

Book of the Week.

WOMAN AND LABOUR.*

"In that clamour which has arisen in the modern world, where now this, and then that, is demanded for and by large bodies of modern women, he who listens carefully may detect as a keynote beneath all the clamour a demand which may be embodied in such a cry as this: *Give us labour and the training which fits us for labour. We demand this, not for ourselves alone, but for the race.*"

Woman's labour in relation to the race is the theme of this interesting work.

The great dame of a thousand years ago is made to ask, "What becomes of the country if the women forsake their toil?" And the burgher's wife asked why she did not labour in her husband's workshop. "God-sooth! Would you have me leave my household to starve in summer and die of cold in winter and my children untrained while I gad about and seek for other work. . . . I have no time to talk with fools. Who will rear and shape the nation if I do not?"

And the maiden spinning at her cottage door asked why she was content and did not seek new fields of labour, "hears the little voices of her unborn children calling 'Oh, mother, mother, make haste that we may be!' Do you ask me why I do not go out and labour in the fields with the lad I have chosen. . . . Who will give folk to the nation if I do not?"

"Such would have been our answer in Europe in the ages past. Man had his work; we had ours. We know that we upbore the world on our shoulders; and that through the labour of our hands it was sustained and strengthened, and we were contented.

"But now a change has come."

The authoress goes on to show how slowly and surely machinery and modern invention "has entered the field of human labour and left nothing as it was. . . . Even the minor domestic operations are tending to pass out of the circle of woman's labour."

So the tendency of the age is for the woman to become parasitic.

"Time was," cried a Roman writer of Rome's most luxurious epoch, "when the matron turned the spindle with the hand, and kept at the same time the pot in her eye that the pottage might not be singed, but now," he adds bitterly, "when the wife, loaded with jewels, reposes among pillows, or seeks the dissipation of baths and theatres, all things go downward and the State decays." Yet neither he nor that large body of thinkers and writers who saw the condition towards which the parasitism of woman was tending to reduce society preached any adequate remedy. . . . They seemed never to have perceived that it was not by attempting to return to the ancient and for ever closed fields of toil, but by entering upon new

that she could alone serve her race and retain her own dignity and virility.

"We to-day believe that behind us there follows a longer train than any of our own race and people; the sound of the tread we hear behind us is that of all earth's women bearing within them the entire race.

"The banner we unfurl to-day is not new; it is the standard of the old free monogamous labouring woman which twenty hundred years ago floated over the forests of Europe. We shall bear it on, each generation as it falls passing it into the hand of that which follows; till the women of the humblest races shall be gathered beneath its folds, and no child shall enter life that was not born within its shade."

The noble words that we have quoted, though they are perforce somewhat disconnected, should fire every woman to read the book from which they are taken.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

July 13th.—Princess Louise (Duchess of Argyll) formally opens the Little Folks' Home at Bexhill, and a Fair in aid of the funds.

July 13th.—Meeting of Protest in connection with the treatment of women in the National Insurance Bill. Chairman, Miss Gore Booth. Caxton Hall, Westminster. 8 p.m.

July 14th.—Meeting of Nurses' Committee to consider Resolutions on the National Insurance Bill, affecting their interests. 431, Oxford Street, 8 p.m.

July 15th.—Irish Nurses' Association. Social Gathering. The Scalp. Cyclists meet at Clonskea Tram Terminus. 4 p.m.

July 15th.—Brompton Hospital Sanatorium, Frimley. Annual View Day.

July 17th to 21st.—Royal Visit to Scotland. July 18th, the Queen visits the Women's and Children's Hospital at Bruntsfield, Edinburgh. July 19th, the King and Queen visit the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh.

July 18th.—Church Nurses' Guild. Quarterly Service at Holy Trinity, Marylebone. 7 p.m.

July 19th to 21st.—National Association for the Prevention of Consumption and Other Forms of Tuberculosis. Annual Conference, Caxton Hall, Westminster, 10.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m.

July 21st.—British Medical Association. Meeting in Birmingham.

July 22nd.—National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland. Meeting of Executive Committee, 3.30 p.m. Meeting of Grand Council, 4 p.m. 431, Oxford Street, London, W. Tea.

July 28th.—Irish Nurses' Association. Social Gathering. Howth Summit. Cyclists' meet at the Crescent, Clontarf. 4 p.m.

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

There's scarce a gladness in the world
Without a little sadness;
There's scarce a sadness in the world
Without a gleam of gladness.

ARTHUR E. ROWEN.

* By Olive Schreiner. (T. Fisher Unwin, London.)

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