

Woman's Work in the World

There Are New Thrills for Mothers of Girls

Old Prejudices Against Girl Babies Are Taking Flight as Women Take a More Prominent Place in the Affairs of the World.

By BEATRICE FAIRFAX.

WERE you disappointed when the baby came? Had you longed intensely for a son, and did it seem as though the whole performance had fallen rather flat when they told you that the baby was only a girl? Did the baby's father very much want a boy to "carry on the family name"—though perhaps you never cared so much for the name yourself—and were all the grandparents and lesser relatives for once in solid agreement that the situation absolutely demanded a boy baby? The disappointment didn't last long, of course. Babies can usually be depended on to conquer their own domestic territory within a week, and I suppose yours wasn't an exception. And now that you are so thoroughly reconciled to her sex, and are convinced that you wouldn't have her different in the minutest point, and the relatives are outdoing each other in fatuous ecstasies, don't you sometimes wonder why you were so very sure you wanted a boy, and why everybody else, concerned and unconcerned, held precisely the same view? Aren't you even the least little bit ashamed of that inhospitality of yours, so far as daughters were concerned? And aren't you, as a matter of fact, trying hard to forget that you ever had any such feeling?

Prejudice Against Girls.

The truth is, of course, that you weren't responsible for that prejudice that flickered in you before your baby's birth. It was surely traditional flicker, a race flicker, and hadn't anything to do with you at all. People have felt that way about babies for such untold ages that it isn't surprising that you shared the feeling for a little while. The desire for sons? Why, it's as old as the world. Whereas the desire for a daughter is something nobody ever dreamed of feeling or expressing until very recent times. There's nothing mysterious about it. As long as people valued and respected men, a great deal more than women, a boy baby was naturally a great deal more important and desirable than a girl baby. And I suppose you realize that I am putting the case very mildly. Historians tell us that many ancient peoples thought it no crime to expose girl babies to a cruel death. For that matter, they're doing it still. Girl babies are still allowed to die both in China and in India. The native religions sanction it, and I suppose there's nothing for the agonized mothers to do but submit.

In fact, we are told that in no eastern country, even today, does a girl baby meet any but a grudging welcome. Snubbed at the entrance to life, she is rigidly kept "in her place" ever afterward. The Jewish religion doesn't allow a single candle to be lighted at the birth of a girl, though there is a welcoming blaze when a boy is born.

It has been a man's world, hasn't it? But it's so much less so nowadays, in our western countries at least, that no mother need any longer lament that she has brought a girl baby into existence. Every day that passes in this swiftly moving age brings a higher valuation of women—gives women a better chance and a bigger one.

The world has rhapsodized about women for some centuries—and stopped at that. Now it's gotten to the point of taking women seriously, of acknowledging its need of them, of slowly unfastening every

rusty, long-locked door of opportunity.

It's a wonderful age for a girl baby to be born into. Just think of the heritage awaiting that tiny, warm, rosy creature in your lap. Consider the privilege you've had in introducing her to a society that is making itself over to fit her as fast as it can. Life ought to be a glorious, triumphant adventure for her from start to finish. Don't you see there's nothing to regret in her not being a boy? Aren't you even thoroughly glad she's a girl?

When she's older you can teach her what a thrilling thing it is to be a girl in her age of the world. You can make her understand what it is that a woman's treasure box has really come to hold.

And what does it hold? Why, life first, of course. Girls are allowed to grow up instead of being left naked on a rock to die. Then the chance to learn. This idea of sending girls to school is a very modern thing. And the choice of work. The time has almost come when a woman can follow any occupation she pleases. Then, a self-respecting status in love and marriage, which is very modern, too. And finally—citizenship.

You can tell that amazed little daughter of yours how things have changed since your own childhood, even though you're only a scant short generation older than she. And you can make her long to be a worth-while woman, now that she finds she has such a precious treasure box to dip into.

And you can set her dreaming as to what the world will be like when it has plunged ahead for another 25 years, and the touch of women's hands can clearly be seen in the actual shaping of the conditions we'll all be living under.

"Only a Girl," But—Perhaps you have not realized all this before. Perhaps you hadn't come to see what a responsibility you have on your hands, even though the baby is "only a girl."

For you'll have to fit her to lead her life intelligently, in the world that is and the world that is to be. It isn't as if she were destined for that "sheltered and protected" existence we've all heard so much about—which simply meant that she remained all her life under some man's personal control—first her father's and then her husband's, for your baby will grow up to be just as free as her brother.

And don't ever make the mistake of thinking that those things the doctor tells you about, fresh air and sleep and food and clothing aren't important. It's your affair to see that the little creature grows up healthy and strong, and you'll find that to do this is a pretty steady and exacting job, and you'll need all the wise help you can get.

For in the world that's coming the half-well woman, the woman whose mother didn't wisely guard her infancy, isn't going to be able to get her share or to give her share. It won't do for that baby of yours to have "nerves" or a bad digestion. When you think that she's some day probably going to be a mother and a homemaker and an active citizen and the follower of some useful occupation outside her home you'll see that she needs all the health you can start her out with.

