

ladies, daughters of professional men, between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five, are employed in the enormous offices of the well-known Prudential Assurance Company. Salaries vary from £30 to £50. The directors have many names on their books, as this department is noted for the comfort of all its arrangements; whilst the company is also famous as having carried into execution the great novelist's ideal, and provided an indoor promenade, and also a library and refreshment-room for those of the fair sex who are fortunate enough to be taken into its employ. It goes without saying that it is necessary that all lady clerks must be fairly well educated, and know at least the three R's; but this is now so usual as to prove no hindrance, and spite of the many businesses which now employ female instead of male labour, the supply is still above the demand, and masters, finding their victims will accept almost any offer, are giving lower and lower wages, twenty-five shillings being considered high, and thirty shillings liberal. Witness an advertisement which appeared in one of our leading papers a few days ago:

"Lady clerk wanted in manufacturing business; hours, 8.30 to seven; till three, Saturdays. Twelve shillings per week. Good handwriting indispensable."

How can a young lady, often of good birth, and always accustomed to comparative comfort, with those tastes for refinement and culture which education generally brings in its train, live, *i.e.*, provide for herself food, lodging, clothes, &c., on this pittance? She is happier if perchance she resides at home, and only has to contribute towards the "general fund"; but there are, alas, scores who are alone, and who must live on a starvation wage, or failing that die, her more fortunate Sisters taking her very bread from her. And the master lives on in his luxurious home, attends church regularly on Sundays, and considers himself altogether a model member of society. Would it not be well if Mr. Burns started a strike of lady clerks? The lady book-keepers, at the large London shops, are better off; they receive from £15 to £20 per annum and board and lodging, though we will not answer always for the superiority of the former. It is necessary for those seeking such positions to know book-keeping by single or double entry, to be "sharp" in money matters, and to be of genteel appearance. Their age averages from eighteen to thirty. Most lady clerks know shorthand. There are several schools in London now where it may be learnt.

THERE is yet another side to the oft-times discussed question of woman's labour. Why, I would ask, is it ever taken as a matter of necessity that female labour should be ever rated at a lower

scale than male. If a woman does her work as well or even better than a man, ought she not, in all justice, to receive the same wage? Why, then, does she always expect and acquiesce in poorer remuneration? There is but one remedy for this crying evil, an evil now mightily affecting our middle classes, *i.e.*, Co-operation. Co-operation of woman with woman. She is needed, and therefore she has to but hold out to obtain her just due. But no single individual can afford so to do, for assuredly another will eagerly step into her vacant place, if she even hesitates. But "Union is strength," as the tiny coral insect teaches us.

BETTER still would it be if the so-called "lords of creation" would combine with the women-kind, for the sexes after all cannot do without each other. Joint trades-unions have been already successfully accomplished in America. If clerks—whether feminine or masculine—would coalesce and persist in demanding a fair wage for a fair day's work, and would fight for their rights on an equal footing, the masters and middlemen must perforce yield; and then there will be no longer any need for the wife to be obliged to go daily to work at a lower remuneration (the extra money making a fraction richer the already wealthy), leaving the husband at home "to cook and wash." Nor then, unless he allows himself to be surpassed in ability, in accurateness, in punctuality, will the unemployed clerk be obliged to sing:—

"Women must work and men must weep,
And there's little to get and many to keep."

A SERIES of lectures entitled, "Six Addresses on the Laws of Production, Distribution and Consumption of Wealth, as an aid to understand what is meant by Co-operation," are being given by Miss Adelaide Anderson to women in the meeting room of the Chelsea and Fulham Co-operative Society. It is a noted fact that, as a rule, women will use a thing and do a thing mechanically, without exercising their reasoning faculty, the said faculty becoming, in time, benumbed. It is, therefore, pleasing to note that Miss Anderson's listeners took an intelligent interest in her rather difficult subject, and also followed it up with questions and suggestion. Her subject verges on the difficult one of political economy, an interesting if obtuse science, but on which a clear and most concise manual has been written by a well-known lady, one who has ever much at heart the welfare of women—*viz.*, Mrs. Fawcett.

THE same cry has arisen in far-off Italy. "Let us unite ourselves firmly and strongly in order to ensure success in carrying out the good work which we are now about to commence." Thus bravely

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