

headquarters for a few days, and luxuriated in the brightness and dryness of the atmosphere. There was much to see in the town and more in the neighbourhood. Like Ephesus in the days of St. Paul, Zeukoji possesses a famous temple which influences the arts and manufactures and trade of the town; shrine-making in particular brings "no small gain to the craftsman," every third or fourth house being devoted to the sale of them. Pretty things they are, fashioned mostly of cedar-wood or white pine, and charming little bookcases or cabinets they make when set up in Christian homes.

About half a mile up the main street stands the Gammon or principal gate of the temple, a huge structure as conspicuous and imposing as the *Arc de Triomphe* in Paris, somewhat the same shape and, though constructed of wood, quite as ornate and much more picturesque. An irreverent American journalist describes the ecclesiastical buildings in Japan as huge and indescribably ornamental roofs set on the ground. The supporting walls certainly are low and dwarfed into insignificance by the superincumbent building, their crown and glory, the masterpiece of both architect and artist. May not this be as symbolical as our church-spires, the outcome of the same spiritual thought. A quarter of a mile farther on another *mon*, or gate, is passed, if possible with a higher and more ornamental roof than the first, and the traveller walks on through a long row of booths where little images of the gods, relics, charts of the temple grounds, story-books, and gewgaws of all kinds, are exhibited for sale, together with fruits and sweetmeats. At each side, behind the booths, labyrinths of minor temples, monasteries, and priests' houses, show their fanciful roof-trees above the surrounding walls; then come two magnificent flights of steps leading up to the grounds of the great temple. Surmounting these the eye is attracted at once by the stone lanterns, the finest and largest exhibit of the kind in Japan, intermingled with statues, in stone or bronze, of Amida (Buddhas), conspicuous among them being that of Bindzuru,

the Helper of the Sick. Originally one of the "Most Holy Sixteen," Bindzuru, notwithstanding his distinguished piety, was, saith tradition, expelled from their chaste society for having violated his vows by remarking on the beauty of a woman; his usual place is therefore outside the temple-doors. "A woman's exterior," to quote a Buddhist text, "is that of a saint, but her heart is that of a demon." Bindzuru's study of the Scriptures may have been perfunctory, carried on by means of the rotatory library, and have left him in ignorance of this dogma, or he may have been tinged with scepticism, but neither his favour with the gods nor his popularity with mankind suffered in consequence. On the contrary, the thousand-handed Kwaunon, Goddess of Mercy, naturally took him under her special protection and endowed him with miraculous powers of healing, which have been continued like a serial tale, down to the present day in all the numbers of his images. His effigy is always conspicuous for its smoothness and shining brightness, the work of true believers who, at all hours of the day, may be seen using the diseased part of their bodies as a polishing pad, hoping thereby to obtain the healing unction, or, at least, a little relief. Possibly it was in consequence of Bindzuru's lapse that a certain kind of hood called a "hornhider" became obligatory as a woman's head-covering when attending special services in the great temples, horns being as distinctive of the Buddhist demon as the cloven hoof is of ours.

The temple grounds are vast and enclose gardens, burial-grounds for the priests, a museum and exhibition of native industries, and, of course, the various accessories of a temple, such as belfries, treasure-houses, a pavilion for the Rinzo, or "revolving library," and a baptistery—an initiatory rite somewhat resembling our baptism being practised by this sect. The invention of revolving libraries is ascribed to a Chinese priest, who lived in the sixth century of our era, but it is eminently suggestive of American labour-saving contrivances. It is a large book-case of red

