

may work on farther; if you never disappoint Mrs. Cay while you are with her—mind I don't say how long you need stay—but if you live up to your standard till the end, it is very likely you will make the place rather pleasanter for your successor."

"I have thought that myself sometimes," Morag owned, "because I've felt I was made to suffer partly for other's sins. Mrs. Cay has said things once or twice which showed me that some of her girls have deserved all her suspicions and needed all her restrictions. And yet——" but Morag paused. She suddenly remembered Robina MacTavish. That young person was doubtless down in Mrs. Cay's blackest list, and her desertion to the Badenoch Arms would certainly tend to draw the old lady's boundaries still more narrow. Yet at the same time, Morag could not help feeling that there was plenty of good in Robina to which another kind of treatment might have appealed with far happier results.

Miss Soutar noticed the hesitation—"And yet," she echoed, "won't you tell me what you are thinking?"

Morag explained, impersonally, that she was afraid some girls would grow hard and indifferent to everything, when they found nothing but mistrust and discouragement.

Miss Soutar looked at her shrewdly. Her keen eyes seemed to read all that Morag did not say, for she asked—

"Do you know any of the girls who have been at Mrs. Cay's before you?"

"Well," said Morag, "I can't say I know any of them. But one of them spoke to me once up at the cathedral. It was she who told me about your association. She persuaded me to join."

Miss Soutar's bright face grew wistful.

"Do you know her name?" she asked. "Was it——"

"It was Robina MacTavish," answered Morag.

"Ah, poor Robina!" cried the teacher. "Mrs. Cay's was just the place to do her harm. She has no resources of her own. All her apparent liveliness and go are like flying fires, which can only exist where they can seize upon some light fuel. Robina only came to our association once or twice last winter. Since then I thought she must have left Nigle. I never see her."

"She is barmaid at The Badenoch Arms," said Morag.

Miss Soutar's face grew very grave.

"I fear I know what that means for Robina," she said. "I am glad she sent you to us—glad for her own sake. There is good in everybody who wishes well to others. I think I must write a letter to Robina. But you, my dear, must not become a companion of hers."

"It is not likely I shall," said Morag. "But isn't it selfish to look at it in that light? How are we to do any good or to help anybody, if we fear to go near them because they need help?"

"You might as well ask, my dear, how are the children who come to this school to be cared for in measles or scarlatina, when we do not allow them to mingle unnecessarily with the other children," said Miss Soutar. "Don't you see we give them into the far wiser keeping of those to whom these diseases are little likely to be harmful? And so should we strive to do in matters moral and spiritual. I do not ask you to shun Robina. I would not ask you to shrink from any great sacrifice for her sake, if it came to you in the path of duty, just as I would not ask one of my children to desert a sick schoolfellow, however

infected, if there was nobody else to care for it. But the ordinary path of duty lies in making other arrangements. If those arrangements break down, why, then of course the path of duty goes on all the same, at any cost. I'm quite fair," said Miss Soutar, "for I myself would not have asked Robina to stay with Mrs. Cay for a day—I should have felt it might cost too much—as I fear it did! But I would not ask you to leave Mrs. Cay untimely. She won't harm you!"

"How astonished she would be to think that such a remark could need to be made about herself," said Morag.

"Yes," answered Miss Soutar, "the moment I said it I thought of the famous story of the maiden who got discontented with her situation, and was advised by her mistress to go to a certain lady and ask her advice as to leaving it or remaining. When the girl returned, the mistress inquired whether the lady had counselled her to give up her place? 'No,' said the girl, 'she told me I ought to stay, and accept you as my cross!'"

They both laughed heartily.

"The truth is," said Miss Soutar, "when we feel anybody is our cross, we may be tolerably sure we are theirs. And all that remains is to see who will have most skill in turning the cross into a crown!"

Morag returned home from her visit with so beaming a face, that Mrs. Cay felt quite certain she had secured another place with great advantages, and that the morning would bring the anticipated notice.

But no, it only brought a letter from Gladys Henderson, and there was something in that letter which, for the time, put all thought of Mrs. Cay out of Morag's mind.

(To be continued.)

GIRLS WHO WORK WITH THEIR HANDS.

INSIGHT INTO THE LIFE AND WORK OF FACTORY-GIRLS GIVEN BY THEMSELVES.



Competition of "My Daily Round," has done good service, if only that it has cleared away many hazy ideas we had formed about Factory-

girls; like all notions formed without knowledge, they vanish as soon as the light of truth is flashed upon them.

