessary than to the thousands of girls who make their living in the great metropolis. Their spirits must find vent somehow, and into their lives some variety must be introduced or, with to-day like yesterday and to-morrow like to-day, existence would be unbearable. The trouble is how to provide excitement without its being unwholesome and pleasure without its unfitting for subsequent labour.

The amusements, even the pranks, of girls are of a more colourless nature than those of young men. However great their vivacity, you never hear, for example, of working girls who have been out to tea climbing up the lamp-posts and putting out all the lamps for half a mile. But for all that they abhor anything slow, and you must take them as you find them. They may not want their entertainment boisterous, but it must be at least lively, for London life, in their way of thinking, is dreary enough without introducing the funereal into hours of leisure.

For want of training, girls are, as a rule, without resources in themselves. Those, therefore, who are under no sort of supervision, and can do just as they please, are gad-about at night and find distraction in ways of which people with no temptation to leave their comfortable firesides little dream. Some of them frequent theatres, with their "young men," if they have them; if not, with girl-companions, or maybe alone; but alone is not common; fortunately, for it is a bad sign. Others go to music-halls, to feast there on comic vocalists, conjurers, ventriloquists, performing dogs, and clog dancers.

Dancing-rooms present a great attraction to the more light-headed, and many a girl has gone astray through the associates found in them, and to the sound of their music has entered on a reckless and dissipated life. A girl may think that after she has had her fling

at this kind of evening amusement, she will settle down to be a good and quiet house-keeper if any young man gives her the chance; but it is extremely unlikely that she will ever do anything of the kind.

Of late years the rational recreation of the toiling population of London has received a great deal of attention; the well-to-do have wakened up to their duty, and are giving both money and time to brighten the lives of those who work as hard but are less fortunate than themselves. It is an age of people's palaces, polytechnic institutes, public libraries, and concerts for the million, and it is not too much to say that the means of passing her spare time in a pleasant and profitable way will soon be, if it is not already, at the command of every working girl.

Amongst these praiseworthy agencies, one which may be quoted, by way of illustration, is the Young Women's Help Society. This society has over eighty branches scattered throughout England, including some of the largest towns—Devonport, Manchester, Newcastle, North Shields, etc.—and over two dozen branches in London alone, where it works among the poorest women and girls engaged in all kinds of employment.

The greater part of the work in towns is carried on by means of evening clubs. These offer an evening enlivened with music, singing, and sewing-classes, sometimes with a dance, always with a pleasant chat, besides supplying coffee, lemonade, and such-like beverages. There is also a lavatory. Last, but not least, the girls are treated to an occasional day in the country.

These clubs are superintended by a matron and by ladies, who take so many evenings a week. They have in some cases an average attendance of between thirty and forty, and the hold thus obtained over the rough girls is invaluable.

In appealing to the public for subscriptions, about a year ago, the Duke of Newcastle, speaking of the benefit of these evening meetings to working girls during the summer season—let alone the dreary winter—put it in a way which it is to be hoped secured a ready response from all who could afford to give. "Let anyone," he said, "try and realise what it must be to return home after a day's work in a jam factory, with the thermometer between 70 deg. and 80 deg., to a room 9ft. by 12ft., with no fresh air attainable except through the tiny window from the narrow, stifling street, shared probably with two other girls, each wearing an old gown rendered loathsome by the heat and work of the day, unrelieved too often by any underclothing. Is it to be wondered at if the girls prefer the streets with their attendant temptations—the public-houses, and others still worse?"

