

they write:—"We desire to record our experience, based on very close inquiry and observation of all the aspects of the matter, that the allegations and accusations so freely made on this subject are frequently baseless, and that not infrequently the shortcomings in question are directly traceable to the employer, whose zeal to carry out his share of duty in this matter is limited to the provision of three basins for twenty-five workers. It has surprised us in such a case to hear the superficial observer lamenting the carelessness of the young persons who fail to use the imposing array of "washing conveniences," while the fact is ignored that the water to fill them has to be carried from the other side of the factory, that if the washing is to be of any use each basin has to be carried away to be emptied and again refilled five times, that towels either do not form part of the "washing conveniences," or are provided at the rate of three a week, and that this washing has to be done during the time when the workers are naturally eager to rush off to their mid-day meal; or, tired out, are anxious to get home to rest and supper. Finally, that these elementary arrangements are not put under the control or care of any one responsible person."

The question of Hotels for Working Women, on the same lines as the Rowton Houses, is engaging the attention of Lord Rowton, and Sir Richard Farrant. The necessary funds are available, but the difficulties connected with the scheme are so great that at present the work cannot be undertaken, though there is no doubt that such houses are badly needed. We are glad to see that Sir Richard Farrant recognizes male limitations, in dealing with women, and is of opinion that "the question will never be solved till a woman with a great personality takes it up."

Miss Janes, Secretary of the National Union of Women Workers, wishes to hear of four ladies philanthropic workers, artists, secretaries, or other workers, who would like to share her house at Hampstead. Miss Janes is starting the house because she believes that there are many women workers to whom fresh air, and quiet in their leisure hours, and simple comfort are essential, and that they will be ready to co-operate with her in the establishment of a small, home-like place, in which they may have their personal needs cared for, and the stimulus of intellectual companionship, and of fellowship in good works. Application may be made to Miss Janes, at 59, Berners Street.

Two European ladies, residents of Bombay, Miss Duggan and Miss Westbrook, who had been visiting Belgaun, have died within a week from plague, contracted at that place.

WHAT TO READ.

- "Sirdar and Khalifa: or, The Reconquest of the Soudan." By Bennet Burleigh.
 "The Cry of the Children." By Frank Hird. Illustrated by D. Macpherson.
 "Hagar of Homerton." By Mrs. Henry E. Dudeney.
 "God's Prisoner: The Story of a Crime, a Punishment, a Redemption." By John Oxenham.
 "Arachne." By George Ebers. Translated by Mary J. Safford.
 "The Terror." By Felix Gras.
 "A Statesman's Chance." By Joseph Charles.

A Book of the Week.

"THE SECOND THOUGHTS OF AN IDLE FELLOW."*

THE Second Thoughts of an Idle Fellow is just the book to beguile away the tedious hours of a railway journey, and it has, therefore, put in an appearance at an auspicious moment. Those who enjoyed the "Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow," and they were many, will doubtless speedily possess themselves of its successor, and will read with enjoyment, and let us hope with profit, Mr. Jerome's meditations "On the Disadvantage of Not Getting What One Wants," "On the Inadvisability of Following Advice," and so on. All the same I think that Mr. Jerome has been unfortunate in the women he has met. That they are types I own. But there are women, not a few, who are not flabby, undecided, irresponsible creatures, and, personally, if we have types of one sort I should like him to give us specimens of the other also. Here is a description of the "going out of a woman":—

"Have you ever noticed the going out of a woman? When a man goes out, he says—I'm going out, shan't be long."

"Oh, George," cries his wife from the other end of the house, "don't go for a moment. I want you to —" She hears a falling of hats, followed by the slamming of the front door.

"Oh, George, you're not gone!" she wails. It is but the voice of despair. As a matter of fact, she knows he is gone. She reaches the hall, breathless.

"He might have waited a minute," she mutters to herself, as she picks up the hats, "there were so many things I wanted him to do."

She does not open the door and attempt to stop him, she knows he is already half-way down the street. It is a mean, paltry way of going out, she thinks; so like a man.

When a woman, on the other hand, goes out, people know about it. She does not sneak out. She says she is going out. She says it, generally, on the afternoon of the day before; and she repeats it, at intervals, until tea-time. At tea, she suddenly decides that she won't, that she will leave it till the day after to-morrow instead. An hour later she thinks she will go to-morrow, after all, and makes arrangements to wash her hair overnight. For the next hour or so she alternates between fits of exaltation, during which she looks forward to going out, and moments of despondency, when a sense of foreboding falls upon her."

Has Mr. Jerome in the course of his meditations ever considered the undeniable problem that a woman is whatever one expects her to be? Can this be the reason why his women are legitimate butts for chaff that he has never expected anything more of them? After considerable study of the sex, I have arrived at the following conclusion: Expect a woman to be stupid, and her denseness will exceed your wildest expectation. Encourage her to believe there is little limit to her capacity, and the chances are that the future has surprises in store for you. Lastly, put her on her mettle, and the stupidest woman will have flashes of genius. M.B.

* By Jerome K. Jerome. (Hurst and Blackett.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)