

similar to that just proposed, which was being successfully worked north of the border. She emphasized the fact that sentiment alone, unless accompanied by a knowledge of existing facts, will not effect reforms; and at present what hampered work was the lack of continuous statistics. The sympathy of the meeting was clearly with her, when she said with epigrammatic force, "we must have sufficient money to live on, and sufficient time to live in." As for the Women's Suffrage Bill, she believed that to be the key which would unlock many difficulties—a sentiment which all women workers heartily echo.

But the Resolution, practical as it seemed, was not to be passed without opposition. Miss Heather Bigg (Hon. Sec. Women's Industrial Defence League) protested. She submitted that there was danger in legislative interference, and that women should lean upon themselves for support, and not trust to Men's Trades Unions.

No one supporting her, Mrs. Gray (a representative of the Social Democratic Federation) then rose to speak to the Resolution, and to declare that she did not consider the County Council had done its duty by women. As this Journal is devoted to the reform of abuses in the Nursing profession, it is interesting to hear her charge. She declared that there are women in Lunatic, Imbecile, and Idiot Asylums working continuously thirteen hours a day; and, what is worse, some of these women were about to become mothers. Indeed, she added, to her certain knowledge, some had brought idiots and imbeciles into the world; at any rate, many of the children suffered from the long contact of the mothers with people of unsound mind.

Among the men sent by various labour organisations one could not help being struck by their serious, eager expressions. They clearly had looked poverty full in the face, and had sounded to the depths the tragedy of the lives of those they represented. One man, a foreigner, representing a tailoring and mantle-making trade, spoke of the frightful evils endured by foreign women and girls in the sweaters' dens, and advocated the appointment of inspectors in such districts who could understand the language of the workers. This, we are glad to say, evoked a hearty response from the Meeting, which clearly held that even pauper aliens should be treated with ordinary humanity and justice.

With the carrying of this Resolution the great object of the Conference was accomplished. Other subsidiary Resolutions were put, as for instance that the Council should be conducted upon non-party and non-sectarian lines; that the Council should consist of one delegate from each Society there represented; and that it be requested to form Special Committees for Finance, Investigation, Education, Statistics, Organisation, and for watching Parliamentary and Legal proceedings.

At the afternoon sitting, Canon Scott Holland gave an inspiring and enthusiastic address, in which he bore high testimony to the pluck and nobility, characteristic of the large body of working girls and women. Morning and evening, month after month, they are to be seen trudging backwards and forwards over the bridge, many of them full of self-sacrificing toil, 'ground down, yet not crushed.' Everything, he justly observed, tempted women to be satisfied with

casually working in the labour market; and by submitting to a low standard of life for herself, to lower the standard of life all round.

The evening meeting, which had more of the popular and less of the directly business element in it, was presided over by the liberal M.P., Mr. Haldane. There was an animated discussion in which a good many took part, including Miss Clementina Black. "The good of the woman is the good of the man; they must stand or fall together" was the all-pervading moral of her remarks. If only the moral sinks into the consciences of those, if any, who take an opposite view, the Conference will not have been held in vain.

The Women's Trade Union Association, then, has initiated its Central Council, with all the *éclat* and enthusiasm that it deserves; and the organisers are to be congratulated upon having received such hearty support. Few movements started for the benefit of women have promised more important or wide-reaching results. A false step may delay reforms for years. Every help and encouragement that can be afforded by a good start has been given. Now for the drudgery. Somebody must be placed at the helm who combines, with well-directed enthusiasm, undoubted business abilities and unceasing energy. The movement certainly deserves the hearty good-wishes of all working-men and women from the highest to the lowest.

A Book of the Week.

THE ANCESTRY OF THE NOVEL.*

The modern novel holds the proud position of being the most widely read, and of exercising the greatest influence, of any form of literature, using the word in the narrow sense of excluding journalism. Not only the man who desires to hold the mirror up to human nature, but the man who has a message to deliver, a solemn warning to utter, a social code to interpret, an ethical treatise to expound, forthwith envelops it with a plot, and sends it abroad under cover of the novel, knowing full well that in no other way can he command so large and attentive an audience.

How did this all come about? How was it that the mediæval romance—such as those relating to Charlemagne and his Paladins, to King Arthur and the Round Table, told by the mysterious minstrels in prose, but mostly in verse—became in the course of time the fiction of to-day?

This is the story that Professor Walter Raleigh has to tell, though he leaves his readers to find their own way after the appearance of "Waverley." He takes his pupils up into a high place, and from thence, in masterly style, at once erudite, condensed, pithy, and interesting, makes them look forth upon the broad, rich expanse of our English literature, and trace through it all the stories of human life and human passions—first the tiny source, scarcely distinguishable; then the uncertain rivulet, gaining strength, however, with the tributaries it receives from the Renaissance; then flowing majestically past the Elizabethan Age, enriched and deepened by Shakespeare's incomparable portrayal of human nature. Later, this stream becomes sluggish and uncertain,

* "The English Novel," by Walter Raleigh, Professor of Modern Literature at University College, Liverpool. (John Murray, London.)

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