

thoroughfares, when a free wheel may be considered to be dangerous, and in this case only one brake is necessary.

It is premature to say exactly where the free-wheel problem will finally solve itself in the manufacture of cycles, for the boom has only just been sprung upon the riding public, and some experts declare that the pastime is on the eve of as great a revolution as that of the advent of the pneumatic tyre. Enthusiastic riders will approach the matter with an open mind, and yet be on the alert to avoid the meddling of faddists. Some of the best firms still hold back, undecided as to which free pedal device they will adopt, but it is undoubtedly a fact

that the free wheel has come to stay, for not only does it enhance the pleasure of all sorts and conditions of riders, from the slowest to the most speedy, but allows the cyclist, after a stiff climb up a formidable ascent, to regain her lost breath by allowing the pedals to be stationary, while the machine either slows itself up, if the road is level, or runs down of its own accord should the descent be so favourable.

Wheelwomen, indeed, are the greatest benefactors, for the free-wheel cycles are easier to ride, to mount and dismount, and prevent the skirt from catching in the pedals. Not only so, but a more easy posture is allowed

in the descension of hills, for no matter how enjoyable the pastime, the old method of "coasting" with the feet on the foot-rests cannot be said to be graceful, whereas now the young, middle-aged or old, all can "slip" the hills without fear of danger, and benefit by the slightest decline of the road surface. There is also less tendency of side-slip on slippery surfaces, a steadier running of the machine at all times, and a more elegant method of propulsion.

Just one word of warning. Follow not the example of those who seek to make puns at the expense of the free wheel, for remember, being costly, it is not given away.

## BREAD-WINNING AT HOME.

### PART I.

MOST women, whether young or old, would prefer, if it were possible, to earn their living at home. This preference is occasioned by many causes. Tradition, social ideas and strong valid reasons all count for something in the matter. The circumstances which induce women to earn their bread, or, more usually, a portion of their bread, by working at home are as different as are the species of work executed under these conditions. There are girls—a multitude of them—who, possessing for an uncertain number of years a niche in the parental household, and not having, unfortunately, a sound general education, a professional training, or any means whereby to obtain these valuable qualifications, find their choice of employment restricted to the very poor kinds of work which can be done by ignorant people. Want of courage and a foolish timidity as to what relations and neighbours may say have the effect of compelling some girls only to do what can be done in a private house. But the most prevalent cause is undoubtedly want of money. Parents have not or think they have not the £50, or, perhaps, even the £10 which would enable one of their girls to learn a trade, and the girls have not often sufficient resolution to put by money out of their small dress allowances to help themselves forward permanently in life.

Among girls of another class, such as the daughters of small farmers and artisans, no absurd pretence of idleness is kept up. It is assumed that girls as well as boys must earn their living or must help their men-folk in some definite form either of bread-winning or of money-saving. The small farmer is probably more willing than the clerk (who reckons himself the social superior) to pay a comparatively large premium to have his daughter taught a business. Yet such farsightedness is only comparative, and there remain in this class, too, a large number of people who would rather fritter away any amount of money upon small transient pleasures than reserve the lump sum that is needed for the attainment of any permanent benefit.

Strongest of all the forces that bind women to their home is the domestic tie. The daughter cannot go out all day and leave the blind aged mother by herself; the wife must be at home to cook the dinner and to keep the dwelling in good order; the mother cannot leave her young children. And yet the woman's traditional old-time work of money-saving, and of preserving, indeed, not only money but health and all the good gifts of life, is not found adequate; money must be earned so that life itself may continue.

I have said that different as are the circumstances which lead to home bread-

winning, so is the work different. There are differences of degree which will become apparent to those readers who follow me through the series of employments which I am about to describe; but there is also one important difference in kind, which should be noted carefully before we proceed further. Employments which can be pursued at home are severed into two classes, according to their dependence upon or independence of the originating power of the worker. The products of art and literature, the principles of philosophy, the results of invention, are all dependent upon certain individual beings, without whom they would never have been created, or, at least, never have assumed their present form. With this class of "Bread-winning at Home" I do not intend to concern myself in these articles. My attention will be restricted to the second and much more numerous class of home bread-winners—to those persons whose work owes something, perhaps, to their ingenuity and much to their industry and dexterity, but is in design and idea not of their creating at all.

It is, in short, of those forms of home bread-winning which either are drawn into the complex meshes of the manufacturing system, or struggle with varying degrees of non-success not to be drawn in, that I propose in this and in future articles to speak.

### BALLS AND BOXING-GLOVES.

Most girls buy lawn tennis balls, play with them and lose them. They may look now and again with vague curiosity at those two curiously-shaped sinuous pieces of cloth which curl round the ball so neatly, and join each other almost imperceptibly; but could they explain how the ball is covered? Do they picture to themselves people engaged in making and covering those balls? I doubt it; for most people have very little notion how anything is made, except certain ordinary forms of food and clothing, which are daily manufactured under their very eyes. And girls are only slightly more ignorant than other people, inasmuch as they have peculiarly few opportunities of observing how the business of practical life is carried on.

If we would see tennis balls covered, we must go to Woolwich, for the industry—why one hardly knows—is almost exclusively carried on there.

Alighting at the Arsenal, I found myself in a wholly different world from the London I had left. Here were no fashionable people, and few shops that did not address their appeal to the thrifty; but neither was there the mean cheerlessness of London poverty. The streets were filled with sea-faring men and with workmen from the Arsenal; and behind the very block of artisans' dwellings which presently I entered, the river and the ships of many nations were passing down

together. Surrounded by the forces of man and nature, by warfare and commerce in its nobler forms, the interests even of small lives could not be entirely petty.

As I entered the block of dwellings, however, I did not see the river at the back, but only a rather narrow and dark staircase much encumbered with children, whose noise throughout my subsequent conversation with the tennis-ball coverer made the receipt of information difficult. The woman whom I visited owned several of the children on the stairs, and inhabited a set of three small rooms for which the rent was 6s. a week. My friend, the ball-coverer, was a pleasant woman with an air of capacity which her statements concerning her work bore out. Taking down a box from a shelf, she showed me that it was filled with balls waiting to be stitched. The balls looked at first sight as though they were ready for use. Each india-rubber ball was already covered with cloth, and the covering adhered to the ball by means of the solution of india-rubber and naphtha which is used for the purpose. But the edges of the two hour-glass shaped pieces of cloth would come apart after a little of the sort of usage to which tennis-balls submit. Consequently the balls were sent to my friend to be stitched, after having been finished up to this point in the manufactory of one of the wholesale dealers in games. Taking up a needle and some flax thread, the woman proceeded obligingly to show me how she went to work. Slipping her needle along underneath the cloth edges, she explained that the ideal was a ball which, after it had been pressed (returning again to the factory for this purpose), should reveal no stitches. It was also very important not to split the cloth but to join the edges, as surgeons say of a wound, "at the first intention." Turning to the question of £ s. d.—though pounds do not complicate accounts in bread-winning at home—I found that the work was paid at the rate of 6d. per dozen balls stitched. But out of this payment it devolved on her not only to provide needles and thread, but to pay the carriage of the consignments of balls. This last obligation makes, of course, rather a hole in the payment. She told me, further, that she could easily stitch four dozen a day, and she looked to earn about 12s. a week. For two months in the winter she would be out of work, and occasionally there were other slack times, as the work is dependent naturally upon the season when lawn-tennis is played. All these statements showed this particular woman to be a better worker than most of her neighbours in Woolwich who are thus employed.

My next visit was to a woman who gave out work, and was consequently in a position to obtain a general view of the trade. She told me that she paid the workers 4d. per dozen, she defraying the carriage, and naturally



incurring the responsibility of getting the work properly done. Some givers-out of work, she said, paid 4½d. She also covered the balls herself, the balls being sent to her coated with solution and accompanied by the cut-out pieces of cloth which she put on. She gave a less cheerful description of the business than I had previously heard, saying that trade was only brisk for six months in the year. The india-rubber balls do not keep well; and consequently here, as in so many other branches of manufacture, an equal distribution of work throughout the year is impossible.

A very different kind of ball, namely, the hard leather ball used for rackets, is also the handiwork of the women in Woolwich. Here we are presented with the frequent anomaly of an apparently troublesome kind of work which is paid for worse than one that is easier. I found in a small tenement house a bright girl living with her mother. She was the kind of girl who, had her lot been cast among people who could have used her services, might have done well as a maid or a dress-maker. But down in Woolwich where ladies are scarce, and except among the officers at the Arsenal, most people are poor together, she was fain to be content with covering racket balls at the rate of 1s. 10d. per gross. With hard work she could do six dozen a day, that is to say, omitting Sundays, she could earn, if she were always working at full pressure, 5s. 6d. a week. This is one of the numerous cases in which a young woman finds herself impelled by mere force of family circumstances to sell her work in a peculiarly bad market.

For racket-ball covering the materials are provided. The first item is a hard core, which is said to be made of the clippings of soldiers' clothes, soaked in a solution, and then compressed till it is as hard as wood, and bound together with some sort of fibre. This core

is next covered with strips of solid leather and rag, then a piece of softened sheepskin is drawn round it, the corners being sewn together and seamed down each side; the superfluous leather is cut away and the ball is rolled between a marble roller and slab, in order to make it perfectly round and hard, and to flatten the seams so completely that a person fingering the ball in the dark should be unable to discover the joins. In this trade there is a great disparity between the earnings of the ball-makers and the prices charged for balls, the usual retail price being three pence or fourpence apiece. The only advantage of this business over the tennis-ball covering is regularity.

