

THE EMANCIPATION OF SEAMSTRESSES.

By ANNE BEALE.



DURING a drawing-room meeting at Mr. Walter Besant's, I was set thinking of "All Sorts and Conditions of Men"; and that not merely in reference to his powerful work so entitled, or to the comprehensive petition in our Book of Common Prayer, but to the needs of our fellow-creatures. These we knew were sure to be advocated, so we went to Hampstead to hear particulars of The Needle-women's Co-operative Association, and to inspect specimens of the work executed by its members. A kind welcome, accompanied by tea and coffee, preceded the informal meeting—or more properly, pleasant little house-party—and we were soon heart and soul in the hardships and difficulties of the seamstresses of to-day.

Details were given of the sweating system as affecting the oppressed and jaded women,

and of the efforts made to better their condition, by paying them their wage without the intervention of the sweater. We were told how that the sweaters or middlemen made as much as thirty or forty per cent. out of work done by women, and that there are often as many as five of them between employer and employed. The women, who are frequently the bread-winners of the family, are thus reduced to a minimum payment, and rather than lose their starvation wage, continue to manufacture shirts at from eightpence to one shilling per dozen, and to toil on at "seam, and gusset, and band," until they literally "sew them on in a dream." Hood's "Song of the Shirt" is being for ever repeated. How is the unjust percentage to be diverted from its course and brought back to the original source? This is the burning question, and co-operation of workers seems the reply. At least this was what Mr. Besant and the friends he had assembled were anxious to prove.

So much has been said and written of late on the sweating system, that it is unnecessary to repeat the arguments of the speakers and the readers of papers. Action was what they craved, and not mere sentimental pity and unqualified assent.

"Come and see our workrooms at Carteret Street, Westminster, and at New Buildings, Tenter Street East, Whitechapel," urged the ladies acting as honorary secretaries of those associations, and partly as their mainstays, until they gradually acquire strength to support themselves.

So we went.

No. 4, Carteret Street, Queen Anne's Gate, is not difficult to find, though it is difficult to get through the swarms of busy bees and

drones mingling in inextricable confusion. A juvenile insect buzzing on the doorstep of what seems a big warehouse, bids us go upstairs, and outside the hive we seek is inscribed the commonplace legend, "Needlework Registry."

Within we find an office, where needle-women can register their names and qualifications for the small payment of threepence, and ladies either in town or country can obtain competent workers on the payment of sixpence. This has been an "unqualified success," and many a weary embroiderer, milliner, dressmaker, upholsteress, lace or linen mender, or plain needlewoman, has been engaged from this office, sometimes in London, and sometimes for more than "a day in the country." To quote from the report: "In a large number of cases one engagement has led on to another, and when once an introduction has been effected and an opening given, the women have obtained fresh work without any further intervention on the part of the Association."

Having heard many details of the good effected by this Registry, the secretary ushers us into the long workroom on the first floor, where we find about thirty women employed in various kinds of needlework. Much of it is of the finest and most elaborate description, for here are made to order trousseaux, and layettes, Indian and Colonial outfits, and garments for "all sorts and conditions" of women as well as men. It is only necessary to examine the specimens of work displayed, to acknowledge that the best hands find employment here, and we are not surprised to learn that "dames of high degree" come to the association for their trousseaux and other orders. Valenciennes lace and French cambric are occasionally *de rigueur*, and even silk night-dresses at three guineas each are fashioned here. Our eyes fail us to count the tucks, all done by hand, in a lace-adorned under-garment, but we are told they are eighteen to the inch, and we only hope that *le jeu vaut la chandelle*; but it must be sadly trying to the eyes! As to the stitching, it would seem that neither eyes nor fingers could suffice for work so minute. Naturally, payment varies according to the materials and handiwork, and articles of clothing are made trimmed or untrimmed, at the will of the employer. Price lists will be gladly sent, and orders are the one thing needed. Happily the rooms at Carteret Street are self-supporting, and the women and girls have already a high reputation; but we fain would see similar rooms all over London, where women may gain a fair wage for a fair day's work direct from the employer, or co-operative association, and the middlemen find better occupation elsewhere. Workrooms could be opened in any desirable locality within a month, if the capital—£250—were raised, either in £1 shares, by loan, or guarantee. It needs only to glance at these long, many-windowed, clean and airy rooms in Carteret Street to be assured of the good effected by working in them instead of in the dens which have been so forcibly described in the Reports on the "sweating system" from the Select Committee of the House of Lords. The fifth is now before us, and brings the investigations down to this present year of grace! Probably the weary women would scarcely call it a "year of grace," when toiling fourteen mortal hours each day—sometimes Sundays as well as weekdays—to earn a bare subsistence. The only *grace* known or shown is that the blinds of the Sunday workroom are closed—a latent mark of respect for the Great God who instituted the day of rest. Woe be to those who systematically employ it as a day of labour or pleasure.

It is, however, hopeful to watch the thirty respectable-looking women on the first floor at Carteret Street, and to know that they only work from nine till six. Most of them bring their dinner, and the forewoman manages to provide tea for all who care to pay one halfpenny for a cup of this welcome beverage. We venture to say that in no fashionable drawing-room is it so acceptable as here. "We all look forward to it," they say, and the forewoman aforesaid deserves a vote of thanks. She has been at her post for over four years, and has never had a holiday. This is worthy of remark, and she hopes for one this year. The second floor of this large building, once a warehouse, is similar in every respect to the first. There are four windows on either side, long deal tables, and an atmosphere of freshness and cleanliness. But the workers are shirt-makers, and the Association has undertaken Government work; that is to say, the women in this room make shirts for the army, and are themselves widows, mothers, or sisters of soldiers. One elderly woman in spectacles says she can make a shirt and a half a day; a young girl can, she smilingly affirms, manufacture two. More work is needed, and it is so well executed that Government might do worse than help on this kind of co-operation. In both rooms the women are thankful for certain weekly wages, which, if not large, are secure, and reach them direct from the secretary, with no intervention of middleman or sweater. As we have said, these rooms are self-supporting, and no appeals are made for charity; only for co-operation of helpers and workers, and, above all, for orders. They will be as "promptly attended to" as at any shop or dépôt, and a competent person will be

sent to receive them if required. We need only repeat that the head-quarters are at 4, Carteret Street, Westminster, and quote a few lines from one of the latest reports: "The price lists are based on the payment of a fair wage direct to the worker, thus removing the evil of unnecessary sub-contracting, and effectually relieving the worker from the evils of the sweating system. Your orders will be carefully carried out at a very reasonable price, and by entrusting them to us, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have personally assisted to destroy the evils inseparable from women's work when under the control of unscrupulous employers." These strong words embody the whole system.