lacquer on a dark lacquer base and lotus-shaped pedestal, and contains the whole Buddhist Scriptures—6771 volumes. It is a merit to have read this library through, salvation in the life to come, and the "avoidance of all misfortune" in the life that now is being thereby assured; but unfortunately the books are written in Chinese—the Chinese of a thousand years ago—and that has never been a language whose literature could be devoured at the rate of a volume or two per day, like the contents of our English circulating libraries. Few men have leisure for such a course of study in these days. Still fewer in the dark ages fifteen hundred years ago dared tackle those Scriptures. Even the priests had to spend so many hours of the day and night repeating the worshipful name of Buddha, and telling their beads that they had no time for the herculean brain-task, they could only dip into an odd volume now and then. Fu Daishi hit on the passage asserting that salvation is the reward of faith, and ardent desire equivalent to accomplished act. The book-case was in existence then; he inserted a pivot in the pedestal on which the whole structure could be made to revolve by one vigorous push, and wrote an inscription on the base asserting that a "degree of merit, equal to that accruing to him who should have perused the entire canon, will be obtained by those who will cause this library to revolve three times on its axis, and moreover long life, prosperity, and the avoidance of all misfortunes, shall be their reward." For a shilling one can obtain all these blessings if one has faith. It is the cheapest theological course in the world, and the most thorough.

The Monto sect has been called the Protestantism of Japan. It was founded in the thirteenth century by a priest, who became convinced of the futility and vanity of the complicated doctrines and difficult practices of the Buddhism of the time, and abolished most of its rites, and even the celibacy of the priesthood, and taught that piety consisted solely in faith in Buddha's willingness to save.

(To be continued.)

## DRESSMAKERS AND MILLINERS AT WORK AND AT LEISURE.

"Know what thou canst work at, and work at it like a Hercules."

"In all true work, were it but true hand labour, there is something of divineness."

Carlyle.



HERE are over a million women and girls in London who wholly or partly gain a living by their own industry; of these, some sixty thousand are dressmakers and milliners, a larger number than is to be found

in any other European capital.

It seems next to impossible to gain any accurate knowledge of the character, success, or influence of such large numbers of our fellow-citizens, and still more difficult to discover how they spend their leisure if they are so fortunate as to have any. The subject is, however, well worth looking into if only to see how sixty thousand women and girls, engaged in honest labour in our metropolis, make their mark, for good or for evil, on the remaining portion of the population.

Their ostensible work is to decorate or make seemly the bodies of others of their sex, but

they do a great deal more than this, and as far as I have been able to see, our London is a good deal the better for this army of workers.

If we are to investigate this subject, it can only be done by breaking up the numbers into those who work in great London houses with settled incomes and without household cares; those who are in business for themselves in a large way, and in fashionable districts, who have to start with large capital and a grand show of rich and valuable materials to meet the demands of their aristocratic customers; those in a more modest way of business, in all parts of London, who do not disdain to make up ladies' own materials; those who go out to private houses by the day, for half-a-crown or three shillings, out of which omnibus or railway fare must be paid; and lastly, those who do slop work at sweating prices, for example, a dozen fashionable blouses at tenpence a dozen! In this way we shall, at all events, touch the fringe of the subject.

It is necessary to say at starting that a large proportion of these sixty thousand are not born Londoners, although they are counted as such; many are from various parts of the kingdom, and also from France; as a rule they are daughters of farmers, doctors, clergy, solicitors, and tradespeople of all degrees.

To begin with, the life of milliners and dressmakers engaged in the great London houses is an altogether different thing from that which obtained twenty or thirty years ago—the hours are fewer, the food is better and more carefully served, the sleeping-apartments are good, the care bestowed on the workers is almost parental, their health is watched over—in most houses there is an invalid-room and a house-doctor—their leisure is profitably spent, and they do not now lie in bed every spare moment, as they used to do, because they are too tired to sit up.

The gradual development of this improved state of things has naturally had an effect upon the girls themselves; their pleasures and recreations are of a higher class than formerly, there is a greater power of thinking among them, a more earnest desire to make use of every opportunity for improving themselves intellectually, and there is a great deal of earnest practical religion noticeable both in their work and their leisure.

The result of all this is that there is a marked decrease in the percentage of deaths among milliners and dressmakers during the last ten or fifteen years.

It must not be supposed that the whole sixty thousand are equally well off or equally successful; three-sixths, or thirty thousand are working for bare subsistence; two-sixths, or

twenty thousand are earning independence; and one-sixth, or ten thousand, are working and struggling for daily bread at starvation wage. Of this last, thirty on an average die yearly of starvation in addition to those who commit suicide from sheer despair. There are, in fact, as many rungs in the ladder of millinery and dressmaking as in that of church, law, or physic.