From balls I passed to boxing-gloves when I found myself in an extremely untidy room inhabited by an equally untidy old woman. She was clever and something of a character, but her appearance was not charming; neither was her manner. I will credit her with being engaged at the moment of my entrance in some efforts at dusting; but the result of these attempts so far had only been to stir up a considerable quantity of flue and to deposit some of it upon her hair. A visitor at such a moment was doubtless peculiarly objectionable, and the abruptness of her speech reflected her sentiments. However, after we had both stood for some time conversing in the atmosphere of flue, I found myself amazed by the urbanity with which she suddenly said, "I might have dusted you a chair, but I've lived so long among these rough people in Woolwich that I've forgotten to be polite."

Matter, however, is more than manner, and from my singular hostess I acquired some out-of-the-way knowledge. The occupation of this old lady was the making of boxing-gloves and cricket-leggings. Formerly she, too, had covered balls, but being a woman of spirit she resolved to do something that was not just any woman's work. So she turned her atten-

tion to boxing-gloves. "I can make anything from a pattern," she said, and went on to explain that she had resolutely unravelled the mysteries of her trade by watching a girl making boxing-gloves. There on the wall hung her patterns—the pieces for gloves and leg-shields cut out in solid cardboard. She was disappointed in boxing-gloves. After all, she did not find they paid well, only 1s. 6d. being paid to her for making a set of four. The materials, which she reckoned cost 8s. per set, were provided; she only had to find thread. Gloves, she explained, vary immensely in quality. She showed me one which was of good quality, though the shape did not satisfy her experienced eye. The back and sides were made of Cape tan, and the palm and inner glove of sheepskin. In the centre of the palm was the ventilating-hole, smartly decorated with an ornament in red silk crochet. The inner glove having been made, the outer leather was sewn upon it, and the space between the inner and outer glove was stuffed with horsehair. This horsehair stuffing, she remarked, was messy work (a fact which excused the state of the room), and also required a good deal of skill; for it was important that the stuffing should take the shape of the hand. When the glove was fully padded, the aperture left at the back was sewn up, and an elastic was run through at the wrist. Working hard, she could make a set a day. The leg-shields were made with similar padding. And my old lady also made the leather mouths for footballs. But with all these various industries she was manifestly in no very bright position financially. She was constantly pressed to do the work, as there were few women who understood it; and yet prices remained low. But prices abound in mysteries of this kind.

MARGARET BATESON.  
(To be continued.)

## OUR PUZZLE POEM: THE LILY.—PRIZE WINNERS.

## SOLUTION.

## THE LILY.

The lily's the flower for me,  
So fair in her sweet purity;  
'Tis only a saint,  
With no shadow of taint,  
Can rival her chaste dignity.

All over the world she is known;  
So loved, and so easily grown;  
Oh! what can compare  
With her whiteness so rare?  
The lily's the queen, all must own.

## PRIZE WINNERS.

*Five Shillings Each.*

Edith Ashworth, The Mount, Knutsford.  
R. Benson, Ballymoney, Ireland.  
Gertrude Broomhall, Wellfield, Barnsley, Yorks.  
Elizabeth M. Capel, 1, Prospect Place, Beechen Cliff, Bath.  
Edith E. Grundy, 105, London Road, Leicester.  
C. H. Hedgman, Malvern.  
E. Holgate, 39, Brooklands Road, Burnley.  
Nellie R. Hosmer, 58, Beulah Road, Tunbridge Wells.  
E. M. Howard, 29, Beaconsfield Villas, Brighton.  
Annie M. Hutchens, 60, Merton Road, Wandsworth, S.W.  
Carlina Leggett, Burgh Hall, Burgh, Lincolnshire.

Clara M. Lush, 26, Scotland Street, Edinburgh.  
Hannah E. Powell, Dugdale Terrace, Portrack Lane, Stockton-on-Tees.  
Ada Rickards, 1, Greenland Villas, Wood Green, N.  
Alexandrina A. Robertson, 15, Fairlawn Avenue, Chiswick, W.  
A. M. de Rougement, 31, Craven Hill Gardens, Hyde Park, W.  
Ellen R. Smith, 11A, Union Court, Old Broad Street, E.C.  
Gertrude Smith, 10, Ferron Road, Clapton, N.E.  
Bettie Temple, 4, Tressillian Crescent, Brockley, S.E.  
C. E. Thurgar, 7, Essex Street, Unthinks Road, Norwich.  
V. M. Welman, 3, Cranmer Villas, Mitcham, Surrey.

*Most Highly Commended.*

Eliza Acworth, Lucy I. Armstrong, Annie A. Arnott, Lily Belling, Isabel Borrow, Kate Campsall, Wilfred T. Campsall, Rev. F. T. Chamberlain, Lillian Chard, F. Chute, M. A. C. Crabb, Mrs. Crossman, Mrs. Cumming, Constance Daphne, Mabel E. Davis, Mrs. Frank Dickson, Leonard Duncan, C. M. A. FitzGerald, A. and F. Fooks, F. Fuller, Kate Furner, Mrs. Gotch, Marie E. Hancock, Ellie Hanlon, Rose D. Davis, Hester M. Henderson, Violet Hewett, J. Hunt, Ellen H. Kemp, Fred. A. Lindley, Winifred Loader, E. Lord, Constance Massie, St. Clair Conway Poole, Janet M. Pugh, Nina E. Purvey, Annie

Roberson, Florence E. Russell, M. Shadforth, A. A. L. Shave, Nellie Skitter, Isabel Snell, Katherine M. Stanley, Edith G. Wallis, Mrs. R. Wallis, G. S. Wilkins, Minnie Wilkins, A. D. Wood, Emily C. Woodward, Edith Wyer, Edith M. Younge, Helen B. Younger.

*Very Highly Commended.*

H. Alexander, M. S. Bourne, Amy Briand, Leila M. Claxton, Lillian Clews, Helen M. Coulthard, Ellie Crossman, Ethel M. A. Darbyshire, Agnes Dewhurst, Mrs. F. Farrar, Ellen A. Fox, Frances M. Granger, Florence M. Graves, F. S. A. Graves, M. Hodgkinson, Phoebe Johnson, Sarah F. Kerr, Annie G. Luck, Evelyn McKenzie, E. Mastin, Mrs. Nicholls, Lilla Patterson, Elizabeth Plowman, Emily L. Reid, Miss Romanes, E. Schoenfelder, Mary E. Spencer, Sadie Stelfox, Mrs. Stretton, Madeline Wharton, Emily Wilkinson, Emily M. P. Wood, Diana C. Yeo, Sophie Yeo.

*Highly Commended.*

Annie J. Cather, Elsie O. Cudlipp, Mrs. H. Danell, Ethel Dickson, Nurse Nyda Eskell, Nellie T. Godfrey, Edith L. Howse, Helen Jones, Eva H. Laurence, W. C. Lee, Wm. Shaw Leest, Janet Leslie, Isabella M. Meehan, Nellie Meikle, Jessie Middlemiss, J. D. Musgrave, Hilda Pickering, H. F. Richards, Emily A. Ruffle, A. C. Sharp, S. Southall, Norah M. Sullivan, Ellen C. Tarrant, C. Forestier Walker, J. Wallace, Mrs. Warren, Alice Woodhead.



## BREAD-WINNING AT HOME.

PART II.  
DOLL-MAKING.

It is very pretty work," said a worn-out little woman, gazing around her with manifest pride. Her gaze was directed towards some bundles of dolls' bodies and arms, a box of sawdust, and a heap of wood-shavings. Other-

wise, indeed, there was little enough upon which the eye could rest. The window looked out upon a dull off-street in Shore-ditch. No carpet covered the bare boards of the room, and there was scarcely any furniture except the bed. Here the doll-maker, a widow, lived quite alone, with nothing to read, nothing to look at, and nothing else to do save to go on persistently stuffing dolls.

It had not always been thus with her. At one time she had been a charwoman; but that business did not pay. The "ladies"—that is to say, the East-end house-mistresses—had often been badly off themselves, and then they did their own charring. But seventeen years had passed since that period—seventeen years in which she had remained faithful to the doll trade, if one can term fidelity a helpless adherence to the only business by which one can live at all.

How this unfortunate but amiable little woman did live still remains a mystery to me. Her earnings, she told me, varied between 5s. and 8s. a week. Her rent (which did not vary) was 4s. a week. From August till Christmas trade was at its highest; but after Christmas, when all the children were provided with dolls, and all the parents and uncles and aunts have spent their money, there would be almost nothing to do for three months.

My friend, as I gathered gradually from what she told me, worked for some small domestic firm, consisting of a man and his daughters, who in their turn had a pretty hard struggle for existence. The doll trade, in truth, does not flourish nowadays as well as it once did. British doll-makers have never pretended to make those exquisite wax creatures that are bought for the nurseries of the wealthy. These have always come from France. On the other hand, our workers are outsold in the cheap market by the Germans, who offer for less money a prettier article. That it is prettier British doll-makers, of course, indignantly deny. My poor friend spoke with conviction of the inferiority of German dolls, although, as one looked at her own human images which littered the floor, it did not seem possible that there were many grades of descent from her models. One of the provoking incidents of German competition she mentioned was the fact that the Germans make their dolls so that the legs will bend at the place where the knees are supposed to be. Consequently, she was obliged to make the dolls' legs pliable; and for the extra labour she unhappily received no extra payment. But granted that this suppleness of the lower limbs was an advantage, there was no denying—so she said—that the German heads would fall off at the slightest knock, and that the composition feet were disposed to get chipped.