We hear a great deal of the slave-trade amongst the blacks—who will help to abolish it amongst the whites? Emancipate them, in short. Let us begin with the women, and free the weaker sex first. It can be done without strike or any disorderly manifestation. If only there were a sufficient number of workrooms in London and other great cities, to which the worker might come for employment, and from which, if necessary, she could take work to her home, if that home were certified clean and respectable, the chains would gradually fall off. But employers must aid. Some masters of large establishments are awakening to the crying evils of the underpaid system, and are sending orders direct to the Association. We want a trumpet-call which shall arouse all the shopkeepers.

"We should thankfully receive orders for emigration and other outfits, as well as for more elaborate needlework," say the secretaries, "and our aim is to improve the work, as well as to benefit the worker. If only purchasers would not run after cheap goods, we should be more hopeful."

"If only!" This is the root of the evil. The buyer supports the sweating system by his or her craze for making cheap purchases, and perhaps pays for cab or omnibus, to save a few farthings. But we are only repeating what has been said before hundreds of times, and only wish each individual would take to heart the condition of the underpaid, and resolve to do something, however small, to ameliorate it. There seems, at the moment, no better plan than helping on co-operation of workers, not as a charity, but as a duty, and so to encourage these overtasked women and those who would help them to strive after better things than starvation wages.

Any one who has books, or flowers, or hospital letters to spare, may encourage them incidentally. There is a library connected with Carteret Street. "I have read all the books over and over," pleads an intelligent-looking member, as she glances up from the inevitable shirt. "We do like flowers; they are so cheerful!" puts in another; while we are told of a sick fund that would be aided by the letters aforesaid.

"And you make no appeals?" somebody asks. To avoid a direct answer, we will bid adieu to Carteret Street, and take a flying leap, after the manner of the gymnast of the trapeze, into Whitechapel. Tenter Street East is not far from Aldgate Station, but it is less easy to find than Carteret Street, because there are four Tenter Streets, as puzzling as the points of the compass, after which they are named. "New Buildings" are, however, conspicuous and imposing. The first floor of No. 1 is devoted to our seamstresses. The rooms are not so large as those of Carteret Street, but are light and airy. About twelve women are at work here, under the direction of an experienced forewoman. They reside in different parts; some near at hand, and others at a distance. One tells us that she comes daily from Hatton Garden; another from Poplar. They are all thankful for regular work and pay, and when a rumour got afloat

that Tenter Street Registry was to be given up, they showed their appreciation of it by their entreaties for its continuance. But more orders are needed to make this branch wholly self-supporting, though it is in contemplation to found another in the East End as soon as possible. Were there an increase of work, more women could be employed, since the rooms are capable of holding additional workers. To quote once more from the last report: "The object now is to make the scheme more widely known, in the hope of obtaining a larger number of private orders, and also some contract work from City firms and public institutions."

When we consider that by paying the seamstress direct, as is done here, she can earn from eightpence to three-and-sixpence for a single shirt, it would seem impossible that women can be found willing, nay, eager, to make a dozen for sevenpence or eightpence. Yet in the report of the special committee, to which we have already referred, cases are mentioned on unquestionable authority which proves this fact. One woman works from seven A.M. to eleven P.M. Another has "sat up till twelve or one o'clock" to earn about a shilling a day, by making from a dozen and a half to two dozen shirts. A third, a shirt-finisher, whose eyes are bad, "can earn only fourpence halfpenny per diem!" This is white slavery indeed!

We need not say that this work is coarse, and done chiefly by machine; done also in close, fetid rooms, and under the sweating system. In Tenter Street efforts are being made to improve the work, and to stimulate the worker to strive after perfection. If we all did our best both for ourselves and our fellow-creatures, the world generally, and our seamstresses in particular, would be more prosperous than we find them. Never, perhaps, in England's history has so much been attempted to better the condition of the poor as now. More than twenty years ago Edward Denison was one of the pioneers in this undertaking, and lived and died in struggling to benefit the very poor. Here, in Tenter Street, we have the privilege of meeting his sister, who is "spending and being spent" literally for a similar end. She is honorary secretary of this branch of our Association, and her presence forcibly reminds us of him who, in 1867, took up his temporary abode in Philpot Street, Mile End Road, in order to see for himself the condition of the East End of London. He died in 1870, at Melbourne, where he was sent in the vain hope of restoring exhausted energies.

If "the blood of the martyr is the seed of the Church," surely the life and death of the Christian philanthropist is the seed that shall bear fruit in the Great Harvest. That most difficult question of how to benefit the poor is ever recurring. They will not always be



TIRE D OUT.

benefited, and do not see things as the social reformer sees them; but they almost all agree in the demand for honest work and fair wages. This is what our needlewomen crave, and we ask the public to encourage them by helping on such co-operation as shall tend to emancipate them from the chains forged round them and their work by the middlemen, as they are called, who swallow the oyster and give them the shells. It is of the system and not of individuals that complaint is made; but each "individual" must answer to Almighty God for his responsibility in the matter. Let us then substitute clean and healthy workrooms such as these for the unwholesome, overcrowded dens described by the Royal Commission.

It is quite possible to obtain fresh air, even in the calumniated East End, and a very respectable amount of sunshine and something like ozone penetrate through the large open windows of these high and substantial "New Buildings." One girl who sits in the window, "into the light," so to say, wears spectacles. She is doing minute running, and has imperfect sight; another manages a sewing machine in another window; while the rest work at the long tables. There is a neighbour room undergoing a cleansing preparatory for more workers, if the "benevolent public" will send orders. Mending as well as making is done here, and constant communication is kept up between west and east, so that the finer work

is sent to Carteret Street. One is surprised at the quiet. A bewildered author or editor might even find repose here. Moreover he might, perchance, get his works out, for the basement is occupied by printers. We wonder how the sweating system affects them? We wonder at all these social problems and social evils, and wondering, take our leave of Tenter Street, with many prayers and good wishes for our sisters. May He who sees and knows all their needs, bless the efforts made to help them, and graciously guide those who are struggling to lift them from the darkness and misery of oppression into the light and hopefulness of liberty.

"VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ"

AND

POEMS OF THE BRIC-À-BRAC SCHOOL.

By GLEESON WHITE, Author of "Some Poetry we Read," "Poets Oversea," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

EVEN the most rigid purist who would fain employ no alien words to express himself, must at times find the clear fountain-head of English undefiled—the glossary of Master Geoffrey Chaucer—unequal to his need. There are things "made in England" that have yet no English name. It would be needless to multiply instances, since the title of this article supplies a pertinent one. The poetry known as *Vers de Société* refuses to fit into any of the usual classifications of English literature. It belongs to neither epic, dramatic, didactic, reflective, narrative nor comic poetry. Nor need it be a lyric any more than a parody. Yet it may contain qualities of each and all these orders of verse, while obstinately declining to be labelled with either. Demanding a class to itself, with a special designation that shall express its possibilities without narrowing its range, we are well-nigh compelled to use the French idiom, that, as we understand it in this connection, refuses to be paraphrased. To supplant the imported title by a native phrase has been often attempted, and failed as often. "Society Verse" is naturally the first to suggest itself. But the bald transliteration of the words fails to satisfy the demand. The French phrase, although used by Parisians for precisely similar writings, has to English ears a more vague and yet a more technical sound. Even as an example of "the French spoken by people who do not speak French," *nom de plume*, expresses more than "pen-name," and infinitely more than either *nom de guerre*, which is French, but cannot be paraphrased in English, or "pseudonym," which is supposed to be our own vernacular.

So "Society Verse" would be too rigid, and yet too elastic; it would admit Mr. Coventry Patmore's *Angel in the House*, and keep out Præd's *Quince* and *The Vicar*, if it were taken to mean verse treating of "Society" only. Nor if, as another critic suggested, we take "Verses of Society" as opposed to solitary and individual poetry, do we get nearer the goal. "Patrician Verse" is too select; "Debonair Verse" too suggestive of trifling, and only trifling; yet with "The Five o'clock Tea School," "Bric-à-brac Verse," they have all something to recommend them, even as Mr. Austin Dobson's *Proverbs in Porcelain*, and Mr. Andrew Lang's *Ballades in Blue China*, conveyed by paraphrase a hint of the fastidious and exquisite contents of the volumes they entitled. But none of these could be accepted as generic names, and we are again forced to the conclusion that the more popular one is the best for practical use.

The poetry we would differentiate is elusive in its characteristics. Unlike the sonnet, a question of form is quite of secondary importance, except that should a form be adopted it must be stringently enforced. Nor is the subject much easier to define. In the right hands and with the right touch almost any subject is suitable. A well-known authority has said, indeed, that if the piece be "poetry" it is no longer *Vers de Société*. This is too delicate a question to settle here, and we would rather believe that true poetry may be found in these daintier trifles, as often as in ponderous epics, or monumental sonnets. What *Vers de Société* should be has been discussed often enough; but for the most part the writers have been more concerned in pointing out the qualities that disenfranchised its claim, rather than the needful qualifications to substantiate it.

Mr. Frederic Locker, a past-master of the craft, has prefaced one of his volumes, the *Lyra Elegantiarum*, with a confession of faith. Among other things he considers *Vers de Société* need by no means be confined to topics of artificial life. Subjects of the most exalted and of the most trivial character may be treated with equal success, provided the manner of treatment is in accordance with the following characteristics. Continuing, "he ventures to submit, in his judgment, genuine *Vers de Société* and *Vers d'occasion* should be short, elegant, refined and fanciful, not seldom distinguished by chastened sentiment, and often playful. The tone should not be pitched high, it should be idiomatic, and rather in the conversational key; the rhythm should be crisp and sparkling, and the rhyme frequent and never forced; while the entire poem should be marked by tasteful moderation, high finish and completeness. For however trivial the subject-matter may be—indeed, rather in proportion to its triviality—subordination to the rules of composition and perfection of execution should be enforced." Although inadequate as an exhaustive example, yet this little poem by Matthew Prior "To a child of quality five years old, 1704, the author being then forty," may serve as illustration.

"Lords, knights, and squires, the numerous band

That wear the fair Miss Mary's fetters,
Were summoned by her high command,
To show their passion by their letters.

My pen amongst the rest I took,

Lest those bright eyes that cannot read
Should dart their kindling fires, and look
The power they have to be obeyed.

Nor quality, nor reputation

Forbid me yet my flame to tell,
Dear five-years-old befriends my passion,
And I may write till she can spell.

For, while she makes her silkworms' beds
With all the tender things I swear;
Whilst all the house my passion reads
In papers round her baby hair.

She may receive and own my flame,
For, though the strictest prudes should
know it,

She'll pass for a most virtuous dame,
And I for an unhappy poet.

Then, too, alas! when she shall tear
The rhymes some younger rival sends,
She'll give me leave to write, I fear,
And we shall still continue friends.

For, as our different ages move
'Tis so ordained (would fate but mend it!)
That I shall be past making love
When she begins to comprehend it."

Here the tone of mock courtesy is not allowed to become burlesque, nor is it wanting in a real undercurrent of pathos and genuine feeling, and above all is never offensively familiar in its tone. D'Israeli the elder, in his *Miscellanies*, has a very sympathetic chapter on *Vers de Société*—"pieces that commonly go under the title of poetical amusements." But he points out that "these amusements have sometimes gained as much reputation to their authors as works of a more serious nature." "This species of poetry," he adds, "has been carried to its utmost perfection by the French. It has been discriminated by them from the mass of poesy, under the apt title of *Poésies légères*. Its writers have formed a body of this poetry which no European nation can rival, and to which both the language and genius appear to be greatly favourable." While this last clause was true in 1840 of the French, as it is still, yet we can show an average of similar work beyond anything then published. True, the quality of Præd, Thackeray, and Landor is not quite equalled by the rank and file; but the mechanism is neater and more studied. Those who lead the van to-day, add to the fancy of Præd, the humour of Thackeray, and the conceits of the older writers, a certain exquisite finish of rhyme and rhythm that is present only in the very best examples of earlier work. The allowable rhyme, a pestilent heresy of the past, is abhorred of modern poets.* To

* As one has said, "The union of sound alone constitutes rhyme. You do not match colours by the nose, or sounds by the eye. A shilling is a shilling; what the vulgar call a bad shilling is no shilling at all."

as her strength returned. "There is no time to lose. And oh, I cannot meet him!"