Forty-four of the Competitors are Factory-girls representing almost every kind of work in wool, cotton and silk. The description of their special occupation is most interesting, and shows that intelligence, patience, industry, cleanliness and self-control are all necessary for its successful performance. Self-indulgence can have no existence in the life of a factory-girl, if she is to earn enough to live upon.

As a rule, both in winter and summer, the girls rise at five o'clock, and start work at six. We will quote from some of the papers, to show the efforts made to be at the mills in time.

"Click, click, click! That is the first

sound that falls upon my ear every morning in the week, with the exception of Sunday. It is the 'knocker-up.' There are several 'knockers-up' about here, but they are for the most part men; but here and there, one comes across a woman who does this early morning work; just fancy being out in the dark, cold, lonely streets from four o'clock to half-past five, going round from door to door, and waiting at each until an answering knock is heard. One comes to our house at five. Having washed, dressed and said my prayers, it is about fifteen minutes to six, and wrapping myself in my nice warm shawl, I hurry off to the mill, and oh, how thankful I am to get inside out of the wet and cold and darkness of out-doors."

"My sister and I are calico-weavers; every morning, except Sunday, we rise at half-past five. We knock at our neighbours' walls, and they knock back to wake each other. Mother gets up too, to make a fire, then we get something warm, as a rule, porridge and milk, and then set off. We have ten minutes to walk."

"I rise between five and half-past every morning, eat a light breakfast and then set off on half an hour's tramp along a lonely country road; for my home is in the country. I am

a cotton-weaver and am expected to be at work when the clock strikes six."

"I am a factory girl in a large woollen factory. I rise at a quarter past five every morning, no pleasant task in winter; and I have about eight minutes' walk to the mill, where I must be no later than six o'clock. No extra time is allowed, the gates being closed as the last stroke of the town-hall clock dies away."

"Whin . . . ting-a-ring. I wake with a start to find it is only my little alarm clock warning me that it is half-past five, and as I must leave the house at six, I know there is no time to spare, so hastily shaking myself up, I begin my daily round by calling 'awake, awake,' to my niece who shares my room; but she is too sleepy, and I shake her well. I hurry her as I wash and brush my hair, and in a few minutes we are both down-stairs drinking a cup of tea made by my dear father. I start from home at six prompt in order to reach the distant factory at half-past. I take the shortest cut through one of our worst slum-districts, but it is still at this early hour, and I am not afraid. As I near the factory I see a long stream of girls and boys, men and women flocking hurriedly along, and I pass

through the big iron gates with them, very glad to be inside, for if I was more than five minutes late I should find the gates locked till eight."

"When I awoke this morning the rain was beating against the windows, and I hoped it was only two or three o'clock, but I was disappointed, for presently I heard a whistle and I knew it was a quarter-past five and time to be getting up if my two sisters and myself were to be at work in time. I am a weaver and have to be at the mill at six in the morning. We live on a hill about twenty minutes' walk from the village where we work."

"I am a calico weaver. My usual hour of rising is five o'clock. After prayers and toilet I have my breakfast and then it is time to start. Soon numbers of mill-whistles or 'buzzes,' as they are known about here, begin to blow, and the sounding altogether to us factory girls has its peculiar charm, denoting that the factories are in full work and the workers in receipt of full wages. On a crisp, frosty morning the whistles, varying from the high shrill note to the deep bass, may be heard for four or five miles. The gates are shut five minutes before starting-time, 6.30; entrance then having to be made by means of a little office the door of which is kept open till 25 minutes to 7. All the hands who are later are fined twopence which is stopped out of their wages."

OPINIONS OF COMPETITORS QUOTED FROM THEIR PAPERS.

"It is a mistake to think all girls who work in factories are alike; there is as much difference between them, as there is between a duchess and her scullery-maid."

"Superior minds are found everywhere, and a factory is no exception to the rule."

"How often we hear the expression, 'only a mill girl,' as though factory workers were a class of people not worth speaking about. Of course some are coarse and rough in speech and manner, but these are not the majority. I can truly say that many of the girls are not only intelligent and industrious but good, pure and high-minded."

"Many girls in this factory attend both Sunday-school and service regularly."

"Whatever work a girl does she can always command respect if she is quiet and courteous in her manner, good disposed to others, and neat in her attire."

"This is what hurts most—everybody seems to look down upon us."

"People forget that we have feelings, desires and aspirations to better things, and that we appreciate the beautiful in Nature and Art as they themselves do."

"A girl if she desires to do right, doing her work quietly soon gains the respect of those around her."

