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SEE WINDOW. SEE WINDOW.

HENRY BLAIR.

The Ultra Optimist.
By RUTH CAMERON.

Optimism is a good thing. A grand, grand thing. At the same time it may become a bad thing under certain conditions, and those conditions are when it is carried too far. "Every virtue is half way between two vices," the Romans used to say. Optimism is no exception to the rule. On one side of it is pessimism—on the other side is ultra-optimism.

The nineteenth century has been a century of optimism. Huge business undertakings have been created out of a little capital, a little more trust and a great deal of optimism. The motif of the new religion is optimism. Everywhere it has been the dominant note. And this is a good note, too, and makes the finest music in the world. Except, again, when it is overworked. Personally I think I am more inclined to optimism than to pessimism. And yet I must say the ultra-optimist irritates me quite as much as the pessimist. He has such a foolish trick of closing his eyes to facts and I never could "hole" that habit. I have no patience with the theory that "when ignorance is bliss 'twere folly to be wise." To my mind it is always better to know. One of my four favorite Bible verses is "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; Now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also, I am known." I like that idea.

To return to the main theme—the other day I was disappointed in a long-anticipated outing on account of rain. I met one of these ultra-optimists. "Cheer up!" she said, when she heard

of my disappointment. "You know the sun is shining behind the clouds." "Now I suppose I ought to have been grateful for that cheering reminder, but I wasn't. We weren't going to have our outing behind the clouds but right on the earth, and on the earth it was raining, and what it was doing behind the cloud didn't matter a particle to me. If she had really wished to cheer me she might have reminded me that I could go some other day. That would have had some sense to it, but she didn't want to cheer me; all she wanted was to get a chance to use some of that conventional patter which the ultra-optimist delights in. The man who is ultra-optimistic on the subject of time is a familiar type to most of us. "What's your hurry?" he says, when he sees you allowing a little time for possible delays. "Half an hour is more than time to get to the station." And so it is if everything goes exactly right, which he optimistically expects. But everything doesn't always go exactly right, as those who depend upon his ultra-optimistic calculations are likely to find to their sorrow.

Again, most of us know something of the man who is ultra-optimistic about money. He never calculates exactly what his income will cover; instead he buys whatever he thinks he needs, and hopes optimistically to pay the bills somehow or other. Or again, he asks you to join him in a business undertaking which according to his figures must bring in at least sixty per cent of the money invested. On examining his calculations you find that the risks are all ignored or under-estimated and the profits optimistically exaggerated.

Yes, optimism is a good thing, but—
Ruth Cameron

From Candles to Gas

Centenary of Great Step is Soon to be Observed—William Murdoch, Who Was Responsible for the Commercialization of Precious Lighting Fluid Was a Quaint Genius—He Wore Wooden Hat and Made the Forerunner of the Modern Bicycle.

The discovery of gas as a lighting power is only one of the many romances of modern industrial development. William Murdoch, son of a millwright, of Old Cumnock, Ayrshire, Scotland, is the acknowledged inventor of coal-gas lighting. He was born on August 21, 1754, in a low-roofed, thatched cottage, a replica almost of the little "biggin" in which Robert Burns was born—and his portraits show a face of striking manly beauty and strong character.

In celebration of the centenary of what may be called "the commercialization" of gas as an illuminant, there is to be a National Gas Congress and Exhibition at the White City, Shepherd's Bush, London, shortly. A long list of popular lectures has been prepared and the exhibits will cover the whole ground of the invention and development of gas-lighting.

William Murdoch's share in the development of this enterprise will be fully acknowledged. Murdoch was a quaint genius. His father and grandfather, although they followed other occupations, had been gunners in the Royal Artillery, and pay-sheets bearing their signatures are still preserved in the records of Woolwich Arsenal.

Brought up with his father as a millwright and miller until he was twenty-three, Murdoch went south and entered the service of Messrs. Boulton and Watt (Watt, being the famous inventor of the steam engine) of Soho Works, Birmingham. He changed the spelling of his name from Murdoch to Murdock out of consideration for the Englishman's natural inability to pronounce the guttural.