The doctor saw that there was something that he did not understand, and that the only way to quiet her would be to obey her; so taking the address of Horace's office, he started off on his mission.

"Leave me alone!" said Elsie, the moment that he was gone; and the nurse, who was crying bitterly by the cradle, went out of the room, frightened by her mistress's strange demeanour.

As soon as she was alone Elsie got up slowly and with difficulty, for her head was still weak, and went across to the cradle. The baby was lying with its little waxen hands outside the coverlet, its lips just parted, and a faint tinge of colour in its sweet face. But Elsie never doubted the doctor's words for a moment. The baby was dead; she knew it—it was just what she deserved: and what would Horace say?

She felt as though her misery must break her heart as she knelt there, and yet she did not shed a tear; she was turned to stone with the anguish that filled her whole being. The moments seemed to pass as slowly as hours; she thought she had been kneeling there all night when the clock struck seven, and she could hardly realise that it was no later than the usual hour at which her husband returned home. She shuddered afresh at the thought of meeting him. She could not analyse her feelings; she only knew that her darling was dead—dead, perhaps, by her neglect—and her heart sank at the thought of his grief and anger. She trembled at every sound, thinking that it was his footstep. But when at last he did come he entered so quietly that she did not hear him. The nurse had left the door unlatched when she went out of the room, and Horace, pushing it gently open, saw his wife kneeling by the cradle, her hands clasped together, and an expression of utter despair upon her face.

"What is the matter, Elsie?" he said.

Elsie started to her feet; a cry broke from her lips and rang through the silent room. Then turning from him she hid her face in her hands.

"What is the matter?" asked Horace again.

"Did you not meet the doctor?" asked Elsie, breathlessly.

"No. Is baby worse? Tell me, Elsie!"

Elsie could not speak. She pointed to the cradle, and like a flash of lightning Horace guessed the whole truth. He flung himself down by his little dead daughter and burst into an agony of tears. Elsie walked away to the window with a strange feeling at her heart. She wondered if she was going mad; she could hear her husband's heartbroken sobs, but she did not feel the slightest inclination to cry. She felt only that they had come to the end of everything. Horace had never loved her, but now he would hate her, and life was so dark that she could not even realise what it was that had so suddenly come upon her. She had had a faint hope lately that their baby might bring them nearer together, but that was all over now. It might have been, but God had taken her away, and there was no hope any more.

Suddenly, as she stood there in the depth of her despair, she felt an arm put round her, and heard a voice in her ear. "Elsie, my darling, you must come and lie down; you look so dreadfully ill."

"Horace!" she exclaimed. "How can you speak to me like that?"

"What do you mean?" asked Horace, gently. His face was very pale, and his eyelids were heavy and red; but he had recovered his composure, and was the strong self-contained man again.

"I thought you would never love me now," cried Elsie. "I did not mean to neglect her, Horace! Oh, I did not, God knows! I would give my life if she were only alive again! I wish I were dead too!"

She shivered convulsively, and tried to draw

away from him, but Horace held her closer in his arms. "You must not speak so," he said. "You are all I have left."

His words broke through the icy despair that lay upon Elsie's heart, and hiding her face upon his shoulder she burst into a flood of tears. It was not till she had told her husband the whole truth that she could feel a moment's peace. But Horace had not a word of blame for her. He could not blame her when her grief was so great; and terrible as his own sorrow was, he knew that he had never been so near to his wife before as he was that night when they knelt side by side by the lifeless form of their little one.

No other children ever came to bless that sorrowing home; but baby's mission was not ended when her brief life on earth was over. Short as they were, those nine weeks had not been lived in vain. The little unconscious child had left an abiding influence behind her which had power to mould the lives of the parents she had never even recognised. Hers is an unfinished story, for it is still being carried on in some far region out of sight. But the work she was sent on earth to do was completed far more perfectly than that of many who have been accounted saints of men. A common love, a common grief, had drawn together the hearts that had as yet found no bond of union, and blended the two lives into one harmonious whole.

Elsie sought scope for her newly awakened sympathies in caring for the neglected children in homes less prosperous than her own, and Horace's bitter disappointment was soothed as he watched and aided his wife's loving labours. There is a wound in both their hearts that aches still, and will ache as long as they live upon this earth; but they have learnt the true meaning of life and love, and numbers of those whom they have helped in their time of need would, if they knew all the story, give thanks with their whole hearts for The Baby's Mission.

MARY BRADFORD WHITING.

THE EMANCIPATION OF SEAMSTRESSES.

By ANNE BEALE.



SOME enquiries and suggestions have been made concerning the article in the November number of the GIRL'S OWN PAPER, headed as above, it is considered expedient to give a few more particulars of the Co-

operative Needlewomen's Association. In the first place, it is asked whether the Association mends as well as makes garments? We give the answer in the words of one of its rules:—"Repairing of all kinds will be undertaken at moderate charges." The enquirer was interested in the condition of young men, who, not being taught the use of the needle, are sometimes at their wits' end to know where to get their stockings darned or their shirts fronted. Such "unfortunates," then, as have neither wife, mother, nor sister to help them, cannot do better than employ the needlewomen assembled at 4, Carteret Street, Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster. By so doing they will aid in putting down the sweating system; since we have heard of late that the middlemen come between employer and employed even in the matter of repairs.

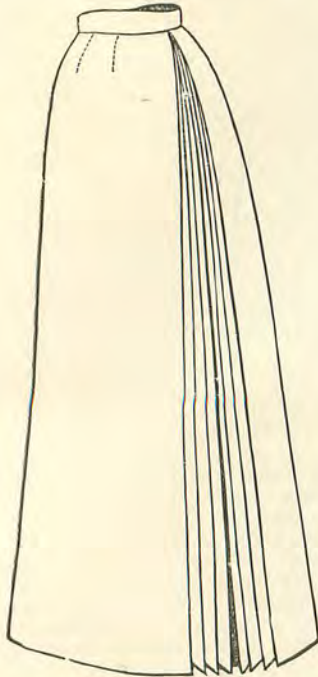
Another kind and interested friend enquires

if the Association will supply small as well as large orders. We venture to quote his words: "I refer more particularly to such articles as collars, cuffs, and handkerchiefs. My idea is that there are hundreds of young men that would gladly order these articles by the dozen if they could order first-hand." Again we answer the question from the rules and price-list of the Association, which will be sent gladly on application. Under the heading "Shirts and Collars," a long list is given, in which it is plainly stated that collars and wristbands are sold by the dozen, and shirts either singly or in numbers, according to order. "Pocket-handkerchiefs" are not mentioned, but they would doubtless be supplied. As orders are greatly needed to maintain the Association, we trust that our readers will kindly make these facts known. The charges are reasonable, and "Experienced needlewomen in finest and plain hand-sewing in shirts and collars, and in all kinds of work, are employed. A capable forewoman overlooks each branch of the work. Estimates are given if required. Work cut out may be sent, or materials with patterns and directions. A competent person will call upon anyone who may desire for measurements, fitting, instructions, etc." (The lines between the inverted commas are quoted from the rules.)