"It is not true in every case that factory girls like fine and gaudy colours in clothing and do not care how their feet and hands are clad. Lancashire girls in the country like to have clean clogs, and the whiter their aprons the prouder they are. It is not likely they will go about when away from their work with untidy shoes, skirts, and gloves."

"Factory girls with all their faults are very tender-hearted and generous. If a hand has had an accident or is ill for a long time a collection is made through the room, and each one subscribes liberally."

"Should one of the girls get married there is great pin-bows of white ribbon put on in honour of the parties."

"Factory girls take great interest in voting affairs, and in their dinner-hour go and hear their side speak."

"The girls, although they have to work for their living, are always willing to help those who are less fortunate than themselves."

"Some of the girls are lovely singers."

COMPETITORS' ACCOUNT OF THEIR 8 O'CLOCK BREAKFAST AND 1 O'CLOCK DINNER.

"Eight o'clock, the engine stops for our breakfast-hour. As there is no provision made for making our tea on the premises, we have to scamper off to the shops near the factory, where we are supplied with hot water and milk twice a day for threepence a week."

"I and my sister prefer coming out of the mill for breakfast; we pay threepence each weekly at a cottage near for having tea brewed and anything warmed we may have brought to eat."

"Boiling water is provided at the mill for those who care to have it instead of going outside for breakfast, but mother sends mine every morning. We sit together in groups for this meal and there is always fun and laughter going on and occasionally singing."

"We often make the place ring again with some hymn or carol in the few minutes after breakfast which helps to cheer us up."

Dinner.—"In the hour allowed for dinner most of us read and sew."

"True, my dining-room chair is an inverted weft can, and I have to dispense with such things as brown Derby china and serviettes, but I have always the best of company to sit down with me; sometimes it is Lord Lytton who keeps up a brilliant talk on old Pompeii; at other times it is good old George Herbert who sings so quaintly and sweetly."

"If we are inclined we fill up our dinner-hour with reading and sewing."

"It is very interesting to hear some when they have time after dinner talk over the events of the week's end just past, it influences those who are told sometimes for good and sometimes for evil."

INFORMATION GIVEN BY THE FACTORY GIRLS ON OTHER MATTERS.

"We are paid by the piece," says a weaver, "so the more expert and industrious we are the more we earn. Broadly speaking, I average over one pound a week."

"I am a coat machinist; this comprises the putting together of the coat generally; the various pieces are given to us as they come from the cutters, and when they leave our hands they are finished with the exception of buttons and buttonholes. A stranger would be surprised to see the speed with which a coat is evolved by a skilful machinist from a mass of apparently shapeless pieces. The machines are all worked by steam power. The prices paid for each coat vary from threepence-halfpenny to tenpence-farthing, according to the quality of the article and the amount of work entailed, and by working about fifty-four hours a week we can earn from 4s. to 12s. a week."

"The dress of a weaver in the mill is a striped cotton skirt and blouse, a white coarse linen apron, a square calico 'fent' tied over the apron, and a leather belt for reed hook and scissors."

"As for companions, men and women, boys and girls flank and face each other at every turn, each doing exactly the same work and each expected to keep pace with the other, so that in our little sphere at least the vexed question of the equality of the sexes has been settled long ago."

"Mother gives us a penny for every shilling we earn, to save, and we mostly have a five days' holiday at the seaside in August."

"In the glove factory where I work, the fines of those who are late are kept in a box till the end of the year when they are divided among those who have not been fined once in the year."

"Being fined is called being 'pennied.'"

FACTORY GIRLS DESCRIBE THEIR LEISURE.

"When I reach home there is a nice warm tea and a bright cosy fire, and when I have helped a little in the house-work I wash and make myself tidy, and adjourn to a pretty little sitting-room upstairs where all my books and writing materials are, and here two or three hours are spent in reading or writing."

"I know nothing of art needlework, but I make all my own dresses and underclothing, so I think my day is fairly filled up."

"After tea I make my way to school where I am studying science this session."

"We very often influence each other by telling of any work we are doing at home or classes we are attending in the evening, for most factory girls are able to do something well beside the work they earn their living with. Some are good cooks, some like dress-making, others singing, piano or violin-playing, reading and fancy needlework. There are some good Sunday School teachers among factory girls."

"On Sunday we go to church, and every other Sunday I teach in the Sunday School."

"I go out once every week to class, being a Wesleyan, and then to the Christian Endeavour."

"I wend my way homeward about a quarter to seven, and after tea I enjoy my reading and writing."

"All factory girls are fond of fancy work; we exchange books with each other or patterns for fancy work, and many of us attend evening classes, so that we never need be dull."

