

The Working Woman.

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Introduction.

The subject of woman is one that has been treated from every point of view, every phase of life now common to woman, and every sphere which it is ever hoped will be attained by her; and yet we feel the importance of this subject so great and pressing that it is with the deepest interest, sincerity and hope to gain a deeper insight into this question that it is again taken up. It is important, because upon this rests so many other difficulties in our social world. If woman's place, work and wages, and the condition of woman as a whole be solved, it would without further effort put to flight the many troubles and sorrows which now reign supreme, especially in our large cities, among the poorer class of people.

a Bit of history.

We find that in very early times

woman was honored not according to the social ideas of the world, but more according to her character. This was undoubtedly because the social laws had not yet been formulated.

Today, we look back, and wonder how people lived in these olden times; but as we advance in knowledge, we find that all humanity enjoys life either in one way or another. It may not be according to our ideal life, but according to his own. To people of our times, life in those days was of a low type. They were happy in their own lives, if men did buy their wives, and did so many other things which seem strange to us. Not until the time of Greece did they find a better way. Then marriage was first based on love, and in general it has lasted thru all these centuries. And yet to this day, how often do we find, that it has based on anything but love!

Woman at this time was always inferior to man in every respect. This has now to a great extent been out grown. We can probably not realize how much man was held above woman.

Xenophon, the great historian, spoke of woman as a child, petted by her husband. About three hundred and fifty years later, Plutarch, who will always live in literature as the author of "Parallel Lives,"

puts man and woman on an equal footing.

The Roman woman was endowed with more legal rights than others at that time.

The Jewish woman shows strength rather than beauty. Among those who represent the almost pure idyllic life are, Deborah, Esther, Ruth and others whom we of today so often consult as to how and what to do under great difficulties. We have reason to believe that they were strong. Deborah not only had the ability to lead, but she also dared do it. So we today, knowing what is to be done, having every opportunity to fit ourselves for doing a thing, should dare to do.

Present Status of Woman.

Today, if we look at the American woman from one point of view, we find that she is suppressed as much or perhaps more than in the early days of Greece and Rome. In 1899, it is reported that woman in some states is not allowed her own earnings. In others, she has full property rights, others only partial control, and in a few places, she has the power to cast her ballot, but in most cases she is classed with the idiots.

Woman's Suffrage.

The leaders in this movement were Lucretia Mott, Martha C Wright, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary Ann McClintock. This was as early as 1848. They based their views, in advocating woman's Rights, on the Declaration of Independence. Later, Margaret Fuller, in Literature; Miss Brown, in the ministry; and Susan B. Anthony in the temperance work were strong supporters of the rights of women. This part of our subject cannot be fully dealt with here. It is sufficient to say that the work is growing and patient work and education will bring, in due time, the best results.

Work and Wages.

The work and wages of women are changed with economic changes. Before the introduction of machinery, woman was an active instrument in the industrial world, but was not a wage worker. Industry was then carried on in the house; weaving, spinning, sewing, &c. were done by the patient hands of woman and

that without pay.

After the introduction of machinery into England woman was about to give up in despair. She was left with only her domestic work. Out of the introduction of machinery, grew the factory system. This occurred in the first half of this century. However, she soon learned she could follow her industry to the factory. The factories of England were soon full of women and children. They being more adapted to the work and worked cheaper than men, resulted in taking the work from the men.

The homes of these women and children who worked in factories were poor, their associations evil, and all factory towns and factory labor were degrading.

In about 1815, and '30, the factories in New England could get women workers only by giving higher pay. The factory system in New England started on a higher plane than in England, but not a perfect one.

Factory laws were passed to limit the

length of the working day for women and children. A child was compelled by law also, to attend school a certain length of time and be a certain age before entering the factory work.

These laws were of some benefit tho not a great deal. Parents would sometimes be untruthful about their children's age.

Why do women work cheaper than men?

1. They have no organized effort as the men have to protect their wages.
2. It is believed that they can live cheaper. But their wages are disproportioned to their expenditures.
3. The low wages are caused to a great extent by the fact that so many girls in large cities take up a work on which they do not necessarily depend for a living, but simply for extra fin money. If merchants can hire such

clerks cheaper than others, They will do so and this brings the poor, who must depend on her wages for her own living and perhaps a mothers, brothers and sisters, into the limits of starvation wages.