The last-mentioned enquirer suggests that "It would be a good thing if general purchasers

could be furnished with a list of retailing houses in every town in the kingdom where sweating is not practised." This would involve much labour and probably some animadversion; but it is in the power of each individual to help to suppress this awful system. If everyone would seek to employ and personally pay the worker, and would not purchase the over cheap articles which are literally the blood of the sweated, much would be done. There should be a co-operation of employer as well as employed, and all honour to those tradesmen who have "come out" from the ranks of the torturers. "We want a continual dropping fire," says Mr. Walter Besant, in a letter now before us on this subject; and if we all contributed our quota of powder we might keep it up. We want more workrooms where the women can get a fair wage for their day's work; but these cannot be established or maintained without money. If the two already "set a-going" in east and west could be deluged with orders, then others might be taken in different neighbourhoods, and permanent good done to the over-tasked, half-starved seamstresses of this great Babylon. Surely the outcry on the sweating system will not be allowed to die away into a mere whisper, as so many popular outcries have done. We would gladly do all in our power to give it a clarion-tongue which shall resound to the ends of the earth.

a permanent success. One of the new ones we illustrate in our present number, in "On a Skating Rink," and it is somewhat novel, and has the front thrown across to the opposite shoulder, and in some of these the cape is caught up at the back of that shoulder, and so leaves the arm completely exposed. Some of these capes are made of fancy and brocaded cloths, and later on will no doubt be made of silk, velvet, and the finer kinds of summer cloths. Chestnut and grey are both fashionable colours at present, and the lining



PAPER PATTERN.

is chestnut silk when the cape itself is of grey cloth. Brocaded woollens are now the most stylish, are best worn of anything for morning wear, and are seen for dresses, capes, and cloaks; black on grey or sand colour is the most becoming.

In "On a Skating Rink" is a sketch of several of the newest gowns, and from these it will be seen that the full yoked bodice is quite one of the fashions of the month; the yokes are made of the brocaded material, and so are the sleeves if the dress be of two materials; otherwise the yoke may be braided,

or folded; and in serge we find many of them are of velvet, for black serge of black velvet, and for grey serges of green of a darker shade of velvet. The girdles of gimp are still much worn, and are narrow or wide, as preferred, and may be tied either in front or at the back. Fringes are put at the edges of bodices as illustrated, and for woollen dresses are sometimes knotted ones; at others, if for rich silks, they are very long indeed, and of rich jet *passementerie*. This is repeated on the skirt or on the bodice, as may be suitable; and this style, as it is very becoming, we shall probably see as one of the prevailing ones worn. Sleeves are quite as high, if not higher, than they were, and show no signs of decreasing; in fact, I find in many of the newest jackets horsehair is used to pad them and make them stiff enough to stand upright. Most of the basques that are worn are put on with a seam at the hips, but many dresses also are made in one, and the seams of the long basque are left open, forming tabs, which are edged with double braid stitched on.

All the high collars, which go by the name of Medici, Tudor, Elizabethan, and Valois, are to be seen, but they are smaller and less extreme, and the edges are generally softened off with feather-edging or a tiny puff. They seem likely to be worn during the spring also, judging from the favour shown to them now.

There is not much to relate about skirts of dresses; they still remain plain in the extreme, and this style seems the most becoming to our English figures; but in France they are endeavouring to reintroduce the panier style, and more fullness immediately over the hips, some of the French skirts being draped so that they almost appear to be pinned on to the bodice edge in the most slight and careless manner.

In making up cloth skirts there is a great desire to show the selvedge, and some recent specimens have had two or three wide flounces with the selvedge left rough on them; and as I said last month, there is an idea that we shall have the fashion of two or three wide flounces back again.

One of the newest skirt-patterns we have selected this month for our paper pattern, which has the most absolutely plain appearance round the figure, a small spire-shaped space being left at the back through which the back breadth is arranged so as to escape in folds. This style is used for trained dresses as well as for short skirts. There are three pieces in the skirt, half of front, half of back, and side piece. Though the shaping is cut at the waist, it is advised that the skirt should only be tacked before fitting there, as each figure requires fitting; and this will be found quite

easy to do. When the skirt is on an extra pleat is often required on each side for very slight figures.

All paper patterns are of medium size, viz., thirty-six inches round the chest, with no turnings allowed, and only one size is prepared for sale. They may be had of "The Lady Dressmaker," care of Mr. H. G. Davis, 73, Ludgate Hill, E.C., price 1s. each; if tacked in place, 6d. extra. The addresses should be fully given. Postal notes should be crossed, but not filled up with any name. Patterns already issued may always be obtained.

As the object aimed at is use, not fashion, "The Lady Dressmaker" selects such patterns as are likely to be of constant use in making and re-making at home, and is careful to give new hygienic patterns for children as well as adults, so that the readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER may be aware of the best methods of dressing themselves. The following in hygienic under-clothing have already been given—Combination (drawers and chemise), princess petticoat (under-bodice and petticoat), divided skirt, under-bodice instead of stays, pyjama (night-dress combination). Also housemaid's or plain skirt, polonaise with waterfall back, Bernhardt mantle, dressing jacket, Princess of Wales jacket and waistcoat (for tailor-made gown), mantelette with stole ends, Norfolk blouse with pleats, ditto with yoke; blouse polonaise, princess dress (or dressing-gown), Louis XI. bodice with long fronts, Bernhardt mantle with pleated front, plain dress-bodice suitable for cotton or woollen materials; Garibaldi blouse with loose front, new skirt pattern with rounded back, bathing dress, new polonaise, winter bodice with full sleeves, Irish wrap or shawl cloak, blanket dressing-gown, emancipation suit, dress drawers, corselet bodice with full front, spring mantle, polonaise with pointed fronts, Directoire jacket-bodice, striped tight-fitting tennis or walking-jacket, honeycombed Garibaldi skirt, new American bodice instead of stays, new Corday skirt with pleats, new jacket-bodice with waistcoat, princess dress, jacket and waistcoat, "Little Lord Fauntleroy" suit, braided bodice and revers, Directoire jacket with folded front, Empire bodice, men's pyjama, a mantle without sleeves, a plain gored princess chemise, Breton jacket and waistcoat, four-in-hand cape, jacket for out- or in-door wear, skirt with two breadths, Senorita jacket, walking gaiter, tailor-made bodice, new cape, seamless bodice or polonaise, bodice gathered in front and fastened under the arm, lace and silk mantle, sailor blouse, long basqued jacket, new jacket with revers, cape mantle, new cloak, and new cape.

