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MARY SMITH,
Treas. W.B.M.U.

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ASK SOMEBODY ELSE.

[The following is taken from *The Message*, the organ of the W. F. M. Societies of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. It should have a wide reading.]

We see nothing so clearly as other people's duty. Through strong glasses of habitual criticism or legitimate expectation or complacent self-sufficiency, we analyze other women's lives with the keenness of a biologist over his microscope. Turning away some importunate pleader for help with the venerable remark, "Ask somebody else," is there not a feeling of unholy joy that this "somebody else" is to be sifted like wheat? that our refusal has been a means to that end?

The membership in our societies could, with blessed exceptions, be divided into two classes: "the woman who ought not to but does," and "the woman who can but won't," and the latter class is largely responsible for many a nervous breakdown in the other. A mania for being in evidence possesses some women. There are self-induced cases of nervous prostration. The woman who "lives always at the top of her voice" will be likely to be prematurely silenced, or, worse still, become discordant, "jangled, out of tune." In religious work, pre-eminently, there must be something radically wrong when a good woman is too busy and too tired to be happy herself or cheering to others. The overworked woman, however, commands our respect as does not her inebriate of Christian drones, even though she may be wrong in assuming undue burdens. "As thy day thy strength shall be," runs the promise, and not "As ten women's day thy strength shall be." If a woman belongs to forty-one societies and clubs, and there are some who do, she should be able to discharge her duty to three dozen of them, at least, by a yearly subscription. Trying to give herself to everything, she is sinning against the mind and body her God gave her. The dignity of living, the grace of repose, the strength of quietness are far from her, while physical breakdown and spiritual depression are imminent.

So there is a woman who needs to say firmly: "Ask somebody else; I cannot, ought not, must not undertake one straw weight more of work or responsibility." But there is a much larger class to which most of us, if we are quite honest, will acknowledge that we belong, the class of "the woman who can but won't." She puts the heavy burden on her sisters' shoulders and keeps it there, adding the weight of her own resigned uselessness or cultivated helplessness. A woman recently asked, in vain, twenty-two other women to help her in a certain missionary meeting, and after that remarkable experience said that she felt she would never again refuse to do anything for anybody. Here are women bound together, by love to a common Saviour, to work for His kingdom. They acknowledge the common obligation of membership and gift of money, but without that gift of voice, time, talent, tact, personality and co-operation, so often elsewhere lavished. Gifts differ. Not

all can do the same thing well; not all can speak eloquently nor pray fervently in public. There is no one who cannot live eloquently her prayers. There are those who "with their lives express the holy Gospel they profess."

There are women who never seek or embrace any opportunity to aid in their individual societies. "The woman who can but won't" is often critical and deplores the tediousness and inadequacy of missionary meetings. The sanctified touch of her gift of criticism, having begun its new work on her own heart, may be the very tonic needed in that society. Lack of time, lack of ability, lack of confidence, are the most frequent excuses given when you are asked to find somebody else. Women who never expected any such trait before become temporarily very humble. Women the very breath of whose nostrils is "something new," decline on the ground that they "never did such a thing in their lives."

You were given a clear, sweet voice. Have you lost it? power in Christ's work? You were endowed with a clear mind for business; it has been a blessing to you and others in domestic and secular affairs. Have you ever used it in Christ's work? Your fluent tongue and convincing manner have put through many a social and patriotic scheme. Were they given you for every use except Christ's distinct call? Locate this possession of yours, perhaps it is not yet outlawed. Pay up arrears of taxes, and begin again. You think perhaps that that other woman, somebody else, has done your work. No, your work has just gone undone; the angels could not do it for you, and "inasmuch as ye did it not" will be the judgment.

But let us not be despondent. Remember that in this work is such help, such chrism as comes in no other work, the direct power and leading of the Spirit of the Lord. The weakest woman can be strong as a lion in His strength; the small voice can grow strong like a trumpet, if it is filled with His message; the beating heart can be stilled with His calm! Only stop and think. Be honest. Dare we take and not give; accept one invitation of the Lord and refuse the other?

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—Yes, Lord, I have come.

"Go work to-day in my vineyard."—Ask somebody else. Lord, I have no time.

"Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good."—Lord, I have tasted, it is true.

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."—Ask somebody else, Lord; I never did such a thing in my life.

"Lovest thou me?"—Then knowest that I love thee.

"Feed my lambs."—Ask somebody else, Lord, I am too timid.

Oh, no. "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength."

"Father, I scarcely dare to pray.

So clear I see now it is done.

That I have wasted half my day.

And left my work but just begun.

"In outskirts of thy kingdom vast.

Father, the humblest spot give me:

Set me the lowest task thou hast.

Let me, repentant, work for thee."

—*Woman's Word*

FROM OUR AID SOCIETIES.

CLEMENT'S VALE AID SOCIETY.—It has been some time since our Society has been heard from through the columns of the LINK. Though we have been silent the work has been going on, the monthly meetings have all been held and we try to do a little extra in way of public meetings, etc. There are