Some girls of course fill up their leisure with reading, but the literature that finds acceptance with a large class is nothing to be proud of. The penny dreadful, with its sensational incidents, has a fascination for the half-educated, who know nothing of the world, and are unable to detect the monstrous improbabilities of this class of fiction. Working girls everywhere are great supporters of the press that issues its highly-spiced stories in pennyworths. By means of these they are able to transport themselves from their poor abodes and the companionship of Tom and Sally, to West-end mansions and the society of dukes, not to speak of sometimes princes. It is so nice, too, to think that there may be some streak of resemblance between themselves and the poor but lovely girl who comes to London from a



thatched cottage in the country, and who is called by her friends Blanche Somebody, but who is really Lady Charlotte Somebody else, and the heiress of three million sterling, though she does not know it. There is all the excitement of following her fortunes as she dodges the villain, who is in the secret of her wealth and station, but who in the end is utterly discomfited, and welcomes the advances of the titled admirer, whom she ultimately weds at Hanover Square, and who is all good looks, honesty, and devotion.

It would be well if their reading stopped short at sensationalism of this romantic type, but to a good deal of the printed matter that falls into the hands of these young people the objections are serious; it is nothing short of demoralising. Great efforts, however, have been made to supply healthy, innocent, and attractive reading, by means of which girls engaged in providing for their bread and butter might brighten their monotonous lives. THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER, if we may be permitted to allude to ourselves, has by general acknowledgment taken the foremost place in this useful work, and many interesting and encouraging instances, we are informed, have come to the knowledge of those concerned in its management, showing that it has been a real boon to the class under consideration.

Before dismissing the subject of the recreations of working girls, it may be remarked that employers often err in thinking that they have nothing to do with how the girls under them pass their time when the day's work is over. True enough, it is their own affair, and the instinct of girls is to reject supervision, but kindly feeling dictates that employers should frequently step in to save girls from the effects of their own ignorance.

"It is the duty," says Cobbett, in words which should be taken to heart by all who have to do with the young—"it is the duty, and ought to be the pleasure of age and experience, to warn and instruct youth, and to come to the aid of inexperience. When sailors have discovered rocks or breakers, and have had the good luck to escape with life from amidst them, they, unless they be pirates or barbarians as well as sailors, point out the spots for the placing of buoys and of lights, in order that others may not be exposed to the danger which they have so narrowly escaped. What man of common humanity, having by good luck missed being engulfed in a quagmire or quicksand, will withhold from his

neighbours a knowledge of the peril without which the dangerous spots are not to be approached?"

People may think that working girls should spend the evenings in improving their minds by attending classes of which there are many now open in the metropolis for their benefit. Some do, but the majority—without taking taste into account—have little energy left for study after their work is done. Watching them going home of an evening, one would think that nineteen out of every twenty would be the better of having an Act of Parliament passed compelling them to turn into bed and sleep for a month, they look so listless and jaded. The culture of the mind is hardly possible when the body is exhausted.

Those who have the necessary vitality left pursue mental culture in such institutions as the College for Working Women, which was founded to enable those who are at work during the day to spend the evening in the development of their minds by careful intellectual training and also by friendly social intercourse, an important point in the development of the mind being human fellowship. The only darkness, as Shakespeare says, is ignorance, and it is well for a girl, so long as she does not overtask herself, to be a seeker after knowledge, especially in things which she can make available in the line of her work. Information pays, if it is of the right sort, and London, together with shorter hours of labour, wants educational centres for working girls, not by the half dozen, but by the hundred, so that they may be brought within easy reach of those who have little time for going to and fro. If working girls were better educated they would be in less danger than now of spending their time foolishly.

It is the want of culture of any kind that makes the girls attending shops and factories all as like each other as peas. One only need overhear the conversation of two of them to see that they have a very limited intellectual horizon, bounded generally on the one side by a new ribbon and on the other by a young man.

Many measures for the improvement of working girls suggest themselves, which it would be impossible to carry out. Kindly feelings towards a class and the interest of the community at large do not always recommend the same things in this topsy-turvy world. But wise efforts, within the bounds of possibility, are being made, and in this direction

the well-to-do have an opportunity of distinguishing themselves, both by giving generously of their means, and by making a liberal sacrifice of their time.