THE EMANCIPATION OF SEAMSTRESSES.

By ANNE BEALE.

As several kind and thoughtful friends have interested themselves in the seamstresses through the articles that have appeared in the GIRL'S OWN PAPER, it is expedient to make the readers acquainted with certain suggestions they have volunteered.

In the first place, however, many thanks are due to all who have gone to the fountain head, either to make enquiries, or to render actual assistance to the Needlewomen's Association by giving orders for work. All who abhor the sweating system could scarcely do better than aid in its suppression by assisting those who are struggling to free its slaves from its bondage. The secretary says that much good has been done by our small efforts, and she is anxious to meet the demands of all new

enquirers or clients; but she would humbly suggest that every one who desires an answer should enclose a stamped envelope. She fears that some of her numerous correspondents may have been disappointed in the matter of replies, owing to this defalcation. Funds are low, and, ridiculous as it may seem, stamps are a considerable item in the current expenses—stamps and printing. Owing to increased demands, price lists are exhausted, and time and money are needed to supply them. We mention this, because many ardent young people, anxious to benefit their toiling fellows, may complain of their letters not being answered. But we hope their ardour may not decrease on this account; particularly since the aforesaid secretary is quite hopeful that both making and mending may

continue to increase through their instrumentality.

And now, as regards the suggestions. They have been made by friends who have pondered over the subject for years, and think they see light at last, if not actual "emancipation" as yet. The light dawns with the possibility of the young men of this great city having their clothes regularly mended week by week at a moderate charge. They give pitiful and even ludicrous accounts of the socks and stockings of brothers and cousins "alone in London." One, a Mildmay worker, says she dares not complain, because, when no longer wearable, they are sent to her for the poor—but, if mended at all, the work is atrocious, and of all colours. Another, also engaged in good work

at home and abroad, rejoices at the prospect of any improvement in the condition of the "ill-mended" lords of creation. Let it be understood that these relatives do not reside at home. A third has matured her plans, and even suggests that there shall be a regular service to fetch and carry the articles to be repaired from their owners' dwellings to the work-rooms of the Association. She would employ Carter, Paterson & Co. to go the rounds of the helpless males, and convey their goods to the more helpful females, and to take them back again when duly set in order. This would be mutually beneficial, and perhaps, in course of time, tend to increase the number of work-rooms, and decrease the multitudes of women who are overtasked and underpaid. If only the men would take a little trouble themselves, and go to Carteret Street and make their own arrangements, the "service" above-mentioned may be managed. But alas! they would rather go about with heel-and-toeless stockings than thread the mazes of Westminster.

Several young men of our acquaintance, who seem really anxious to employ the Association, are always "going to see about it," but fail to go. We hope the girls will keep the mankind up to the mark; such at least of them as have no womenkind to "mend their gloves, and sew on their buttons." It is impossible to realise the amount of patient thought expended on this difficult question by tens of thousands of people who would fain see the toiling needlewoman paid for her day's work without the intervention of the sweater or middleman.

Our readers will like to know, that in addition to this fair wage for fair labour our seamstresses enjoyed a pleasant social evening on New Year's Day. Between eighty and ninety of them sat down to a bountiful meat tea provided for them by kind friends. The workers themselves had tastefully decorated their long room. Flowers, fruit, and all sorts of sweets adorned the tables, and happy faces surrounded them. Songs and recitations succeeded the feast, and donors and guests rejoiced together. Before they separated, a

presentation of New Year cards took place, each member of the party receiving four. They were given by the Religious Tract Society and other kind friends, and doubtless will often serve as reminders of a happy evening.

Even though the results have not, as yet, appeared to be commensurate with the outlay and efforts made, it must have rejoiced the hearts of the hosts of the evening to see so many respectable women withdrawn from the evils of the sweating system, and provided with work and wages apart from it. We must repeat, what we have already said in previous numbers of this magazine, that orders, both small and large, will be instantly attended to, and that, if required, a forewoman will be sent to receive them. The excellence of the work can scarcely be overpraised. For full details we must refer the reader to the number of the GIRL'S OWN PAPER for November last, but we again give the full address in the hope of enlisting "orders;"—Needlework Registry, 4, Carteret Street, Queen's Anne's Gate, S.W.

NOTICES OF NEW MUSIC.

STANLEY LUCAS AND CO.

Rêves.—No. 1, *Berceuse*; No. 2, *Scherzino*; No. 3, *Chant d'Amour*.—Three "Dreams," by Señor I. Albeniz.—We have received Nos. 2 and 3 for piano only, but No. 1 is composed by the talented Spanish pianist for violin or 'cello and piano. We could wish that 'cello music should belong exclusively to that instrument, and not, by the transposition of an octave, become violin music so easily.

PITT AND HATZFELD.

Album of Eight Songs, with German words (English translations by Charles Hervey), music by Arthur Hervey.—Of these eight songs we prefer the May song. In setting the well-known words, "Du bist wie eine Blume" of Heine, Mr. Hervey finds it difficult to forget his predecessors. "The Violet" is a most graceful composition. The piano part is, throughout the Album, a feature of interest.

Album of Six Songs, by Benno Schönberger, with German and English words.—Beautiful original work, but occasionally marred by passages for the singer which are literally unvoiced. No one writes violin passages for the French horn; why should unsingable effects be provided for the voice?

