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Evening Reading for the
Workers' Family

THE PATH ONE TREADS.

Two young girls lived in adjoining cottages in a great city, who were very good friends. They were working girls, daughters of workmen, and they were, at eighteen, full of the joy of life. The treadmill of factory existence had not yet worn away the exhilaration and enthusiasm of youth.

Their homes were comfortable, pleasant and full of affection. The two, Jennie Dean and Myrtle Desmond, walked together every morning to the shirt factory where they worked. Being young and strong, this walk did them good, furnishing sufficient out-door exercise to offset the long hours of sitting in a close and dusty workroom. As yet they showed no ill-effects of the tedious toil.

Their employers were not despotic; holidays were granted occasionally. The girls lived at home with their parents, who did not need their wages, except as they voluntarily contributed some delicacy to the family table. They dressed well for girls in their station in life. It was a delight to watch these young girls as they started away in the morning with a brisk, springy step; their eyes beaming, their bright faces glowing, jokes, light chatter, and smiles springing to their lips as naturally as songs pour forth from the throats of the birds.

They had worked in the factory from the day they were twelve years old, but their cheery home life, freedom from anxiety and hard toil after shop hours; their little leisure and social pleasures had preserved their freshness and health. In their own neighborhood were a number of young people like themselves, workers, able to enjoy many of the good things of life. The weariness of lives of toil was lightened by the chances of mental and social enjoyment. They had a literary club, a singing society, and little social parties every week, where young people learned to know each other better and which promoted many a little romance that afterward ripened into life-long arrangements.

The two girls with tastes so much alike in everything, came to admire the same man, and he appeared to be as much attracted to the one as the other. If he ever showed one special attention he soon found means of bestowing some pleasurable treat on the other. He liked the society of both in a friendly, social manner, and they seemed to like well to have it so; thus the deep friendship of the girls was undisturbed by what might have been a mischievous rivalry.

But long, pleasant days to working people do not always last. The time came when the happy young people were compelled to part. Evan Hamilton was offered a better opportunity for getting ahead in another city. With many deep regrets and promises to see them frequently, he left his friends. Shortly afterward Myrtle's father received a small legacy from a deceased uncle, who had lived in the East, which enabled him to go into business with some other moneyed men, and so to gain an income from other people's labor as well as his own. He moved into quite an elegant house in another part of the city. Myrtle was sent away to school and so left the shop forever.

Jennie was left to plod along alone. Others of her old companions left for various reasons; until she felt among the other workers a sense of isolation. Foreign workers had taken the places of her old friends, and though she did not share in the prejudices of many Americans against workers from another country, still, she could not enjoy their society as she had that of the people who had grown up with her.

Jennie worked away two years more without many friends or companions and then her mother died. Her elder brother had gone away to the West, promising a better opportunity for making his way to an energetic young man. It seemed best for her to remain at home and keep house for her father and her younger brother. This younger brother found work in a factory too far from home to allow him to board there. The father seemed to droop, to lose all energy and desire to live after his wife died—she had possessed the courage, the power and the determination of the family.

As winter came on he fell ill, lingered along for two or three months and finally succumbed to his fate, died and was buried. There were some few small debts. The place was sold, the debts paid and the little money remaining put in the bank to the credit of the three children. They had not heard from the brother in the West for years and did not know where to look for him. Each share was too small to depend upon as an income, and it was necessary that they both work.

Jennie went back to the shop and secured her old place. She rented a single room where she prepared her own food, and worked harder than ever. All social life was now completely shut away from her. She had no leisure, no friends, no opportunities for mental or spiritual development—nothing was left her but work.

The time dragged by. Occasionally she heard from her old friend Myrtle and they made several plans to meet, but these were never carried out. Finally all communication between them ceased. Of Evan Hamilton she knew nothing, beyond a mention or two of his name in Myrtle's letters. He was doing well, but she would not make any further inquiries, as he

seemed utterly to have forgotten her; heard that her elder brother died far away in a distant mining camp. He had sent her a few nuggets of gold and a few mementoes, but she would like to have known more, but she was poor and could make no inquiries, accepting only such information as one or two comrades of his vouchsafed to give her.