A circumstance which speaks well, both for employers and employed, is the many years girl-milliners and dressmakers remain in the same houses of business; several have been employed close upon twenty years, beginning as a rule at a salary of £12 a year, and going on gradually to £50 leaving their mark on each department, till at length by means of skill and character they find themselves in positions of great responsibility; and the advantage of this is that those in authority know exactly the difficulties, temptations and longings of those under them, because they have trodden step by step the same road, a practical knowledge which is priceless and which no stranger could possess. It is the same in the houses of court milliners and dressmakers, where the superintendents of the various departments have been for years in the same positions.

Some of the large business places are like small kingdoms, and in the majority of them, where the milliners and dressmakers are housed and boarded, the laws are almost as strict. All the younger ones must be in by ten o'clock or they are fined—the fines usually going towards forming libraries—no one may sleep out except in case of emergency, and then the head of the firm or housekeeper must be quite satisfied as to the necessity beforehand.

Their quarters are quite apart from the men's, and they dine separately as well; generally they go to meals in parties, half principals and half improvers and apprentices as fairly as possible, indeed, the greatest order reigns throughout the establishments. As a rule the milliners must have learnt their business before entering the large houses in London; they begin at the shapes and are called "improvers." For the first year they get no salaries but are boarded and lodged; the second year they commence with £12 and go on with an increase every year till the salary reaches £50.

They are drafted off to the work-room or show-room according to their ability. The latter position is much coveted, but the girls selected must know how to speak to ladies, have delicate, clever hands, and nice manners, and have been accustomed to the business of the show-room before coming to town.

Other girls are told off to match the ribbons, etc., for all ribbons and laces are bought by the chief milliner of the ribbon and lace departments, the latter having transfer books by which they check off the amounts sold. Fancy crowns, shapes, embroidered laces and similar goods are bought in Paris. Except during sales every bonnet sold is entered in a book with its description and the name and address of the customer.

The head milliner keeps two years' records, and the counting house clerks keep still longer notices, so that it is possible to refer back five years.

The "buyer" purchases what is required in Paris on her own responsibility, and must be very experienced.

Apprentices are received as a rule in the dressmaking departments of some houses by the payment of £30 premium for three years, and £20 for four years, and are instructed in all branches of the trade. There is generally a skirt room and a bodice room, in which all the workers are outdoor hands, that is to say, they sleep, breakfast and sup out. For these girls the various homes in London are exactly what they need when their day's work is over;

the food is simple and good, the bed-rooms are clean, the sitting-room comfortable, the company of other girls makes it cheerful, and the home is mothered and kept in order by a good matron.

The workers in these two rooms must have had two years' experience elsewhere before seeking engagement here, and must produce testimony as to character and efficiency. They are paid twelve shillings a week to begin with, and find themselves in everything but tea, which is provided for them in a room specially kept for their use. They are required to be in the work-rooms before a quarter to nine in the morning, otherwise the money for lost time is deducted at the end of the week when the roll is called and wages paid. The day's work is over, as a rule, at seven in the evening.

The skirt and body hands are distinct one from the other; the superintendents arrange the trimmings while the actual work is done by the "hands," in other words, the one side supplies the genius and skill, while the other performs the mechanical work. Naturally the skilled labour is paid best.

The number of out-door hands varies according to the houses in which they are engaged; in some there are as many as a hundred and fifty, in others ninety, in others as few as thirty. I have put the question to many girls: "What do you do if a girl comes among you whose talk and behaviour is what you call fast?"

"She corrects herself generally," is the answer. "She sees we do not like it and that we avoid her. She therefore ceases to be offensive or gives up her situation."

We see that girls in houses of business and in those of fashionable milliners and dressmakers are thoroughly cared for and well taught in their hours of work, and certainly there is nothing left to desire in the rooms provided for them when the day's work is over; they are most comfortable and homelike with their library, piano, and quiet games. Still, this is only a portion of the workers after all. Further down the ladder there are very many good dressmakers and milliners who employ a great number of apprentices and day workers, and who do not object to making up ladies' own materials. Here, instead of paying three pounds for simply making a dress you may get it done for a pound, and in place of paying a couple of pounds for a hat or bonnet you may get it for fifteen shillings or a pound.

