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The Influence That Counts

THAT the women of to-day are the hope of the nation of to-morrow, is possibly a trite statement, but it carries with it at the present time enough significance, in this country, to bear repetition. Long after we have forgotten the admonitions of the press, to "reconstruct," and "carry on," to "make the world safe for democracy" and "democracy safe for the world," long after we have become accustomed to the presence of our governing officials after their sojourn abroad and have memorized their reminiscences of the Peace Conference and the parts they played therein—considerably long after all this there will still remain with us this fact—that this Canada of ours needs a national overhauling and that this housecleaning rests in the hands of the women.

Women have not advanced one whit more than when Eve kept house for Adam "somewhere in Eden." And Eve was no super-woman; at least, not after she fell! Possibly she didn't realize the tremendous responsibility that rested upon her—her influence upon future generations—or she would not have erred. But the women of to-day have no such excuse. They do realize their responsibility, and, whereas, Eve kept house for only one man with no knowledge of what the results of her mission in life might be in years to come, the twentieth century woman must know that from her very hearth (granting that the Government will some day make it possible for her to maintain a hearth) will go forth either stalwart citizens who must throw in their lot with their fellows in establishing the Dominion of to-morrow, or weaklings.

The call to women of courage, faith, strength and understanding shall not, and does not come from the public platform, from the political arena or from any of the various niches women have, especially in the past five years, hewn for themselves. True, since 1914, women have been needed in the public field. There is probably no exaggeration in the statement that the war could not have continued without their help in official channels. Many of these women must still remain in these public capacities if they are to support themselves. On the other hand if they are to support the country their not too distant goal should be a home, where all the experience they have gained, all their self-reliance may be brought to bear upon the creation of a creditable family circle.

Never before have men needed more guidance, more sympathetic understanding. The chaos from which so many of them have emerged has loosened their grasp upon the realities of both commercial and home life. It will take time and careful coaching on the part of women to bring them back to normal. This does not imply humouring, but it does call for tact.

Labour unrest, incipient Bolshevism—all this can be combated by women; not from the platform, not by political propaganda, but, in the home. There, the ideals of the small boy and the small girl should be formed and fostered; brightened up when they become tarnished by contact with the unscrupulous. There, the young lives should be shaped, moulded into the dignity of future citizenship. The school has its part to play, the pulpit also; but both of these fail if there is not behind them, if there is not constantly supporting them, home influence.

"Women and Reconstruction" is a slogan that has been flaunted in and out of the press for the past ten or eleven months. It is at best, a generality. The part women are to play in Canada's upbuilding or re-building, or whatever it should be styled, is individual. It can be summed up in this—the improvement of home life.

Editorially Speaking

IN France, which country after all, has been most devastated, the voice of women in public, or political agitation is conspicuous by its absence. They suffered as the women of no other country have suffered. Now that it is all over; they still remain peculiarly silent. They are busy. Their work is too overwhelming to permit of either plans or controversy. They are re-making their country's homes—their own homes.

In the northern districts of the country, as soon as the conflict ceased, these women who had tilled the land and produced so large a quota of the nation's food supplies, living, the while, huddled together in make-shift community shelters, immediately set about building log houses, re-modelling wells, scraping together enough currency to purchase cows, horses, and fowl—why? Because these

band, her sons, and her daughters, in the home circle from which must emanate the principles which will make of this Dominion a broader and stronger and healthier place in which to live.

The Woman and the Profiteer

NOW that they haven't the war to talk about, the newspapers are full of tiresome Profiteers!"

"Tiresome," they are indeed, those profiteers—though not in the sense of the non-thinker rocking on a hotel verandah, and bemoaning the lack of sensation in the daily papers.

Tiresome? Ask the woman who is trying to provide nourishing food for growing children, with bread and potatoes and butter and meat at breathtaking prices. Or the woman who must keep two or three school-children neatly shod. She will answer, "Tiresome," but with a sigh and a moment's tensing at the mere thought of the struggle.

Are some women thus to exclaim of boredom at the mention of the great living-problem or others to double their at present splendid effort to meet the crisis individually and let the matter rest there?

We think not. We hear of different attitudes here and there that belie such indifference and suffering acceptance. In Chicago, organized women have gone themselves to retailer, to wholesaler, to manufacturer, or producer, inquiring the margin of profit they consider fair and necessary. With the resulting data in hand, they have found wide discrepancies—and have been neither silent nor acquiescent thereat.

But, of course, only a few of life's necessities can be traced by a layman in any such simple fashion, for many of our products come at least in part from distant markets and are things about which we ourselves cannot know.

