

THE OBSERVER

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POWER OF THE CONSUMER

Co-operation as a means not only for ending the consumers' ills, but as a method for fighting monopoly and bringing about an industrial democracy in which the buyers, the rightful rulers of industry, shall keep the profits to themselves is brought to the attention of the American public in the April number of the Review of Reviews, which says:

In Europe is seen the co-operative movement at its highest stages of development. In 1884 British co-operators, numbered 717,000, in 1894, 1,200,000; in 1904, they had grown to 21,180,000. Last December the English Wholesale society returned to its constituent societies \$1,000,000 as their share of the net profits of \$1,600,000 made during the previous six months; half a million dollars was retained for extending the enterprise. The case of a family in Glasgow, Scotland, that for years paid its rent from the profits on its purchases is cited. The English Wholesale, aroused by the high price of coal, is making large purchases of coal lands. Already the English Wholesale, aroused by the largest flour mills and biggest boot and shoe factory in Great Britain. These two enterprises have a capital of \$37,000,000 and have 21,000 employees on their payrolls. The biggest bakery in the world, situated in Glasgow, is a local co-operative enterprise. Besides giving the people the benefit of the profits of each purchase co-operation has stopped the leakage in family income caused by adulteration, short weight and overcharging. The reason is very simple. The co-operative storekeeper would be cheating the very managers of the enterprise, for in this case the purchasers are the managers and he is dependent on them for his position.

In Belgium the profits instead of being returned to the buyer in the form of a cash rebate are used for collective purposes, sick and death benefits, free medical aid, old age pensions, maternity subsidies, day nurseries and general clubhouses. These last have free libraries, reading rooms, lectures, dances and moving picture shows. In Ghent the co-operators have bought a theatre where the audience elects the actors and chooses its own plays. In the permanent employ of this society is the famous Flemish sculptor, Van Breesbroeck, who is hired to decorate all the co-operative buildings and to create a distinctive working class art. The basic principle of co-operation is the fact that the people hold supreme power as consumers. As workers the capitalist spurns them, as consumers he bows prostrate before them. Membership is open to all comers, each

member irrespective of capital invested having one vote, and his share of the proceeds depending on the purchases of himself and his family. Capital as such does not share in the profits, all the money over and above that subscribed by members drawing ordinary rates of interest. That the movement already has reached gigantic proportions is shown by the fact that in 1911 co-operative societies throughout the world did a business aggregating \$250,000,000. This is an increase of \$18,500,000 over that of the previous year.

With so much discussion of cost of living, wages, etc., in this country it is only a question of time before general attention must be directed to this movement, holding forth as it does the possibilities of making moderate incomes adequate and of beating monopolistic extortion at its own game.

Washington Y. M. C. A. physical director declares he has a system that will do away with nervousness. Prospective bridegrooms will be thankful for the course.

Merrle England aded! Between dynamite and threats, the suffragists are making anything in Cromwell's day look as tame as a street carnival.

Suffragists can argue that one thing they do not require the taxpayer to furnish is the cuspidor for public buildings.

Wool is to be admitted free. For \$7.50 we ought to be able to buy a suit that won't shrink with the April showers.

A RUINED ROMANCE

Genevieve Ward's Story of Her Wedding Tragedy.

PARTED AT THE CHURCH DOOR

After a Dramatic Ceremony Following a Complication That Became an International Affair and Was Ended by Our Government and the Czar.

In Mrs. Tweedle's "Thirteen Years of a Busy Woman's Life" are some stories of Genevieve Ward, the famous actress.

One morning in March, 1908, came a knock on Mrs. Tweedle's door, and in walked Miss Ward.

"Out for my constitutional, my dear," she exclaimed. "So I thought I would just look you up. I have walked six miles this morning, and after a little rest and chat with you I shall walk another mile home and enjoy my luncheon all the better for it."

"You are a marvel!" exclaimed our author. "Seven miles and over seventy I saw your 'Volumnia' was a great success the other day when you played it with Benson."

"Yes," she said, "and the next day I started for Rome. I got a telegram saying one of three old cousins, with whom I was staying in Rome a few weeks previously, had died suddenly, so four hours after receiving the message I set out."

"Were you very tired?" "No, not at all. I knitted nearly all the way and talked to my fellow passengers and when I arrived, instead of resting, went at once to see to some business, for these two old sisters, one

of whom is blind, were absolutely prostrated with grief and had done nothing while awaiting my arrival. I stayed a fortnight with them, settled them up and arrived back a few days ago."

Here is the pathetic story of Miss Ward's marriage tragedy as she told it to Mrs. Tweedle:

"I was traveling with my mother and brother on the Riviera in 1855 when we met a Russian, Count de Guerbel. He was very tall, very handsome, very fascinating, very rich and twenty-eight. I was seventeen. He fell in love with me, and it was settled I should be married at the consulate at Nice, which I was. But the Russian law required that the marriage should be repeated in the Russian church to make the ceremony binding; otherwise I was his legal wife, but he was not my legal husband.

"It was arranged, therefore, that I should go to Paris with my mother, the count going on in advance to arrange everything, and we would be remarried there in the Greek church. When we arrived in Paris it was Lent, when no marriage can take place in the Greek church, and so time passed on.

