

Some Leading Articles from The Dawn

Lawson, Louisa (Dora Falconer)(1848-1920)

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Some Leading Articles From The Dawn

Sydney

The Dawn

1889-1890

Selected Lead Articles from The Dawn

About Ourselves

The Dawn

Volume 1, Number 1.

Sydney, May 15, 1888

“WOMAN is not uncompleted man, but diverse,” says Tennyson, and being diverse why should she not have her journal in which her divergent hopes, aims and opinions may have representation. Every eccentricity of belief, and every variety of bias in mankind allies itself with a printing-machine, and gets its singularities bruited about in type, but where is the printing ink champion of mankind's better half? There has hitherto been no trumpet through which the concentrated voices of womankind could publish their grievances and their opinions. Men legislate on divorce, on hours of labor, and many another question intimately affecting women, but neither ask nor know the wishes of those whose lives and happiness are most concerned. Many a tale might be told by women, and many a useful hint given, even to the omniscient male, which would materially strengthen and guide the hands of law-makers and benefactors aspiring to be just and generous to weak and unrepresented womankind. Here then is DAWN, the Australian Woman's journal and mouthpiece — a phonograph to wind out audibly the whispers, pleadings and demands of the sisterhood. Here we will give publicity to women's wrongs, will fight their battles, assist to repair what evils we can, and give advice to the best of our ability. Half of Australian women's lives are unhappy, but there are paths out of most labyrinths, and we will set up fingerposts. For those who are happy — God bless them! Have we not laid on the Storyteller, the Poet, the Humorist and the Fashionmonger? We wear no ready-made suit of opinions, nor stand we on any ready-made platform of women's rights which we have as yet seen erected. Dress we shall not neglect, for no slattern ever yet won the respect of any man worth loving. If you want “rings on your fingers and bells on your toes” we will tell you where they can best be bought, as well as sundry other articles of women's garniture. We shall welcome contributions and correspondence from women, for nothing concerning woman's life and interest lies outside our scope. It is not a new thing to say that there is no power in the world like that of women, for in their hands lie the plastic unformed characters of the coming generation to be moulded beyond alteration into what form they will. This most potent constituency we seek to represent, and for their suffrages we Sue.

Unhappy Love Matches

The Dawn

Volume 2, Number 2.

Sydney, June 1, 1889

MARRYING FOR WEALTH, position, or any consideration other than love is universally considered to be the Alpha and Omega of half the world's matrimonial infelicities, but it would be easy to find a corresponding number of so-called love matches, showing equally unhappy results. For who does not, among their acquaintances, count the unhappy couple, whose mating was the result of a love fit, — heartily tired of each other, yet chained together for life. The woman who cannot give a better reason for marrying than that she is in love, is likely to come to grief. It is not that she loves, but *why or what* she loves, that is the all important question. Realizing that when two hearts filled with love, tempered by respect, meet, melt and fuse into one, with congeniality of mind and purpose, it must be, to those participating, the realization of a perfect union in every sense of the word, still, lacking the above conditions love matches rank among the unhappiest and saddest marriages of all. Two things also necessary to happy union are perfect confidence and absolute truthfulness. The moment either of these is violated a wall is begun between the two hearts which, unchecked, will soon become so dense, so wide, so high, that even the grave itself would be less a separation. The advice given by H. Maria George, in *The Household*, is sound. She says —

Let every woman contemplating matrimony ask herself if she loves her prospective husband well enough to see the world with his eyes; enjoy its pleasures through his participation; see her ambitions wither one by one, or, perchance, carried on by her sons; to live a life full of petty duties, a round for which she has, perhaps, no aptitude, no congeniality, to lead a life of self-repression, self-sacrifice and buried individuality, to exchange her fresh youth and beauty for a mother's look of care; can she quiet every longing pulsation of the throbbing heart and lull her hungry soul to sleep by the thought that she is a wife and a mother?

It is but seldom that a man foregoes ambitions, or changes his life plans because he is a husband and a father. The circle of the wedding ring spreading and broadening for him closes in about his wife, bringing with it so many new duties and responsibilities that time and hands are so full, except in a rare combination of circumstances, as to leave her without either time or strength for the cultivation of talents or the pursuing of such a line of thought as will render her companionable to her husband. Whether

bread and babies are pursuits lower or higher than those that fall to the lot of the husband is a question not to be decided here. But every woman in average circumstances who cannot with the two, satisfy every longing of her soul will certainly find marriage a failure. She must therefore remember that marriage means in these days the acceptance by her of a position full of work, restricted by many grievous limitations, and implying an abandonment of individuality, and that even love has not always achieved final happiness for married couples. In marriage career is offered to women, a clear defined, but limited career. They should be sure that it is their right vocation before they allow love only to prompt them to the acceptance of it.

Spurious Women

The Dawn

Volume 2, Number 3.

Sydney, July 1, 1889

WE take it that anything which is diverted by artificial means from its natural shape and from the natural exercise of its functions is a spurious representative of its kind, and we could not therefore select any of the dainty women figures you may see "on the block" as a fair specimen of a woman of the human race, because they are really spurious women. Bound, padded, compressed and laced, the modern woman is a highly artificial product, made, not after God's image but as near as possible to a fashion plate; and if any inhabitant of another planet were curious to see what a real natural woman was like, we should have to take him to some of the few women not afraid to use dress for purposes of health and comfort only, and beg him to overlook those who, by corsets, high heels, and a score of other inventions, have succeeded in constructing in themselves, a new variety of woman. It is enough to make any reflecting creature stand aghast to think that the most beautiful creature in the world is not content to stand, like any other living being, on her inherent merits. As if they had no reason of their own, some women follow like a flock of sheep, the lead of a milliner-built beauty, and offer up their health and comfort to secure an artificial outline. It is true that these things are done with the ultimate hope of pleasing the men, for if there were no men, it is not to be supposed that women would squeeze themselves into artificial shapes for pure pleasure. Yet the men are not to be altogether charged with the crime of inciting to these shams by their admiration. Taking men in the lump, there is sense in them if you wake it, and surely if they don't like a natural woman let them leave her alone. It has come to be believed that corsets are really necessary to the due support and bracing together of a woman; is the race then grown so limp and invertebrate? Can we not then stand upright without collapsing at the waist? If anyone is unable to remain perpendicular without a steel waistcoat it is clear that the muscles responsible for her natural support have had no opportunity to develop. Corsets are just as unnecessary as they are injurious, at any rate to the woman of average stamina, and of average symmetry. To those who are invalided or deformed, another rule may apply, and we would not for the world, restrict the liberty of individual opinion. On the contrary, if any honest reasoning woman sincerely believes that it is better to reduce the

breathing capacity of her lungs, to crowd her internal organs into unnatural and often dangerous positions, and to crease her skin into folds by continual pressure, let her do so; the law of the survival of the fittest may perhaps weed out her and her offspring in time. Perhaps we shall be giving away secrets too much, if we talk of the indented garter-rings, about the knee, killing the flesh and cutting off the circulation, the injuries of high, stiff collars, high-heeled boots, and heavy skirts, a drag upon the hips; but it is well known enough, how many carry a heavy load of hair strained up and balanced at fashion's dictum on the top of weary heads, and it is often enough charged upon us that when dressed for walking we cannot raise our arms above our heads, nor stoop to pick up anything from the floor, nor throw a ball with any certainty that it will fall before us. The outdoor gait of a large proportion of women is certainly spoiled by lack of freedom, and the arms of the majority hang cylindrical and stiff like a bent stove-pipe. All these things make us sigh for a race of clear thinking women who are not afraid, whose own judgment is guidance enough and reason enough, and who will dress for health, decency, and comfort only. It would seem merely reasonable to wear garments which will leave our arms at least as much freedom as a doll's arm on a wire hinge, and to refrain from tying our ribs together, in a way which prevents respiration, and disturbs our anatomy, particularly as the only gain we achieve, is a counterfeit beauty of an unnatural model. We laugh at the Chinese women with their poor useless bandaged feet, and all the while we are tying up ourselves and laming much more important organs than feet, viz. lungs. For experiments prove that the average lung capacity, without corsets, is 167 cubic inches, but with the armour plating on, it is 134 inches only. Now, the first necessity of life is to breathe freely, for the blood collects poisons in its course, which can only be cleansed from the system by exposure to air in the lungs, and if anyone desires to feed her body on entirely pure and well-cleansed blood, it is essential that the action of the lungs should be untrammelled. When we remember that every minute, a quantity of blood equal to the entire amount in the body is passed through the lungs for purification, and that it is from the blood that every part of the system from head to foot, draws its material of life, and replenishment and renewal, it is apparent that the least aid we can give to the capacity of inhaling pure air, is an aid to the health of every organ and tissue in the body, brain included. It is generally admitted, that, on the average, women are much weaker and much more subject to small ailments than men are, in spite of the fact that the anatomy of each is so alike as to require an expert to distinguish between them, and it is reasonable to suppose that part of this weakness is due to habitual constriction of the lungs through many generations, and