The bodies of my friend's dolls were made of rag with black calico feet, and arms and hands of flesh-coloured leather. This leather,

by the way, she could only purchase in small quantities, and therefore expensively. She could not make the bodies herself, but had to take the rag to a machinist to be stitched up, and then fetch the dolls away again. What with errands of this kind and with continually going to and fro to fetch work from her employers, much time was consumed, and her small store of strength (for she was not young) was reduced.

Her chief business was stuffing the dolls. She explained to me that stuffing called for skill. The bodies would be filled with sawdust up to the hips and with shavings above, so that the larger part of the body should be light. The waist part should be stuffed very firmly, so as to give a centre of gravity to balance the weight of the head; but the bust and shoulders must be loosely filled.

For small rag dolls' bodies she received 3½d. a dozen. Formerly the price was a farthing more. Arms were paid for at 1d. per dozen. For large dolls she received 10½d. a dozen; this class of work paid her better. She began work at 5 A.M. and went to bed at half-past eleven, but could only turn out from six to eight dozen bodies a day. She could make a dozen arms in an hour. Out of her earnings she had to buy her own stuffing. The sawdust cost 5s. 6d. per cwt., and a half sack would last between a week and a fortnight. Calico cost 6d. per lb., and leather 3d. per lb.

Occasionally, but not often, she also did the covering of the faces. She showed me presently how this was effected. Taking up a ready-made wax face, she pressed it into a heated mould, previously lined with white muslin, which adhered to the warm wax and came away with it. Upon this surface her employer would paint the features and complexion. For effecting this little operation, which required some deftness, the doll-maker was paid 6d. per gross. She found this kind of work more remunerative than any, because she had neither to supply faces nor muslin. It was a drawback, she went on to say, that she was constantly obliged to change from one branch of work to another. And then she had always to be thinking about money. There was never a penny to spare. Lately she had got all into a tangle. She had been obliged to refuse work, because it was more than one pair of hands could manage; and yet she could not employ an assistant because, as usual, she had no ready money. I asked my friend whether, in the pressure of her work, she found time to do her own cooking. She replied that what little cooking she could afford to do she did; but it was very little. Nothing about the small fireplace betrayed any signs of cooking; her meals were manifested mainly of the tea and bread-and-butter order. She was, moreover, an abstainer. She spoke with great pleasure of two occasions on which she had been taken for a day into the country by some Church organisation. One of these had been into Epping Forest, where she had almost lost herself. Poor little woman, so helpless and so amiable! I left her to her "pretty work," feeling, I am convinced, much more sorry for her than she felt for herself.

Having seen the doll made, let us turn to the dressing processes. Many dolls of the "alien immigrant" variety arrive in this country in a state of nudity; consequently doll-dressing is a larger industry than doll-making. It is an industry practised in London, Glasgow, and other large towns. The Scottish workers achieve a measure of success by dressing the dolls as "Hieland laddies" and New-haven fishwives, and their handiwork may, for aught I know, be attractive. But I should

be letting patriotism get the better of me if I asserted that the cheaply attired doll of South Britain was a fair match for the equally cheap doll that arrives in costume from Germany, France and Switzerland. Both the English and the foreign cheap dressed doll wear materials of little value, and neither has had much stitching lavished upon her wardrobe; but while the foreign doll usually looks as though her dress carried out some particular idea on the part of the designer, the English dolls look dowdy—*elle manque de chic*, as the Frenchwoman said of the Venus of Melos. This dowdy appearance is scarcely surprising, seeing that many of the women who dress doll live in that poverty-stricken half of London where from New Year's Day till Christmas, they scarcely ever behold any scrap of beauty or elegance.

It can scarcely be doubted that some improvement would be effected in the quality of the dressing if workrooms were established under the direction of women with ideas and taste. One wholesale London firm, that is in great part managed by ladies who have had both an excellent education and a long business training, has made the experiment of opening such a workroom. Here girls are chiefly employed rather than the older women who are tied to their homes. These girls, as I learnt from the wage-book, earn from ten to fourteen shillings a week; and I was told that during the few years the workroom had been in existence, the quality of the dolls' dress-making had distinctly risen.

With a rare exception such as this, the employment is still an instance of "bread-winning at home." According to the description given me by one of the ladies to whom I have referred, the dressing of the average cheap doll reduces the complications of the toilet to their elements. A double square of calico, stitched all round and twice up the middle, is cut up and, turned inside out to hide the raw edges, forms a bifurcated undergarment. With a chemise the doll of the people dispenses, but she has a petticoat edged with deep lace, because petticoats show. Her dress is frequently made of flannelette, pinked out at the neck and shoulders, and turned up at the hem with a band of sateen of some contrasting colour. A string is run through to draw the dress in at the waist. With a scrap of white muslin and wire a hat of picturesque shape is concocted, and behold, dolly is dressed. But, of course, fashions are always changing, and each set of dolls must be costumed a little differently. The doll which I have been describing is the kind of young lady the customer buys for sixpence. She is sold by the wholesale to the retail dealers at 4s. 6d. per dozen. Very good dolls—dolls whose garments take off and bear inspection—are sold at 12s. a dozen. For these the customer is charged 1s. 6d. or 2s. each, according to the season of the year and the locality of the shop. The wholesale dealer rarely gets 2s. apiece for a doll unless it is a particularly large one; for size in dolls is regarded as indicative of worth.

The earnings of home doll-dressers vary greatly according to industry and skill. The work is paid for at from 4½d. to 8d. a dozen for the commonest species of London dolls. In Scotland I believe prices are considerably higher; and I have seen 1s. 6d. to 18s. a dozen quoted; but the work in these cases must be of considerable merit and elaboration. It is difficult to strike an average even for London doll-dressers, because from day to day and from week to week the takings vary remarkably. An indifferent worker earned in one week 4s. 10d., dressing on one day two



dozen, on another three and a half dozen, and on a third five dozen. The next week she took 11s. 8d., dressing from four to six dozen each day. She was helped by a cripple son. A good worker who lived alone earned 15s. 9½d. in a week; the advantage of working uninterruptedly counted probably in the case of the latter for more than the occasional help given to the other who had a large family to look after. The doll-dressmaker, I should add, is provided with materials by the wholesale firms who give out work; but she needs to possess a sewing-machine, which is an expensive piece of stock-in-trade.

One of the doll-dressers whom I visited, I found inhabiting two extremely squalid rooms in a tumble-down dwelling immediately over a public-house, where a group of women were gossiping in a state of partial intoxication. The staircase was rickety in the extreme, and a part of the dirty cracked ceiling, I was informed by the woman, had fallen the other day upon her husband—who was a delicate man and not able to do much—and upon one of her sons. The landlord refused to put the place into repair; but as they paid 5s. a week for these rooms, whereas for about the same

amount of space they would be charged 7s. 6d. in "the dwellings," she thought it necessary to bide where they were, although the accommodation in the dwellings was better in many essential particulars. She had six children, of whom one, a pale-faced but intelligent-looking lad, was at home when I entered. Her boys, she said proudly, could do anything with their fingers, and could make dolls' frocks, blouses, and sleeves beautifully. One of these nimble-fingered boys had lately found work at a staymaker's, where he was employed tipping the bones with metal. At the moment of my call the doll-dresser was puzzling over a new model which she ought to copy. It was a cotton sun-bonnet, goffered in a very pretty way, and edged with white imitation lace. How was this goffering to be done? that was the question which puzzled her. But she had come practically to the conclusion that it required a special appliance to be added to the machine, and she was convinced that the work would not repay the half-crown that the goffering instrument would cost.

At present—it was the beginning of the doll-dressers' season—the making of samples was the worker's chief occupation. Any idea in

ladies' apparel which she thought new or pretty she would imitate. For these samples no extra payment was received; but as they brought her more work she did not object. Like my other friend the doll-maker, the doll-dresser thought her work attractive. She scarcely ever made two dozen alike, and manifestly enjoyed the variety. Some costumes wanted a great deal of beading, others running, others tucking or trimming with lace. She evidently reckoned herself something of an artist in her way, though she did live in a slum in Shoreditch. The stuffing business she disliked, for it filled the place with "wood wool" (fine shavings); still, she did this also occasionally, when the dressing orders were slack. Every morning, she told me, she rose at five to get one of the boys off to his work. A little later came the preparation of her husband's breakfast. Yes, it was a busy life to be both a doll-dresser and the mother of a family, all of whom must earn their bread. But she liked her work, and she esteemed her employers, who she seemed to feel were helping her to fight the terrible German giant.

MARGARET BATESON.

(To be continued.)

## LIFE'S TRIVIAL ROUND.

By ROSA NOUCHETTE CAREY, Author of "Nellie's Memories," "Mollie's Prince," etc.

### CHAPTER XIV

#### NINA GIVES HER OPINION.

"The smallest worm will turn being trodden on."—*King Henry VI.*

"I am sure care's an enemy to life."—*Twelfth Night.*



I WAS surprised to hear from Hope the next morning that Miss Faith was in her usual place at the breakfast-table.

