

that cramps the freedom of the soul, playing, as it does, through our finely constituted organisms?

We should make the material world our tributary, and stamp ourselves upon everything with which we come in contact. Beautiful fabrics, fine and many colored, sympathizing with every mood of soul or of nature, it is our right to wear. And it is well to fashion them tastefully, and let the artistic faculty have play in harmonizing and combining; always keeping in view that the raiment is secondary to the person, and the person to the soul within, that longs to translate its every impulse with grace and comeliness.

The dress, then should, be a part of ourselves, worn, I could almost say, religiously, as a sincere exponent of what we feel to be appropriate and pleasing. Measured by this standard, how arbitrary and unmeaning are many of the styles that live out their brief lives on the backs of our sisters, ere the garments which gave them birth are soiled. Let us hope that American women will, ere long, have the independence to exercise their own taste and common-sense in their apparel. They will, when a sufficient number perceive the true relationship between the inner and the outer life.

I have endeavored to impress upon your mind the important truth that every habit and every surrounding influences the spirit. Everything that fetters or misdirects the body through which it acts, is an evil; so you see that it is of vast importance to our spirits that our dress should be true to our best conceptions of the useful and the beautiful.

I know you object to the American costume, and no wonder, for it falls far short of the requirements of beauty. It arose as a protest against the physical slavery of woman, and was valuable as showing that we demanded to be unswathed and put upon our own feet. And whenever you hear a man railing at short dresses, and deprecating any change from the good old days when we were vines and they were oaks, be sure he is not a man to be trusted, not one to love and revere the true woman, or else he is most shallow and heartless, and for these two classes you care little.

The man who thinks of these things to any purpose, is eager to raise his wife and daughter from the threshold of swaddling bands.

There are signs of a healthy reaction from servitude to fashion. There is more individuality in dress than formerly, and the short street dress is a great step forward. It so commends itself to the common sense of women that it cannot soon be spared. For a home and exercise dress, the gymnastic costume, introduced by Dr. Lewis into his classes for Physical Culture, as well as in a class that has been taught for several years by a noble woman of the city of New York, is steadily gaining favor as most convenient and healthful. None admits of greater variety of material or trimming. The waist is first noticeable. It is long, loose and perfectly adapted to give every muscle full play and let the lungs have room to expand.

In concluding the letter, but not the subject, I would ask you to consider that every struggle of humanity is toward a better form of existence. And we must toil on with our fellows, examining every reform to see if it does not contain the germ of some great good.

"I slept and dreamed that Life was Beauty;
I woke and found that Life was Duty;
Was then thy dream a shadowy lie?
Toil on, my heart, courageously,
And thou shalt find thy dream to be
A noonday light and truth to thee."

H. M. H. P.

New Brunswick, N. J., February, 1898.

THE SOCIAL EVIL.

Editors of the Revolution:

In an article in "THE REVOLUTION" of the 19th inst., headed "How Man Legislates for Woman at Albany," you say, "Yet it is nothing to virtuous, healthy, high-toned women that men come to them from the by-ways of vice, to poison the family purity and peace, to stamp the scars of God's curse on the brow of infancy, and make lazar-houses of all our homes"—and you ask equal protection for all the daughters of the State. The daughters of our state should learn to protect themselves. This they can do by rejecting and ostracizing those whom they know to be libertines—men who boast of their successful amours and seductions. To my certain knowledge (the experience of a quarter of a century), it is just such men that take the first rank in the best female societies. As only one instance, I will mention, that while residing in a flourishing village in the western part of this state, I was introduced to a young gentleman who had distinguished himself by seducing a very re-

spectable young girl of the village, who became pregnant. This fact was well known, as all such items are, in country villages. It is true, the matter was compromised by the payment of \$100 to the injured party; but it is equally true that, from that time, he became the hero of the village, his society courted by the finest young girls of the place, invited to parties given by the best society.

I would like to ask who are the firmest believers in the saying "that the reformed rake makes the best husband?" Most undoubtedly, "Heaven's last, best gift to man"—woman. Again, is not pride (and that of the meanest kind) the besetting sin of American women? How unwillingly do they engage in even honorable and suitable employments, and how painfully does their conduct contrast with the German woman. She deems it no disgrace to work, nor to indulge in habits of economy, while with the American woman these two ideas of Work and Economy are almost unknown.

When she marries, what is the motive? Is it from any really honorable sentiment? Does she not first desire to know whether she will thereby better her condition, the real meaning of which is—will she be able to spend more money, be lazier, wear finer dresses, and make her friends envious? To study her husband's happiness, to practice economy, and to introduce it into the family household, does not enter into her calculation. What wonder, then, that men prefer to keep mistresses rather than marry such unprincipled women? You may say that I must be speaking of individual cases, and rare ones too, but you are mistaken. Three-fourths of our women are here truthfully depicted. Yet I am no despiser of woman—no woman hater. The best type of humanity is revealed to me in the true woman. Such a one I can almost worship. Such are indeed rare, but they do exist, even in these degenerate days. You can make your paper more useful by seeking to dignify labor, and by a little less denunciation of men.

Very respectfully,

A SUBSCRIBER.

RIGHTS MAN GIVES TO WOMAN.