habitual compression of the organs which lie below the diaphragm. Few people are aware that women who wear tight waist-bands breathe in a manner that is unnatural, and unlike all other human creatures. All natural men and women, whether civilised or savage, do, in the act of inspiration, expand both the upper and lower part of the chest, but the maximum expansion in all men, and in natural women, is abdominal. You inhale a full breath, the ribs rise slightly, the upper part of the chest dilates, the diaphragm contracts, and at the waist there should be, in healthy people, an expansion of from one to three inches, but there are few women whose habiliments allow an expansion of more than one-quarter or one half-an-inch. Thus the modern woman with a diminished lung-action, breathes mainly with the upper part of her chest, while all men, and all women who breathe freely, breathe almost entirely with the lower part. Even if this change were not injurious and we could afford to dispense with a full lung-action, the compression of the waist is necessarily hurtful, since it squeezes internal organs, and prevents the due contraction of the diaphragm, a contraction which materially assists the liver in the discharge of blood and bile. Tie a tight bandage round the waist of a man and the functions of the organs affected are impaired, he is unable to make more than two thirds of the mental and physical exertion of which he is capable. Is it not probable that women lose nearly the same proportion of their natural ability? But the idea of corsets on a man is ridiculed everywhere. Does it not strike you as possible, that the air of amused toleration with which men often regard women, is due to her pervading artificiality — this padding and strapping? If one man sees another using the smallest device to improve his features or figure, does he not instantly despise the intentional sham? And while men are expected to alter their standard of opinion for woman's benefit, and to concede to women the liberty to ingeniously alter and add to their natural figures, without the penalty of contempt — “because you know she is a woman” — how can we expect men to place women in their regard and respect on a real equality with any agreeable and wholly natural fellow-*man*? A writer in *Scribner's* magazine says regarding the physical development of women:

When we reflect that woman has constricted her body for centuries we believe that to this fashion alone is due much of her failure to realize her best opportunities for development, and, through natural heritage, to advance the mental and physical progress of the race.

Whether women may by acting on rules of sense instead of fashion or habit, really advance in the future the physical standard of their children, is a thing to be tested, but this thing is sure and indubitable, that but little

progress is possible until we have all learned to reject and expel with abhorrence every species of artifice and the whole brood of shams.

Tea And Bread-And-Butter

The Dawn

Volume 2, Number 4.

Sydney, August 3, 1889

THERE is story of a girl who kept herself alive for some time by sucking a clean pocket-handkerchief. We do not know how many grains of starch a handkerchief usually carries, nor can we say if, in this case, the laundress had mistaken it for a shirt front, and had so supplied a plentiful quantity of stiffening, but the story, true or false, furnishes a parallel very slightly extended of the method by which many women are nowadays content to keep themselves alive. A little starch for breakfast, dinner and tea, is certainly not the rule, but a little tea and bread-and-butter for all meals is the staple food of hundreds of women, and as sustenance for a healthy body, this diet is not very much better than the pocket-handkerchief. When the men are away, the wives and mothers starve themselves; whether it is to save trouble in the kitchen, or to, save time for themselves, or from sheer indifference to food, the same result ensues — “A cup of tea is all I want!” It does seem as if women in the mass are incapable of regarding good health and a sound body and mind as worth cultivating at the cost of any little trouble. Doctors know well enough that women are the most difficult of all their patients to cure; dietary rules and healthful habits, which involve some kind of watchfulness, restraint, and patience, are too irksome for the average woman to obey. Working girls would rather starve themselves and be well clad, than preserve a healthy body simply and cheaply dressed. Even nursing mothers and hard-working women are equally indifferent to all health rules; they will not make themselves eat at regular times and in sufficient quantities. For this the children suffer, and the whole household indirectly suffers too. Half-nourished bodies produce a score of trifling ailments, fatigue, strained nerves, and irritable tempers. “Laugh and grow fat” is a cheery adage, but life is sad to many, and to grow fat is a costly ambition. It is not our object to glorify gluttony and extol corpulence, but these are unquestionable facts that in any reverse of life you can laugh if you are healthy; that almost everyone can be healthy if they will, and that to be healthy it is necessary, among other things, to eat the right food and plenty of it. If the leanness of your purse cries out against meat at lunchtime (which is properly meat-time), do without those coveted feathers or that much-to-be-desired bodice. Internal health is worth external beauty a thousand times over. What is the chance of a beautifully

dressed woman against she who has the even temper and good spirits of perfect health, even if you apply no other test than the relative value in the husband market? To have “a sound mind in a sound body” is the first of ambitions. Accomplishments, beauty, riches, dress, are insignificant beside health; virtue, happiness, and rational thoughts, build themselves on health, and the heights of intellectual and moral worth are not to be scaled without it. If you lack a profession, if you have no defined ambition, set yourself to be professionally sound in body; the sound mind will follow. To eat too little is less disgusting than to eat too much, but both are equally foolish, and in large towns where it is the almost universal custom for men to be away from home during the day and to return for dinner at night, the women are habitually guilty of eating too little. Even the children are often allowed to eat a meat dinner in the evening, perhaps only an hour before they go to bed, in order to save the trouble of giving them meat and vegetables at midday, which is the right time, and the only time when such a meal should be given them. Bush women are not much more sensible in this than their urban sisters, indeed some pride themselves on the little they eat and the number of meals they miss altogether. For all these indiscretions nature invariably inflicts a penalty, and the doctors, chemists, and patent-medicine makers receive the fines. It does not pay the doctors to teach health rules to the masses and it therefore behoves outsiders to cry out to the people that they can be healthy if they will study the right methods. The unfortunate children after they are weaned, struggle under the sins of their ancestors with remarkable success, but it is an obvious fact that the race might be strengthened and improved to an indefinite extent if the mothers would consider health as capable of evolution, instead of regarding it as an accidental accompaniment of birth and permanent through life in that state of better or worse in which it was originally inherited. If husbands when they return home ask their wives what they have had to eat in their absence, ninety in every hundred replies would be — “tea and bread-and-butter”. This may tend towards spirituality and the maintenance of that “dear delicate little woman” variety of the “clinging” species prized by some men, but the world would be none the worse, for a robuster, healthier, stronger type of woman; nor should we be sorry if we could see the tea merchants transformed to market gardeners and all the milliners driven into the provision trade.

The Man Question

Or, The Woman Question Re-stated

The Dawn

Volume 2, Number 5.