"He must have been a thoroughly bad man, because he did his best at that time to persuade me to run away with him, always reminding me that I was his legal wife. The whole thing was merely a trick of this handsome, fascinating rascal. He promised me that if I would go to him he would take me to Russia at once, and there we should be remarried according to the rules of the Greek church. Being positively frightened by his persistence, I told my mother. At the same time rumors of De Guerbel's amours and debts reached her ears, and she wrote to a cousin of ours, then American minister in St. Petersburg, for confirmation of these reports.

"My cousin replied, 'Come at once.' We went, I, of course, under my name of Countess de Guerbel, which I had naturally assumed from the day of our wedding at Nice, and we stayed at the embassy in St. Petersburg. The count's brother was charming to me. He told us my husband was a villain and I had better leave him alone. That was impossible, however. I was married to him, but he was not married to me, and such a state of affairs could not remain.

"It became an international matter, and it was arranged by the American government and the czar that we should be officially married at Warsaw. The count refused to come. The czar therefore sent sealed orders for his appearance. Wearing a black dress and feeling apprehensive and miserably sad, I went to the church, and at the altar rails, supported by my father and mother and the count's brother, I met my husband.

"It was a horrible crisis, for I knew my father was armed with a loaded revolver, and if De Guerbel refused to give me the last legal right, which was morally already mine, its contents would put an end to the adventurer's life. There we stood, husband and wife, knowing the service was a mere form, but the marriage was lawfully effected. He had completed his part of the bargain, and we had learned his villainy. At the door of the church we parted, and I never saw him again."

His Instrument.

"That executor is very energetic in carrying out the various provisions of the testator."

"He does seem to be working with a will."—Baltimore American.

The Oyster.

Huxley said that an oyster is as complicated as a watch. All we know about it is that it's awful to swallow one that is out of order.—New Orleans Picayune.

One he must be thatched with an other or it will soon rain through.—Owen.

Earthworms For Rheumatism.

Your paragraph, writes a correspondent, giving as a cure for bronchitis a bag of earthworms on the chest, reminds me of a prescription I heard of thirty years ago, given also "in all seriousness," in Nottingham market place, as a remedy for rheumatism. In this case, too, the earthworms formed one of the constituents, but it was necessary to put them into a bottle and pour upon them a quantity of powdered quicklime. The resultant compound, well rubbed into the affected parts, was guaranteed by the prescriber to be a certain cure for rheumatism.—London Chronicle.

Mixed as to Definitions.

Hungry Higgins (Wol. You drink wot a miser is? A miser is a man that denies himself the necessities of life when he has the money to buy 'em. Weary Watkins: Oh, I have met some of them fellows. But I thought they called themselves 'Prohibitionists.'—Exchange.

Her Poor Taste.

"Does your husband ever tell you you have poor taste?" "Frequently." "And what reply do you make to him?" "I think of what I married and say nothing."—Houston Post.

AN ARCTIC EXPERIENCE.

Talking and Wrangling to Ward Off Brooding and Insanity.

"I had not much opportunity to speak English during those twenty-eight months when Iversen was my only companion," says Captain Einar Mikkelsen concerning an experience in the arctic regions. "I thought it would help to pass the time if I tried to teach him English, but it didn't amount to much. Iversen wasn't keen on learning a new language when there seemed to be very little chance of our ever wanting any language at all, except to say our last prayers, and so the scheme fell through.

"When the others were there we talked about everything through those dark months—everything under the sun. Silence is golden, perhaps, but not in the arctic, for to live men left to their own devices speech, continual speech, is the only saving grace. Silence must be avoided at any cost, for silence means brooding. Still it is as well as a rule to avoid controversial topics—politics, for instance—though in the last desperate winter, the third of this trip, I remember we did talk politics, having exhausted pretty nearly everything else.

"One of us, for the purpose of argument, became a staunch Conservative and the other a Socialist of the deepest dye. All the things we had to argue about were two and a half years old and might have been settled, perhaps, but for us the world had stood still. We even got as far, I believe, as involving Europe in a universal war, and then it suddenly occurred to us that in these circumstances no ships might come next year to the Greenland coast, and that awful prospect was too horrible to contemplate, so we dropped politics. We dreamed a good deal and found some comfort in telling each other our dreams and perhaps embroidering them a little.

"It scarcely seems credible, but I remember that it was almost a relief to wake up one night with a raging toothache. At any rate, it was something new, and I began to calculate how long it would last until I could get to a dentist, supposing we were taken off by a ship the following summer. I made it 210 days—say, 5,000 hours of toothache. It didn't last as long as that, but it stayed quite long enough to make me prefer some other kind of distraction."—Chicago News.

The Concertina.

The concertina dates from the early part of the last century. Its invention was an early indiscretion of Sir Charles Wheatstone of telegraph fame, who took out a patent for it in 1829, the very year in which somebody in Vienna invented that similar instrument, the accordion. The concertina was popularized by Signor Regondi, who had come before the public as a juvenile prodigy with the guitar. At one time no London concert was really complete without him and his concertina, and he astounded the Germans with the music he could get out of it.—Exchange.

Stood by His Theory.

"Thales, the ancient philosopher, declared that there was no difference between life and death. 'Why, then,' cried one of those to whom the remark was made, 'don't you put an end to your life?' 'Because,' was the reply, 'there is no difference.'"

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