"She is not a bit fit to leave her room," she remarked, "she looks quite ill, but she was very sharp with father when he remonstrated with her. I do wish she had stopped upstairs, Berrie. What is the use of quarrelling with him and making him so uncomfortable?"

What is done cannot be undone," finished the poor child in a weary voice, "so we must just make the best of it."

"If only Miss Faith had your brave spirit, dear."

"I am not brave at all, Berrie," she returned sadly. "I think I almost broke my heart last night, but I am trying to hide it from father this morning. Aunt Faith gives him so much to bear; he told her just now so nicely that he hoped that her head would be better by the afternoon, as he meant to

bring Brenda up to tea. 'I think that will be the best arrangement. What do you say, Aunt Faith?' But her answer was as chilling as possible. 'That is for you and Miss Ashton to decide, Graham. I have no opinion on the subject. I suppose you will just do as you both like!' Oh, how I longed to shake her, for the dear old dad looked so dreadfully pained."

"She will come round, Hope, my dear, but we must give her time."

"Of course I tried to make up for Aunt Faith's rudeness. I told father that we would have tea on the terrace, and that Nina should pick some of his favourite greengages, but I could not get a smile out of him. That is what Aunt Faith does: she flattens him out and takes the bloom off everything. He did not like to say any more as Nina was there, but he was quite downcast and sad when I walked with him to the gate."

"I am glad that my little girl loves her father too well to hurt him," he said, and I am sure that there were tears in his eyes, and of course I put my arms round his neck and told him how sorry I was, and that Aunt Faith did not mean it, but that she always said sharp things when she was unhappy."

"I am glad you told him that, Hope, my dear. Solomon was right when he said it was 'the little foxes that spoil the grapes.' It is the little tempers and sharp speeches that spoil the sweet fruitage of home life," but Hope did not smile as she usually did over my homely axioms; she seemed lost in thought. Very likely it was the sight of her pale cheeks and swollen eyelids that had brought the tears to Mr. Mostyn's eyes. I knew how tenderly he loved his little girl, and the slightest

unhappiness on her part would try him far more than any amount of crabbed and peevish speeches from Miss Faith.

"Oh, there is one thing, Berrie," she observed presently. "I want you to tell Nina about it. It would never do to leave it to Aunt Faith. Nina is so quick she would find out how she felt in a moment."

So of course I promised that I would speak to the child as soon as she had finished her lessons. Nina had outgrown Miss Faith's teaching, which, to tell the truth, was rather old-fashioned and limited, and for the last few weeks she had gone to the Fergusons'. Mrs. Ferguson had a resident governess for her three little girls, and she had kindly proposed that Nina should join them at their lessons for a few hours daily. It was an excellent arrangement; Templeton, where the Fergusons lived, was only just down the lane, and Nina could run there alone. The children were well brought up, and Amy especially was a pretty, well-behaved little girl. Mrs. Ferguson was a nice motherly creature, and devoted a great deal of her time to her family, so Nina would get nothing but good there, and already the arrangement worked well.

Miss Faith was very trying that morning; it seemed as though her unhappiness must have vent in finding fault with everybody. She affronted Johnson by complaining that the silver was not as bright as usual. Of course he argued the point. Johnson never allowed anyone but his master to find fault with him. He wouldn't take his orders from women folk, as he often informed Mrs. Jones, and as he had lived with Mr. Mostyn's father and had grown grey in the service of the family, he



had been spoken on the subject, but Peggy suspected a deeper meaning to Mrs. Asplin's words, and hung back on her way to the gate, to link her arm in that of her kind friend, and beg for an explanation.

"Oh, Peg, it's the sea, the cruel sea!" cried Mrs. Asplin then. "I have such a terror of the water since my boy was drowned! It's over ten years ago now, but it's as fresh with me as if it had been just yesterday. My bonnie boy! You never saw him, Peg, but he was my

first, and even Rex himself was never quite the same. It's foolish of me, and sinful into the bargain, for you are in God's keeping wherever you may go, and it would be selfish to spoil your enjoyment. I will try to overcome my fear, but, Peggy dear, you know what good reason I have for dreading suspense just now—and as you love me, don't let them miss that train! If you were late, if you didn't appear at the right time, I should be terrified, and imagine all sorts of horrors. I—I don't

know what would happen to me! Let nothing, *nothing* make you late. Remember me, Peg, in the midst of your pleasuring!"

"Mater, I will!" cried Peggy solemnly. She looked in the sweet, worn face, and her heart beat quickly. A hundred resolutions had she made in her life, and alas! had also broken, but this time it would go hardly with her if she neglected her vow to her second mother.

(To be continued.)



### WHEN YOU ARE NEAR ME.

By HELEN MARION BURNSIDE.

WHEN you are near me, afar fades all sorrow,  
No one so happy, so blessed as I;  
Not a care for to-day, not a fear for to-morrow,  
Disturbs my content as the moments fleet by.  
When you are near me, the sunlight enfolds me,  
Life's sunlight for me only beams from your eyes;  
The magical spell of your joyousness holds me,  
And sadness is banished, and weariness flies.  
O stay with me; bless with your brightness my lot—  
O stay with me, Love; will you not—will you not?

When you are absent, the gloom round me closes,  
No one so lonely, so weary as I,  
No warmth in the sun, and no scent in the roses,  
As on care-weighted feet the dull moments lag by.  
When you are absent, dark fears overtake me,  
Life of its savour and beauty is shorn;  
O stay with me, Love; never leave or forsake me—  
O leave me not, Love, lest I languish forlorn.  
O stay with me; bless with your brightness my lot—  
O stay with me, Love; will you not—will you not?



### BREAD-WINNING AT HOME.

By MARGARET BATESON.

#### PART III.

##### SOUTH LONDON INDUSTRIES.

APART from its historical associations, the older southern portion of London is dreary and repellent. There are names of streets and places that have a pleasant antique savour about them. There are Tabard Street and Pardoner Street that take the fancy back to Chaucer's pilgrims setting forth for Canterbury; there are Tooley Street of sartorial memory, Redcross Street, the Marshalsea, Newcomen Street, and Mermaid Court, not to speak of Pickle Herring Street and Shad Thames, which, skirting the reaches of the river where foreign sailors congregate, may really promise adventure of a sort. But when we have crossed London Bridge and mingled with the sombre, dingy crowd that is chronically staring enviously at the ships below, we pass into a region that is in the main merely sordid and poverty-stricken.

The reason of this dullness is not far to seek. The lie of London is from east to west, and the main thoroughfare runs with but a slight break at the Bank from Bow to Shepherd's Bush. No doubt the number of West-Enders whom business carries frequently to the East-End is not great; the thoroughfare itself, however, becomes by its length and continuity an important avenue of trade, and as one looks at the crowded shops of the Mile End Road, one never wholly forgets that this lively road is in a sense a continuation of Oxford Street and Holborn. But there is that in a river which, bridge it never so often, does divide. Neither Westminster Bridge,

Blackfriars Bridge, nor London Bridge can make Southwark and Bermondsey seem to be of a piece with London north of the Thames.

South London resembles East London in being poor; it is poor in two ways, but neither of these is picturesque. It is poor after the manner in which some artisans and clerks are poor—a most painful kind of poverty, because it is so respectable; and it is also poor with the poverty of the class that labours perpetually at ill-paid industries because it can never afford the time to learn better trades. The poverty of both classes leaves little margin for picturesqueness. The men-folk of the superior class go daily across the river to earn their bread while the women remain at home to do the housework with or without the assistance of a "slavey." The second class for the most part spends its days as well as its nights on the Surrey side and occupies itself in the manufacturing processes of the district.

A considerable manufacturing town is South London. True, it cannot show so many factories and tall chimneys as the Eastern Metropolis; still, the initiated know that down Bermondsey way there are acres occupied by jam-making, fruit-bottling, potted-meat making, and other factories, while elsewhere breweries, mineral water and bicycle factories are tolerably numerous.

But specially is South London remarkable for its home industries. I call them home industries rather because they are carried on in the living-rooms by the workers than because they are especially suitable for the private fireside. The latter is indeed by no means the salient characteristic of some of these indus-

tries. There are cases not a few in which an occupation is so obviously dependent on the special conditions which can be created in a large factory, that one is at a loss to imagine how it ever found its way into the tiny bed-sitting-room of a family. By the time the spectator comes upon the scene, it is evident that the contest between factory employment and private life is over. Private life has, of course, been worsted. In saying this, I would not by any means be understood to express an opinion antagonistic to all forms of bread-winning at home. The occupations which can be conducted at home are much too diverse in their nature for any such generalisation to be reasonable.

I would ask my readers to bethink themselves of their sentiments when some member of their family, seized with a passion for photography, has turned her bedroom into a photographic "dark room," or when some would-be sculptor has imported lumps of soft clay into the drawing-room. Have not such occurrences been attended by a good deal of friction and a sense that home was not exactly habitable? Imagine, then, that the room in which these messy processes go on is the only room for everybody—bedroom, sitting-room, nursery, and workroom all in one—and you will probably arrive at the conclusion that not every kind of industry can suitably be carried on in such exiguous quarters.