Sydney, September 2, 1889

“WOMAN” as a topic for male journalistic pens has been popular ever since the infancy of literature; the little feminine vanities and vagaries have formed a delightful nucleus for descriptive and imaginative literary work in “leaders”, paragraphs, poems, plays and essays. Now and then, exceptional tidal waves of controversy occur when “marriage”, “woman's suffrage”, or similar subjects attract and swell the billows of printing ink, but these subside, and the permanent currents of the literary ocean carry always the same kind of debris — disquisitions on woman, her weakness, inconstancy, vanity, and little failings innumerable. When we read such articles we are reminded of those sermonisers who

“Compound for sins they are inclined to
By damning those they have no mind to,

and we should like authors to turn upon men and boys the searchlight of genius with which they have hitherto illuminated the character of women; for a serious examination of modern social affairs, renders apparent the significant fact that women and girls in the mass, have a higher standard of action, and a finer moral tone, than men and boys in the mass possess. Begin at the top of English society and go down. Apart from political considerations, Her Majesty the Queen has lived a blameless and good life. She may have made political mistakes incident to a difficult public position, but she has undoubtedly been a good woman. Consider her feelings as a good mother and decide whether she has found more comfort in the careers of her sons or of her daughters. The Princess of Wales has won affection everywhere and no one doubts that she is well worthy of it. Have the ways of her sons or of her daughters most warmed her heart? Whose rectitude and goodness has reached most nearly to the standard she herself has maintained? This kind of enquiry may be pursued through all grades of society, and it may afford the writers on “women” some new and impressive subjects of study. At the foot of the scale, enquiries will find the hardworking laundress, aided in her drudgery by her daughter, while her heart aches over a selfish, idle, and vicious son, it is the *daughter* who helps to keep the home together, who takes one handle of the clothes

basket, who walks long distances to get the food at the cheapest shop, who runs the errands, and who misses her schooling in order to aid the old folks. Go where you will among the poorer classes, you will see a mother toiling at the tub or mangle, or in some way earning a living, while one or two of her sons idle about the house. The sons are always ready to eat or to complain, they do not hesitate to ask for the few shillings she has, while she, poor soul, is happy to work for them if they will only keep decent and "out of trouble". So also with that weary and overworked woman, the boarding-house keeper. She chops the wood in the backyard, while a son, whom she will not expose, "vamps" on the piano or plays cards in the dining room. The sons gamble and drink; if they earn any money it does not help to keep any home together, it disappears at races or in amusements. There are hundreds of young fellows able to work, yet invariably idle: so long as they have parents, they think it the duty of those parents to support them. There are mothers who are almost content to see their sons idle at home, so greatly do they apprehend disgrace and trouble when the boys are abroad and unwatched, and though education has, in many cases, a happily mollifying effect, the balance is against the men in all classes. A city man complained the other day that of his six sons, he had little hope of either; another mourned the ruin of his only son, now a confirmed drunkard. Hundreds of others dare not enquire what is the evening occupation of their sons, being well aware that tippling, gaming, or compassing the ruin of some poor girl, form their customary employments. Through all the layers of society there is such a preponderance of evidence on the side of the women that it is possible to make a comprehensive generalisation and say that parents beget sorrow with their boys and comfort with their girls. To this conclusion we invite the attention of all writers upon "women", in order that everyone who studies social questions at all, may aid in the effort to level men up to the moral average of women. Consideration might also be well spent on the cause which has rendered prevalent among men, though absent as a rule, from women, such vices as bibulousness, gluttony, sensual appetite, and a morbid taste for gambling. It may seem to anyone newly introduced to the subject a very singular anomaly that drinking, low language, and gallantry, should be considered not altogether derogatory in one sex though utterly debasing in another; but this peculiarity of popular vision which gives two opposite views of the same thing, is an ancient habit. We cannot now discuss the cause of the moral inequality we allege; it will suffice to point out that though custom and inherited opinion have habituated us to judge the actions of men and women by different standards, the inherited squint does not justify perpetual ignorance as to the side where reform is most

seriously and urgently needed.

Boycotting The Dawn

The Dawn

Volume 2, Number 6.

Sydney, October 5, 1889

ASSOCIATED LABOUR seems to be in its own small way just as selfish and dictatorial as associated capital. The strength which comes of union has made labour strong enough, not only to demand its rights but strong enough also to bully what seems weak enough to quietly suffer under petty tyranny. We have a notable example of this in the boycott which the Typographical Society has proclaimed against *The Dawn*. The compositors have abandoned the old just grounds on which their union is established, viz: the linking together of workers for the protection of labour, they have confessed themselves by this act an association merely for the protection of the interests of its own members. *The Dawn* office gives whole or partial employment to about ten women, working either on this journal or in the printing business, and the fact that women are earning an honest living in a business hitherto monopolised by men, is the reason why the Typographical Association, and all the affiliated societies it can influence, have resolved to boycott *The Dawn*. They have not said to the women "we object to your working because women usually accept low wages and so injure the cause of labour everywhere", they simply object on selfish grounds to the competition of women at all. Now we distinctly assert that we do not employ women because they work more cheaply; we have no sympathy whatever with those who employ a woman in preference to a man, merely because they think she will do as much work for a lower wage. We will be the first to aid the formation of trades' unions among working women, whether they be compositors, tailors, or any others, so that women who try to earn a living honestly may win as good an income in proportion to the quantity and quality of their work as men can do. In this object we know we have the sympathy of our readers, and as to the boycott we only need their co-operation to entirely neutralise its effect. A great many women have written to us at various times wishing to be able to help us and begging to know how. There is now an opportunity to help us, and the woman's cause generally, with pronounced effect, and we can give a comprehensive reply to all our kind well-wishers. The aid can be given by those who have no time to write for us, no time to attend women's meetings, no time for anything but the duties of their own household. It can be given us in the most powerful form, merely in the course of the

necessary expenditure of your weekly income, whether that be large or small. *If it is made clear to your tradesmen that you deal with them because they advertise with us, the boycott is immediately defeated.* Subscribers alone never entirely support a newspaper: the expense could not be borne without the profit of advertisements. Therefore, of course, the most effective way to injure any publication is to prevent the possibility of advertisement support. We are told that a Sydney journal on which two women were engaged, was recently interfered with and effectually extinguished in this way. Union men personally visited those who advertised in that journal, and threatened them with a union boycott if they continued their support. As a consequence the tradesmen withdrew their advertisements, and some newsagents who had also been visited, refused to sell the paper, producing of necessity, the stoppage of the journal and the bankruptcy of the proprietor. This is not likely to be our fate, since we possess the sympathy of so many Australian women, but we shall need the aid of our friends, and we ask them to give it in this way — the most potent and conclusive way discoverable — namely, to deal as far as due economy and your circumstances allow, with those tradesmen and others who advertise in *The Dawn*, and to tell them that you do so deal with them because their advertisement appears in our columns. We have no bitter feelings of hostility, but unjust treatment must be opposed in some way, and the method we ask our friends to adopt is both effectual and comparatively pacific. The question raised is not merely a question of the employment of women on a woman's journal, for though this is the immediate point of conflict, there is a larger principle in the background. Trades' unions would dispute, or force out of sight if possible, the right of women to enter the labour market at all. But women must have work, for there are thousands not depending on any man for support, and yet possessing, as far we know, as good a right to live as any other human being. Men have made the avenues to dishonour (among which we include the mere marrying for support) plentiful and easy, while the avenues to honourable competence are few. Of nurses, governesses, and housekeepers, there are already too many, and though housework, if well done, is as honourable as any employment whatever, we cannot forget that there are a great many women with abilities leading them in other directions than these. The trades which women can manage easily and well are filled by men: the muscular arms of men are handling postage stamps and millinery, big men sit cross-legged on benches, sewing. You can see such anomalies as a six-foot Hercules leaning over two skeins of floss-silk matching the colours, another in the feather and flower department drawing an ostrich feather over the back of his white hand to display it. In like

occupations are thousands of men slowly wasting their physique, while the women are crowded out, and as far as possible, kept out. Setting type is perhaps a less unmanly employment than those enumerated, yet, an old compositor admitted to us that he was often ashamed to be doing nothing all day but such light-finger work. There are parts of printing work which men must do; but the work of a compositor is both light and healthy and as in our office the girls do no night work we can defend ourselves and ask the support of our reader with a clear conscience, certain that in fighting our own cause we are also advancing that which we have quite as much at heart: the cause of all women workers, present and future.

Modern Chivalry

The Dawn

Volume 2, Number 7.