"Some of the girls attend classes in the evening. I read and paint in the evenings."

"Occasionally I go to a concert or a Sunday School party."

"I am in a lace factory; I leave work at half-past five and at six o'clock I have to go to night-school for one hour four nights a week because I am under seventeen; this is the rule of our factory. The girls who attend can obtain THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER for threepence through the school-mistress, the firm we work for paying the remainder."

We have some most interesting papers from milliners, dressmakers, shop-girls and telegraph clerks, and one from a girl in a village shop and post office, and last not least, one from a young married woman describing her home-life.

A FEW PARAGRAPHS FROM THEM.

"I am a dressmaker or cheap costume hand.—The costumes obtain at a factory and execute my work at home. I sit down at my machine on Monday morning and try to put away the thought that I am only to receive one shilling and twopence per costume, viz., bodice and skirt fully lined and finished throughout ready for the wearer to don, including a dozen buttonholes worked with twist. Sometimes there is a deal of trimming on the said costume which makes double work, but the remuneration remains just the same. I can only afford to snatch twenty minutes for dinner and ten for tea. Sometimes I do not stop for meals at all."

Daily dressmaker.—"I have found time in the winter months to attend our Technical and Art School. This has put quite a new element into my life, opening a new world to me."

Dressmaker in a very large shop.—"Girls in work-rooms get the name of being very careless in religious matters and of spending all their leisure time in the pursuit of pleasure, and some of it of a questionable character, but I am sure it is not so with the majority of work-girls. The greater number of our girls attend church or chapel, bible-class or Sunday school regularly on Sunday."

Milliner.—"One meets with many different characters in a large work-room, and get to

know one another better than those at home know us."

Milliner in a children's millinery warehouse.—"In the afternoon, an errand girl comes round to us and we each give her a farthing for milk, and she takes in the milk for us all. We put our tea in our own teapots, and put them in the kitchen. At a quarter to four, a bell rings and we have tea. We have only to bring it from the kitchen."

Milliner.—"The daily work of a milliner is very interesting; it has its trials like other trades. I say trades, yet it is more than that, it is an art, and only those who have taste for it can ever succeed."

Assistant in a draper's shop.—"I always notice as it gets late the people are much easier to serve than in the early part of the day. About seven o'clock we get rushing busy. About half-past ten I go home, having worked since nine. I receive six shillings a week."

Dressmaker.—"There is no royal road to dressmaking; it means perseverance and application and not a small amount of patience."

Mantle-maker.—"Since I have been 'second hand' I have lived entirely in the house and have found it much more comfortable than lodgings. We work from eight to seven-thirty."

Dressmaker.—"I should like to speak a word or two to the average workroom girl, according to those I have met; they are of a very kind and genuine disposition, always

willing to help one another whether in home or workroom troubles. It was only last week that I was speaking to one of our girls, and she told me that every Thursday she and a girl friend go visiting some very poor people, and at the time we were talking over the poor, this young girl was working on a pair of woollen shoes, as a certain old lady had not got a pair to her feet. This was in our tea hour, half an hour allowed. This is only one instance of many."

Girl in village shop and post office two miles from a town.—"Seven o'clock in the morning I receive the sealed letter bag from the postman, open it, sort the letters and send the post-boy round the village with them. Now customers begin to come in for little things that they want for breakfast, for the poorer people seem to live from meal to meal, only buying a small quantity of food as they want it. After breakfast I help to cut up pigs, send the joints out in time to cook them for dinner. Eleven o'clock the postman returns for first despatch of letters. I make all the bills and do the booking and ordering of goods. One o'clock my dinner, which is very interrupted by customers; one wants a chop for his dinner, another a knot of thread to finish some straw bonnets for the warehouse. Four o'clock, postman is here again with more letters. People who are expecting them call for them. Our tea-time is as much interrupted as the dinner-hour."

"Six o'clock, and the postman is here again for the last despatch of letters, I have to seal them in the letter-bag and he takes them to the town office. Now we begin making sausages, I only season them and string them ready for sale. Customers now flock in and their wants are numerous; one wants groceries, another meat or some medicines or pills, or a ready-made shirt, or calico, or brushes, or paraffin oil; all this comes within my work and I help in it all. Aunt and I do all the work; she pays me as she would a stranger."