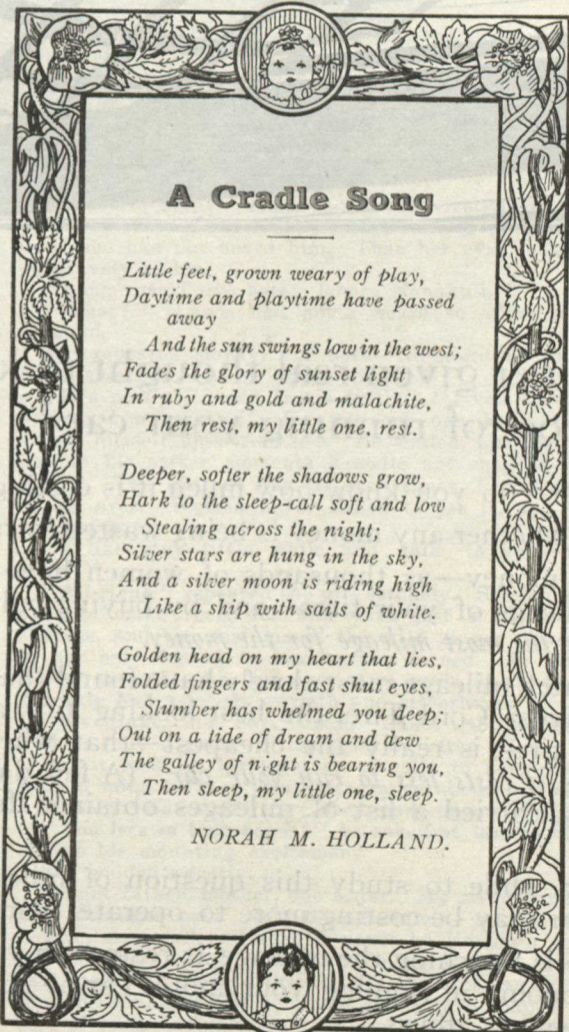
Herein lies an active danger—that of a false hue and cry that actually gives protection to real offenders. There is everywhere a tendency to brand an increased price in almost any article the result of profiteering.

Is there profiteering in its production or merchandising—or is its high price the result of some of the intricate and abnormal conditions prevailing in the world to-day? To wrongly brand its costliness as due to inflated profits somewhere, aggravates a condition that is already bad, and lends cover to the illegitimate profit-maker.

To draw these vital lines of distinction is as important as is the task of each of us—to see that we are not adding to the temptation or the case of profiteering by failing to know what we can of values and avoiding the carelessness that comes from a too ready acceptance of the "everything-is-high, this-must-be-expected" idea when big prices are asked us. Let us rather shop round—look round—ask round, and enter seriously into any plans that will reduce selling costs to us.

The women of Canada must arraign themselves intelligently as a definite part of that Power Behind that is working toward more balanced conditions. Indifference is not our cue, increasing struggle not our duty. We must look about us with seeing eyes, note how much of the fault may lie with us, as being too "easy" or too ignorant, to recognize abnormal or inflated values when we see them, or reasonable high cost in things which are temporarily and unavoidably dear. And where increase in our power to better faulty conditions lies in using combined effort and the greater knowledge of our organizations, let us use them to some purpose.

But above all, let us get away from this pose—for pose it must be—of indifference, from equally harmful passivity and from the assumption that all costs are high for the same reasons!



A Cradle Song

Little feet, grown weary of play,
Daytime and playtime have passed away
And the sun swings low in the west;
Fades the glory of sunset light
In ruby and gold and malachite,
Then rest, my little one, rest.

Deeper, softer the shadows grow,
Hark to the sleep-call soft and low
Stealing across the night;
Silver stars are hung in the sky,
And a silver moon is riding high
Like a ship with sails of white.

Golden head on my heart that lies,
Folded fingers and fast shut eyes,
Slumber has whelmed you deep;
Out on a tide of dream and dew
The galley of night is bearing you,
Then sleep, my little one, sleep.

NORAH M. HOLLAND.

things represented the re-establishment of their homes—not merely houses) to which those of their men-folk who were left, might return.

Throughout every region of France immediately affected by the war the women are trying to put on a newer and better status, the home life and influence that produced such men as Foch, Joffre, and Clemenceau.

IS there not a parallel to be drawn? The women of Canada have an opportunity to-day they have never had before. The men have been under stress. They may not as yet feel equal to the burdens that await them. The new Canada depends upon its women.

Referring back again to Eve, it is still the primal instinct in every woman, to manage a home. Woman may have taken hold in channels that did not exist in Eden, but her greatest influence will always be that which she can exert over her hus-