Album of Ten Songs, composed by C. A. Lidgely.—There is a great deal of promise in these settings of good poems, and we look forward with considerable interest to this young composer's further writings. It would be well if all composers limited their choice of words to those which are worthy of good music. It might limit the propagation of rubbish in both arts.

España.—Six Album Leaves for the Pianoforte, by J. Albeniz.—Most of these are Spanish dance forms, and all contain the quaint characteristics with which the music of that country fascinates and delights us.

Largo (Mélodie religieuse), for violin, by Tivadar Nachez.—In addition to the pianoforte accompaniment is an *ad libitum* part of a sustained character intended for the organ. Although printed upon three staves, a very little management would make this part available for the American organ or harmonium, instruments more likely to be found in the drawing-room than an organ with pipes and pedals.

Gavotte—Première Valse, composed by Benno Schönberger.—Capital pianoforte pieces, free from commonplace ideas, and ably developed. The waltz has a beautiful dreamy persuasion about it which is delightful to hear.

NOVELLO, EWER AND CO.

Part Songs for Treble Voices.—A selection of trios and duets, old and new, specially adapted for high schools by the able editors of the *Children's Hymn-book*. There are so many compositions for female voices that it seems to us as unnecessary as it is inartistic to take part-songs originally composed for male or mixed voices and convert them for this purpose.

Eight Pianoforte Pieces, by Strelezki.—This is the latest Pianoforte Album brought out in all the excellence of style and type to which this firm has accustomed us. Of the eight pieces, we specially recommend a "Notturno," "In the Meadows," "Mazurka," and a "Miniature."

Ten Violin Pieces (Eclogues), by Nešvera, are of greater interest and greater difficulty. We commend these to our readers who are advanced violinists.

Beyond; I Shall see Thee Again.—Two songs by Willem Coenen.—Both of these are sacred songs, and of moderate compass. The second song, a setting of touching words, by Rev. E. Husband, is the more interesting one.

A. HAMMOND AND CO.

Arpeggios, by Professor Bradbury Turner.—Yet another collection of *arpeggios*! you cry. But this is certainly by far the best and the most complete we have met with. They are carried into all scales; the inversions of each chord are there, and so are several scales in double-sixths, &c. Candidates for local examinations will find all they require in this ably-arranged work.

Examination Series of Pianoforte Music. This collection of pieces, by Dr. Gordon Saunders, useful alike to student and professor, is not only carefully fingered and revised, but is furnished with notes on the form and construction of the piece—information which is always needed, and not so often to be found clearly set forth, for such examinations as are held by Trinity College, and kindred bodies. The series is sub-divided into three sections, corresponding to the requirements of senior, junior, and primary examinees, and about sixty numbers are ready, well engraved, and with large-sized clear notes.

EDWIN ASHDOWN.

By the Brook, sketch for Pianoforte; *A Book of Fancies*, also for pianoforte.—Both the above works are by that accomplished student of the Royal Academy of Music,

Miss Ethel Boyce, and they fully justify the high opinion and the full hopes which her earlier compositions drew forth.

The sketch, *Allegro Molto in C*, requires delicate playing, and will well repay the work it demands.

The Book of Fancies is a collection of finished sketches of varying difficulty. They are also published separately. Graceful, thoughtful, and good as they are, they will each give you pleasure of some sort—sad or bright.

ALFRED HAYS.

Shadow Children. A song for contraltos, by H. A. J. Campbell.—An altogether effective song, with bright gleams of originality enough to raise it far above the average ballad. It should become a great favourite, as the words, in addition to their setting, are thoroughly good.

MESSRS. J. AND J. HOPKINSON.

Three songs, words by W. E. Henley, music by H. F. Birch Reynardson.—Of the three songs we think No. 2 will prove itself the most attractive, as it is the most simple. They are all published together at a very moderate price for the set, and are worth possessing.

The Spinning Wheel.—Words by George Barlow, music by George A. Lovell.—A simple melody, mainly dependent upon a most descriptive accompaniment for its interest. When properly played, the effect is good.

O Swallow, Swallow!—Words by Lord Tennyson, music by Arthur Somervell.—Notwithstanding the recollection of Piatti's beautiful setting of these words, with 'cello obligato, Mr. Somervell's composition strikes us as fresh and original, and possessed of beautiful, expressive thought.

Three 18th Century Studies for Violin and Piano, composed by Arthur Somervell.—By way of contrast to the song just noticed, the tendency of which is decidedly modern in both form and harmony, and as a proof of this artist's clever versatility, come these quaint imitations of a quaint period. The set includes an Air, a Sarabande, and an Allemande.

WEEKES AND CO.

The Welcome. Song by Walter J. Lockitt, with words by Ruth Lamb.—The composer is greatly helped to his intellectual setting by the beautiful words which have already impressed us in a past number of the GIRL'S OWN PAPER.

of all trades," in point of fact, ready to help with head, and hand, and heart. No "fine airs of superiority" are wanted in the homestead of the "squalter," much less in those of humbler means. The housewife needs a veritable help in any work she may require to be done. Nothing is to be regarded as "menial" and *infra dig.*; from singing and playing, to entertaining her guests; teaching the young folk, and nursing the baby; down to brightening the copper kettle, feeding the poultry, cooking the dinner, or lending a hand, on an emergency, even at the ironing table. Of course your duties as "mother's help" would not necessarily include all these branches of work; but the rule remains paramount, that, in offering yourself as such, you must never say, "This, or that, is not my place."

Life in the colonies differs much from that in the old country, excepting amongst the very wealthy; and so the factotum of the mistress of the house, if willing, good-tempered, and trustworthy, does not lose caste in the performance of the essential every-day work, in which the mother and daughters think it no humiliation to join her. Bearing all these circumstances in view, I recommend the intending emigrant, for whom I am specially writing, to drop the name of "governess" altogether, and to designate herself a "mother's help." Next, that she should qualify herself to some extent in a knowledge of cookery, plain sewing and cutting out, and home nursing. If she can attend a series of the *St. John's Ambulance* Classes, it would be invaluable to her, and those with whom she may find a home, very isolated as they sometimes may be.

