

We were received by the Director, a man who impressed one with his energy and determination to lift some of those miserable creatures into a better mode of life. His clean white jacket indicated readiness to check the spread of disease by himself aiding in the removal of such a blot to civilisation.

Every applicant—unless under the influence of drink—is on reception registered, then given a bag on which is a large number. In this bag is a clean shirt. After bath and food he goes to bed putting his clothes into the bag. This bag of clothes is conveyed to the disinfection chamber in the basement, put into the zymotic oven at one end, and after being subjected to great heat, taken out at the other, carried back to the dormitory, and placed on a chair or stool at the foot of the bed ready to be put on clean next morning. At any time after 5 a.m. the man can get up, put on these disinfected clothes, have a breakfast, and set forth in search of a job, more fit to mix with others and not so likely to be rejected by employers as he might be dirty and breakfastless.

Four nights' lodging is given free, and then if the man is unsuccessful in finding employment he goes before the Director, who endeavours to find where the difficulty arises. If inefficient, he is helped by some training, wood-chopping, paper sorting, &c. No loafing. Big boys are dealt with a little more rigorously, to avoid their drifting into the shiftless class and adding to the population more of the same sort.

Women are equally helped, and it must help them for the struggles of the day to have had a clean bed and quiet sleep. The bedsteads are of iron frame, sacking laced down either side makes them easy of removal for cleansing. Babies go to one division, where in plain but clean box cots they have the opportunity of sleeping, the mother coming every three hours to the breast fed, the others are attended to by the Sisters in charge.

In the boys' dormitory there were extra beds down the middle, indicating pressure for accommodation, but no unpleasantness from want of air. Commenting on the crowded state we were told that one was closed for disinfection. Again, asking a question as to certain beds, we were told those boys wet their beds, therefore are made to get out every two hours. So an endeavour is made to instil more cleanly habits.

Having made a round of the entire building close on midnight, the hospitality of the Director's wife provided us cocoa and eggs and bread-and-butter. Then by almost deserted streets we returned to our hotel, feeling that Amsterdam was setting an example which might with advantage be copied. Unfortunately some cities only gather these outcasts together, stopping short of helping them to help themselves.

CLARA LEE.

The problem of the "bottom dog" is an acute one in this country, and it is of great interest to hear of the successful work going on in Holland.

## OUTSIDE THE GATES.

### WOMEN.

The Reception held on Tuesday, at the Knightsbridge Palace Hotel, by the Women Writers Suffrage League, to meet the new President, Mrs. Flora Annie Steel, was a very distinguished assembly, and most brilliant little speeches were delivered on "Why I am a Suffragist."

Mrs. Steel's address was delightful, inspired with fine feeling and dignity, and to listen eagerly on one afternoon to Mr. F. W. Pethick Lawrence, Madame Sarah Grand, Mrs. Israel Zangwill, Miss Beatrice Harraden, Mrs. Baillie Reynolds, Miss Belloc Lowndes, Mr. A. G. Gardiner, and half a dozen others, and still talk Suffrage over the teacups, proves how deeply in earnest the Women Writers are in their demand for the Vote.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick has been elected Chairman of Council of the Society of Women Journalists. The charming rooms in quiet St. Bride's Avenue, Fleet Street, are most conveniently situated for busy women journalists. There all the principal papers can be scanned, resting meanwhile in a really comfortable chair. The library is growing rapidly—a great boon to those who are eager to read new books. Young journalists are finding the help and expert advice to be obtained from the courteous officers of the very greatest use in starting their literary career.

The current issue of *The Englishwoman* publishes a most interesting article by Mr. Charles D. MacKellar, on Miss Edith Mary Durham, War Correspondent at the front in the Near East. "It is," we are told "ten years ago or even more, since Miss Durham first became a wanderer in these Balkan lands, and in that long space of time she has become very well acquainted with some of them, and especially with the mountains of Albania, and the warlike tribes who dwell in them and at their feet. She has acquired the Serb language, and also a certain knowledge of the Albanian tongue, which is the ancient Illyrian. She has studied their customs and ways, their songs and legends, and made herself familiar with their hopes, their wrongs, and their ambitions. The Albanians are a chivalrous race, and because she so trusted herself amongst them, she won their confidence and regard."

Thus it came to pass that when a short time ago a tired, wet, muddy, famishing woman rode into the midst of the Malissori tribesmen, she was received with cries of "Our Queen has come back," and "greeting her in their wild way, the weirdly picturesque mountain warriors, armed to the teeth and keen for war, rode on with her through the wet mist and mirk of the night, till a rough mountain home received them, and their heroic but bedraggled "Queen" sat down with them to take her share in their rough meal of a sheep-boiled almost whole!"

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)