Of South London it may be said more accurately than of most districts that the home industries are generally factory industries, and that the work of the factory tends to become the occupation of the home. The lines of



demarcation in this neighbourhood are indeed peculiarly hard to draw. One scarcely knows, for instance, what to call a shop with some wicker chairs displayed in the window and on the pavement, and others in a semi-finished condition inside with people busily engaged in completing them. Such a place is partly a shop, partly a workshop, and partly a domestic workshop, inasmuch as the place is also the private residence of those employed. Basket and chair-making is, by the way, one of the distinctive occupations in some South London streets in the Southwark quarter. Another industry is tin-plate working. There are streets in which it would seem that every fifth shop was stored with whitesmithery in the form of paste-cutters, jelly-moulds, funnels, and other culinary utensils. These articles are fashioned by hand out of thin tin-plate, and women, as well as men, are engaged in this occupation.

Brush-making, box-making, and paper bag-making, and, near the river, sack-making are among the characteristic home employments of South London women. To this list I shall add, as I describe them, several other and rather curious avocations. I had expected also to have occasion to speak of fur-pulling; that is to say, the pulling of rabbits' fur from the skin. Recently, however, on visiting an alley which has been a chief scene of fur-pulling, I learnt that employers were withdrawing their work from the homes and were insisting on the business being carried out within their factories. This statement was also confirmed by one of the clergy, who appears to be labouring indefatigably in a very depressing neighbourhood. The public has already been made acquainted with the conditions of fur-pulling, and has come to the conclusion, without many dissentient voices, that it was the kind of work which could not advisably be conducted in tiny bed-sitting-rooms, but ought to be carried on in factories properly ventilated and arranged for the purpose. The public does not often make up its mind; when it does, it gets its way. Consequently fur-pulling has practically made its exit from the courts and alleys of Southwark, and I need not therefore consider it on this occasion.

Let us examine, then, some of the prevalent and more wholesome forms of fireside bread-winning on the Surrey side, noting privately, if we like, their advantages and demerits. There is, to begin with, the staining of broom-handles, an industry nearly allied to brush-drawing. Let us visit a broom-handle stainer, a very pleasant, hard-working woman. For thirty years she has lived in one of the districts stained black on the map of Mr. Charles Booth as inhabited by a semi-criminal class. During that time she has scarcely ever stirred beyond her door, and perhaps, under the circumstances, it is not surprising. On Bank holidays a pandemonium reigns outside, and decent people are glad to close their doors and their ears to the shrieking demoralised population in the streets. She has also to make the most of any off-days, as there are arrears of clothes-mending and ordinary domestic work which cannot be attended to at other times. This woman's husband is a plumber and decorator, who, like so many men of his avocation, has bad health. She has six children, but these, she says, do not take part in the work. For the four-roomed tidy little house the family pay seven shillings a week.

As we enter this little dwelling we find the passage-way lined with freshly stained red broom-handles that are leaning against the walls to dry. Indoors we find the brush-stainer busily at work in the back room. Each brush or broom, she explains, undergoes several processes before it is properly stained. First of all some dry paint in powder is dabbed on with a wad, then it is varnished and sand-

papered—sand-papering hurts the hands—afterwards it is oiled and polished. She is provided with her materials, and her payment is a halfpenny for each brush. The work is supplied to her by a dealer in the immediate neighbourhood; there are consequently no expenses of carriage. She estimates that her earnings are about two shillings a day, and she does not earn then lightly, for she is up at five every morning. She appreciates the regularity of the trade, and only observes a falling-off in the height of summer when London housewives go from home and buy no more brushes and brooms.

In an adjacent street we shall find brush-drawing is the occupation followed by many women. One of these is not at all in flourishing circumstances. To conduct the business successfully it is requisite to have a machine that cuts the bast into the different lengths which we observe upon a scrubbing-brush. Such a machine she possessed at one time, but her health, never good, grew worse, and she had to go into a hospital. The impoverishment that illness brings obliged her to part with her useful machine. For wiring the bast—that is to say, fastening each tuft of bast with wire into a perforated hole in the brush—she receives eightpence per dozen brushes. She can only do about a dozen and a half a day, and therefore can hope to earn only six shillings a week. Hers then is an unfavourable case.

We come next to those industries favoured by almost all unskilled and unenterprising women, box-making and paper bag-making.

Not that box-making does not demand industry. Far from it: box-makers work with incessant activity; but their occupation, once learnt, makes no call upon the mind, and the thoughts can wander freely to the worker's private affairs what time her fingers are busily pasting bandboxes. We realise faintly what the public consumption of bandboxes must be when we see the multitude of such perishable receptacles that are being put together in the home workshops of London. In a small tenement-house, let out in single rooms to different sets of people, I found the front room turned by day into a small box factory, though at night it doubtless became a bedroom. In this room two women and a little girl were working. The child was engaged in heating paste at the fire. The one woman was occupied in stitching paper to the sides of the boxes in order to form a binding for the four walls. Her colleague, an elderly woman, was exceedingly busy pasting smooth paper over cardboard in order to make the boxes white or coloured, as the case might be. They told me that these boxes were paid for at the rate of twopence, threepence, or fourpence per dozen, according to size, and that, by working together, they could usually make about nine dozen a day. I discovered that everybody in this house was doing something different. One of the tenants, indeed, combined two avocations. She was a charwoman in a general way, but she was also considered to have a pretty taste in the making of funeral wreaths, and had given a sombre pleasure to her neighbours on several occasions by transforming natural flowers into wreaths and crosses. Her fees for practising this art were doubtless on a most modest scale.

The making of the "short clay," or the long either, does not at once suggest itself as a woman's employment; nevertheless, in South London I lighted upon a woman engaged in pipe-making. She had male colleagues—her husband and his assistant—who did the actual shaping of the pipes. Taking up a piece of soft clay, and rolling it lightly by hand upon a board, they evoked a pipe in a moment, though of a rather vague outline. Dipping a wire into oil they ran this wire through the whole length of the pipe. Then placing the

thicker end of the pipe in a mould (the manufacture of which is one maker's speciality), they squeezed the bowl in it so as to give it the shape fashionable at the moment. The meeting of the two sides of the mould leaves a seam upon the otherwise smooth surface of the pipe. First, however, the pipe must be left to dry, and it is then handed to the woman, whose business it is to scrape off the seam and any little roughness upon the stem. The pipes, when trimmed, are baked for some five hours in an oven on the premises, and are afterwards sold direct to publicans and tobacconists. Particulars of earnings I did not elicit; but evidently these pipe-makers were well off. They amused me somewhat by remarking that some pipe-makers lived to be ninety.

I will describe one other home bread-winner and, for this occasion, I have done. Distinctly this was not a prosperous woman, although I could not say she was an unhappy one. She had recently lost her husband, and was by trade a basket-maker. In a very miserable attic, for which she paid three shillings a week, or the rent of a nice cottage in the country, I found her. A dirty-looking bed occupied the main part of the room, and in front of it on the otherwise bare boards was a small strip of carpet. By the fire stood various pots of liquid dye: crimson, violet, and yellow. Into these she dipped the strips of wood so as to introduce colour into the more decorative portions of her basket-work. These strips of wood (such as are used for bonnet boxes) she could buy in sixpenny or shilling's worths. When she could afford to purchase a shilling's worth at a time she found the advantage in the quality of the wood. With the aid of a small wooden instrument furnished with metal teeth, she quickly tore her wood into narrow withs, and found that out of sixpenny-worth of wood she could weave six dozen baskets. I must explain that the baskets she made were scarcely of a utilitarian character, but were that species of small, egg-shaped baskets which may be seen in toy-shops in company with children's buckets and spades.

While I watched her she quickly made a basket. Taking some of the wider strips of wood she bent these upwards upon her knee so as to form the framework of the basket. Through these ribs she began to plait the slighter strips, introducing now and again a strip of magenta or purple to give gaiety to the effect. Turning in the ends of the ribs when she reached the top of the basket, she wound over the edge a wide piece of wooden lath which she had made bright yellow by plunging it into her jar of turmeric.

How did she sell these baskets? I inquired. Easily enough, it appeared. Every morning she set out with a bundle of them in her hand, and visited one of the markets of South London to which women resort. Some of the baskets she would sell to the marketers, but still more to the small folks by whom they were generally accompanied. For children's baskets she charged a halfpenny each, and for the larger ones a penny. Taking one day with another, she would reckon to sell three dozen a day. Thursday was a bad day, for wages would then be exhausted, and on that day she often had to bring some home. Returning at midday, she would work in the afternoon and evening and all day on Friday in order to have a large stock-in-trade for Saturday. It was useless, of course, to try to sell baskets on a wet day.

On the whole it was evident that my friend the basket-maker, though poor, scarcely perceived her state of destitution, for the pleasing excitement of commerce kept her mind occupied and exhilarated her spirit with the hope, however often disappointed, that some day her empty baskets would fill her purse.

(To be continued.)



## BREAD-WINNING AT HOME.

By MARGARET BATESON.

## PART IV.

## SOME EAST-LONDON CLOTHING TRADES.



THE making of clothes seems, at first thought, to be a very proper business for girls and women to carry on at home. Girls who are thrifty make some of their own clothes at home, and are wise in so doing. Mothers sometimes even make their little boys' suits; but they are possibly less well advised, for it is understood that

among boys the statement "as nice as mother makes it" does not apply to jackets and knickerbockers. However, the point is that there is a vital difference between making articles for ourselves and for other people. We look indulgently upon our own handiwork because it spares us the necessity of spending; but other people—those incomprehensible and critical folk whom we call the public—look narrowly at what we offer them, and doubt whether it is worth the price we note. The public detests work that looks amateurish. It insists that work for which it is to pay a price, even a very small price, shall look right and business-like. This applies most of all to tailoring. Dressmakers' productions may be suffered, though reluctantly, to be somewhat vague of outline and not always exact in all parts; but in tailoring a coat with a puckered collar, or a waistcoat with buttons and button-holes in disaccord, is not to be excused.

