



Woman's Rights.

A right to tread so softly
Beside the couch of pain,
To smooth with gentle fingers
The tangled locks again;
To watch beside the dying
In wee small hours of night,
And breath a consecrating prayer
When the spirit takes its flight.

A right to cheer the weary
On the battlefields of life;
To give the word of sympathy
Amid the toil and strife;
To lift the burden gently
From sore and tired hearts,
And never weary of the task
Till gloomy care departs.

A right to be a woman
In truest woman's work;
If life should be a hard one,
No duties ever shrink;
A right to show to others
How strong a woman grows,
When skies are dark and lowering
And life bears not a rose.

A right to love one truly,
And be loved back again;
A right to share his fortunes
Through sunshine and through rain.
A right to be protected
From life's most cruel blights,
By manly love and courage—
Surely these are woman's rights.

—Sadie Gilliam Baird.

The Grind of Gain.

By PEARL RICHMOND HAMILTON.

AS the six o'clock whistles pierced the frosty air with their hoarse shrieks, the tables and desks after a hasty attempt of being tidied up, were deserted and the crowded office changed from a day's tire-some noise of lively business activities to the usual evening silence that closes the work in the average place of a manager's headquarters.

Just one person remained—the industrious little person at a typewriter—she was pounding away the last words of a dictated letter to add to the pile that lay on the great desk near her.

At last she came to the end and after placing it with the others she buried her head in her hands and remained in this position till the manager stepped in and sat down near his desk.

Looking up he noticed her unusual manner and asked! "What's wrong, Miss Miller, are you not well?"

"Oh yes," she replied, "I'm all right, I suppose, but I'm tired, and disappointed and wretched," and the last word ended in a cry, so she again buried her face in her hands and her body shook with the sad sobbing that comes from an aching heart.

The manager was touched and endeavored to soothe the troubled girl into confidence, but all in vain, because the pent up emotions of many days had found vent owing to a physical breakdown that often follows the strenuous strain of an office girl's life.

For several minutes the only sounds in the room were the audible convulsions of the little stenographer.

The manager tried in vain to speak words of comfort to her but the distressed one could not curb the outflow of tears till there seemed to be none left. Then with strangely solemn expression she lifted her swollen eyes and looked long and steadily at the typewriter in front of her.

After which she gathered courage, saying pleadingly:

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Wendling, but I just could not keep up a minute longer."

"I am sorry, very sorry that this happened here," she added, fingering her wet handkerchief nervously.

"Never mind, Miss Miller," he answered kindly, "little bodies often carry big troubles, but are you not happy this season just after Christmas when the whole world is glad?"

"No, Mr. Wendling, far from it—you are very kind to me in the office—very kind, but—oh I can't tell you," and she stopped suddenly and her eyes filled again as she sat for a minute in mute misery.

"Come tell me all," he urged carelessly making a few marks on a piece of paper on the desk. "Perhaps I may be able to help you," he added wheeling his chair around till he sat directly in front of her as if to encourage her into confidence.

"Though my acquaintances know me as a reticent bachelor, full of business and not given much to society, I have some interest in humanity and a desire to help others in times of misfortune," he continued, bringing his white teeth upon the lip as if he would press the blood from under it.

Miss Miller felt that before her was a man full of the magnetism of an intense inner life, so her heart opened to him in these words:

"You may call me weak, Mr. Wendling and you may believe with many others that I am earning my living because I want to be independent. But back in the home city is a young man who is all the world to me.

He loves me and I love him and he earns enough to make us a little home together but that can never be," she stopped suddenly as if fearful of telling too much.

"I cannot understand why you cannot marry—circumstances seem favorable to me," responded Mr. Wendling wheeling the chair half way around and back again.

For a moment the little stenographer did not speak, then she began:

"A long time ago when this young man was a boy, and the other three children were smaller than he was, they lived comfortably and apparently happy. While they did not have very much they lived well.

The mother, busy with her little ones, kept the house tidy and cosy and the little house rang with childish laughter until one dark, terrible, awful day when the father suddenly left the family in cold destitution."

"No one knows the reason—no one knows his whereabouts. The mother took in washing and one little boy sold newspapers. The oldest girl worked in a store till her frail body was filled with germs of consumption and she is now home too feeble to work, so nearly all of the support of the family depends on the income of this young man. The mother and children have battled through the perishing cold of our northern winters while pangs of hunger and sickness have nearly eaten out their lives.

Under this condition, the young man feels that for years to come, he must support the family for he has recently obtained a good position. So you see Mr. Wendling why I am sad," she ended and her whole soul shone in her eyes.

The human heart is full of mystery and sacredness, and Mr. Wendling I think felt the force of this tale just told him, since the veins stood out like whipcords on his brow and strange convulsive workings of the throat prevented him from making any remark about the strange story.

He felt that before him was a girl whose soul was as pure as sunlight and as full of great depths as the sea.

She was one of the many young women who have enough of God in them to make a man live up to the best that there is in them. Suddenly there was a knitting of the brows as if his thoughts were making hard knots in his busy brain—for indeed the brain that managed a large machine company such as he managed, was busy—too busy to listen to many stories of real life. Finally he exclaimed:

"What a pity for a young man to bear the burden of such a weight!"

To be robbed of that which is the best in life—a home with the heart of his choice!"

"Yes," the girl broke out anxiously.

"There is nothing crueller under the sun than a man leaving a wife and children in want, with the wolf of hunger gnawing at the bodies while the worm of sorrow is eating out the hearts."

Both remained silent for a while. Then Mr. Wendling straightened up, pulled down the cover of his desk, put on his coat and turning to Miss Miller and remarked:

"Your understanding is strong, your judgment clear; the happiest fate for a girl is to grow up to be a womanly woman in a house of her own."

"A home of my own with him," she repeated half conscious and it seemed as if her very life would flame out in this great desire.

She looked up at him earnestly as he reflected in this reply:

"The great troubles of youth are almost without exception molded by the little hands of love. There is nothing in human life that breathes such happiness as the consciousness of love. Remain as you are, my girl, till you marry the choice of your heart. Do not fan out the flame by trying to care for another, since the right one is in a position that must necessarily prevent your marriage."

Happiness dies hard, and the desire for happiness—never," but suddenly a terrible thought twisted his face and he left the room.

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