Sydney, November 5, 1889

OF the many smaller troubles which women silently endure, probably one of the worst is the incivility to which they are exposed at the hands of clerks, counter-men and officials. The little business a woman may have to do in the city, is in general a severe ordeal to her, and even in shops where it might be supposed that self-interest would ensure courtesy, unless she is an habitual customer, or one the splendour of whose appearance foreshadows a large order, she cannot be sure of courteous attention and treatment. Of course, the behaviour of men towards a recognised champion of "women's rights" does not come within the scope of our comments, because it is understood that such a creature is little more than a perambulating vinegar-bottle armed with an umbrella, and she, being ready to eject acidulous language against any male creature of differing views, must expect an occasional exhibition of venom in return. No, it is not the treatment of the sour-tempered militant female (if such there be) which excites our indignation; the reservoirs of our wrath and contempt only overflow when we see some little woman, too timid to complain, wincing under an unprovoked discourtesy. Financial offices and institutions are particular purgatories for women; government offices are by no means clear of the taint; some few shops need an expurgation, and into most city offices employing subordinates women enter doubting how heavily their sensibilities will be trodden upon. The worst offenders can probably be picked from that large body of officials who are paid by the public; these repay, in return for their salaries, a good deal of rough manners, indeed there are some who have a low notoriety among the public whom they bully; they rank as chiefs in the hierarchy of bad manners; and men also suffer from the infliction, though not so severely as do the women. Before describing the methods of procedure, we must admit that beautiful women have no ground for complaint; beauty carries a free pass, entitling the holder to the kindest consideration of all strangers, and great as are the dangers and penalties of loveliness, it has this prerogative at least, it may call the nearest adult male to be its willing servant. Even the boor therefore relaxes in the presence of beauty, but in the average woman he finds a submissive and defenceless prey. The boor is sometimes in high station; if so, he exercises his sovereign right to be a churl in this way;— as the

victim enters his official lair he casts on her a momentary and indifferent glance, then instantly resumes his work. Possibly a thousandth part of his glance towards her falls on a chair, and she understands she is to sit there; she finds her way there at any rate, and sits down waiting till he deigns to break the silence. When she has waited long enough to be thoroughly miserable, he says "Well?" in a begrudged interrogative tone, and recommences his writing, or at the best listens indifferently with his eyes on a book or paper before him. Should the worm turn under his treatment and develop powers of remonstrance, or should the subject of her story show her to be in some form influential, or powerful, or unexpectedly strong in arguments or resources, she may have the wounds of her spirit healed by the most unctuous affability but to be considerate to all human creatures alike is not natural to him, and that affability, no doubt has its subsequent reaction. The boor of the office-counter considers it a nuisance to have to do business with women at all. He issues to women his abrupt instructions to do this, sign that, fill up the other, and readily grows impatient, irritable and cynical if they seek clearer enlightenment or further directions. He has no courtesy naturally and he is not paid to include it among his acquired accomplishments. It is not inappropriate to mention in connection with this topic that it is a general masculine opinion that the inability to understand business is a natural characteristic of a woman's mind. The number of women successfully managing or working in businesses in other countries should be enough to disprove this, but in the cases of unbusiness-like women whom we are considering, the incapacity to comprehend business routine at a glance is inevitable. There is nothing in any part of most women's lives or training to teach the least idea of office methods or formulae, and it is only natural to blunder at the first contact with petty regulations of which the necessity and object are not distinctly apparent. Would the masculine intellect prove less clumsy at its first introduction to duties for which men have not, but women have, received special training? Returning to the boor, we must record that when found in a shop or warehouse the individual specimen generally shows the characteristic of the species by intentional neglect rather than open insult. Sometimes discourtesy may take a grosser form, but generally the science of the game is to estimate how much the prey will endure, and to let her stand or sit expectantly to the furthest limit of her patience. The victim rarely complains, since it needs not a little courage to search for, and make report to, the proper official; besides the inventive unveracity of the boor may produce such a plausible tale as to achieve, even in the presence of his employer, a second triumph over his victim. These slight and hastily sketched instances of modern chivalry will remind hundreds of our readers

of inflictions personally suffered; the details of each case may vary, but the generalisation remains true. Whether the boor class is caused by climatic influences injurious to the liver, or by some still-existing taint of convict blood, it is impossible to decide; we can only hope that the genus will become extinct as the world becomes more generally agreed that, as we all consist of the same amalgam of animal and spiritual matter, we have all equal rights to the consideration and courtesy of our fellows.

The Root Of All Evil

The Dawn

Volume 2, Number 8.

Sydney, December 5, 1889

IN spite of the popular belief that “there is a woman at the bottom of everything”, there are a few who still believe that the “love of money is the root of all evil”, and we need hardly say that in our opinion the latter is by far the more fertile cause of misery. During the last few years in Sydney, we have seen a long succession of prosecutions for fraud and embezzlement committed by clerks and others in positions of trust. These men did not steal to procure food for starving wives, or medicine for sickly children; they were all in receipt of salaries sufficient to procure them the necessaries and the comforts of life. They stole that they might spend more, or to enable them to gamble and grow rich with a bound, and their histories show clearly enough that crime is a natural outcome of this insensate love of riches and extravagant display. Even with the mass who happily keep honest; the same passion keeps men anxious and chafing, because forsooth they are not richer; they may have enough, yet they pant for more with as much vehemence as if tickets to Paradise were to be sold to the highest bidder. The amount of physical injury which results from the perpetual haste and friction caused by this starving for superfluities is incalculable; there is not any disease more insidious and exhausting than worry, yet how many men can be found who live placidly, content that they are decently clad, housed, and fed, and satisfied to be free from the horrors of poverty without craving for the extravagant and dangerous pleasures of wealth? The majority of people rarely look downwards towards the miseries of poverty, never reflect on the ills which they, themselves, escape, ills under which millions of their fellow-creatures writhe, but occupy themselves in envying those who are better off, sighing for some fresh luxury, grumbling because they cannot save more, chafing under the limits of their income which happily keeps their tastes and comforts within the bounds of untempted simplicity. The effect of this money craze on men and women alike, is always disastrous; temper and constitution are worn down by it. Character goes overboard when money is to be won, and no sooner does the pocket grow full than commensurate requirements develop to exhaust it. The actual selfishness of being rich, the indifference to human agony which is implied in the personal possession and use of a large fortune, is what no one seems to recognise, yet it perhaps

explains why “it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven”. It is easy for one who is not wealthy to profess gratitude that he has not committed the crime of devoting to his personal use that which other men, not less worthy, die for lack of; but it is probably the best of a poor man's unconscious and negative virtues that he is poor, and therefore not misusing for his own benefit that wealth which might bring hope into the lives of a hundred necessitous creatures. Of the terrible effect upon the world at large of the craving for wealth, the records of crime and of pauperism furnish sufficient examples. In these days of speculation many men are willing to grow rich upon the losses of others; in these times of fierce competition and rapid, cheap production many a man climbs to wealth up a stairway made of the living bodies of the poor. The desperate attempts made of late years to lessen the gulf between the very rich and the very poor have only been partially successful. The rich grow richer and stronger, the poor weaker and more numerous. Hundreds of thousands of pounds pour annually through the channels of charity upon the smouldering fires of poverty, and the generosity of the few is spread like a veil over the miseries of the many, who, being honest workers, should never need to take aught that they do not earn. The recent gift of a quarter of a million made by one Englishman for the purpose of building homes for the poor is a splendid example of individual generosity, yet it is but a bucketful of water thrown on a desert, it does not alter the intolerable social conditions of our time, for pity and charity should not be needed, and that system must be rotten at the root wherein honest labour cannot win enough for common needs. Have we nothing to learn from the story of the London dock labourers strike? that insurrection of the starving. The first simmering of a revolution was there, happily checked and moderated by generous help and timely success. It was only by the influence of John Burns that the firing of London in several places was prevented. To the brink of such disaster has the selfish fighting for riches brought the old world! Even the unions of the workers for self protection gives only a temporary relief, for the wealthy can unite also. Look at the gigantic “Trusts” and “Combines” in America; the Railway Trust, the Telegraph Trust, the Sugar Trust, the Rope and Twine Trust; all huge monopolies and unions of wealthy men, created to make rich men richer regardless of the grinding of the poor. Some day they may grind too fine. They forget past warnings;— the strike of the Illinois coal miners, of the New York freight handlers, the Chicago strike, the railroad strike, the Pittsburgh riots. Even America, by lust of riches and selfish disregard of the claims of human life, has prepared the explosive elements for a great social disruption. In London one person in every forty-