But even if the young governess have sufficient good sense to "put her pride in her pocket," and follow out the suggestions I have offered; I feel that one more, and that a rather important consideration, should be presented to her before taking such a grave step as leaving her own country. Let me then enquire whether she have fully counted the cost of parting from those who are her nearest and dearest? Even if not likely to need her ser-

vices, in case of sickness and the approach of old age; and length of time required for the interchange of letters; what chance has she of meeting the cost of a return to see them, even for one visit in a lifetime? I now refer to that permanent banishment which emigration to the antipodes would probably involve. Do not shut your eyes, my young friend, to the leave-taking, the home-sickness, the possible need for your presence in the old home in the future, and the sorrow entailed on those who deserve so much of consideration at your hands. Emigration to Canada does not involve so great a sacrifice, nor as many difficulties. The cost is trifling, the exchange of mutual communications quicker, the meetings and a change of plans of far easier accomplishment. Do not rush hastily into arrangements of such deep importance to you and yours, but consult your parents and family, and make your decision after earnest prayer for Divine guidance.

I will now suppose that the "lady's help" has given the question of her future course in life her careful consideration, and that she has finally resolved to emigrate. In this case I will give the addresses of a few more institutions from which she may obtain assistance and information on all essential points. There is the Female Middle-Class Emigration Society (Hon. Secretary, Miss Blake, 7C, Lower Belgrave Street, S.W.), the Church Emigration Society, Ladies' Auxiliary (Hon. Secretary, Miss Denison, 196, Cromwell Road, S.W.), the Columbia Mission (Hon. Secretary, H. Caldwell, Esq., 18, St. Stephen's Road, Westbourne Park, W.), the United British Women's Emigration Association (Hon. Secretary, Miss G. Lefroy, 17, Eldon Road, Kensington, W.), the Emigration Department of the Girls' Friendly Society (Head Superintendent and Director, the Honourable Mrs. Joyce, St. John's Croft, Winchester), and the "Y. W. C. A.," 17, Old Cavendish Street, W.

At the Emigrants' Information Office, under the auspices of the Colonial Office, 21, Broadway, Westminster, S.W., handbooks at one penny each are to be obtained, provided with

maps and circulars, free of charge. Lastly, I may name the Ladies' Association for Promotion of Female Education in India, in connection with the "S. P. G." Society (Secretary, Miss Bullock, 19, Delahay Street, S.W.), where young governesses may be put in the way of obtaining a field of missionary work.

This list of addresses may, I think, suffice for the enquirer; and I have only now to warn her very seriously to make no mistake as to her eligibility, for a vocation beset with so many difficulties, dangers, and deprivations. I have personally known of a good and zealous man, who thought himself "called to the work of missionary life" in India; but he had not a gift for acquiring languages. During the five years of his residence in this his self-selected native field of labour, he never succeeded in mastering the language; and had not his wife learned it, and given her time and strength to working in his place; those five years, and all the expenses would have been completely thrown away.

Again. Do not mistake a love of change, adventure, and independence, for zeal in the cause of your Divine Master's glory, and the salvation of souls. There may be some admixture of personal gratification, in the adoption of any and every vocation, however sacred, and whatever amount of danger and self-denial they may entail. But in the devotion of some years of your life to missionary work, your first and main object should certainly be, to offer yourself as a sacrifice to God and to your fellow-creatures. Privations, fatigue, fever, and treachery from the natives, whose good you desire to promote, await—or, at least, threaten you—one or all! Count the cost, and be prepared for the bitter end, so far as this life may be concerned. And if, after consulting good and experienced advisers, with self-examination and earnest prayer, you still regard yourself as "called" to the work; then go, and may you hereafter realise the full bliss of that most soul-stirring promise: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever!" S. F. A. CAULFEILD.

THE EMANCIPATION OF SEAMSTRESSES.

By ANNE BEALE.

WE are requested to tell our readers of a change of abode and name—two very important items in the welfare of any institution. "The Needlework Registry and Co-operative Needlewomen's Association" will remove from Carteret Street, Westminster, to 170, Buckingham Palace Road, S.W., at the end of June. It will henceforth be styled "The Alford Needlework Association and Needlewomen Registry." As it was originally founded by the late Lady Marian Alford, it has been considered meet that it should bear her honoured name. She laboured late and early, spent and was spent, in the cause of the distressed needlewomen, and to her "good beginning" it is mainly due that a few of them are rescued from the sweating slavery, and enabled to earn a fair wage for a fair day's work. We have to thank some of our kind friends, subscribers to this magazine, for their efforts to aid in this emancipation. Many new clients have come to the office, directed by the GIRL'S OWN PAPER, and some of "Our Girls" may be congratulated on their successful advice to their mankind. Shall we be pardoned if we quote from letters lately received, which go far to prove what female influence—albeit only sisterly—can effect. They were written to the Secretary.

"DEAR MADAM,—I am one of 'Our Girls' brothers' in London, and I have been told by my sister, who is a constant reader of the "G. O. P.," to have my shirts made at your place; and being very obedient in such matters, I herewith desire that you will manufacture me two white shirts." Here follow size of collar and cuffs, and a few other particulars. Then: "If you will kindly let me know how much you will want for making them, I will send you the money; and would you tell me whether you can send them to the above address, or must I fetch them?"

This practical letter was duly answered by the Secretary, who requested that "The sister should be thanked for her kindness and the brother for his obedience." In reply there came a pattern shirt, with more enquiries, and the welcome intelligence that the writer "was going to be a regular customer," together with the following addenda: "I am much obliged for your promise to send them to me. I will convey your thanks to my sister, and feel grateful for your thanks to me, although, you know, a fellow ought to obey his sisters in such matters." This is the comment of the Secretary: "I wish there were more kind sisters and obedient brothers, anxious to help the poor needlewomen." So do we, and we

trust both brother and sister will forgive our quotations, made in the hope that their example may be extensively followed. There is nothing so fruitful in results as good example.

The new workrooms and registry at 170, Buckingham Palace Road, are to be opened the last week in June. The exact date is not fixed, but should this advertisement be in print before the event, and should our readers feel inclined to be present, they can ascertain the day on application to the Secretary. There is to be a sale of work, etc., to inaugurate the opening, and contributions of any kind will be most gratefully welcomed, as will be the presence of friends interested in the good cause. It need scarcely be said that a move is an expensive matter, and tends to decrease the funds, which are never very high; so help is needed to settle our seamstresses in their new abode. The lease of the old one has expired, and the change is imperative, so that the increased expenditure is unavoidable. The situation of the new premises is decidedly advantageous, and our allies tell us that they will "certainly call when they go to the Stores!" The Committee have taken the whole house, and henceforth there will be no difficulty in finding the "Alford Needlework Association."