A young married woman.—"I have on my hands the entire work of my house including the washing and baking. Beside the housework proper I make a good many of my own dresses and find time for visiting, keeping up my small store of accomplishments and reading. In summer there is the garden to attend to. My experience is that by doing my own work and so saving the expense of labour we can live very comfortably on one pound a week, this including dress and all personal expenses. I have carefully kept account to be sure of this. We have the comfortable consciousness of living much within our income. In the evenings while I work, my husband often reads aloud; at nine o'clock we have a very light supper, and after this we have music as a rule. I would not like to exchange my home-life for any profession in the world."

POLITICS FOR GIRLS.

By FREDERICK RYLAND, M.A.

PART IV.

FEMALE SUFFRAGE.



N this paper I want to talk mainly of certain problems connected with the question of Socialism; but before doing so we will try and find room for a few paragraphs about a question which has a special interest for women:

Ought women to have a vote for members of the House of Commons?

The object of giving any class of persons the franchise, or the right to vote, is to secure that the interests of that class shall not be overlooked. If the class is already indirectly represented, or has no special interests, there is no need to give it the right. It is, perhaps, an open question whether the class of women as such has any special interests not adequately provided for; but the general drift of thoughtful opinion seems to be in the direction of admitting that it has. Men and women certainly do not entirely understand each other's point of view, and there are many questions, some great and some small, in which women as a rule take a line of their own. This is especially the case with regard to social questions, which are likely to engross much more attention than they have hitherto done.

Then there is the argument for justice. Why should a person otherwise qualified be refused a vote simply on the ground of sex? Mr. A. at No. 1 has a vote; Mrs. B. at No. 2, with equal education, and an equal stake in the country, is refused a vote, merely because she is a woman. This seems on the face of it to be an outrage on fairness. But, as a matter of fact, things are usually worse, since Mrs. B.'s gardener or coachman will probably have a vote, while she is without one.

These two are the chief arguments in favour of admitting women to the franchise, and their weight is very great. On the other hand, there are several important points to be considered. In the first place, it is not at all clear that the great majority of women who would obtain the franchise would care to use it. There seems to be no general and wide demand for it; and it is quite within the bounds of possibility that English women might do as German women have done in one of our South African colonies, ask the legislature to take back the gift which they did not want. At any rate, probably not ten per cent. of the female voters would on a purely political question go to the poll. It would require some very stimulating appeal, some harrowing attack on the sentimental side, to induce them to vote in large numbers; but when they did vote, the rush would in many constituencies entirely overwhelm the male voters. Now, it cannot be for the advantage of the State that a large body of voters, who habitually take little interest in political matters and do not get the political training which comes from incessant discussion, should be able to rush in and form a momentary and irresponsible majority. Such a majority on a single point, formed of voters with an inferior degree of political knowledge, and with an inferior degree of moral and physical force to back it, would hardly compel the submission of their opponents. Suppose, for instance, the vast majority of men were in favour of a war with Russia, and the women vetoed it, or *vice versa*; in either case it would be felt that as the men supply by far the greater part of the blood and the treasure which would be spent on a war, and are out of all comparison in a better position to judge of the effect of such a war on the honour, welfare, and commerce of the country, with them must rest the final decision.

The truth is, that the intelligence even of highly intelligent women is not political. Only a few will take interest in politics steadily and

continuously. If only women interested in politics vote, it is hardly too much to say that women as a whole will be very little better represented than they are now. And we must remember that the factory-girl class will be by far the most important class of women voters. The married woman who has no separate house property will have no vote; the rich educated women, who chiefly desire the franchise now, would be in a hopeless minority. Political power in many large cities would be chiefly in the hands of young, ill-educated, giddy, and often ill-conducted girls, living in lodgings.

Another objection is sometimes taken that difference of political opinion between man and wife would lead to quarrels. Although I am apt to agree with the remark of the old antiquary, Aubrey, who, speaking of Milton and his first wife, says that "two opinions sleep not well upon the same bolster," yet I think that this is not likely to lead to much unhappiness. A more serious matter for women is the fact that as rights of citizenship can hardly be conferred without corresponding duties, the franchise would probably be accompanied by the obligation to sit on juries, the liability to be called as special constables, and the duty to assist the police when called on in order to perform various unpleasant functions.

In all probability these objections will be overruled; and if, instead of conferring the franchise wholesale, we confer it gradually, restricting it at first to women of some wealth and education, most of the difficulties will disappear. One thing is certain, that if women want the franchise they will have to ask for it, and that in a much more extended fashion than they have at present shown any inclination to do. Probably there are many more men who wish women to have a vote than there are women who wish to gain it.

Individualism and laissez-faire.—In my first paper I said that the modern Conservative is not necessarily opposed to changes in social