seven is in receipt of charitable aid, and we have it on the authority of one who has worked fifteen years in East London, that for every one of the degraded poor who figure in statistics there are twenty persons honestly toiling long hours for a daily pittance which keeps them just alive, but always within arm's length of starvation. Such figures shew us an array of misery which no one can contemplate unmoved. The rich men who from their platform of comfort look on, are so many modern Neros. They all fiddle at the burning. They dine sumptuously, while within a stone's throw their fellow creatures are sharing a fragment of bread, or a bowl of pieces from the charitable "scrap-cart". Over a costly bottle of wine men can discuss the women who earn a penny an hour! Better be a camel struggling at the needle's eye, than a rich man expecting rewards after death; there is more reasonable hope of success. In this comparatively young country we have not reached the condition of extremes in wealth and in poverty, but our methods, our rage for wealth, our whole social system being precisely a reproduction of the system of the old world, the result here must in the long run be just the same. Nothing but a change in social conditions can save us from the dangers now threatening America and England. We must set ourselves to discover a system under which all who are willing to work can earn the necessaries of life. Spasmodic Christmas time charity is not enough; it is the apparent duty of every man and woman to study the social question and to practise that real charity which sets the good of mankind at large above personal aggrandisement, and which makes the happiness of fellow creatures of more value than the social flattery and selfish pleasures which wait upon riches.

The Need Of The Hour

The Dawn

Volume 2, Number 9.

Sydney, January 6, 1889

THE great need of the hour is for men and women who are not afraid to take hold of active practical work against the growing immorality of the age. There are plenty of persons who applaud the good deeds of others and yet what are they themselves doing? Martha K. Pierce, LLD, in a little tract, which constitutes No. 9 of the social purity series, issued by the Woman's Temperance Publishing Association, asks such persons a number of very pertinent questions which are worthy of most serious consideration. Did you ever think how dangerous a thing it is for us to attend a meeting, where evils are talked about, and to read articles about them in papers, and get into an agonised state of mind over them and yet do nothing? There is no surer way to deaden moral energy. I fear that this is the danger of the hour. We are feeling dreadful about it all, but are we doing much to stop it? How can we sit in our safe churches and lecture halls and listen in a perfect ecstasy of indignation to denunciation of faraway evils, when we might know if we would, that in the next street some work as diabolical calls to heaven for vengeance. How dare we go home and quiet ourselves into obliviousness to disagreeable things with the hope that sometime women will have the power to do something in some safe and effective and eminently proper way to prevent these shocking things? How many of us are contenting ourselves now with praying that somebody else will do whatever it is "advisable" to do at this juncture? If we could only see ourselves as the pitying eye above sees us when we try to put celestial aspirations into the straightjacket of propriety, we would humble ourselves in the dust, realizing our utter unworthiness to receive those fleeting visitations of the Divine. There is real work before us. Are we watching the train on which bewildered girls are being hurried to a future so terrible that those who love them can have no hope except that Death will find and secure them soon? Are we sure that the pretty sales-woman who waits on us so patiently during an afternoon's shopping, is not wishing that she had some good, safe friend to go to for advice about some acquaintance whom she half distrusts? Is the servant girl so kindly and justly treated that she does not go to unsafe places for the scanty pleasures that her life of drudgery knows? Has our grumbling at the sewing girl's bill made her wonder as she turns to go to her home, whether it would be so very wicked

after all to accept the protection of some man, who, dissipated as she knows him to be, is the only person who seems to care whether she starves or not? Have we taken pains to secure the confidence of the silly daughter of our careless neighbour, that we may give her an effective word of warning? Is there a place in our town in which any hopeless woman could shelter? And have we taken pains to have its location, and purpose so well advertised that no one could fail to know of it? Have we joined hands with every other woman in our neighbourhood who can interested in this work (and what true woman cannot be?) that we may help each other in lines of effort that cannot well be carried on by other individuals? Are the laws against abduction, kidnapping, and other crimes allied to the traffic by which our sisters are enslaved, put in force in our locality, not spasmodically, as peculiarly distressing cases happen to come to public notice, but every time they are violated? Are we trying to gain for womanhood such a direct influence in the body politic that officials will find it to their advantage to enforce those laws, and to guard the interests of women as scrupulously in all ways as they now do the interests of the voters upon whose support they depend? And whatever else we do or leave undone, do we speak in season the well-deserved and sorely-needed word of praise for the ones who dare to be the first in any line of this work?

The Curse Of Bad Example

or, The Drunkard's Wife

The Dawn

Volume 2, Number 10.

Sydney, February 5, 1890

Is a pitiful fact to contemplate that according to the existing conditions of modern civilization, it can be looked upon as little short of a miracle should the average youth reach man's estate, and escape the contamination of vice which daily example makes him familiar with from babyhood. To be able to swear, smoke, drink, or, gamble like a man, is the Alpha and Omega of his infantile dreams. Is it not a painful sight to see cripples and pale children, some mere babies, with the marks of an early grave upon their pinched faces, behind hoardings or up dirty lanes "heading them"; with childish eyes shining bright with excitement through the smoke of paper cigarettes. Useless for the passer-by to stay and ask these babies not to smoke while every other man we meet has a cigar in his lips. Useless, also the protest against gambling, when the pile of forgotten dailies which the urchins are supposed to be on the street selling, contain exaggerated descriptions of the palatial splendour of some new gambling hell, and are loud in praise of its manly and enterprising promoter. Useless indeed are woman's tears, and woman's prayers, while the votaries of vice hold dominion of the city, while single men and abandoned women, obtain licenses to open as a public house, any tottering mass of rottenness they may select, for the purpose of giving the weak another push hellward. Verily, "man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." Will it be believed a hundred years hence that such a state of things existed, and none but "women and cranks" had courage to raise their voices in protest. Walk down George street from nine to twelve o'clock any night, and see the traps laid for our sons and brothers. The sailor boy leaving home for the first time amid a mother's hopes and fears, is led into a Chinamen's den the first night he puts foot on the soil of Sunny New South Wales, when, in less time than it takes to write it, the pocket-money given by a self-denying parent to spend on land, is transferred to the keeping of a Chinaman. Is it not enough to make one's blood boil to see the son of Britain, while professing contempt for the "yellow heathen," triumphantly led in to a den by a greasy Mongolian, who actually patronises the Britisher, as he leads him like a dumb, driven beast; from this place he emerges with empty pockets to find himself on the pavement, perhaps battered and maimed for

a fancied offence by some drunken stranger; the Chinamen, standing round, complacently watching with evident satisfaction the Britishers fight. Is it not a sound to make one shiver, to hear the curly head of a stripling bouncing from off the hard stone curb, while men cry “stand back and let them have it out,” and some good woman's boy goes down again, while men fairly gloat over the scene. Perhaps some tow-headed, painted barmaid with the unquenchable tenderness of a woman's heart, not dead within her, rushes into the ring and stops the assault. But the police, where are they? Ask the Mongolians! The proverbial terrace is no myth! Can we wonder that a woman, lately, in defence of self and children entered and smashed the mirrors and decanters of a drinking den where her husband continually spent his time and money to the neglect of his children. Is it to be wondered at, that this woman, seeing how worse than useless was the outlook for help from any quarter, took the law in her own hands and vowed to damage the property of every publican who gave her husband drink. Oh, woman! Is this always to be? Are ye never going to make an effort to purify humanity? Content to suffer and degenerate, pander to men, and give birth to boys for this. If too apathetic to care for self, for the sake of your precious children, rise as one and denounce these vices, the result of men's weakness and apathy. If the father, who is in power, and helps to make the laws, has not the moral courage to put down these vices, how can the son be strong enough to avoid them handicapped as he is by transmitted weakness. Oh, Sisters! lookdown at the sweet, baby boy resting on your soft, white bosom, and picture it, think of it. Say, “Shall this fate be his?”

The Divorce Extension Bill

or, The Drunkard's Wife

The Dawn

Volume 2, Number 11.