Do take it seriously, this being the mother of a girl baby. Do regard it as the most deliciously real and exercising responsibility you have ever had or can have.

Conditions in France Are Unknown to U. S. Boys

"France is living in the lap of luxury. We find no shortage of food here. We have everything to eat we want," writes the soldier in France to the folks at home.

Naturally "the folks at home" after receiving such a letter have little patience with the United States food administration when it says that unless we save food for France, it will starve.

Yet this is the actual state of affairs. France is in desperate need of all the food we can send it. The reason our soldiers who are over there do not know the real condition of things is that at the front or in their camps there is no food shortage. Uncle Sam sees to that. Even in visiting the French homes the true state affairs is not hard to see. The American soldier, the French are a proud race and do not enjoy showing their discomforts to their guests! Furthermore, they will do anything to make an American feel at home among them, even though to do so means using all their month's sugar supply.

Also, since the American soldier is the best paid soldier in the world, he can afford to buy what little food there is on the French market without realizing that the majority of the French inhabitants themselves cannot afford to pay the high prices that the scarcity of food in France creates.

All these things account for the American soldier writing home that there is no food shortage in France. The true state of affairs, however, is revealed by a letter recently received at the United States food administration by one of its members

who has made a careful study of food conditions in France. In this letter special mention is made of Boulogne. But food conditions here may be taken as typical of many towns in France.

"The bread in Boulogne," according to the writer, "is very bad, being dark brown in color and very coarse in texture. The prefect showed me telegrams—a whole stack of them—from the mayors of various towns and villages in his department saying that their bread supplies had given out completely and wiring in haste for more. You can imagine what this means to a people, 52 per cent of whose diet is composed of bread."

"We spent the day," the writer continues again, "going to several towns closer to the line, stopping at Calais, Arras and St. Omer, and went into the bakeries that were still open in each town. In many places there were queues of people standing in front of the bakeries waiting their turn to get their small rations of bread—and the vilest sort of bread at that. In some places it was made partially of buckwheat flour, and in others they eked it out with chestnut flour, which gave it a very unpleasant odor."

"Other food supplies were not plentiful. The mayors of the towns complained a great deal about the influence purchases by the soldiers had on the local markets. 'What butter, eggs and fruit there were was bought by the soldiers. Those dealers who had supplies—and these were few—often refused to sell them to the civilians and held them for the prices they could get from the military.'"



Ruby Klingbeil

Conservation League Shows How Ingenious Cope With H. C. L.

Thrift week, December 18, was observed in several of the school districts by appropriate programs, followed by discussions of household problems.

The Lothrop school district held its thrift meeting December 5 at the home of Mrs. Maynard C. Cole, 1915 Lothrop street, with 26 women present. The program, consisting of singing and talks by the women of the district, developed a great deal of interest and demonstrated the value of the meeting. A room was given over to the display of the articles discussed and labor-saving devices of various kinds.

The following program was carried out: Music, "Star Spangled Banner," accompanied by Mrs. A. S. Pinto. Reading, "Mr. Hoover's Message," Mrs. Herman K. Lehmer. Short talks with illustrations: "Household Administration and Bookkeeping System" by Mrs. R. E. Winkelmann. "Economy in Little Girls' Clothing" by Mrs. E. J. Simpson. "Economy in Little Boys' Clothing" by Mrs. J. P. Shuran and Mrs. L. E. Conklin. "Economy in Home Dyeing" by Mrs. E. A. Knapp. "Fuel Conservation" by Mrs. C. H. Savidge.

Mrs. A. S. Pinto showed a fine storm coat which had been made from an old automobile coat. The coat had been ripped apart, washed and pressed, turned and made up on the wrong side. The coat is of fine material and could not be duplicated for \$60. Mrs. Charles Powell told of a little boy's coat made from a fine army coat. Mrs. Hollis Johnson and Mrs. M. C. Cole showed what could be done with coats and suits dyed and made over into dresses, each one wearing such a costume. Mrs. Rodman Brown gave a short talk illustrating that women of affairs today do not attach so much importance to dresses as formerly, yet such women are always appropriately gowned.

Mrs. Howard J. Gates read a very interesting article on "What to Do with Cast-offs." Fifteen minutes was given over to open discussion. There were many other splendid meetings at the Farnam, Saunders, Walnut Hill, Yates, Beals, Benson and other schools, but owing to the prevalence of influenza and the street car strike the attendance was small.



Pearl Klingbeil

Where Intelligence and Beauty Are Combined

On a nippy December morning there is nothing so exhilarating as a walk downtown, not alone for health's sake, but that one may see the pretty business girls. The days are past when woman's most arduous task was to pour the ooling into the Severs, for the huge time clock of duty has called many an attractive maid from the land of 4 o'clock teas to the realm of roll top desks and clicking typewriters. The trailing flimsiness of the tea gown has been discarded for the smart blue serge of the business suit and be-furred and low-heeled, you pass these young women of an early morning with a smile on their lips but a purposeful light in their eyes.