Editors of Revolution:

WHEN I see a poor washerwoman breaking her back over the wash-tub, working faithfully a whole day and getting twelve shillings in payment; and a great, strong man with ever so much more brawn and no more brains, get two dollars and a half for holding a lamp while the plumber blackens a lead pipe in a dark closet, and scrapes stars and fancy devices on the pipes that are never to be seen (the same plumber getting from three to four dollars a day), then I want women to vote, that they may get a better price for their labor.

I have had some interest in finding out the general opinion of man-kind (or unkind) on the subject, and as a general thing I find he is willing to accord her—

- The right to wake when he's asleep,
- The right to watch, the right to weep,
- The right to rise and light the fire,
- The right to keep her needle by her,
- The right his ancient clothes to mend,
- The right his simplest want to attend,
- The right to pleasantly construe him,
- The right to bring his slippers to him,
- The right to let him make the laws,
- The right to find no fault for cause,
- The right to comfort his distress,
- The right to wear her same old dress,
- The right his every joy to double,
- The right to save him every trouble,
- The right to clothe and teach the young,
- The perfect right to hold her tongue.

S. X.

TAKING THE BULL BY THE HORNS.

"O! Pope Pio! Most Holy Father!"—thus your people address you, as if you were the greatest God or good of the Universe. Nevertheless, as our brothers are not afraid to impeach our President, let me presume to tell you that you had better not meddle with female education; not in this country, at least.

You say in your bull that the advocates of female education, etc., are seeking the corruption and ruin of religion, society and government. Did female education and suffrage produce the social corruptions and governmental ruins of the past? Were female education and suffrage responsible for the vices and corruptions of the Papal and Pontifical chairs, for the atrocities of the French Revolution, and for our own terrible rebellion?

Pope Pio, you are greatly mistaken as to our aims and

objects. Educated women, by the help of the ballot, intend to reform and purify society, and to help establish a government on a just, firm and lasting basis; a task which your sex alone, whether as men or Christians, has never yet been able to accomplish, and which, permit me to say, you never can. Our religious, civil and governmental affairs are as badly managed and as corrupt, without the aid of free women, as would be our homes and families without the true wife and mother.

E. O. G. W.

EXPERIENCES.

BY MISS H. M. SHEPARD.

"I DWELL amid the city,
And hear the flow of souls in act and speech;
For pomp or trade, for merry-make or tolly
I hear the confidence and sum of each,
And that is melancholy!
Thy voice is a complaint, O crowded city!"

As a director and worker in various benevolent societies, my attention was attracted to, and my sympathies warmly enlisted in the trials of that class of toilers known as "sewing women." That there must be much suffering among them was evident from the frequency with which they were forced to apply to the benevolent for relief; but why this should be the case with women who were so skillful with the needle that they could almost always find plenty of work, was a question that puzzled more than me.

In society meetings I have heard the subject discussed over and over again, some attributing the evil to one cause and some to another—the most frequent reason given, being *improvidence* on the part of the women. More than once I have heard applicants for help reproved (by good, energetic directors who never had occasion to earn a penny in their lives) for not laying by in brisk times something for the rainy day. And more than once have I heard the word of women questioned when they stated the prices paid for their elegant handiwork.

From forewomen and employers whom I questioned I got but one reply, "We pay whatever the work is worth—a fair price for fair work, and a liberal price for that which is superior." Any attempt to get at exact prices was parried; and the fact that their employees worked for them year after year was given as proof of the justice of their dealings. One seamstress with whom I talked said, "If you should tell my employers what I have told you regarding the pay we receive, I should be discharged, and poor pay is better than none. You see, Mrs. S., they hold us in their hands."

All these things, together with the prospect of being at no distant day thrown upon my own resources of head or hands for support, led me to reflect more seriously upon the evils to which these poor women were subject, and the means by which they might be lessened. Experience is a grand instructor, and there is no way in which we can so well become acquainted with the condition of any class of people as by identifying ourselves as nearly as possible with them. It was in this spirit and with this view, that, having in the winter of 1893 a considerable portion of time at my disposal, I determined to place myself in the ranks of the sewing women, and endeavor to realize their position.

My first essay was in one of the largest dry goods houses in the city. I went to the shop-walker and stated my errand, and was directed by him to the top floor of the building. I had never before been in a large work-room. Since then I have been in many; but as this one will serve as a fair sample of the better class of work-rooms, I will attempt a description. It was about 75 by 100 feet in size. A space railed in at one end formed an office where three men (two bookkeepers and a cashier) attended to the accounts of the department. At a long table in one corner stood the forewoman and her assistants. Here work was cut and stamped and given out, the sewing woman receiving a ticket with each parcel, which must be registered with her name and address at the desk, and shown also to the porter at the door. Up and down the room on one side, arranged like desks in a school-room, were fifty sewing-machines, at which women sat sewing. On the other side were tables at which lace and bead-workers, embroiderers and finishers, plied their needles. Through the aisles walked two or three overseers directing the work and keeping order. The forewoman was engaged when I entered, and I had ample opportunity to observe the room and its occupants. The room was and is one of the best for its purpose in the city, well warmed, well ventilated, and well lighted.