Sydney, March 5, 1890

THE fate of the Victorian divorce extension bill is a source of keen anxiety to many a miserable wife who has the misfortune to be linked for life to a drunkard. In the helpless innocence of girlhood, she, in good faith, believing her lover all that he led her to think him, trustingly said "I will," and for better or worse, by this she must abide. No matter that he lied and deceived her knowingly. There is no law to punish a man for deceiving his wife. He may do violence to the best feelings of her nature; outrage the holiest emotions of her heart, and there is none to condemn. If he defrauds his fellow man of a shilling the law will deal with him. If he robs his wife by brutal deceit of all faith in mankind, health, peace, happiness, and of her life by the slow torture of a breaking heart — what of it? All he has to do is to bury her and seek another victim in another woman who believes him. All the consolation the wife of such a ghoul could reasonably expect from the world is "Why did you marry him?" About as reasonable a question as asking a condemned criminal awaiting his execution why he committed the act that brought him there. What availeth her to say "I was young, ignorant, inexperienced in the ways of the world; I believed and I loved him; he vowed that I should not want; he loved me and would love me for ever; all these promises he has broken. I have kept mine. He will not support me; he drinks and is cruel to me." And the world's answer is: "As you have made your bed so you must lie on it." A wife's heart must be the tomb of her husband's faults. Verily, a girl must be as wise as a serpent and as harmless as a dove; she must have trusting innocence, implicit faith, loving devotion, and every soft and womanly attribute, and at the same time be an expert in physiognomy, phrenology and mind-reading, and a veritable woman of the world into the bargain, to ensure herself against matrimonial disaster. With all due reverence for the sanctity of marriage, can there be anything sacred in the bond which binds a good woman to a sot, felon, or brute? Of the three the first is the worst, the felon disgraces her, the brute bruises her flesh, and perhaps breaks her bones, but the sot, makes her perpetuate his ignoble race. What sober, strong, cleanly man would submit to share his bed with another in the worst stage of drunkenness? But the confirmed sot, if he possesses enough command of his tottering limbs to

bring him to his lawful wife's chamber, may then collapse in abandoned beastliness upon the floor or conjugal couch if he reaches it, and proceed to make night hideous for her. A nerve of iron truly, must be possessed by frail women, who are expected to endure nightly, this horrid ordeal, and put a cheerful face upon it in the morning, well knowing that this is her fate so long as her power of endurance holds out. How often does the patient wife quietly steal from the chamber of horrors to seek shelter by the bed of her sleeping children, content if but allowed to sit in peace until day brings temporary respite. What patience! what forgiveness must these martyrs possess. To what extent can our good Queen realise the position of these long-suffering women.

Hounded To Death

The Dawn

Volume 2, Number 12.

Sydney, April 5, 1890

IN an English village lately the coroner's jury returned a verdict of suicide in the case of a girl found drowned. The usual charitable verdict of temporary insanity could not be given, for it was clear from the confession she left behind her, that she had deliberately premeditated death, she had estimated her future and elected to die. Being a schoolmistress she had set apart her holidays for the purpose of a last visit to some good friends, with the resolve that when the visit was over life should end too. In her letter she said her keenest pain was the knowledge that in dying where she did she would bring disgrace on those who had been kind to her. The letter unquestionably revealed that the suicide was deliberate but it showed too that she who died was a sensitive, loving, and gentle soul whom the world could not afford to lose. The explanation is simply this — that she had been seduced and deserted, and that she knew the world well enough to be aware that, though it winks at a great deal of vileness, and though it keeps some remnant of pity and charity for the utterly abandoned, it does not allow unwedded mothers either tolerance, pity, or charity. To those with sympathy enough to enter into the heart of a girl like this there are few things more sad or more pitiful than she. In her life there came a day when she realized that the love she looked to for help was gone, the love for whose sake she had been weak had stabbed her and fled, that it had not been love at all but only lust, perfidy and cowardice miscalled a man. She saw that though with the help and sympathy of love she could have borne all, yet alone the world showed a face of stone to her. Looking ahead she saw the agony of shame, of discovery, of public disgrace, then the rejection by friends and acquaintances, her position lost, no work to be had, no hope at all. There is little enough work for women at any time. What can one do from whom all faces are averted? That a girl should take to the streets seems a natural continuation of a life thus diverted, and we must not forget that it is the natural continuation because no other way of livelihood is left. This is no new story, nor does it belong to England alone. There have been broken hearts and good lives thrown to the death clutch of the waters in how many places? Accursed blood-stained Mrs Grundy! Tyrant, indiscriminating and unjust! Must you preserve your reputation for chastity by hounding girls like this to death? The woman has been weak,

perhaps ignorant, perhaps the victim of opportunity, at any rate too loving, and too foolish in that she trusted a man. She has proved weak; he has proved base. We punish the already wounded, we beat the helpless, we smite the suffering, but the other whose guilt is at least equal, does he find himself cast out from decent society, is life so miserable that he seeks death? Does every man kick him downwards? No; he who brought disaster to her life under the sacred name of love, who repaid trust by desertion, who abandoned a helpless girl to a merciless world, he who is not fit to be buried with a dog, escapes harmless, when she, who in pain and misery has already almost expiated the sin, bears the burden of contempt which is as heavy as the fear of death. Does she not claim help and pity; does he not merit vengeance? The purity of society is not worth preserving if we have to keep it by the sacrifice of victims like this. By what habits and long-preserved traditions we have grown used to action so unjust matters not; it is time, at any rate we commenced to judge by the light of reason, sympathy, and charity. But leaving the man out of the question, what warrant have we for condemnation of the woman? The stain on the soul is not ineffaceable. If she falls further it is because we impel. There are not many elements of meanness about her crime, and her sorrows deserve pity. Few of us are unspotted and shall we decree that for this sin only among the long category of mankind's errors, the punishment shall be banishment, dishonour, or death? No "home for fallen women" is of use here, no public institution can stand between a breaking heart and suicide, just public opinion alone can show the door to hope, can offer the chance of restoration. But at this time the world's conduct shows a visible anomaly; the benevolent are giving money to homes for the fallen, while, with the cold shoulder of respectability they urge another unfortunate into the gulf from which such homes are filled. We build the refuges and prepare the inmates at the same time; for whosoever speaks bitterly of these, or who suffers scornful speech in others to go unchallenged, who denies work, aid, or sympathy to a woman because she has sinned in the one way deemed unpardonable, is driving her along the road which ends either in death to the body or degradation to the soul.

Ourselves

The Dawn

Volume 3, Number 1.

Sydney, May 5, 1890

WITH the present issue *The Dawn* starts upon its third year. It is now two years since, with many misgivings, we submitted our first issue to a critical public, and none were more surprised than ourselves, at the generous notice we received from our brothers of the press. Since then, we have enjoyed hearty and substantial support from readers of both sexes, and though ostensibly catering for women, we undoubtedly owe much of our success to men. This liberal support we appreciate the more from the fact that similar journals published in England and America own, that after twenty years of hard struggling, their efforts are just beginning to be self-supporting, while many are still compelled to ask extra monetary help from their readers. This, happily has not been our experience; we have had fair play and know that if present support fails we shall have none but ourselves to thank for it. We have had opposition from wealthy and influential people who cannot understand why so unpretentious a publication as *The Dawn* achieves prosperity, while more elaborate efforts met but untimely deaths. Possibly it may be that the intellect of man, though ranging unlimited fields with masterful comprehension, cannot enter with entire sympathy into the mind of a woman. Possibly the fitness of things ordains that a woman's paper should be "run" by women, but probably the most influential cause of our success has been the view we have taken of women's interests, a view in no way similar to the popular notion of the affinities and tastes of womanhood. The fact is, women are tired of seeing themselves "damned with faint praise" in society journals in which it is not considered correct to record the commonplace virtues of middle class life, and in which the quiet housekeeper is ignored or pushed aside to give place to the frivolous leader of fashion. The mass of women want to have themselves fairly represented, and the mass are made up of those who are not much in evidence, and who do not therefore figure as typical women. Not one woman out of every hundred cares what is going on at the centres of fashionable society, and those who do, are proverbially known to be just those least likely to subscribe to a paper, hence the ignominious failure of every attempt to cater exclusively for them. There is no better test with which to gauge women's taste in literature, despite all said to the contrary, than in that they steadily refuse to support

compilations of fashions, block vanities, and racy society scandals. They know full well that the women such journals represent have done much to colour the disparaging paragraphs concerning women with which present day literature abounds, and she who reads them being persistently put forward as representing the general standard of woman-kind does much to rivet the shackles of oppression weighing heavily upon her thinking sisters.