That is why women who go into the tailoring business without learning it properly, and wish to work at home, find themselves restricted to some one humble department, but obliged, even in this, to be workmanlike and exact. My readers may say to themselves, "How much better it is to do one thing properly than many things indifferently!" And so, in general, it is. But in all generalisation there comes a point beyond which our rule will not hold. Such a point we may find when we look at the small occupations of which I am about to speak. Let us ask ourselves whether that person would be more useful to us who can sew on buttons well, than the other who can make a whole gown in a middling style? Certainly not. Moreover, my readers, I am sure, all know enough about trade to be convinced that the imperfect all-round dressmaker would succeed better in the world—other conditions equal—than the button-sewer who can do nothing else. If they will bear this fact in mind, they will understand partly why it is so difficult to do anything to help those who have become home-workers in the tailoring trade. After a few years spent in one narrow, monotonous employment the worker loses spirit, and convinces herself that she could not perform any larger task if she tried.

With the exception of the small but deplorably crowded district of Soho, the London clothing trade is carried on chiefly in that vast and spreading city which is called the East End. But the East End too has its quarters and divisions, each with its own characteristics. To mark the centre of the trade we ought to put our finger on Whitechapel, but we may

find ramifications extending to Mile End, Poplar, and Stepney.

Girls, I ought to say, are not often engaged as home-workers. Unless they are kept at home to help a father and mother in the trade, they go into the workshops, where they earn, according to their skill, from nine to fourteen shillings a week. The disposition which shows itself among some young ladies to prefer any class of work, however miserable, which can be done at home, is now displayed by the young East-Enders, who like the cheerfulness of factory or workshop, the settled hours and rates of payment. The home-workers in this trade are, for the most part, women who, in early life, have been tailoresses or shirt-makers, have married and retired, and then later desire to earn money, but have not the energy or even, probably, the quickness to enable them to become regular workshop hands.

But I can perhaps most easily make the circumstances of these home-workers clear by describing a few of the women I have visited. Now I am not going to harrow my readers' feelings. Too much, I think, has been attempted in this way by some previous writers on the subject, who have described home-workers as though they were manacled and held in bondage by human tyrants. These people are often in a sad enough plight to our thinking, but they do not regard their own state as we do; if they did, they would throw off a yoke which has not been imposed upon them by any one wicked individual in particular. Anyone who is acquainted with these workers will bear me out in saying that the last idea that enters their minds is to make any change in their plan of life. Let me instance a woman cleverer than her neighbours, whom I will call Mrs. Baker. She lives in Ratcliff, in a squalid street, which she says would be all right if it were not for the people. Mr. Baker has been an invalid for ten years past, and he only finds himself equal to pottering about the streets, talking to his neighbours. So poor Mrs. Baker has to do everything. Her occupation is trouser-finishing. "Finishing" always sounds as though it were superior work, but it is not. It means in this instance sewing on buttons, making button-holes and putting in lining. As finisher she receives the customary rate of payment for cheap goods of fivepence per pair. And she can do three pairs a day. Her means, as you see, are 7s. 6d. a week when she is in regular work. But alas! our calculation falls to the ground, for at the time of my visit Mrs. Baker has no work at all. She is a sufferer by the Transvaal War. All her work, which is given out to her from a warehouse, is despatched ultimately to an outfitter in Johannesburg, whose name is stamped already upon each pair of trousers. The warehouse is already filled with garments which cannot be sent, so poor Mrs. Baker is brought to a standstill. Yet there is other work she could do, one would think. She happens to be a beautiful braider, and she shows me a dress which she has braided by hand without having so much as traced the pattern. Why, when in the West End braiding is so fashionable upon ladies' tailor-made gowns and coats, cannot Mrs. Baker seek work in this direction? But no; Mrs. Baker, like almost all home-workers, is handicapped—or thinks that she is. She explains that she gets the two rooms cheap—4s. a week—in which she and her husband live, in consideration that she looks after the rest of the house. How can she go away and leave

it to the sole care of her husband who is so ailing, and may be "taken bad" any minute? Then, it must be admitted, the want of facilities for cheap and quick transit from Ratcliff to West London does make intercourse between the two ends of the Metropolis most difficult; the railway from this part of the world is no help to a person wishing to go to Oxford Circus, and the crowded tramcars often take more than an hour in getting merely to Bloomsbury. In this matter of locomotion East End workers have a serious grievance. "But why live in the East End?" I inquire of this particular woman. "We was both born here, my husband and me," is the reply, "and we don't seem to care to move." I ask her, by way of offering some work, whether she would make and braid a baby's bib for me. But no. First she explained that she had no "capital" to buy the materials. That, I said, could be supplied. And, secondly, she had never made one, and it would be too much out of her line of work. And thus, as usual, it was decided that what had not been done could not be done.

I next visited a somewhat helpless old woman, who lived with her son and daughter-in-law in a six-roomed dilapidated house, for which the rent was 12s. a week. She, too, had no work, but did not appear greatly concerned. Her earnings as a trouser-finisher were manifestly supplementary only. Then I came into the dwelling of a much more energetic woman, who was engaged upon very heavy corduroy and "moleskin" trousers. The latter are made of a kind of thick felt of dark colour or black. I find it hard to determine which would be more disagreeable to manipulate, the "cords," with their unpleasant smell, or the moleskins, which in foggy weather or at night must be most trying to the eyes. But my friend was of a philosophic temperament, and remarked that she never lacked for work and must take the rough with the smooth. She, too, received fivepence a pair.

Some women give out work, but it is difficult to tell—and they themselves do not seem to know—whether they are better off than those who do the finishing and are paid merely for their own work. One of these givers-out, whom I found in a house at Stepney, consisting only of two rooms, was responsible for the entire making of the trousers, and was paid tenpence per pair. She gave out the garments to women to machine, and though she did not tell me what she paid, I should imagine that 3d. per pair would be near the mark. She then, helped by another woman, did the finishing and pressing. Allowing for the payment that she must make to her assistant, I cannot imagine that she profited much by this scheme of work. At the moment of my visit a large number of trousers had just been returned from the shop because the pressing had not been perfectly executed, and some small marks of gloss were discernible. For the balance of her tenpence she had therefore to repeat the damping and ironing processes. But both she and her colleague were perfectly cheerful, not to say gay.

Waistcoat-making is less complicated, and can therefore be entrusted to one person to make and finish. The prices for tweed waistcoats range, according to quality and the amount of needlework required, from 8d. to 10d. each. An elderly woman told me she could now only make eight a week, but had done better in her younger days. Coat-making demands more skill, naturally, than the fashioning of the other articles of male



aire, and is undertaken generally by men, with or without the assistance of their women-folk.

In ladies' dress the blouse has become a prominent feature, and it is one that lends itself to home industry. And a very ill-paid one it is, where the cheap ready-made shop-blouse is concerned. A blouse may be an exquisite bodice costing from one guinea to five times that amount. Girls who like to work at home and are clever dressmakers earn from eleven to eighteen shillings a week in West End blouse-making of this class. But the majority of blouse-makers concern themselves only with the cheap variety, and earn but little. Recently I visited a maker of blouses who was concocting with much taste and skill blouses of white muslin, trimmed with embroidery. These would probably sell in the shops for but a few shillings, yet the labour involved was not insignificant, for there was much tucking and trimming. The blouse-maker was a young married woman, and, having a small child to look after, could not perhaps easily go out as a dressmaker. Yet her occupation was fully as laborious. During the months before Christmas, she was obliged by her employer to make none but pattern blouses, that is to say, bodices of her own designing, no two being alike. She told me that she found this business of designing was most trying, and that she often lost her rest at night trying to think of some new style. The payment she received, though slightly in advance of the ordinary rate (2s. 6d. a dozen), did not pay her for the increase of time and thought involved. She could make from three to six blouses a day. Such earnings, however, could only be supplementary to good wages received by her husband, for the home of the family was situated in one of the excellent blocks of dwellings lately erected by the London County Council, where the rents are 5s. 6d. for two or 7s. 6d. for three bright and comfortable rooms. But the blouse-making is evidently not thought to be an easy way of earning a livelihood, for I found a younger girl (probably the needlewoman's sister) who had quite made up her mind to become an office clerk so soon as her studies of shorthand and

typewriting should be completed at an adjacent evening-school. She will probably get no more than ten shillings a week to begin with if she goes into one of the offices at the Docks; but she will think herself, and indeed be, better off than my friend the blouse-maker.

Corset-making is another industry that still lingers in the homes, although the machine-made corsets that are produced in factories in vast numbers are ousting all hand-made goods except the very best. For the best West End customers willingly pay from a guinea and a half to three or four guineas. I have heard it said that the purchaser who knows where to go in the Commercial Road district can buy for half the money precisely the same kind of corsets and made by the same workers as those that are sold in Regent Street. Be that as it may, most of the hand-made East End corsets are neither of one kind nor another. They are less cheap than the ready-made class of goods, and they are not fine enough in cut and workmanship to fetch a higher price on their merits.