Then her younger brother, wanted to marry, and proposed that she give into his hands her share of the money to help establish a home; this broke up her home, but they were to come, or, if she preferred, the money in the future, it should be returned. Jennie agreed to this, but had a secret cry after she saw the money in her brother's hands, for she knew him to be a selfish, slow-going fellow, and that her chances, whether for the money again or of ever seeing the money again, were very slim, indeed.

She went to visit him after he brought his wife home, but they were not favorably impressed with each other. The sister-in-law appeared to be afraid Jennie wished to come and live with them immediately, and Jennie, resenting this feeling, was very cool and formal. This ended their relations for some years.

Occasionally Jennie found time to attend a little church service, or stood near her lodging place. One Sunday she sat in a secluded corner and quietly listened to these words: "Contentment is a blessed gift to the sorrow-laden and the toiler. Perseverance, patience, industry and economy are sure to lead to success, prosperity and happiness. Whoever is willing to work and wait, no matter how hard the lot or how long the road, may be sure of rest, enjoyment, triumph in the end."

She had worked and saved and plodded patiently along as her meek disposition inclined her to do ever since she was twelve years of age, and she was now thirty-eight. She had missed but few working days in all that time. She had performed all day to prosper to prosperity, and every garment she wore was made or fixed over by herself between the hours of nine and twelve o'clock at night. Was not that economy? She turned her dresses, trimmed her hats, patched her shoes, inked her gloves, and kindled her fire anew twice a day to save fuel, drank weak tea and warmed over scraps of meat, and walked four miles to save car fare. Wasn't that economy?

She had never complained or grumbled or talked back to the foreman; never joined a strike or remonstrated at a lowering of wages. Wasn't that patience? And she had waited silently, had crushed down all envious, tired, miserable thoughts. Was not that near contentment as possible? And how much nearer was she today to prosperity and happiness than when she first began? Not a lot. She had not twenty dollars in the world. Should illness or any new misfortune befall her she had no friend to whom she could confidently turn. The little education she had once possessed was nearly forgotten. Her love for books and fondness for scientific objects had died out for lack of opportunity to cultivate them. The romance of life had barely touched her existence, and had gone forever. She was not likely now to meet a congenial soul in the monotonous walk to and from her work and the congenial soul would not have recognized its mate in the little withered body dressed in shabby black. What chances for happiness remained for her? A few more years of toil, of frugal living, of loneliness and then the hospital and an unknown grave in the potter's field—this was all she could possibly expect for, her long waiting and patience and industry.

After Jennie listened to this sermon, and she reflected upon it over and over again, it was impressed upon her that she might better herself, if she changed her work. This everlasting stitch, stitch, stitch, was so narrowing, so wearying, so dwarfing. In her present environment, she made no friends; she could do one else any good; she could learn nothing new or good. But what could she do? She had no education for any higher occupation. She could not crowd herself in among the women who were engaged in the cultivation of the "higher life." She could not write, or speak or teach. She could not afford to stop and study and learn of others. She knew not how she was to bring herself in contact with her fellow-beings, except—there was but one way—she could go out to service.

She would be serving her fellow-man, perhaps be doing more really useful labor and get into closer relationship with good people.

It was generally looked upon as a humiliating position, but who was there to care? Not her brother, who was contentedly living her own life without thought for her. It might break up the long, weary monotony of her life.

Looking over the advertisements for servants, she came across one which seemed to appeal to her. It was for a second girl in a small family, where she would be required to act as lady's maid sometimes. Jennie thought that if the lady were nice she might be very happy in such a place. She put on her humble little bonnet and wrapped her brown shawl about her—an attire that will extinguish the most graceful beauty in the world.

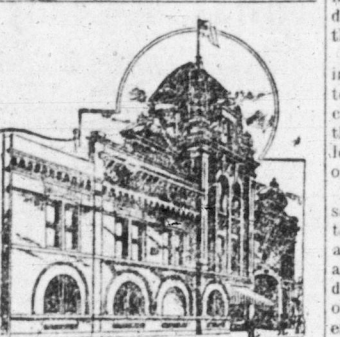
Her face was mild and sweet, but thin and withered, her little worn figure seemed to shrink away from the gaze of others and her narrow life with all its weariness, and monotony and emptiness was expressed in her dejected, humble little walk. A mere, insignificant, working woman beginning to grow old, and she felt conscious of it.

