

**"NO ENCUMBRANCE."**

(From "Woman's Outlook.")

Fateful words! Surely they appear with increasing frequency. One is struck, when scanning the daily paper, to see the number of advertisements stipulating that applicants must be without children; while it is not uncommon to see advertisers seeking employment, adding the words "no children" to their list of capabilities, as an additional bait to the potential employer. Theoretically, the child is "the complement to married life, the light of the home, the most valuable asset to the State," and so on. Practically, children are anathema. Landlords look askance at the family with young children; no hotel or boarding-house desires them as guests; the owner of a furnished house to let firmly declines the tenant with young children; no one willingly travels in the same railway carriage as mamma and baby. Worse still, it is a distinct handicap to a man seeking employment to have to own to a wife and children. The confession is a drawback to his chance of an engagement. In fact, the single man applying for the same post as the family man, given that their attainments are equal, would undoubtedly have preference. Why? Because the salary that might be sufficient for a bachelor would not support a married man with children.

Has any one ever seen advertisements reading somewhat as follows:—Wanted,—Married couple to take charge of an hotel; preference all things being equal, will be given to a couple with a family." "House to let, healthily situated, excellent sanitation and ventilation, good nursery. Admirably suited for a family with young children." Or, "Widower requires a competent housekeeper; no objection to one with children."

Such advertisements one has never come across, although there must have been at least some cases where they could have been inserted without detriment to the advertiser.

So much has been said about the "declining birthrate," "the empty cradle," and "one's duty to one's country," thereby emphasising the duties of parents to their country, that the case for the parents should also be carefully considered.

Has society as a whole no duty to the children? It would be a bold

person who would say it has no such duty. In fact, it is being increasingly urged that it has many and very real duties to the children, but alas! the child being in most cases dependent upon the parents, it is only possible to benefit the children through them.

It is neither right nor fair that children should be so generally considered either nuisances or encumbrances, but true it is that they are too frequently looked upon as such.

If considered as encumbrances, children will either suffer or not appear. The limitation of families is a serious evil; one might almost say crime. Certainly the sacredness of the married state is violated by a wilful determination that there shall be no offspring. Yet while conditions remain as they are, and children are regarded as "encumbrances," there remains some excuse for the empty cradle.

Let women do what they can to have the point in question clearly focussed, and considered, and decided upon its merits, and may it never be said that women encouraged the attitude of mind which, on paper, laments with bitter accent the declining of the birthrate, but in actual deed and word discourages the building up of a family, by proclaiming the child "an encumbrance." Rather should they strive to make the saying true, that "happy is the man who hath his quiver full," remembering as well that the child of to-day is the man of to-morrow.

**NOBODY KNOWS BUT MOTHER.**

How many buttons are missing to-day

Nobody knows but Mother.

How many playthings are strewn in her way?

Nobody knows but Mother.

How many thimbles and reels has she missed?

How many burns on each little fist?  
How many bumps to cuddle and kiss?

Nobody knows but Mother.

How many cares does a mother's heart know?

Nobody knows but Mother.

How many joys from her mother-love flow?

Nobody knows but Mother.

How many prayers by each little white bed?

How many tears for her babes has she shed?

How many kisses for each curly head?  
Nobody knows but Mother.

**EXPLAINING IRELAND'S POVERTY.**

Quotations from "Herself"—Ireland—by Mrs T. P. O'Connor:—

A priest said to her: "The slums are a shrieking reproach to mankind, and a monster indictment against publicans, the public-houses, and the corporation. There is scarcely a newspaper or a man in Ireland dares lift a voice against the distillers or publicans, least of all the politicians whom they send to Parliament. He is muzzled, and obliged to play into the ruthless hands of the men who ruin the poor, and are directly responsible for the starvation and death of many children. Publicans are not impulsive murderers; they destroy by inches and slow methods the bodies and souls of those who enrich them."

"The Homestead," edited by a man of unswerving honesty and unflinching courage, George Russell, says, 'We in Ireland have signalled the war by increasing expenditure on drink by two millions. The world-tragedy has been celebrated by us by the expenditure of fifteen million pounds on alcohol in one year. Fifteen million pounds on drink, when industry and agriculture are starved for want of capital, and a body like the Agricultural Organisation Society finds it difficult to get the few thousands a year it requires. Fifteen million pounds spent in muddling our wits and suppressing the soul God breathed into man, in one small country with a population of four million people. Our politicians are afraid of their lives to hint at enmity to this beastly trade. Men who won't unite or consult with each other for the good of their country will unite cordially for its evil, so that the devil may always be on tap in pints and pots, in bottle and in barrel, for all who require him. Never can Ireland have real prosperity until two things happen—an Irish Government formed of Irish people to govern Irish people, and a law (even if it should create a revolution) to close all public-houses. How can any country hope to succeed with 86 public-houses in a village of 1500 inhabitants? Never have I seen human beings more sodden with drink than in Galway. Faces a deep purple red, bloated, and dropsical, and hands that trembled as if they suffered from shell shock."