The great difficulty is the difficulty of wages. Miss Edith Simcox, writing on this subject in a contemporary about two years ago, mentions that there are perhaps a million of respectable, self-supporting, self-respecting, fairly-skilled female operatives whose clear average earnings with a long day's labour are more often under than over ten shillings a week.

"We believe," adds Miss Simcox, "that there are still well-to-do people who say and think that ten shillings a week are very good wages for a single woman; but that opinion is seldom supported by a detailed budget.

"Let us see for ourselves how much spending there is in such a sum. The rations allowed to the old people in Whitechapel Workhouse cost, according to Mrs. Barnett, 3s. 11d. a head per week. In quantity they are scarcely equal to the amount physiologists consider necessary for the healthy maintenance of an able-bodied adult, and a lone woman can hardly buy as cheaply as contractors. Still we will suppose our working woman to be content with the same diet as the aged paupers, and to spend only 4s. a week in food, 3s. is an ordinary rent to pay in London for such a small back room as she will occupy; light, firing, and washing can hardly cost her less than another shilling, and if she belongs, as we will hope, to a trade union, her necessary weekly expenses are brought up to 8s. 2d. without any provision for clothes, holidays, amusements, or saving; for all these and other purposes she has a balance available varying, let us say, from 4d. to 1s. 10d. a week, or from 17s. 4d. to £4 15s. 9d. a year.

"And yet there are ladies whose cheapest dress costs as much as the whole year's pocket-money of an industrious book-finder, who have the audacity to talk about thrift to these passed mistresses in the art of 'going without!'"

Were wages raised many good results would follow. We cannot certainly have everything—wages, education, leisure, and recreation—put straight at once; but the present progress of things is in the right direction, and we are confident that a better day than was ever seen before has, in our time, dawned, though it may not yet shine brightly, on our sisters, the working girls of this country.

[THE END.]

## FORBIDDEN LETTERS.

By MARY E. HULLAH, Author of "Celia and Her Legacy," "No," etc.

### CHAPTER V.

EDMUND RAVENSDALE knew nothing whatever of the events that were taking place at Yew Lodge; business was slack, and he had come down to Hazelton for a day or so to see his mother and enjoy a breath of country air. He did not recognise the voice calling for help, though he happened just at that moment to be thinking of Bessie, and wondering whether she would be pleased with the copy of Tennyson's poems which he had brought for her from London.

On arriving at the farther side of the river he shouted two or three times, but there was no answer, and he landed thinking that some child must have been calling "Edmund, Edmund." Yet it had sounded very much as if the child had been in great trouble; he got into the punt again, and pushed off a little

way along the bank, in order to convince himself that no accident had occurred; the river was deep in some places.

"Anything wrong?" called Edmund, in ringing tones; the echoes brought back his own words dimly; he waited a little while, and then, satisfied that all was well, he went his way homewards slowly. It was past six o'clock when he arrived at Yew Lodge. Anything wrong? Surely much that was wrong. Edmund Ravensdale had never had such a home-coming as this. At the study door he met his father, and there was that in his face which caused the young man to ask breathlessly, "Is my mother worse?"

"No, no, thank God! I have not told her yet, we must keep it from her as long as we can. Come in, my boy; here is sad news—look" (he put Bessie's ill-written confession

into Edmund's hand); "she has run away, the child I said I would cherish and guard as my own daughter. She has been missing since luncheon. I have sent to Templebury station and to the Junction; I have telegraphed to the Bridges—no one has seen her."

"What is it all about? I don't understand why she went!" exclaimed Edmund.

A very few moments more and he was in full possession of all the facts, as far as Mr. Ravensdale knew them. He drew a long breath. "I hope it is not so bad as you think, father," he said kindly; "she cannot have gone very far in this time, and I will go at once and look for her; she has acted very foolishly, and I expect that she is frightened, and hiding somewhere close by. I will bring her back."

He spoke with calm decision, thinking to