

starchers, whom he comprises under the generic title of *blanchisseuses*, are subject to a hundred ailments during the exercise of their calling, and that they are accordingly as deserving of sympathy as the female workers in the big *Magasins* like the Louvre. There are, according to the statistics of this medical authority, 30,000 recognised and, as it were, official *blanchisseuses* in Paris, who are members of the "Washerwomen's Grand Mutual Benefit Association and Syndicate." Other *blanchisseuses* there may be, but being outside of the Syndicate, they are, no matter how able, robust, and skilful, regarded as mere outsiders, who are only tolerated by the august and full-fledged females who, by favour of the Syndicate, preside over the wash-tubs and ironing-tables of Paris. The most common diseases among the cleansers of linen and the "artists" who "get-up" shirt-fronts and cuffs in the immaculate manner the secret of which seems peculiar to Paris, are pneumonia, bronchitis, rheumatism, ophthalmia, and the various contagious affections—such as fever, small-pox, and cholera. The peculiar water called *Eau de javel* which they use has a most pernicious effect on the *lavandières*, while the starchers and ironers are especially subject to varicose veins, owing to their long periods of standing while engaged in their labour. As to the florists, whose skill has also been carried to perfection in Paris, they continually run all sorts of risks, owing to the different colours and the lead, copper, and arsenic which are constantly in their hands. Many hygienic measures of great value have been taken in order to ameliorate the condition of these workwomen of all grades; but they still compare unfavourably with their sisters in the shops, who lead lives of relative comfort."

In fact, I hear that a "revolt of washerwomen" of all grades in the suburbs of Paris is imminent. People have for some time past been sending their soiled linen to the *Baulieu*, or suburbs, because it is less expensive than having it cleaned and starched in the centre of the metropolis. The owners of laundries in the city have therefore petitioned the Municipal Council to levy a toll on all clean linen coming into the city from suburban laundries. Naturally the *lavandières*, *blanchisseuses*, and *repasseuses* of the *Baulieu* have protested *en masse* against this outrageous proposition. They say that it would be cruel and unjust to burthen them with additional tolls and taxes, as they are handicapped enough already—owing to the circumstance that many housewives now wash most of their linen at home, that female apparel has undergone a change, white petticoats, &c., having been discarded for coloured ones, and the white caps of *bonnes*, so eminently becoming and characteristic, once the glory of their wearers, have been set aside for ambitious hats and gigantic *coiffures*. I hear, however, that

the *Maitres de Lavoires* have a chance of gaining the day, as they have enlisted the sympathies of many of the municipal councillors.

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Apropos of the match girls' strike, the Trades Council, who, for the first time, has undertaken the duty of representing a class of unskilled labourers—the skilled artisans employed in organised and special trades having until now monopolised their interest and protection—state that "the moral outcome of the dispute will be poor indeed, unless the match-makers and all of us keep in view the labour question as a whole. It does not rest in a contest with Bryant and May, or any single firm. There is a line of cheapness below which nothing but degradation to the workers is the result, without advantage to the consumers, as may be realised by the ridiculously low price at which, for example, matches are now sold. The insatiable demand for the lowest price, irrespective of methods or consequences, is the curse of modern industrial life. The entire community must bear its share of the odium if, in this rush, it drives employers to drive their workers. Much might be done by a healthy public determination to encourage native production in preference to so-called cheap importations."

CORRESPONDENCE.

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* * * We do not hold ourselves responsible for opinions expressed by our Correspondents. Brevity and conciseness will have first consideration. See notices.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

SIR,—“Sister Despair's” letter touches on a subject concerning which the late Miss Alice Fisher has spoken to me more than once. I know that she was strongly of opinion that women should be *specialy trained* for the duties of a Lady Superintendent, and that long experience of Nursing work in the position of Sister (whose daily groove is somewhat narrow) would not necessarily fit her for the infinite variety of duties expected from the head of a hospital, who has to superintend both Nursing and housekeeping, and “manage” her little world in general. From personal experience I am sure that it is not always the best Nurse who makes the best Matron, although before all other qualifications a woman who holds that responsible position should have a scientific knowledge of Nursing, so that with half a glance she should be able to grasp the fact that the treatment ordered is being carried out to the letter of the law. Thoroughness is greatly needed in women's work, and I should suggest for the future, that before considering herself eligible for the post of Matron, a Sister should spend at least twelve months in learning the details of housekeeping and domestic management under some thoroughly experienced person.

HOME SISTER.

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