A lady reclined in an easy chair, with her face turned away, as Jennie entered. She wore a lovely pale pink gown of the finest material, with pink and white bows of cream ribbon dotting it here and there. Her bright gold-brown hair gleamed over her shoulders in wavy masses, and the white hand lying in her lap was as delicate and symmetrical as the hand of an angel might be.

"Beautiful and young," Jennie thought, with just a slight quail of envy, and the lady turned as the girl announced her. The handsome, young-looking face, with its delicate, pink color, the long-lashed lustrous eyes, and full brow, indicated loveliness, culture, thoughtfulness. Jennie first thought this, and then came a vague sense of something familiar in the countenance and whole personality. Before the lady spoke a word from the doorway said:

"My dear, may I come in and speak to you for a moment?" A gentleman entered. A handsome, well-groomed, well-dressed gentleman, and Jennie shrank within herself in the presence of two such imposing specimens of humanity. Then startled, she looked

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again. She knew them both now—and oh, how far from her they stood. Their paths, winding along such different routes, through such different scenes had now crossed, but still were so far apart. They stood in the sunshine, with fair breezes blowing gently upon them and flowers blooming at their feet.

She stood in the dark valley, among the rocks, torn by the briars strewn along her pathway, bruised and worn and dusty by her long wearisome journey, ignorant, awkward and plain. And yet early in life they had danced merrily, along together the same road, and she had been as bright, as pretty, as full of the joy of life as they. How had she missed their path? Had she had any choice?

Jennie stood by a moment, while all gazed intently at one another. Then she turned and said tremblingly:

"I beg your pardon. I believe I have no errand here, after all," and withdrew. Lizzie M. Holmes, in The Federationist.

National Civic Federation
(By Martin Fox, President Iron Moulders' Union of North America.)

The nineteenth century, which has just been gathered by the scythe of time, saw wonderful transitions in every line of human effort, and he would be bold indeed who would prophesy that there will not be still greater changes in the twentieth century, now in its infancy.

We seem to be on the eve of a better understanding of the relations that should exist between capital and labor. On every hand the close student will find evidences to justify the thought:

Force, the primitive arbiter, is giving place to a broader and more intelligent court. Public opinion disconcerts "trial by combat" in the administration of justice. It has long ago been buried with the code of which it was a part.

In the field of industry, strange to say, that obsolete practice still maintains. But employers and workmen are alive to its folly and injustice, and await but the proper means to discard it forever. At the beginning of the twentieth century we stand expectant.

I am an enthusiastic supporter of the principle of conciliation in industrial disputes. In my capacity as President of the Iron Moulders' Union I have had ample opportunities to gauge its advantages. Readers of these pages have been told before the experience which this organization had with the Stove Founders' National Defense Association—a militant combination of the stove manufacturers of the United States.

Since 1891, there has been no dissension between the members of this association and the union which has not yielded to the good offices of a committee of conciliation composed of an equal number of representatives of both organizations.

My faith in conciliation is deeply rooted and justified by my personal experience. The decisions do not always give satisfaction to the workmen sometimes they excite violent denunciation. That must be expected, for substantial betterment.

Holding these opinions, it logically follows that I view with favor the promotion of an Industrial Department of the National Civic Federation, and endorse its purposes as set forth in the declaration adopted at the New York meeting last December. The task it has undertaken is a delicate one. Discouraging failures may mark its early efforts. But I am firmly convinced that its moral influence alone justifies the commendation of every organized workman.

The "Committee of Thirty-Six" in its essence disposes of the short-sighted policies—"nothing to arbitrate," or "refuse to recognize" a labor union.

Any employer—and there are still a few left—who assumes the high and mighty ground that he will "run his own business," even to the extent of dictating absolutely the wages and conditions of those whom he employs, will be out of line with representative thought of his own class, and will find little sympathy for his absurd claims.

Despite its seeming incongruities, I view the principle involved in the "Committee of Thirty-Six" as the logical result of long years of agitation, conflict and earnest thought. It will not prove the panacea for all our industrial ills, may, of itself, do little to minimize our minor conflicts, but it is pregnant with hope for the future when the relation of employer and employed be better understood.

Our present duty lies in promoting a better understanding of conciliation, and consistent with this duty, in co-operating as we are permitted, to crown the efforts of the Industrial Department of the National Civic Federation with success.

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Big Bargains in Blouses—10 dozen beautiful Gingham Pattern Blouses just the thing for present wear. Regular \$1 and \$1.25. Special 50c and 75c.
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