

The Trouble With Us All

JESMOND DENE

BUT in spite of the Sanctity of Work, in spite of the manifest blessing upon it, work is not the whole gospel of progress, or at least not as it is often understood,—just a form of busy-ness, a manner of occupation with something that we call work, something which manages to establish a sort of monopoly not only over our time, but over our life; exalting itself into the place and investing itself with the whole dignity of work, until we become almost afraid of the higher pursuits of life and our faculties less and less capable of embracing them.

We have come out of a great war and have experienced a mighty deliverance. Yet we are not happy. We are restless, nervous, over-strained—not perhaps over-worked, but over-busy, over-occupied—"many coming and going, and no leisure so much as to eat," still less to be quiet, to think, to pray; talking, organizing, controverting, living in public. Of course there is and must be much of this; some of us must give ourselves to it, and where it is a real necessity it is an honourable one. But it comes about that we cease to think of it as a necessary evil; we form it into a habit and almost exalt it into an ideal.

We cannot rest from the round of "doing things;" unless we are "doing something," we are oppressed with the sense of time misused, even with some feeling of guilt, just as our grandmothers, or some of them, used to be ill at ease if one of the maid-servants were found to have a moment's leisure through the day, and would instantly devise some fresh task. And so "our busy crowded little lives come to have their reflection in our busy, crowded little minds," depriving themselves of the necessary conditions for growth, almost shrinking from "the deep and solitary places of peace with their disquieting beauty," not able to come face to face with themselves and the reality of themselves. And yet—

"I deem that there are powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.
Think you, mid all this mighty sum
Of things forever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we will still be seeking?"

A reminder far more necessary now than when it was first uttered, for everything in our modern life seems to conspire against "the powers" who might do this gracious work in us.

"The gifts and blessings of civilization have to be paid for as never before in an extravagant expenditure of nervous force by men, women and children. The cost of advancing civilization is high. Payment has to be made for it at every step, in nerve and heart and brain. The race of life was never so swift, the conflict never so fierce as to-day. The artificial life man has constructed for himself carries with it no balm or healing, and the strain will be intensified as science proceeds and commerce becomes more exacting."

These are wise words, the truth of which we can all illustrate from our personal experience,—consider, for instance, the revolution in daily life caused by the telephone. An investigation has recently been made in the Old Country into the feeling with which various classes of men in the community regard their own work. As the result of a widespread enquiry, it was found that while miners, engineers and industrial workers generally voted their work "all toil," farmers, gardeners and shepherds admitted to enjoyment in theirs. There is food for meditation in this and perhaps the reason of it is not far to seek.

We all feel the need of inspiration, for none of us lives by bread alone,—by shorter hours, by higher wages, by more things, more activities, more means of recreation. The very spread of education, the multiplication of books, newspapers, free libraries,—all these help to lift us into the ranks of those who know, or at least of those who think they know and aspire to know; yet do we not all look for our master; for one

to direct, to interpret, to inspire, to unite, to energise. These very conditions affect our leaders perhaps more than ourselves; our modern life drags them perpetually into the open, forces them to talk, to give judgments, to be interviewed, to live in public; we deliberately exhaust the reservoir within them, and then are astonished and grieved because they have neither refreshment nor nourishment to give us. It has all come about by a sort of perversion of the true ends of life.

The "gloomy Dean," as he is sometimes called, tells us that he looks upon the 20th century as probably destined to be an age of prolonged tension, anxiety and, for many, of great suffering,—of bitter passions and terrible crimes; yet adds "that a great revival of idealism with a religious basis is not impossible and would transform the situation." The very restlessness of men, their endless experiments in the regions of thought seem to prove their need for this. "What is truth?" they ask, not in jest, but in bitter earnest. "We need religion; but to whom shall we go? Where is it to be found?" Humanity itself found utterance in the voice of those Greeks who came to Philip saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." It is as true to-day as ever,—more than ever perhaps. "There be many that say: Who will show us any good?" and the answer stands in the Psalmist's prayer: "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us."

Where? To many the Church is just the place where they will not look; they seem to see in the Church to-day "a reflection of the bustle, the strife, the rivalry, the commercialism which they find everywhere else," and as a competitor with the world the Church can never be more than a failure. If it could succeed, it would "succeed unhappily." And yet the Church is called and destined to witness perpetually to God and to the unseen, and not least to witness to the Divine quiet and the Divine restfulness, which whether we know it or not, we all so greatly need. The very building which we call "the church" is meant to be the refuge of our souls; the place of peace where we can find shelter from the strife of tongues and the unceasing demands of active life; the mountain top of the spirit where we may be alone with the Divine Presence; where our seeking hearts may search and find the peace of those who love God's law.

