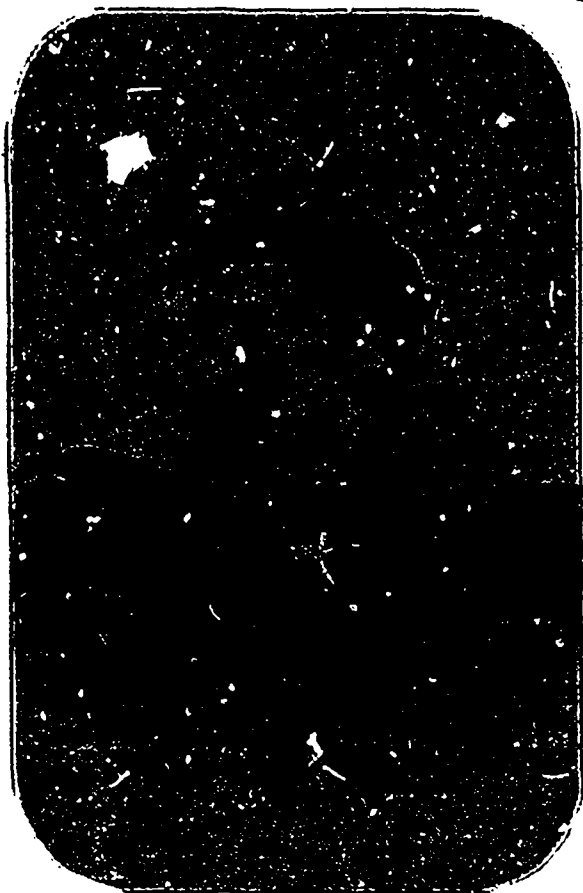


PEOPLE

BY FAITH PENFOL.



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that might successfully appeal to and capture the working classes of the United Kingdom.

Usually a visitor from the motherland discovers this at once; occasionally, as in the instance of Miss Black, it takes experience to make it clear. When this energetic young worker pays Canada a second visit, as she doubtless will in October, when the world's W. C. T. U. convene in Toronto, she will probably come more quickly in touch with her Canadian audiences.

We speak thus our impressions of her platform methods only. In private intercourse Miss Slack is charming, with the manifold personality of an earnest and intensely alive woman.

Our first surprise is that she is so young. In view of the offices she holds, and the public work she has accomplished, we naturally expect to find her a woman of mature years, grey and sedate. But the lady who greets us is a young woman in life's prime; with English color, a plump, springy figure, and a bright energy of manner sufficient to take years off any woman, and keep her always a girl.

A young woman then, with brown hair, broad, low brow, deep set eyes, straight nose, and maternal lips and chin—a face whose upper portion expresses high executive ability, while the lower contour shows the passion of affectionate impulse that goes to make the enthusiast and philanthropist.

Miss Slack is a delightful talker. Every bit of her talks—eyes, flushing color, hands, restless tapping foot. She is exceedingly in earnest, and her philanthropic experience has been varied.

She is strongly in sympathy with every movement that favors the advancement of woman, because in them she sees the factors that she believes will finally produce all the large issues for which philanthropy and religion are striving.

"The measure of freedom women have, has been so lately acquired, it is hardly to be wondered that we make mistakes, that we are yet, in many instances, narrow. But we will gain breadth by degrees. Narrowness is shut-up-ness. Breadth is opening out to all conditions of humanity," she says. "Therefore, if as you say, your organizations of Canadian women are afflicted with narrowness, see that they get out into a wider vision. The National Council will do wonders in that direction."

So sceptical is the world, and so rare a thing it is to discover men and women who are working and enduring for love's sake alone, that it is our habit to impugn the motives of philanthropists of either sex. "She or he makes a good living by it, doubtless," we say with a shrug, and salve our own restless conscience with some cynicism about "conviction in proportion to profit."

Oh, the pity of it that we should have grown so unbelieving; and the greater pity that we have nourishment for such growth! How the single-hearted and of honest purpose suffer by reason of him of double-mind.

Many a man and woman sacrifice ambition, ease, cultured instincts, money, ay, even love itself, for the high cause of God, for love of their kind; and because of a few stumbling blocks we neither recognize the sacrifice nor accept the worker.

But there are those in our midst who are yet enthusiasts in the love of their fellows, who reckon all things as nothing in the joy of philanthropic work, who are born with hearts big enough to hold a world of such petty folks as we who thus carp.

