

against the dark human flesh, like a great throbbing opal in a ruddy ironstone matrix, or a humming bird of gorgeous plumage hovering in the calyx of a somber Brazilian flower?

Certainly this full moon just risen free of the horizon vapors must have witnessed unnumbered repetitions of such forlorn wreckage of the gelatinous living shuttles, as they fling themselves in rash self-destruction out of the rippling patterns they wove on the ocean's immense loom, where now with ever brighter sheen its fluent fabric is assuming a delicate, bluish-white glamor from the dazzling lunar disk.

With the same perplexing silence and impartiality the moon's gaze rested on the portentous combats of saurians, and the struggles of prehistoric man, through vast evolutionary epochs, as tonight on the mingled agonies and delights of the world's tumultuous cities, and the animal life of jungles and seas, even to this vagrant episode of the squids' frenzied suicide.

It is no wonder that the quaint, blotched semblance of a visage in the orb's radiance comes to seem, to certain moods, the inscrutable aspect of a sphinx, from which as archetype that of Egypt may have been sculptured, but so much older as to make the pyramids' hoary consort dwindle in age to a baffling-faced infant.

Whether, then, it be the plains of Mesopotamia, the shores of the Nile, the Athenian Acropolis or the Roman forum, strewn with the wrecks of by-gone civilizations and religions, or the sands of Sahara flecked with the caravans' bleaching bones, or even this beach overspread with the deep's eructation of its strangling progeny, everywhere the insistent human queries are stirred by the drama of creation and dissolution, regardless of the scale on which it is enacted.

And always Nature's response is the obdurate blandness, beyond all provocation and emotion, that seems itself a counter question—wrought into a terrestrial symbol, by hands of men unknown, in the battered stone sentinel of the African desert, and celestially presented in the hinted features of the moon-face, all but drowned in its own refulgence, at the frontier of unimaginable wastes of space.

ELIOT WHITE.

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THE WOMEN'S TRADE UNION LEAGUE.

Alice Henry in the Dispatches of the Service of The Survey Press Bureau.

You have all heard of the Strike of the Forty Thousand, when the shirt-waist girls in New York and Philadelphia left their machines in the depth of winter and stayed out till the employers accepted their terms.*

*See The Public of June 24, p. 588.

Why did they strike, when it was so hard for them? That was what the public asked. That was what some employers asked, too, when driven to distraction by silent machines and unfilled orders. The answer of one little Jewish girl was to the point. "How can you live," said her former employer, "if you won't come back to work?" She said slowly in her queer, formal English:

"I lived not much on forty-nine cents a day."

Would not you strike too, if you had forty-nine cents a day; if you were fined a day's pay for being five minutes late; if you were charged for a worn-out presser-foot; if you had to pay for power to run your employer's machine?

These were the conditions which the words of one girl, "I am tired of talking, let's do something," changed from an ordinary petty dispute to a struggle of national importance.

This girl is typical of the finest material of the strikers. She is a young Russian Jewess, not yet out of her 'teens, who had in her own country a good schooling. She herself did not strike because of personal hardship, but because many of her sister-workers were paid so poorly and treated so badly.

It was at this stage that the New York Women's Trade Union League was of such service. It more than any other one body brought this story before the public, and linked together socialists, suffragists, lawyers, clergymen and society women, to raise money to keep this enormous body of workers from starvation, to enroll the girls in the Shirt-waistmakers' Union, to rent halls in which they could meet, to provide speakers in English, Yiddish and Italian, and to aid in drawing up agreements as fast as employers were willing to make terms.

Thus organized and thus expressed, the restless dissatisfaction of the girls was focussed on certain simple clear demands, and these in the end were gained: A 52-hour week; a limit to night work; increased pay, and a contract with each shop drawn up by the union.

The Strike of the Forty Thousand is a mirror of conditions common in the life of working girls. The part taken by the Women's Trade Union League is typical of that which the organization is beginning to play in the lives of our young girl workers.

It is but six years since the League began its work in Boston. The national headquarters are in Chicago, and the president is Mrs. Raymond Robins. She is fired with a religious enthusiasm for the welfare of the young working girl. There are now local branches in New York, Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, Springfield (Illinois), and Philadelphia, Cleveland and other cities are coming in line.

