

## The Young Woman and Her Problem

By Pearl Richmond Hamilton

### The Tidal Wave of Deeper Souls

We are none of us perfect, but we need not save our souls with this truth. We can all improve. Let us each ask ourselves this question: Which is more pronounced—the creative or critical power in me? If the critical is choking the creative, then let me stop long enough to ask "why?" Perhaps I am overworked and need a rest or a change. The time a farmer takes to sharpen his scythe or mower is not lost. Are we destroying more than we construct?

Each soul must work out its own destiny. We each must find out ourselves; realize the nature God has given us in the activity of life; and it is only when we realize our nature in activity that we are happy. I know happiness comes from within because the most unhappy, the most restless girls I have known have lived in homes of luxury with every physical wish granted. The cure of many ills is the act of forgetting one's self. This is just what our brave soldiers are teaching us in their complete readiness for sacrifice. Disloyal grafters should blush with shame at the way they are nullifying the work of the noble men who would rather be underground than live the soft life of the one whose Shylock spirit grows fat with the blood that drips from the sword of war.

It is disloyalty for any girl to be idle these days.

A club has been organized under the name of the Hour-a-day Club, the purpose of which is for each member to give one hour a day to patriotic service. It may be an hour's wages to the Red Cross, or an evening canning fruit for sale, or a lesson in First Aid or knitting socks; or it may be an effort to arouse interest and love for our country in the heart of a foreign woman.

There are thousands of women giving very much more than an hour a day, which emphasizes the plea that not one girl in the land should give less than an hour a day. Each day, as it dawns, is full of colossal needs, and we are failing our duty if we do not meet a few of those needs every day. La Rochefoucauld says: "True courage is to do without witness that which one would do were the whole world looking on."

One girl is making ten little notebooks, all of them different, and they are for ten soldiers "over there." She puts into them beautiful and cheering notes and a few drawings. The soldiers say it is a great comfort to know someone thinks of them and appreciates what they are doing, so a very little service helps someone.

During three months of last year, in our own club of girls, we had every Sunday seventy-five little books from the Bible for distribution among the girls. These little separate books cost from two to three cents apiece. Each Sunday we had for our lesson the story of a book or an outline of a subject worked out in the book. Every girl was provided with a pencil to mark the verses we emphasize in the lesson. Then I asked every girl to carry her little book in her purse a week so she might read every day and mark verses herself. At the end of the week she was requested to send it to a soldier friend at the front. Each little book fitted nicely into an envelope. After a few weeks letters came from France, from Africa, from England, asking the girls to attend every Sunday, for they

enjoyed the little marked books so much. A little book from the Bible—perhaps it was Proverbs, or Matthew or the beautiful story of Ruth, marked by the girl in Canada, meant much to the soldier lad over there. I am sure we enjoyed those lessons more than any we ever had. It was the straight Bible, and it helped those who are giving their lives in service for our protection.

Every girl has individual power, and can help, in her way, to bless those men who give so much gratitude for so little.

It was only a tiny photograph that my little girl sent to a soldier she has never seen, but to whom she writes regularly, and this is his reply:—"I really can't express my appreciation for the picture of you and your baby sister. It is before me as I write this. When I get your letters I enjoy them so much because I know they are the sincere thoughts of a child's pure heart."

### The Girls' Conference

An organization has recently come into prominence that, in my judgment, is the very best of clubs for girls in the "teen" age. Recently, the Manitoba branch held its annual convention in the First Baptist Church of Winnipeg. The group of girls in the picture is a photograph taken during the session. Over five hundred girls from all parts of Manitoba represented the various branches of the club. The women in the picture are the leaders in the work and some of the hostesses of the delegates. We are especially pleased to publish this, as our magazine goes in to most of the homes of these splendid Manitoba girls.

Those who think the Sunday School is not progressive, will be surprised to learn that this great organization for girls is the result of an organized Sunday school class movement. It holds before the members the fourfold standard of a girl's life—the physical, intellectual, religious and social development of a girl. Under each phase a printed outline suggests how she may develop the standard. Splendid reading courses are carefully worked out, physical exercises, and broad, attractive ideas for service. The outline of the work alone is an inspiration to girls. At this particular convention Miss Taggart, from Toronto, created an atmosphere of such womanly sweetness that every delegate felt the power of a spiritual woman in everyday life. She led many beautiful services, showing how a well developed body, a keen and well informed mind, and a life devoted to unselfish service, insures happiness that gold cannot buy.

The resourcefulness of the different clubs appealed to me. One club in a little town obtained permission to place a barrel in an elevator. Above the barrel was a request for everyone with a load of grain to throw one shovelful into the barrel. In this way a good sum was collected for Red Cross work. The clubs were all interested in patriotic work. The more isolated clubs seemed the most resourceful. This alone is excellent training for girls. And they have good social times. We are all becoming reconciled to the fact that girls need good times, and we are getting busy on the environment. There were a thousand girls in attendance at some of the sessions of the conference. I am sure these girls, the sisters, daughters and friends of Manitoba's

soldiers sang "God Save Our Splendid Men," with an inspirational note that those present can never forget. It was a wonderful privilege to see this group of some of Manitoba's finest girls gathered together with the earnest desire for more light, more vision, more strength and more wisdom. Rev. R. D. Armstrong, the man in the picture, with Miss Falk, Miss Duncan, Mrs. Alfred White, of Brandon, and several others, are the leaders of this organization in Manitoba. Miss Sadie McDonald, of Winnipeg, is the newly elected president. Dr. F. W. Patterson closed the convention with an address that will bless a great many Manitoba homes through these delegates, who caught from his sermon a picture of the ideal woman.