And these are often men and women of forceful character; salty, pungent, aggressive perhaps,

or with an executive ability that leads them to be ever in the fore. Yet, though their methods or manners may be open to criticism, their work remains; and below all surface ways, if we but listen, we hear beating a passion-throb of protective love.

Miss Slack is such an one. She was born in Ripley, in lovely Devonshire. She belongs to a family markedly intellectual and alert in Christian work. Having an independent income, this young lady might have remained in luxurious and cultured social life; but she chose the hard experiences of the active philanthropist. She has been for some time a Poor Law Guardian. She is an active member of the committee of the Woman's Liberal League, which is the right arm of the Liberal party in England; member of the Central Suffrage Society, the British Woman's Temperance Association, and lastly she has accepted the office (unsalaried) of honorary secretary of the world's W.C.T.U., which places her next in official rank to Miss Frances Willard and Lady Henry Somerset.

Since her acceptance of this latter position Miss Slack has done magnificent evangelistic and Temperance work, especially in Ireland, where she gave a marked impetus to the White Ribbon movement. Her forceful, humorous and aggressive personality, with its wealth of enthusiasm, made her especially acceptable to the warm-hearted Irish people; and she enrolled many of their women under the White Ribbon banner in the crusade which she conducted in Dublin and Cork during the past year.

Her popularity extended equally to the Roman Catholics, and some of the most prominent members of this church joined with the Protestants in giving her support.

That Miss Slack is an ardent suffragist is not a matter of surprise. There are few women who go down into the depths of life's shadows, and come face to face with its problems, without being forced to the conviction that women should have some part in making the laws under which they and their families must abide. "We have to suffer the penalties inflicted by the laws, if we break them," says Miss Slack, "so logically, we ought to have a voice in framing that which we are compelled to obey."

In all these offices her work has been largely that of the platform and the pulpit. She has preached for such well known ministers as Mark Guy Pearse and Hugh Price Hughes, and is the first woman who has occupied Wesley's pulpit. Yet she has gone down into the prisons and work-houses, and become acquainted with the practical details of the evils against which she fights.

It is a curious thing to look upon, this daintily dressed woman, to listen to her thoughtful cultured speech, to realize what she might have if she chose, of easy living and agreeable environment,—and then to recall the work to which she has devoted herself, and for the sake of which she has given up much of the joy of home life, and her especially loved art, music.

For fourteen years Miss Slack gave her services as organist of Ripley Wesleyan Chapel, only resigning the post when the many engagements arising from her public work took her frequently from home.

To the question, whether she did not regret the responsibilities she had assumed, and the work these involved, Miss Black answered, thoughtfully:

"A few years ago, when first entering upon this work, I was cynical and self-assertive, dictatorial, and disposed to demand that every one should walk in my way, and see as I saw—I may be inclined that way yet," she interpolated with a smile, "But since I have sounded the depths of human degradation in my Poor Law and prison work, life has opened out to a fulness it never would have done otherwise. Only as we give our sympathies width do we grow like God."

MISS AGNES SLACK, whose recent visit to Toronto, caused some stir in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union circles, occupies a position and owns a personality that gives her more than passing interest to women of organizations, as well as that larger circle of our sex who are interested in knowing something of the lives of women with careers.

Both personally, and in her public work she is a young lady of exceptional gifts, and the fact that she has attained such high office in organized philanthropy gives promise of larger development.

Those who were brought into personal intercourse with her during her stay in the city will retain a remembrance—a trifle amused perhaps, but also markedly vivid—of a young woman militant, if we may adopt the descriptive word; a fighting philanthropist, aggressive, practical, executive, yet with all the impulse of her sex, and all the passion of benevolence instinct in a mother woman.

Miss Slack is intensely British, and also intensely Liberal in politics. These facts she made clear in an address delivered in Broadway Tabernacle. The former by deploring that Toronto semi-religious gatherings did not open with the National Anthem, the latter by her hot assault on Lord Salisbury, for his non-support of the Temperance movement. Possibly, also, the bright, energetic little lady in this, her first visit to Canada, hardly realized the difference between audiences on this side of the water and those she had addressed so extensively and with such success in the British Isles.

Whatever may be the case over the line, an audience of Canadian women cannot be won to approval or conviction by a manner of address