Recently I was passing along a street every house of which proclaimed by its air of gentility that its inhabitants deprecated all connection with trade. I was even told that the landlord forbade all indications beyond brass door-plates that business was carried on within. Yet lurking directly behind a pair of Nottingham lace curtains I saw within a glass case a pair of scarlet stays. They scarcely suggested the human form, so very abrupt were the curves which suggested the waist, yet undoubtedly they were stays. The exhibit proved to belong to three maiden ladies who had inherited it from their father, himself a staymaker. That it was not as decorative a window-ornament as a vase of wax flowers they were not to be persuaded; yet, in deference to prejudice, they removed it, I believe, whenever the rent-collector was known to be in the neighbourhood. Upon the table of the sitting-room lay a great heap of jean which they were busy cutting out. Each of the three sisters, it was explained, had her special task. Nancy would cut out the material, Jenny hold it, and Sarah do the sewing, and the insertion of the metal

eyelet-holes by means of a press. The help of man, however, has to be invoked to iron the finished corsets. They worked for an East End firm, but their earnings appeared to be exceedingly small, and the possibility of having some day to enter the "great house" seemed to be ever present to their minds. And yet to take any steps by which their work could be made more acceptable to the taste of the day appeared to be out of the question. Corset-making of this class, however, is exceptional nowadays, and home workers are far more frequently employed in "fanning" the bones than in making a corset from start to finish. Fanners working at home probably earn on the average about a shilling a day.

Shirt-making, umbrella-making, and tie-making are other departments of the clothing trade by means of which women and girls earn their bread, however scantily, at home. The curious fact, however, remains that these home bread-winners are satisfied with their lot. They do not, of course, wish it to become any worse, and they grumble if prices are lowered, but neither do they, on the whole, want to be well off. Educated people living in the East End have given me instances to the latter effect. I remember hearing of a woman who as a girl had "seen better days," but she made a runaway marriage and was lost to sight. Her father at his death bequeathed a small fortune to her, but as she could nowhere be found, the property fell into Chancery. These facts came later to the knowledge of the woman, who was earning a miserable subsistence in East London, and she mentioned the story eventually to a lady. The lady naturally inquired whether she had applied to Chancery for the money. "No," was the reply, "but my brother has been thinking of doing so."

"How long has he been thinking of it?"

"Oh, going on for thirty years."

Another old man had £1,000 left to him which similarly failed to reach him.

"But, bless me!" he exclaimed, "what should I do with a thousand pounds? The Chancery gentleman puts it, I am sure, to a good purpose."

(To be continued.)

## LADY DYE'S REPARATION.

By SARAH DOUDNEY.

### CHAPTER V.



EVERYTHING is happy today," said Lucie, seated on a stile in Berry Lane.

"Everything," Angelique answered.

"Listen to our brothers the birds, as St. Francis of Assisi called them. There's a mellow whistle for you! It came from that rose-bush."

She stood lightly leaning her arm upon the top rail; the sunshine revealing the graceful lines of her young figure and the sweet face from which the sailor hat was pushed carelessly back. Someone who was coming

along the lane felt his pulses throbbing joyfully at the sound of her voice. He was so glad to have found the thing that his heart had sought. And yet, until he had seen her he had not known that he had been seeking anything. This was his fourth visit to Narrowfield, and the deep-blue eyes gave him a half-shy welcome.

"What do you think of Amy Severne's garden?" she asked, smiling as he came up. "Lucie and I go to look at it every day. It will be quite beautiful next spring."

To tell the truth he had forgotten even to glance at the grave. This living girl, so fresh and sweet, had banished all recollection of the dead.

"Yes, next spring," said he vaguely. "And so you have been listening to our brothers the birds. They are very merry just now."

"Lucie had taken her lesson-books into the porch," she said. "But our

sisters the swallows twittered so fast over her head that she came out here to escape them. We wanted the good saint to come and tell them that they chattered enough."

Conversation never flagged where Angelique was. Her mind was full of quaint legendary lore gathered from many storehouses. She had read widely, liking old books quite as well as new, and retaining with curious tenacity much that was worth remembering. Many girls of seventeen were more accomplished, few were half so amusing as she was. Her talk rippled on, never monotonously, but like a little stream running among the reeds and over the stones. Like the stream, too, she could linger in the shade where the water deepens and the silence is sweet.

"So Lucie is excused from lessons," Thurstan said. "Quite right on such a day as this. I didn't think the country



of them, coloured, striped, or spotted narrow ribbons, but a newer idea is to have a

leather strap round the crown, the buckle being leather-covered also.

The prophesied disappearance of the silk-lined gown has failed to come off, and silk, both as petticoats and dress lining, is more used than ever. In fact, silk petticoats may be, and are, worn by everyone, the favourite colour, like last year, being pink of the brightest hue. One of the new styles is to have a white muslin flounce with lace insertions buttoned over a coloured silk flounce. In fact we may regard the petticoat of to-day as one of the most important parts of dress, for we may wear the plainest of tailor-mades, but our petticoat must be pretty. Nor is this so very expensive a thing, if we can make for ourselves; for silk has become so remarkably cheap that we can do wonders on a small allowance.

Steadily, but rather slowly, the trimmed skirt is making its way onwards, and in France particularly, the volume of them is immensely increased, and even the old gathered ones have been reproduced. But here we shall not wish to give up our well-fitting skirts, and increase our bulk in this way, and shall probably be slower in adopting them. So our dressmakers are making them wider at the foot and, alas, are increasing the length. There is a strong effort to revive the double skirt or tunic, but I do not believe, when it is

once discovered how this increases the apparent age of the wearer, that it will become popular.

The constant appearance of the Bolero in all our dress this year is remarkable. We cannot go wrong in having some kind of simulated one, and it seems universally becoming. Jackets of all kinds of *velour du Nord*, velvet, velveteen and satin, are to be seen, and they are really useful articles of spring attire. But there are many young people who never use them, nor think of providing more than a light cape to use as a wrap; but for older people they seem to be a needful finish to the costume. It is naturally a great saving when they are not required.

The Bolero is much worn with the Princess dress, and in this case it is very short indeed, and cut up the back nearly to the neck, the corners being rounded. The high Swiss or corselet belts are quite a feature of the season's dress, and are generally made of the material of the rest of the costume, and they may also be trimmed with lace in the same manner as it is. They are very pretty for slight figures, but do not enhance the beauty of stout people; so they like the Bolero, which is most charming when worn by girls. In fact, fashion seems to take no care for those who have allowed themselves to become fat. It always seems to me that, with plenty of exercise, and some care about eating, no one need become unwieldy.

The shoes worn this year are either with one or two straps across the front, or else they are of the Cromwell order, with flaps and buckles, and the open-worked stocking is as much worn as ever. Nothing is more remarkable than the change that has come over the world of women in their wearing of boots and shoes. Those worn to-day are of so much thinner and slighter a kind than was formerly the case, and the strapped shoe has found friends in every class of life. I hear it said that they are so much lighter, and more comfortable for these tiring London pavements. Very high heels, at least for the streets, are no longer in fashion; and when worn they are only seen in the house. Bronze shoes were prophesied as a coming style, but I do not see many worn.



SPRING BLOUSE.

Blouse of dark blue glacé silk, chemisette of white chiffon over white silk, collar, cuffs and band of green velvet edged with narrow braid and lines of velvet.

## BREAD-WINNING AT HOME.

By MARGARET BATESON.

### PART V.

#### EMBROIDERY, KNITTING AND CROCHET.

THERE is a paying method of conducting all industries, even those connected with fancy work. Of course I do not mean to affirm that all industries have only to be carried on in the right way to pay very well; for there are employments that by their nature can never be extremely profitable. But what I would make clear is that even the least profitable kinds of work are always capable of being made to yield relatively good remuneration if they are executed in the proper manner. Unfortunately many women display what I can only characterise as a perverse preference for doing work in the way that will make earning money by it most difficult. They will do work in their own fashion and at their own convenience, they will do it irregularly, they will do it at a distance from the proper markets, and, if possible, they will do it at home. Other persons, more sharp than honest, trade upon these peculiarities, and too often reap ill-gotten gains by promising to sell home-work, done under the most unlikely conditions, if the workers will pay money in advance. And so set are some women upon working in the manner they prefer, that the exchange of scanty money for abundant promises goes

briskly forward. Girls, being more independent of home ties, are less frequently victimised after this fashion than older women, yet even with them the disposition to make a little money without much trouble frequently gets the better of prudence. In the classes of work which I have taken as the subject of the present article, the competition among girls and women in unusually severe. Every girl can do a little knitting, a little crochet, a little fancy or "art" work; but the individual girl forgets how many others are as gifted as herself in this respect, and boldly enters the department of industry where I should say there is more competition than anywhere else.

And yet the home-worker even in fancy work could succeed under the right conditions. I am bound to admit these conditions are not always within what politicians would term her "sphere of influence." For the first of these and the least attainable is to live in a town where there are shops that deal in knitting and embroidery. An alternative is to live in a tolerably well-peopled rural district, where some influential people would help the workers to form a rural industry. Such centres have happily been established of late in many parts of the kingdom, and I hope that a large future of successful effort is still before them. But even in a neighbourhood where there are no

artistic and public-spirited ladies and gentlemen to establish some special industry for the locality, much might yet be done by an energetic and business-like girl. Such a girl must place herself in communication with the trade in some department of handiwork, learn what class of products are most saleable, and then try, not only to supply these herself, but make herself responsible for collecting similar articles from her neighbours. It is all very well to decry the middle-man system, which has, no doubt, led to some abuses; but a system of the kind is indispensable whenever commodities of home manufacture are dealt with in the large quantities necessary in modern commerce. No wholesale dealer living, for instance, in London or Manchester could possibly do business with thousands of individuals living miles away from either of these centres; he must make some one person in a district responsible for purveying to him the work of that district; and it is fair enough that the responsible collector should receive some extra payment for the labour entailed. It is because these collectors or middle-women are so scarce in country districts that rural industries remain non-existent in many neighbourhoods where they are badly wanted.

