

tunity of thanking them for the honour they had done her in electing her President of the Association. It would be her earnest endeavour to promote its aims, which were just and necessary.

They were met to bring about a higher and more moral standard of life in the young womanhood of the country, and they relied on the truism that health and decent surroundings were necessary factors. They were, therefore, specially concerned with the provision of decent hygienic lodgings for young working girls and women. It was not difficult to imagine the effect which degrading and shameful conditions of life must in a short time exert over a young and frail sensibility. No attempt was at present made to give moral instruction in the schools; this was left to the voluntary agencies.

Criticism was directed against the propaganda of the Association to provide lodging-houses for women on the ground that it tended to destroy home life. She thought that those who spoke so eloquently on this point had not seen the home. When this consisted of one or two rooms for the accommodation of a large grown up family, with the father perhaps a fallen drunkard, the decencies of life were unattainable. Also the lodging homes were intended for those who were homeless—the widow in search of work, the factory girl, the servant in search of a situation. It was unreasonable to expect people who had to live at a low standard of decency and cleanliness to have a high moral standard. The housing question was at the root of social reform.

Lady Maclaren said that a great wave of industrialism had passed over the country, and society had not moved on to meet the new conditions. There was a great need of cheap and suitable lodgings for women. Young girls were migrating from the country to the towns to obtain the means of self-support, but no thought was given as to where and how they were to live, and the need for cheap and sanitary lodgings at a cost within their means was urgent for all grades and ranks of women workers. In some northern towns it was the custom to lock the servants out for the night if they had not returned by 10.30, and the police said that they had no place to which to take these girls for a night's lodging except the police cells. Immoral persons often frequented the common lodging-houses on the look out for young girls. Also in these houses means of washing and especially of washing clothes were most inadequate. People might employ a dirty man, but no one would employ a dirty woman. Municipal lodging houses could be made to pay. In Glasgow they paid 4 per cent.

Mrs. Hylton Dale said that the personal observation of ladies who had disguised themselves as tramps and slept in verminous common lodging houses and casual wards showed that there was an immense lack of accommodation for women of all grades and ages. There were critics who said there was no demand on the part of the women themselves. That might be so, because they were inarticulate.

Mrs. Mary Higgs, of Oldham, who, disguised as a working woman, had penetrated into casual wards and common lodging houses, sent a paper in which she said that the primary necessity of women was a place to live in in safety. The lives of many of our fellow women were full of hardship, nay, of peril. One girl in Sheffield forced to leave her home because her father had thrown boiling water over her was found by the police sheltering in a sewer. A lady who had spent some time in common lodging-houses in London was horrified at what she saw, yet these houses were registered under the London County Council. She could not see that it was right for a municipal register to tacitly cover vice.

Dr. Sykes, M.O.H., St. Pancras, spoke of the need of prevention, and Mrs. Charles Morrison (Liverpool) referred to the evil of sublet rooms—let to men, women, or both, and no questions asked. She said that "If Christianity does not get rid of one-roomed dwellings, one-roomed dwellings will get rid of Christianity." She spoke of the need for inspection of lodging-houses, especially at night, and the obvious impracticability of the women's sleeping quarters being inspected by men. "We need," she said, "city mothers as well as city fathers. The city beautiful must be morally clean and pure, as well as architecturally so."

Miss Beckett gave an interesting account of the work of the Church Army. The Rev. G. Z. Edwards said a week ago he had spent the night locked up in a cell with two other men, who told him in all friendliness he had better look out or in six or eight weeks he would be done for. If this was the case with a man, six hours might accomplish the ruin of a woman.

Mr. F. C. Mackereth spoke of the difficulty of any woman arriving in a town in England late at night of getting into a respectable house unless she had a man with her. "It is," he said, "damnable."

In the afternoon the two principal papers were by Councillor Margaret Ashton, of Manchester, on "Municipal Houses," which she emphasised could be made to pay, and by Mrs. Bramwell Booth on "Private Enterprise." Mrs. Lachlan Mackinnon gave an interesting account of an Aberdeen experiment.

#### WOMAN LUNACY COMMISSIONER.

When the Lunacy Bill came on for second reading in the House of Lords recently, Lord Courtney of Penwith moved an amendment to the first schedule with the object of giving a discretion to the Lord Chancellor to appoint a woman as a paid as well as an unpaid Commissioner. The Lord Chancellor agreed that it would not be easy to overstate the importance of having women associated with the care of the insane, and he unreservedly assented to the principle of the amendment; but he could not accept the amendment at the present time, this being a bill of a temporary character. We hope that before long Lord Courtney's suggestion will be carried into effect.

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