

IX.--The Work of the Women's Employment League

[By Mrs. J. K. Unsworth, President.]

NOTE:—The following significant and suggestive article was given by special request. The persistency and resourcefulness of those who have given themselves to the solving of the problem of unemployed women in Vancouver calls forth not admiration only, but creates a desire to aid such a commendable enterprise. Most of our readers, we believe, will appreciate the spirit that prompted us to secure this contribution for insertion among our notices of "Businesses Worth While."

A merry little toy shop with a varied collection of dolls representing almost everything from golliwogs to British commanders of all sorts and sizes, many-hued war toys, Christmas boxes, French flowers and fancy work, sweeties and plum puddings for sale, and with the King and the Kaiser having a constant wrestling match in the window, is the visible result of the opening of a miniature toy factory on November 7th, by a committee of women who "saw visions and dreamed dreams."

Nearly 900 girls have registered here as out of employment. For two hundred and fifty positions have been found of different sorts, mostly domestic; 150 have been employed at one time in the factory, and more than that in numbers, as the work is spread out to cover the many girls who plead for "just one day's work," for which 15 cents an hour has been paid, and the girls taken for the most part who needed it most, regardless of ability. In the order department dressmaking has been done, dolls have been repaired, 1200 holdalls and housewives have been made and delivered at Hastings Park. badges for clubs, underwear and knitting, forage caps, and with great pride, the big flag from the Court House repaired.

A business man would be inclined to smile, or scoff, at the temerity of the combination of business and philanthropy, of co-operative policy with the unskilled and incompetent, and truly some of the products have cost many times over their selling price to produce. Then, too, an occasional girl is ungrateful or careless or unwilling. An offer of a home may turn out to be selfish instead of unselfish, but the atmosphere of helpfulness is the predominating one, and girls asking for work will say, "Mary needs it more than I do," or, knowing that there is not enough work to go round, will tell of a girl friend who is down to her last dollar.

Among women, too, this and all the numerous plans for amelioration the war has made necessary, have laid bare qualities hitherto perhaps dormant, and those whose minds are absorbed by the higher responsibilities of life, overlook personal gratification and give themselves unstintedly to the needs of their fellow women, because we have now a common cause, and have returned to the elemental woman, and my lady and the salesgirl work side by side on a