That Nonsensical Idea

The Dawn

Volume 3, Number 2.

Sydney, June 5, 1890

“I utterly Opposed to this nonsensical idea of giving women votes”, said one of the members of parliament commenting on the proposed Electoral Bill. So are we opposed to it if it is nonsensical, but as so many reforms and discoveries of incalculable value have at first sight been declared idiotic and absurd, we may as well look at the foundation facts and see if this proposed Bill contain the essence of foolishness or whether it does, as some claim, bring us as near to pure justice and absolute freedom as any human law has yet approached. We are a community of men and women living in one corner of the globe which we have marked off as our own, and since the business of so many people cannot be managed by all, we select 150 men to make laws for us and manage our public offices. The laws made by these deputies are binding on women as well as men, but the women have no advocates or representatives in the Assembly, nor any means of making their wishes known. The life and work of every woman is just as essential to the good of the community as that of every man. Her work and the character she bears raise or depress the standard of the state as much as does the life of any individual man; why is she set aside and disabled from expressing her opinion as to what should be done by this community of which she is a member? Why are her rights less than her brothers? She bears a full half of the trouble when the affairs of the state are depressed, an unjust law or the lack of law brings to her life care or hardship or injury as it does to men, yet none of the deputies ask what she wishes — why should they, she has no vote. She belongs to the better behaved sex — for women only contribute one-fifth to the criminal class (four-fifths are men) — and it would therefore seem likely that her opinion would be worth having, yet she is expressly discouraged from the formation of opinions, they are declared ineffectual by the other half of this community of people. It does not seem so nonsensical after all, this idea that a woman's opinion as to the fitness of a deputy may be as just and right and worthy of weight as a man's opinion.

Supposing

There are two views of the woman's suffrage question commonly discussed, the justice of the measure, and its expediency. Few doubt its

justice, many question its expediency, and yet, being just, what does all else matter? Suppose that the right to vote lay with women only, and that the progress of the world was bringing expansive thoughts and hopes of a happier future into the minds of men. When men perceived that this right was unjustly withheld from them, and felt that their individual manhood was title enough to this right to a voice in decisions affecting all, would they tolerate discussion as to the expediency or wisdom of the measure? Would they stand by and hear the women conjecture how men might perchance misuse the concession if granted, would they quietly wait while political factions summed up the chances of the support of the new voters? No, they would say "Curse you — it is my right. What business is it of yours how I use it?"

Her Proper Sphere

As to expediency, the arguments have been so often repeated that it seems foolish to reiterate them, especially as nothing cogent is brought forward on the opposing side in Parliament such old phrases as these were used, viz:— that "woman should be kept in her proper sphere" and "women have duties quite outside the political arena". One would think the political arena consisted of the parliamentary refreshment room, they are so sure it is not a desirable place for a woman to be seen in. In the minds of these objectors "politics" seem to consist of the petty animosities and personalities which the law-making business now gives rise to, but "politics" in reality cover nearly all questions which thinking men or women do now consider and form opinions upon. Laws are made upon divorce, the sale of liquor, factory regulations, the employment of children, gambling, education, hours of labour, and scores of subjects upon which women do think, and respecting which they ought to have the power of giving effect to their wishes by the selection of men representing their shade of opinion. And if women do not also at once enter the "political arena" so far as to care greatly about the land laws and mining acts, pray do men voters come to an intelligent decision on every possible subject of legislation before casting a vote? Most men do not seriously consider and decide in their own minds upon more than two or three of the many subjects which come within the wide circle of "politics", and it would not therefore take women long to reach equality in that respect. We are inclined to believe that a woman can form as good an idea as to the best man among parliamentary candidates as the average man voter.

More Logic

But say some people, women do not want the vote, most of them would not use it if they had it. What will happen after they have the vote may be left to the prophets to say, but if A and B do not want something is that a reason why C who has a just claim should be denied?

Prematurity

In the debate, Mr Traill, who said he was in favour of women's suffrage, urged that the measure would be premature; that women should be first educated to the use of a vote by possessing the suffrage under a local government Act. "Then," said he, "if found to be using it well they should be permitted to influence Imperial questions." This would be kind indeed, but this is not the method hitherto employed when new classes have been admitted to the franchise. We have not first put them through political schools; we have taken the raw material, and under the influence of its new liberty and swayed by the responsibilities of its new standing, the raw material has developed, but where has any government ever had raw material so certain to act conscientiously, so prepared already with intelligence and with a strong bias towards moderation, peace, steady reform, and moral purgation? Probably it is because they know that with women voting the men of bad character would have little chance of future election, that makes men so fearful that women "might not use it well".

Women Members

Many of the speakers in the House contended that if women received the right to vote they should also logically have the right to sit in parliament. This is not asked for and need not at present be decided. Few women would care for such a post, but it may be safely said that if exceptional women spring up such as the world has hitherto had some examples of, they could not fail to raise the tone of the House and fill a place worthily. It is to be remembered that men will not cease to vote when women have the suffrage, and that women are decidedly critical of their own sex. She would need to be a remarkable woman who could win the confidence of a mixed constituency of men and women. A young married woman is the usual illustration taken to show the absurdity of a Woman member and a woeful picture is drawn of her deserted babies and dinnerless husband. But these pictures only show the speaker's ignorance of women, for there is no woman who would not think of her baby and the happiness of her home long before she desired in her wildest fancies the barren honour of a parliamentary seat. She would not be likely to be asked to stand, and she

would not consent if asked. Some members treated the question in the old semi-facetious way, conjecturing the effect of pretty women in parliament and the power of a lovely woman premier to win susceptible opposition members to her side. This presupposes that the political convictions of men are but wavering undecided beliefs, and easily unseated, and forgets this fact that a woman of such attainments and character that a mixed constituency of men and women esteemed her a fit parliamentary representative, would by her very nature, her modesty and quiet sense, make this silly gallantry impossible; and she would so scorn adherents won only by beauty that they would probably begin under her influence to form their opinions firmly and honestly. Another member alleged that his brother members would do no work if ladies sat beside them. If men are indeed so silly that in a place of business they must inevitably be simpering to women, it will not be so nonsensical to give a vote to a class undoubtedly not prone to publicly exhibit their weakness or their foolishness.

The Legal Link

The Dawn

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MONA CAIRD and her disciples have whispered in the ears of those women whose sufferings have set them pondering, that the troubles which so often and so soon follow marriage are due to the marriage bond; to the practicably inseparable tie; the legal link. No bond, say they, then no ill-treatment; love that lasts, not languishes; at least the kindness of a friend not the autocracy of a legal master. Now again in the May number of the *Westminster Review* Jeannie Lockett writes:

It is a well attested fact that in cases amongst the poorer classes where people enter into marital relations not legally binding, the women as a general rule, receive better treatment than is the case in a similar grade of society where the tie is a legalised one. 'Ah! it's easy to see the poor thing is his lawful wife else he would not dare treat her so', is an expression of opinion not uncommon in such communities.