A Table on Comparison of Average Earnings of the Same Occupation and grade of Efficiency, is given in the Bulletin, of the Department of Labor, for May, 1897, on pages 243 and 244. In which we find under the head of "Domestic and personal service" that laundry industry is given in this industry, men and women of the same degree of efficiency worked at the same occupation in four instances in each of which the men were paid an average of 23% more, than the women, in these four instances. Men were found working at the same occupation, in one instance with children of the same grade of efficiency, in which case, they were paid nearly 93% more

than the children.

As said before, women get the work because they are better adapted, more easily controlled, cheaper, more reliable etc. In view of this fact, it would seem that women would be employed more than men, but it is not so. Machinery is changing so that women are being displaced in many industries on account of more automatic work being done by machinery. Woman has not the physical strength for heavy work. But there are occupations in which women are always employed, men not being fitted for them and never engaging in them.

Boarding Homes and Clubs for Working Women.

The women who work in the factories need the social side of their lives developed, for they really have no social life. Most of the working girls and women have no relatives or friends. It is for these girls and women who work for very low income.

that the boarding homes and clubs have been secured. To give them the necessities comforts and moralities.

They must live in lodging houses, where there is anything and every-thing but attraction. Their rooms are small and dingy, poor ventilation and unsanitary. A very few private families take in these girls, but it is rarely that they do. The vast number live in the afore-said conditions.

The first organized effort in this country to care for these people was in 1852. The Ladies Christian Union, in New York offered a home to self supporting women. This movement has since then grown in every respect.

The great needs in Chicago today are home and mothers for homeless children. The small homes now established are not sufficient for the demand. Many are turned away for lack of room.

Boston, thru the Young Women's Christian Association, get homes as far as possible, and reports that it is very difficult to find the right kind of a

lodging place for a reasonable amount of money, such as the ordinary working girl can pay.

The view in New York is to have a large dormitory. The girls paying a small amount for its use. This, if properly governed, would be a great development along this line. There is, however, a class of women not yet reached. They are those who have no money at all and are seeking employment.

Thus far, we have dealt with the women engaged in what is called, unpleasant work, made so by the conditions and surroundings under which she works. To me, there seems to be no reason why factory work, clerking, etc. should not be made fully as respectable as the best domestic labor, such as we are taught in our Domestic Laboratory, teaching and all other employments which women have carried on successfully and are still being developed as time goes on.

Agriculture as an employment for women is delightful, healthful, and an independent occupation. In addition,

women have succeeded in all the following occupations: fruit ranches in California, cattle ranches in Colorado, stock ranches in Kentucky, and sheep ranches in Vermont. The best suited branches for the average women are, small fruits, raising chickens, dairying etc. These are also the most profitable. The important thing in carrying out work of this kind is to have courage and definite aim here given success will follow.

Conclusion.

Gathering up the fragments in this rambling discourse we find that woman has done and apparently must do, degrading work for little or no pay; and that she has done and can do good and noble work, of which she may well be proud. Knowing that the good can be done and that the evil is being done, how can we sit with careless or perhaps no thought of our sisters who are perishing for the great and good. We also know the great responsibility resting upon the poor mothers, who are unable to help themselves or their children into a better and

higher realm of life, which might be theirs if they but knew how to free themselves. Jacob A. Riis in his book "How the other half lives," will show clearly the condition of the women and children of the poorer classes. Solve this problem, and others will be solved. How much good could, and would, come, from these poor children who live in the streets of our large cities, if they were properly cared for and educated.

No one can care for a child like its mother. This is true, with a few exceptions. Help the mothers, and the offspring will be greatly benefited and humanity as a whole would rise in strength and morality. It has been ably said, 'That the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world. We must then be up and doing, in answer to Mrs. Browning's poem.

"Do you hear the children weeping Oh! my brother.
Ere the sorrow comes with years.

They are leaning their dear heads against their
mothers

And that cannot stop their tears.

The young lambs are bleating in the meadows

The young birds are chirping in the nest

But the young young children Oh! my brother.

They are weeping bitterly in the playtime of

the others

In the country of the free.