The League is an expression of the mother spirit of the women of this continent, watching over

the young growing girl, helping her to relate herself to her brothers in the labor union and to her sisters who are in the service of the home and the child. Everyone can belong. It is not only a gathering together of women's unions. It provides a fellowship to which can belong the working woman and the woman of leisure and the woman's club anxious to help in bringing about the shorter working day, a wage on which a girl can live, and in hastening the time when all dangerous machinery will be protected, and every factory well-lit and ventilated. Anywhere and everywhere the man or woman who wants to see the precious gift of the girlhood of each generation conserved as carefully as the forests or the waters, can help by joining.

It is a wonderful training school for its members. The inexperienced work-girl, and the woman who has never had to earn her own living, come into touch with some of the wonderful personalities who, under the prosaic title of business agent, are helping other working girls to know their own powers.

Here is how one business agent, Melinda Scott, handled a situation that the unprotected young factory-worker has to face often: A little Polish factory girl was insulted by a foreman. She complained to the superintendent, but was told it must have been her own fault. She sent to the owner of the factory a registered letter and obtained the official receipt. No reply was forthcoming. Melinda Scott as business agent was now appealed to. She went straight to the superintendent, and told him she would call "Shop" within fifteen minutes if this foreman was not made to publicly apologize. The employer was telephoned for. He came in his motor, and within the fifteen minutes the foreman was asked for an explanation he could not give. "Very well," said the employer pointing to Miss Scott, "you do as she says and apologize." The foreman did what was asked, and the same day received his walking papers.

Could church or priest have preached a more forceful sermon on morality?

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INSENSIBILITY.

I saw him at the Carlton, in his wine,
His white broad hand along the table lay;
A waiter passed a savory made of swine,
On scraps of pastry, which he waved away,
Then looked about him over his pince-nez.

He carried all the while a genial air
Of infinite patience through that weary meal;
Stroking at moments his well-parted hair,
Or fumbling at his waistcoat, where a seal
Hung from the pocket, like a cotton-reel.

At last his friend beside him, who had read
Two or three times the evening paper through;

And answered to whatever he had said:
"Ah!"—his attention to a column drew,
Murmuring through heavy lips, "Can this be true?"

He took the paper patiently, with like
Patience began to read it and to carve
A shilling strawberry. 'Twas about the strike—
A hundred, in the cause, had sworn to starve.
He put it down, and muttered: "Let them starve!"
—H. Monro.

BOOKS

A GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL.

A Life for a Life. By Robert Herrick. Published by The Macmillan Company, New York, 1910. Price, \$1.50.

There is a bigness about Robert Herrick's latest book that renders the writing of a calm and controlled criticism difficult. The magnificent breadth of the canvas; the multiplicity of detail, touching our national life at its heights and its depths, and yet fusing all together in the grand outlines of a central theme of symphonic bigness; the acute realism of the single pictures and the splendid richness of imagination that generalizes from the Part to the Whole—all these qualities of a great prose epic this book possesses in measure overflowing. It might well be called the American "Faust," the epic of our modern national tendencies, our modern national life. Like Faust, the hero, Hugh Grant, touches life at all points, learns to know the lure of successful endeavor, and the joy of returned love,—but he sees the sting, the hellish bargain by which the desired goal is won, and at the last learns that true peace comes only through self immolation. This, roughly outlined, is the thematic note of this magnificent prose epic, written in a prose that oftentimes reaches the richness of verse, lacking only the outer form.

Hugh Grant, the foundling from the country town, follows the lure of the city, and at the outset of his endeavor encounters the two extremes of modern industrial society. The maiming of the little sewing girl in the shirt-maker's loft, and the chance meeting with the bearded "Anarch," who explains the economic reason—taught by hate—for such incidents, come as prelude to Hugh's introduction to the multi-millionaire, Alexander Arnold, and his glimpse of luxury in the Arnold home, of power in the bank controlled by Arnold—twin symbols of Success. The great electric sign "Success" that lit the attic chamber which was Hugh Grant's first—and last—home in the city sheds the glare of its artificiality over all the life that he learns to know under its watchful eye.

Helped by native ability, drawn by the lure of power, the beckoning of love, Grant mounts the ladder rapidly. But the very thing that gives him