It is not only in the poorer classes that women have been driven, by unkindness, ill-usage or cruelty to ask why the love which seems so strong a security before marriage so often becomes hate when the bond is tied. Nor are they without grounds when they reason that men become demoralised by the absolute rights over women which, after marriage, law, custom and opinion give to them. Absolute rights they practically are, for when a woman marries she expects and intends to live with her husband all her life, and general opinion expects her to gratify at his pleasure, not at her option, nearly all his wishes. Her unpractised and unbusinesslike mind makes her readily confess in many things her weakness, and induces submissiveness and patient endurance; and her inferior strength tends, when once love is gone, to encourage the brute part which lies in human nature, the inherent propensity to bully and tyrannise any helpless, weak thing. Then the strongest force of all which keeps her quiet under cruelties, insults, and abominations known to women but which must not here be named, is the potent dread of stepping outside conventionalities, for to the woman far more than to the man the edicts of society are weighty and cruel. Lastly the dread of poverty, the hopelessness of life to a married and separated woman with or without children, holds her bound, so that she is indeed at the mercy of her legal protector. Reviewing all this it is not to be wondered at that those who think of these things and seek some principle or some theory by the adoption of which all the wrongs shall be slain at the

root, should come to the conclusion that the substitution of voluntary union for the present style of marriage is the change we need. Look, they say, at the man who marries a clever, independent-spirited woman who can earn her living easily apart from him, he does not illtreat her, he knows too well he might lose her if he did, and in other cases if a man knew that his wife could and would leave him, he would take care that she desired to remain. Our theorists therefore urge that since it is not possible to many women now to have the strong basis of financial independence let them at any rate be free to dissolve the contract at will without reproach — let the man feel that his hold is not perpetual and secure and he will strive to retain his wife's affections by the tenderness and thoughtfulness which enabled him to win her. Altogether the theorists make out a strong case, seemingly strong at any rate to those who intimately know the pitiful sadness of the lives of many married women. But in our opinion so sweeping a change as the abolition of the present marriage ties; that is, an abolition either of the legal or moral binding force of them; is not the right method of cure. One extreme does not always balance another, nor can one safely cure a fever by stepping suddenly into an ice house, and any change in marital relationships which may be made must be the outcome of slow and gradual change in opinion and belief. Nor is the quick severance of a tie which binds to suffering always the noblest way to win happiness. Indignant and chafing as we are at the irreparable wrongs endured by multitudes of women, we are sure that it is not in the mutual and binding pledge that the evil lies. Change a man's ideas and his whole way of living is altered; and the change in ideas that is needed is this: men must think less selfishly, women more so. These are general terms and it is not to be supposed that we think there are not cases where this rule might justly be reserved. What we assert is that men should reflect in moments subtracted from their own ambitions, "What does my wife's life consist of?" Women in moments stolen from the daily round of work must remember the individual dignity they have to preserve, the soul they have to develop, the personal rights they have to maintain for the sake of themselves, for the sake of the whole sex and for the sake of the children whose lives and characters they are all the while forming. Submissiveness and readiness to bear everything does not make a woman attractive to her husband, quite the reverse: she takes an inferior, if not a contemptible position, with the natural result that she flings away her own and her children's happiness and encourages the faults she ought to oppose. Husbands in general are not unselfish though they may think themselves kind and generous. A man does not often consider what his wife's existence is, in what proportions her work and her pleasures lie, or what she gives in return for what she receives. Absorbed in their

own ambitions, business cares or pleasures, how many men ask themselves what sort of life their wife leads, whether she has strength enough for herself and the children she rears, hope enough to make life cheery, chances enough for development, share enough in the general ambition and success of the family as a whole? We do not want to see women attempting to seize a mastership, or growing quarrelsome about imaginary rights, but we do want them to see that the unselfishness which seems a virtue is practically the abandonment of their position. To claim the full rights and privileges of thinking, self-respecting, free human souls is to undermine a thousand wrongs and humiliations, to render themselves the more beloved for their apparent audacity and to, at the same time, secure the best conditions for their children. Women must learn that if they bear wrongs other women must bear the same, if they do not claim personal respect neither can their sisters. If they are weak or oppressed how can their children be strong or noble? This habitual self-effacement leads to all manner of weakness. A woman will tell lies to shield her husband, or perhaps to shield her own pride. If she is pinched or bruised, or injured, if things are broken in a fit of temper, she will swear it was not he, it was the result of accident purely. If he insults her by boasting of his connection with other women, she does not resent it, if he squanders the money, she works the later and the harder to replace it, if he drinks she hides the fact and shelters him with lies and bears him dipsomaniac children. In time she does not own her own body or mind, and her only morality is to be faithful to the marriage contract. The long-suffering, patient, enduring temper of women under hardship only leads to hardship's continuance. They should have more trust in their own intuition of right, think more of their own lives and destiny and of the lives they bequeath to the race. For it is often easier to endure than to act and the true unselfishness is to be selfish for the cause of progress and the good of others. They must think more of self, if self is to have more dignity and more worth, they must gain for themselves more liberty and more respect that the children and the race may be stronger and nobler, inheriting less of passion and of vice, less of the weak and tired-out household drudge, more physical and intellectual strength, more mental and moral cleanliness. If women thus aim at the enhancement of their own individualism there will be no need to change the method of marriage relationships, and in time, by women's efforts to restore their side of the balance in the marriage scales, we may even find Jeannie Lockett's axiom inverted and married women a better treated class than those who are bound by no legal bond.

The Strike Question

The Dawn

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10000 WIVES TO BE CALLED OUT!!

MASS-MEETING OF THE AMALGAMATED WIVES' ASSOCIATION!!

DEMANDS OF THE WOMEN!!

DOMESTIC LIFE PARALYSED!!

WHAT would you say if you saw these headlines in your morning paper? Yet why should you not see them? Wives suffer from long hours of work, low wages, lack of rest, and oppression, and women are citizens entitled to just such rights and privileges as are claimed by men, among these privileges being the right to cease work, and to make terms for the betterment of their condition. Working-men strike for higher wages, shorter hours, "smoke ohs," or in defence of one of their number unjustly or despotically treated, but though sensitive as to their own rights does it ever occur to them to think of the women? Is there any one member of all the affiliated Trades who has reflected that there is another class more in need of union and of defensive leagues than he and his fellows. Never! The social constitution may be turned upside down and stood on its head so to speak, when men's demands require hearing, but no one thinks of the women. Thousands of pounds are spent on organisation, circulating newspapers, bands, processions and free meals, and on the other side thousands on special services of constables and military, while the grievances of the men are being put to the test, but not a soul asks "Have the women any claims?" In point of fact even working men themselves stand in the position of employers, because just as under the wealthy there is the less powerful class of labour, so, subject to the social predominance of men, there are the women, weak, unorganised, and isolated. Does a man concede to his employee-wife, defined hours of rest, fair pay, just and considerate treatment? The wife's hours of work have no limit. All day the house and at night the children. There is no Woman's Eight Hour Demonstration, though we can make a public holiday because the men have won this right. A wife has no time to think of her own life and development, she has no money to spend, it is "her husband's money," the complete right to her own children is not yet legally hers, and she is not even in independent possession of her

own body. Surely it must be admitted that she needs the protection of a Union as much as a working man. What is a wife's pay? It is certainly what no Union would allow any member to accept from an employer. She did not marry for pay, you may urge. True, but her work is worth as much as the man's. He married her to share equally in his disasters as in his successes, and if she has to suffer with him in troubled times, surely she has a right to share equally when finances are sound. "She gets food, lodging and clothes?" Yes, but who else could be hired day and night for a lifetime on those terms. What of the treatment? Some are happy. Yes, and others bear a petty despotism, rough handling, rough language, selfish indifference, overwork. There are many of these. They endure far more than any man would tolerate from any master. Yet at first it seemed strange to talk of a Woman's Union and a strike of wives. If men demanding rights and liberties would grant the same to their wives, and demand as much for all women, we might begin to flatter ourselves on our civilization, but this men do not do, and as for women they have no unions, no organisers, no speakers, no meeting halls, and no newspapers to represent their claims publicly and justly. Serious writers in newspapers do not touch woman's questions; such topics are left to the comic man, yet the wrongs of women are real and crying out for remedy. Do not lay the flattering unction to your soul that a woman's excited imagination has invented woman's wrongs. Do not fancy that such wrongs are slight and tolerable because they are not known to bachelor clerks, nor quoted in newspapers, nor talked of in commercial circles; these things are to be learned by following men when work is over, to the secrecy of "homes," where sheltered in the privacy of an Englishman's castle, selfishness can be indulged, bitterness spoken, meanness practised. Men's wrongs are vented by public speakers in the Domain, women's wrongs are endured in the abominable seclusion of separate "homes." This may sound extreme but if you have ever seen a beaten woman, if you have seen a woman exhausted by house-work, if you have seen one broke down by perpetual suppression, or if you have ever talked with a doctor about his woman patients, you may understand in what manner the great Strike Question presents itself to a woman.