Then there are others with little or no capital who live in cheap districts, east, west, north and south of London. These make for small tradespeople and servants, and charge ten shillings for making a dress, and trim a hat for a couple of shillings. These employ from five or six hands and apprentices to ten or twelve according to the season, but they do not live in the house, they come in the morning and go back home at night. As may be supposed, those on the last two rungs of the ladder have not much leisure, being glad to work as long as there is work to be done.

The great drawback to the success of milliners and dressmakers who are in business for themselves is that people do not pay ready money for their dresses and millinery, and are seriously offended if pressed for it; this is a source of much trouble and perplexity to heads of business, whether great or small, for they are bound to meet their bills whatever happens or they could not continue their work, and the pity of it is that in many cases the non-payments are the result of simple thoughtlessness.

We next come to the girls who have to keep a home together, and who go out by the day to private houses as milliners and dressmakers: their lives are hard, they have to leave home early in all weathers and return late at night; their work is close and unceasing, and when all is said and done, there is

not much left out of fifteen or at most eighteen shillings a week when the omnibus or railway-fare is paid to and fro. It is a hopeless look-out for the future, they have no leisure whatever except Sunday, it is impossible for them to lay by a penny; they are only thankful if they can be sure of regular work, otherwise how is a roof to be kept over the head of sick mother and brothers and sisters; there is a wide difference between the well-fed, well-cared for girls in large London houses and these.

We must still take another rung of the ladder downwards, where women and girls work all day and half the night and cannot even earn enough to provide bread for themselves and those dependent on them; they have no time for anything but this everlasting stitching; a blouse, a fashionable one, must be made for less than a penny, the workers finding the cotton. It is intolerable that this should be possible in our London; what shall be said of those who take advantage of the necessities of the poor and helpless by forcing them thus to work at starvation prices in order that they may heap up riches for themselves! Sweating is direful in its results to body, soul and spirit. The wonder is that so many stick to honest labour, that so few die of starvation and that suicide is not more frequent among these heroic people.

To work our way back to the upper rungs of the ladder. Girls engaged in London houses, having homes within reasonable distances, are very kind to those who are alone and whose parents are far away in the country: they constantly invite them for the Sunday, a day which would otherwise be very lonely.

I think it will afford as much pleasure as surprise to hear that when the day's work is over, a large number of milliners and dressmakers, not merely apprentices, but improvers and superintendents and heads of business, may be seen wending their way in all directions; some to girls' clubs, others to Spitalfields and East End to teach, to cut out clothes and tack them together for the poor, ready to be given out to be made; some to cripple children to teach them how to sew, others to meet girls without any of their advantages and try to interest them and make life happier for them, while not a few go to what is known as ragged school work.

A large number of the girls for their own improvement join classes for languages, especially taking up French and German, which is so useful to them in business, or literature or music, and if you were to go into the sitting-rooms of an evening you would find many engaged in reading, or doing pretty work, or making their own dresses; and if you inquire after some whom you miss you will hear that they have gone to some of the good concerts which are rendered so accessible nowadays.

Sunday is by no means an idle day for milliners and dressmakers. They are up early and may be seen at early service; they teach in Sunday-schools, and take a deep interest in the members of their classes; and this Sunday work is not confined to the highest rung of the ladder, but includes every division we have noticed except those whose lives are destroyed by the sweaters, God help them!

Self-help.—Among milliners and dressmakers girls under twenty may by paying £1 a year, girls under twenty-five may by paying £1 5s. a year, girls under thirty may by paying £1 15s. a year obtain 12s. a week in case of sickness or inability to work, and a permanent income after the age of fifty-five by belonging to the Milliners and Dressmakers Provident and Benevolent Institution. Since its establishment in 1849 it has paid out to members nearly £14,000.

Young milliners and dressmakers can thus secure for themselves provision in the future.