But I am forgetting that on this occasion I am wanting to tell my readers in the first



place what is being done, leaving them to deduce for themselves the lesson of what ought to be done. Let me remind them, then, to begin with, that in embroidery and knitting (I except crochet) the home-worker has to compete to her own disadvantage with the factory employee. The manufacturer or the head of a retail embroidery firm will always prefer to have girls working for him on his own premises, even though he should pay them more, than employ needlewomen living out of reach of personal communication. He knows, too, that girls working in a well-organised work-room will get through a much larger quantity of work, and execute it in better style than can those young women who are stitching in their own homes, possibly among untidy surroundings, and in any case amid the many interruptions of family life. Consequently he employs the home-worker unwillingly and only does so at all because he can effect some saving, either by economising factory or workshop space, or by actually paying her at a lower rate than his indoor employees. But embroidery, whether carried on in the work-room or at home, is apt to be an ill-paid occupation. To indoor hands many dealers in ecclesiastical needlework do not give more than an average weekly wage of fifteen shillings, though wholesale purveyors of fancy goods to the Berlin-wool shops have told me that their scale of payment is higher, and that quick embroideresses in their employ can easily earn one pound a week. In first-class depôts, also, to which work-rooms are attached, I should say that the higher wage was not infrequent, but in these cases the girls are better educated and have a more cultivated taste than those I have just spoken of. Home-workers in fancy needlework are very little employed in the rural districts of England, except in such localities as Keswick and Haslemere, where, under the direction of artistic people, some beautiful work is done. But I could not counsel a single isolated worker living, say, in the remoter parts of the Eastern counties, Wales, or Cornwall, to attempt to make a living by home needlework, unless, indeed, she had the requisite commercial enterprise to organise a centre of industry herself. But in towns there is more scope for home-work. Not only the proprietors of needlework shops, but also dealers in trimmings and *passementerie* frequently employ outside hands, who, being paid by the piece, can earn from two to three shillings a day. But such earnings are precarious, and it would be an over-sanguine girl who would reckon up the year's takings on this scale. Very many girls, I fear, have experimented in another department of needlecraft with any but good results. I refer to drawn linen and fine white work for household purposes. Beautiful work of this kind have I seen done by ladies who lived in out-of-the-way parts of the world, for which they found it next to impossible to obtain a sale. For in this branch the Englishwoman has the Irishwoman as her rival; and the poor Irish workers are not only fain to be content too often with a miserable wage, but into the bargain their labour seems to be carefully organised and utilised by the trade on both sides of the water. This class of needlework, together with the embroidering of initials, has latterly tended to become an Irish speciality, and I doubt whether English embroideresses can out-rival the Irish in the elegance and grace of their stitchery. Although I have not much that is encouraging to say concerning the business of embroidery as it is practised in this country, yet I hope that a time is coming when we shall cease to be content to learn that the exquisite decorative needlework which appears on so many Parisian creations of dress and millinery could by no possibility have been executed in Great

Britain, and when we shall ask ourselves whether, if highly-educated girls were not taught to do such work instead of painting hundreds of indifferent pictures, they might not achieve a tolerable measure of success.

The class of hand-work most practised by girls and women is undoubtedly knitting. There is hardly a woman in the United Kingdom who cannot knit. She may work very slowly and clumsily, still, she can knit; and the idea always lurks in her mind that if the worst comes to the worst, and she has to do something to earn her bread, knitting will serve as her stand-by. She has not the least idea that everyone knits—women know so little of the world outside their own small circle; and so when "reverses" come she almost invariably thinks that someone will pay her handsomely to knit socks or babies' boots. A friend of mine who once advertised for a lady to knit a pair of infant's shoes, was appalled by the number of answers she received; and the terms asked by the workers varied from sixpence up to two shillings a pair. But only one out of about a hundred applicants had the commercial common-sense to enclose a sample shoe to show what her work was like. I may add that knitters who seemed to be in the habit of undertaking this kind of order asked 1s. 3d. and 1s. 6d. a pair.

In stocking and general knitting, machinery has ousted hand-work, so far as the main bulk of the trade is concerned. Most of the knitted goods sold by the drapers are knitted in the factories of Leicester and Nottingham or by women who have a machine for use in their own home. But outside these centres knitting-machines are also used by home-workers to some extent, though to how large an extent I have never been able to discover. Home-workers, I have been told, can sometimes earn a trifle in odd hours by knitting by machinery strips to be exhibited in Berlin-wool shops as specimens of the effect of certain fancy wools when made up. Here, again, it is only the town-dweller who can obtain employment in such a manner. It is through personal interviews and acquaintance that these little commissions are procured. But the machine-knitter, unless she can supply some wholesale house, is apt to fall between two stools: she does not obtain private orders, as customers may just as well purchase machine-knitted goods at shops, and, unless she lives in London or in one of the centres of the machine-knitting industry, she has no opportunities of supplying her work to the trade.

Hand-knitting is neither quite dead nor is it in the enjoyment of much vitality. There remains a small demand for articles well knitted in the old way, and this demand has latterly not perceptibly increased or diminished. For gentlemen's stockings it may slightly have increased, owing to the development in late years of the taste for cycling and mountaineering. For these purposes nothing looks or wears so well as hand-knitted stockings. Here, as in the department of embroidery about which I have already spoken, something could be done by influential ladies to foster the industry in their own localities. In the neighbourhood of Warwick such an effort has already been made, and, I trust, with an adequate measure of success. The Warwick knitters receive 3s. 6d. per pair for fine stockings with handsome tops, and all materials are found. For plainer ones 3s. is paid, and for coarse stockings the price given is 2s. 6d. Terms such as these are, of course, very good; but it must be remembered that the amount of work which can be produced is not great. Average good knitters, I am told, knit three pairs in a fortnight. It will be seen from these particulars that even the best workers can only earn about 5s. a week in this way, consequently I need not say more to convince my readers that hand-knitting under the most

favourable circumstances is only a pocket-money or supplementary employment. As a counterpart of the Warwick industry may be mentioned the knitting of jerseys which is carried on in a Norfolk village, thanks to the energy of a lady who has organised the business. The goods are ultimately sold through a West-End dealer in knitted articles.

Some years ago the knitting of Ringwood gloves was a lucrative occupation for women living in the New Forest district; but its prosperity has declined with the introduction of machines. Still, there are many ladies and gentlemen who prefer hand-knitted gloves for riding and cycling; and I observe that most of the first-rate outfitters advertise such gloves as though they were specially likely to attract customers. I have found the industry still carried on in Hampshire, and can say from personal experience that the gloves both fit and wear extremely well. But Hampshire is a district in which many rich people live who gladly foster any handicraft that is likely to benefit their poorer neighbours; and I do not think the partial success of the knitters in this locality must encourage us to think that women could sell their work to equal advantage elsewhere. A knitter whom I visited told me that the ladies of the neighbourhood paid her from 1s. 6d. to 2s. a pair for gloves, this price naturally including the cost of the wool. Good knitters can make five or six pairs a week, allowing for time being occupied by domestic duties. When the materials are provided, as is generally the case in work done for the trade, prices appear to vary greatly. One knitter mentions 4d. or 5d. a pair as being usual; another says, "Not less than 6d. a pair," while one of the largest manufacturers of knitted goods in England has mentioned 8d. or 9d. as being customary. Where knitting is sold to the wholesale houses in this way, it is absolutely necessary to find someone to act as collector or middleman, as firms would not do business with an isolated worker here and there.

Crochet, which in the past some of us have been prone to despise, would now seem to pay almost better than knitting. No machine, so far as I am aware, has yet been invented to do crochet. Consequently crochet, although we no longer take delight in it when it assumes the form of antimacassars, is still thought to have merit for such purposes as babies' jackets and small petticoats. Many beautiful little garments for diminutive wearers are made in crochet that would assuredly not be so soft and dainty if manufactured by machinery. For crocheted babies' shoes 6d. is customarily charged—little enough!—while for a charming garment, petticoat and bodice in one, the price to a private customer was 2s. 3d., inclusive of material. The manageress of a firm, which in its turn supplies the wholesale houses with knitted and crocheted goods, told me that a quick crocheter could earn from 9s. to 15s. a week. She informed me further that 9s. a dozen was paid for crocheted white woollen babies' jackets, the materials and pattern being provided by the firm. Only the best workers were employed, and these were all Londoners.

To sum up, in conclusion, the result of these details, embroidery may, under favourable conditions, be accounted a bread-winning employment. That is to say, a girl who is well taught and has some taste and originality may earn an adequate living thereby, while a girl who possesses merely mechanical skill gains a mere pittance by much labour. But knitting and crochet are only supplementary occupations, and a girl who is obliged both to live at home and to earn her full maintenance should not dream—as, alas! she frequently does—that she can accomplish this laudable purpose with the sole aid of four steel pins or a crochet-hook.