Numbered among these young business women is Miss Margaret Cott, who is a traffic manager, if you please, and the only one in Omaha. The responsibility of her position does not seem to awe this attractive girl in the least, for she finds such joy in her work that she accomplishes her various and complex duties with little effort.

Two charming sisters, Misses Ruby and Pearl Klingbeil, entered their business career together. Inured these young women and they find policies far more interesting than parties.

The joys of following the elusive white ball over the rolling green of the links, and the delights of brisk canter through the park have been sacrificed by Miss Mary Gant that she might take her place in the busy work-a-day world. Miss Gant is very athletic and delights in all kinds of sport. Her work fascinates her, too, but she plans her duties so that there is still a little time left for outdoor activities.

Hostilities have ceased and the valiant sons of America who answered their country's call will soon return to follow the peaceful pursuits of life, but will the girls who have had a taste of the life have made a place for themselves in 'mid the hum and bustle of the busy world be content "to sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam"? We hear much of the new era for women and it is most probable that milady will be loath to resign her new independence when the men return.



Margaret Cott



Mary Gant

Society Turns to Red Cross Work and Happy Xmas

Winter Dancing Club Will Bring Younger Set Together During Holidays

EVERY one is working busily for the opening of the Red Cross drive. The headquarters are by thing and peeping in between the huge posters pasted on the windows we saw everyone there. Of course parties are not again, so those who are still hale and hearty are dovetailing all their time to making this drive a great success.

Mrs. Frank Judson is wonderfully proud of her roll call slogan and we don't blame her for it's very original and appealing. She stopped us on the street the other day to tell us about it and to show us one of the lovely cards, designed by our clever artist, Miss Helen Eastman.

Things are a bit quiet, we must admit. Even the army folk are not entertaining, and only a foursome at dinner or perhaps a cup of tea and a friend or two relieves the monotony these December days. Plans are progressing rapidly for the Victory Christmas, however. Mrs. E. W. Crockett at Fort Crook, assisted by a number of the officers' wives, will trim the huge tree, and on Monday evening, December 23, all the men at the post will be honor guests at a real Christmas party. The huge branches of an evergreen will bend beneath their burden, for there will be a gift for every soldier, gay with red ribbons and holly. The women of the Service league are responsible for the idea and have expended every effort to pass along the Christmas spirit.

Some wonderful parties are being planned for the holidays. Christmas night the younger set will have a cotillion at the new Athletic club, and with the men home from the forts, what could be jollier? The New Year's eve party is to surpass all others, we hear.

We have had a hint as to the favors, and they are really works of art. There will be a little dinner and dancing will follow until the bells ring out announcing the coming of the glad New Year.

One of the gay little affairs for the yuletide will be the opening dance of the Winter Dancing club. At a meeting of the directors, held Saturday at the Henshaw hotel, the final plans were completed for a beautiful Christmas party. Many of the members will be home on leave, and others are returning to stay after a long absence in the service of Uncle Sam.

American Mothers May Be Proud of Their Boy's Record While in France

By DR. JENNY B. MERRILL.

The phenomenal success of American boys at the front after an unusually short military training was not only a cause of thankfulness, but indicated that American mothers' methods of discipline had not been so indulgent nor lax in the past as some good critics have feared. There has been a blessing in disguise in the free action and self-assertion that are allowed American children.

Fifty years ago, a little book entitled "Children's Rights," appeared in this country. Perhaps it went too far, but children had suffered long from too great severity. Herbert Spencer in England wrote of children's rights as well as of women's. The words of progressive thinkers on both subjects were needed. Later from Sweden, Ellen Key sent out "The Century of the Child." Later yet, from Italy, came Dr. Montessori's outcry against suppression of the child by arbitrary discipline, and her advocacy of discipline "based upon liberty."

Probably all of these leaders directly or indirectly gained much of their inspiration and guidance from Froebel, who dared to write even in Germany, "Follow the Child." Froebel, the founder of the kindergarten, was German, but not Prussian. Prussia soon recognized that "democracy" would be the outcome of his method and promptly suppressed it.

Froebel was in a sense a martyr and died disappointed with his own nation's rejection of the kindergarten, but with his "eye of faith" he turned hopefully towards America, on which country he proclaimed his ideas would flourish under democratic protection and guidance.

Mothers of America, many of them, as well as teachers, have studied kindergarten principles for 50 years and have again and again testified to their value.

"What are these principles?" Read Miss Emilie Poulsson's "Love and Law in Child Training." This may be found in almost any library or can be bought from the publishers, Milton Bradley Co., Springfield, Mass. Its very title suggests the kindergarten's principles—love and law, but not license.

"A soft answer turneth away wrath." "Grievous words" are avoided because centuries ago it was discovered that they "stir up anger." There are no loud, shrill tones, but rather quiet, decided emphasis, if need be.

"I ain't repented, having proved themselves useless," the wise mother accepts the terse statement that "in discipline one can hardly speak little enough."

No doubt American mothers have still much to learn, but well may they take heart from their boys' record in France.