Among the unusual things which Murdock was always doing was the wearing of a wooden hat. According to the accepted story, Murdock was so nervous at his first interview with Mr. Boulton, of the Soho works, that he let his hat fall on the floor. Boulton had previously been struck by the strange headgear, and the noise it made falling prompted him to ask some questions. In answer to those Murdock confessed that the hat was made of wood and that he had turned it on a lathe of his own construction.

There were makers of gas of a sort before Murdock lit his house at Redruth, in Cornwall, with the new illuminant. In 1785, at Calross, in Ayrshire, although Murdock did not know of this until long afterwards, in the ovens of Lord Dunderland, a member of the ingenious Cochrane family, gas had been produced and rejected as a waste product. Others speculated to have been on the point of making the first discovery, but as has been said of Murdock, the merit of "the first idea of applying and the first actual application of carbonated hydrogen gas to economic purposes as a substitute for oils and tallow" first belongs to him.

Murdock inherited his inventive genius. His father was the inventor of toothed circular iron gearing, and other clever contrivances. Even as a boy, William Murdock showed skill and ingenuity in mechanics, and a wooden horse of his own contrivance on which he and his brothers rode to school at Cumnock, is claimed as the forerunner of the modern tricycle, and even of the locomotive.

From his boyhood days, Murdock impressed his friends with his unusual ability. Boulton was so struck with him that he engaged him at

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Case of Mrs. Tully.
Chicago, Ill.—"I take pleasure in writing to thank you for what Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has done for me. I suffered with such awful periodic pains, and had a displacement, and received no benefit from the doctors. I was advised to take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and am now as well as ever." — Mrs. WILLIAM TULLY, 2952 Ogden Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

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their first interview and wrote to his partner, Watt, from Cornwall where the big Scotsman had been sent as the agent of his principals: "Murdock has been indefatigable since he began. He has scarcely been in bed or taken the necessary food." Of his stay at Redruth—where he remained for nineteen years—an amusing story is told. It is related of him that, with a gas-filled bladder under his arm, and squeezing the gas out with his elbow, "just as if he were playing the bagpipes of his native land," the gas burning at the end of a pipe attached to the bladder, he used to light his way about in the early and late dark hours of the winter days.

Murdock did other things to scare the wits of the people of Redruth. One of his contrivances was an engine that ran on wheels—a forerunner of the motor car—and his excursions on this used to alarm the natives, much as the first flying machine would frighten them; almost out of reason.

In 1792, while living at Redruth, Murdock carried out the experiments in the distillation of different classes of coal that resulted in the discovery of a gas with which he lighted his house and offices. In 1797 he was back in Birmingham, and there constructed apparatus upon a larger scale, with which he lighted the principal building at the Soho Steam Engine Works of Boulton and Watt. He was slowly but surely coming into his own. Up till his forty-fourth year this benefactor of mankind was never paid more than \$5 a week; but his departure for Scotland seems to have awakened Messrs. Boulton and Watt to his value. To a man of his temperament, however, money mattered little; but, on his return to Birmingham, he was not averse to accepting a salary of \$5,000 a year.

Murdock died at Handsworth, Birmingham, Nov. 15, 1839, in the 85th year of his age; a neglected, but not a disappointed, genius.

The Silent March.

When the march begins in the morning
And the heart and the foot are light,
When the flags are all a-flutter
And the world is gay and bright,
When the bugles lead the column
And the drums are proud in the van,
It's shoulder to shoulder: Forward,
march!
Ah! let him lag who can.

For it's easy to march to music
With your comrades all in line,
And you don't get tired, you feel inspired,
And life is a draught divine.

When the march drags on at evening
And the color-bearer's gone,
When the merry strains are silent
That pierce so brave in the dawn,
When you miss the dear old fellows
Who started out with you,
When it's stubborn and sturdy—
Forward March!
(Though the ragged lines are few!)

Then it's hard to march in silence,
And the road has lonesome grown,
And life is a bitter cup to drink,
But the soldier must not moan.

And this is the task before us,
A task we may never shrink;
In the gay time and the sorrowful time
We must march and do our work;
We must march when the music cheers us,
March when the strains are dumb,
Plucky and valiant, forward, march!
And smile, whatever may come.

For, whether life is hard or easy,
The strong man keeps the pace,
For, whether life is hard or easy,
The strong soul finds the grace.

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