"Sweet Peace, where dost thou dwell? I humbly crave,

Let me once know."

He searched and sought, but could not find, and then—

"At length I met a reverend good old man;

Whom when for Peace

I did demand, he thus began

'There was a Prince of old

At Salem dwelt, Who lived with good increase

Of flock and fold.

'He sweetly lived; yet sweetness did not save

His life from foes.

But after death out of His grave

There sprang twelve stalks of wheat;

Which many wondering at, got some of those

To plant and set.

'It prospered strangely, and did soon disperse

Through all the earth;

For they that taste it do rehearse

That virtue lies therein;

A secret virtue, bringing peace and mirth

By flight of sin.

'Take of this grain, which in my garden grows,

And grows for you:

Make bread of it; and that repose

And peace which everywhere

With so much earnestness you do pursue

Is only there.'

Remember that you must be so sure of God's omnipresent goodness that no adverse story will cause you doubt or fear.

Remember that you cannot build up your business, your health nor your happiness by violence, discord, worry or impatience. Your salvation is in patience, love, harmony and praise.

What About Women?

SIR ANDREW MACPHAIL, who has been considered an authority on many subjects, must have spent a good deal of thought and time on the lecture which he delivered in Toronto recently, on "Women and Democracy," but his logic was decidedly faulty. He said that men will work for women, but not with them, and since women have the vote, and are now eligible for seats in parliaments, we may look forward to a parliament of women. He linked up women, democracy and Bolshevism, in some inexplicable manner, and perhaps without intending to do so, left the impression that women are going to do, and perhaps have done more harm than good in any public work which they undertake. He made us think of Buddha, who when asked to allow women to enter a religious order, said: "Just as a field of grain is blighted by mildew, so does woman destroy whatever she touches."

The entrance of Lady Astor into the House of Parliament has stirred up quite a sensation in England, as also that of Miss Marguerite Cody into the reporters' gallery, and many men and some women are wondering what good will come of this new departure. The country will, no doubt, expect much more from them than from the male members. We believe that Lady Astor went into this new work with one motive, that of helping the women of England, and surely she will not be afraid to use her influence on the side of right and progress.

Some time ago, before women had the franchise, either in Canada, or England, a writer in Toronto "Saturday Night," gave to the public his vision of "women M.P.'s." Taking his picture from the present parliaments of men, he could see the women sitting around with their feet on the desks, smoking, and seemingly "just putting in the time." No one will have to wait to see such a picture, for there are young girls and matrons in public places at the present time behaving in somewhat this fashion, but we do not believe they will ever get into parliament.

No! The women who are taking a keen interest in public matters are women of high morals who will set a noble example to others.

Mrs. L. A. Hamilton, Toronto's first Alderwoman, has for years been keenly interested in city politics. She has studied the characters of the city fathers and knows pretty well why they take certain stands on certain questions. We feel sure that she will give a disinterested mind to all important questions, and from her work in municipal matters we would not be surprised if she is called to a wider field of usefulness.

In the city of Brantford, Ontario, Mrs. N. R. Frank has been a valued member of the Board of Health, and will be chairman of that Board for the coming year.

The Hon. N. W. Rowell, in a recent address before the National Council of Women, at Ottawa, spoke of the wide field of usefulness in public welfare work which lies before women. He expressed appreciation for what women have done, and now that they have more "privileges" their work can be of a much broader character. Quite a different outlook from that of the "twentieth century professor!"

Quebec is still "wobbling" about granting the suffrage to women. The question is being discussed again in legislature. The question of women being admitted to the bar is also under discussion.

As soon as the bill passed in England enabling women to enter the legal profession, two women at once began their studies. We have no doubt but that Quebec has women just as eager and ready to begin this study.

Miss McMaugh, Australia's first air-pilot, passed her tests at Northold, and has received the certificate of the Royal Aero Club.

JEANNE ACADIENNE.

From
"Spectator
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MEMBER out of desire word, a feeling brethren of of duly discoura nection with t hear appeals grate upon t they have lea naturally ask endorsing all been taught e anew and les motives to s steady us in misled and b trust our be future? It i our good peo tremely impo must be mac meetings or modify or ne lican loyalty her age long purpose, purs It is fellowsh are sound of association i glittering la life or the p tempt us asi

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