

here—to know that God's gifts of fresh air, pure water, food and raiment were as much a part of His intentions for the well-being of the children of men as the undying life beyond the grave.

Mdme. Antoinette Sterling sang some delightful ballads, after which she spoke strongly on the social purity movement. She said "they were told not to speak on this terrible subject, but to shut their mouths and blush. But they would not consent to this. Silence was always dangerous. Let us have nothing going on either in society or in our homes that we are afraid to speak about."

After a most successful opening session the Conference was adjourned.

At the continued meetings of the British Women's Temperance Association, Lady Henry Somerset was re-elected President.

The first Resolution proposed denounced lynching, and cordially approved of the attitude taken on this question by the American Women's Christian Temperance Union. The Conference also set forth the urgent need of altering the Criminal Law Amendment Act, by abolishing the three months' limit within which, in the case of girls between 13 and 16, a prosecution can be instituted; by abolishing also "the reasonable cause to suppose" a girl to be 16 as an excuse for ruining her, and in other respects.

Resolutions were also carried urging the universal appointment of matrons to supervise women and girls under arrest at police-stations, and supporting Mr. Conybeare's Sale of Intoxicating Liquors to Children Bill.

Miss Florence Hobson has an interesting article in the *Humanitarian* on "Sex Prejudice and Woman's Progress," in the course of which she discusses many of our social problems, without, however, formulating any completely satisfactory conclusions. She opens by saying:—"It is not my purpose in this article to champion the interests of men. I have always believed them to be highly skilled experts in the noble art of self-defence against so-called feminine encroachments. But I believe it to be equally true that the extreme attitude taken by some emancipated women towards the opposite sex is calculated to seriously injure the true interests of women. We all know, of course, the injustice which women have suffered in the past—the cruel ignorance, the economic slavery (not yet completely redressed), the social indignities which have handicapped her for centuries—and we must recognise that their bitterness is a direct and natural outcome of the long ages of the oppression of women by men, and cannot be wondered at as a passing phase. But that it has come to stay or is anything more than a *mauvais quart d'heure* in the history of the woman question, I will not believe."

Miss Hobson's views on the difficulty of combining the effort of motherhood with wage-earning are specially worth calling attention to at this stage, when so much is being said to prove that women can follow their professions equally with men, in spite of the exhaustion of child-bearing:—"Women are, on the average, physically weaker than men. To this, of course, many will reply that however unfit women

may be at present to compete with men on equal terms, that the women of the future will, by better training, have changed all that. For example, a recent lecturer told us that she considered in the future women would become strong enough to carry on professions or trades outside the home, even during the years of child-birth and rearing, and that she looked forward to the time when most women would, like the Irish peasants to-day, be able to return to active work within about a week of child-birth."

"Now I would submit that those who hold such views claim for women not merely equality, but superiority. For they claim not only that woman shall continue to bear the strain of her own special function, but that, in addition to this, she shall be possessed of sufficient surplus power to enable her to compete on equal terms with man (who has not the burden of race-reproduction) in every other field. She must continue to be the creator of the child, and at the same time must not be disqualified by this for success in any other branch of creation—in literature, art, scientific invention and discovery, &c., &c."

Miss Hobson goes on to discuss the question of woman's labour, and this she does well: tracing, as so many now do, the condition of immorality among young women very largely to the difficulties in the way of "a fair wage for a fair working woman's day." "So long, too, as women are sweated, and the virtuous life continues to mean for the poorest girls the life of toil, bare and cold and miserable, so long will we have prostitution with all its horrors in our midst."

"And I do not hesitate to say that every woman who is an employer of other woman's labour, even though it be only that of domestic servants and who does not do all in her power to lighten toil, facilitate conditions, shorten hours and study in every possible way to brighten and humanise the lives of those under her control, is acting in a way to drive these women to seek their freedom at any price and is directly feeding prostitution."

"Much can be done by the revolt of the mothers against the *mariage de convenance*, if ever the type of mother which I have in mind can be brought to revolt and to take other than sordid views of matrimony. A large number of enlightened girls may do much to educate public opinion by refusing to marry immoral men, just as these same men would themselves refuse to marry unchaste women."

In conclusion Miss Hobson, in summing up the essential differences between men and women, says: "For my own part, I am inclined to believe that many of the finest qualities in the new type will grow out of the cultivation of those traits which are more essentially feminine and where woman moves naturally along the line; for example, the intuitive faculty, the power of sympathetic insight, the gift of order and organisation which makes many a woman a small Napoleon in her way, and above all, the richness of her emotional nature, which she has in common with the greatest poets and artists of all time. That very intensity of feeling which, in its wild state, is too often dissipated in hysterics and nervousness, may in the future, when better understood and controlled, become one of the sources of her greatest power."

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