While writing of this convention, a notice of a similar convention in Saskatchewan came to my desk from Miss Helen Davison, secretary of the Regina Y.W.C.A. The Saskatchewan work is divided into two conferences—one meeting in Saskatoon, Oct. 26th-28th, the other meeting in Regina, Nov. 2nd-4th. The notice sums up the value of these conferences in this statement: "This is the day of great demands upon womanhood; demands upon her strength, courage, faith, optimism, resourcefulness and spirit of service. These conferences mean vision, courage, faith, good cheer and training to the girls of Saskatchewan," and I want to add Manitoba, Alberta, and all other provinces in Canada that take up this progressive movement for the girl in her teens. It is the very best of training for our young girls.

### The River

She sat next me in the street car, very close; in fact she unconsciously leaned against me. I looked down at the profile of her face, sad and forsaken; it expressed the heart hunger of some mother's girl alone in the city. She did not know my heart went out to her, for I sensed that indescribable burning of remorse that scorches the very soul of a girl—those downcast eyes, the drooped body, tiny little fragment of one of the city's numberless rejected victims of smooth-tongued betrayers. She was one of Heaven's sacred gifts to humanity—withered under the venomous social blight. I knew it.

Every day I live I feel more indebted to the army of young girls and young women whose foreordained mission was to bless humanity. Every day I feel more bitter towards a human hound—man or woman—who would violate and crush beneath their polished boots the heart of a young woman. A big lump chokes me when I think of those fourteen-year-old, fifteen-year-old and sixteen-year-old mothers in yonder Salvation Army Home. Who dares to chide them for believing the promises of the men they loved too much, promises made by men who knew these girls had not been taught the knowledge of life by their mothers. In many cases these girls lost their mothers in early childhood. Who dares to chide them when they have been kicked down into the social mud by the very men to whom they had given their very life? The more I know these precious girls the more determined am I to say no word of criticism regarding them.

And oh! the multitude of girls in this city and other cities who are part of our

economic system who need the personal touch—good, clean, pure, brave, honest girls they are in the great majority, because they have come from good homes, and they need us to help keep them as pure as they were when they left those homes. Most of them recognize villains, but they do not see into the leprous souls of the majority of tempters who swim in decent society and even sit in the Amen seats of the church.

A working woman tells of her safety in a pioneer section of the country in the west where, she said, men were killed in drunken brawls. Yet, with it all, womanhood was safer than in the padded parlors of civilization. Why? I asked my friend's brother that question once.

"Because every man in this camp knows that if he as much as looked disrespect at a decent woman, he would be cut into scraps in about two seconds; and there would be no coroner's inquest," he answered savagely. One of the girls of our club married an engineer and went to live in a town near Alaska. On one of her visits to me I asked her if she were not afraid to stay alone when she was only one of two women in that town. She was surprised at my question. "Afraid? I was never afraid but once, and that was at a mouse that I caught in a trap the next morning." The well-known villain or the branded criminal are not the greatest dangers to girls. Girls know them when they see them. The average girl is in danger of the "part saint and part sinner sort of man"; he is the greatest danger to the wage-earning girl, and he is usually married. "The greatest danger is not from open enemies but from tainted friends," one authority quotes truthfully. One very hot day last summer I went down town to shop. Customers were impatient, and the girls, all who waited on me, were worn-out physically. It was at the end of the day, yet every girl who served me said a pleasant word to me and smiled. As I passed out of the stores I looked back in admiration on those brave girls, and I went home kinder to everybody because of their courage. There were trials in those lives. There was little Miss —, who helped support her family; and at the time when she was most tried, for she was paying for her sister at the hospital, the one over her tried to buy her soul. "He bothered me most when he knew I was most worried," she told me later, when she had come out victorious. And he was a saint outwardly—yes, a saint in a respectable church. There are girls whose loved ones are all at the front, who are fighting harder battles at home. "You! What can you do?" sneered a man to a young girl whose brother and sweetheart had gone to the front. She was all alone. He knew it, and he threatened to fix it so she could not get a position in another place—a form of existing fraternity. The poor young girl sobbed herself faint on the shoulder of a sister worker. There are tragedies going on that investigation committees cannot reach. Why, do you know I was actually put on a committee one time for investigating a place of industry, and one of that committee was the wife of the manager? The thing seemed so ridiculous to me that I stayed home and did my week's washing. I never served on an investigating committee in my life—social calmsomining never appealed to me.



Manitoba Girls' Conference, at its First Meeting.