

May Crisis Society Woman Became a "Tramp"

By GRACE R. CLARKE

Not "Wanderlust," but a Sincere Belief in the Doctrine of Individual Liberty, Each Spring Impels Mrs. C. C. Whitney of Marshall, Minn., to Leave the Comfortable Home of Her Husband and, Without a Cent in Her Pocket or Help from Friends, Work Her Way from Town to Town Doing Varied Acts of Philanthropy.

The present abnormal and almost impossible matrimonial situation is because our married women have not, as a rule, interests and occupations that render them independent of their husbands.

Dependence of the wife on the husband is one of the chief obstacles in the way of a truly happy, normal marriage. The human mind craves more than is contained in the narrow circle of home as food for its thought. Without enrichment from the larger world outside that circle it becomes...

Thus as a simple law of psychology a married woman just as much as an unmarried woman needs the stimulus of an outside occupation. But this is a man made world and the man decrees that if a woman becomes a wife it is her duty to be a housekeeper and a mother.

If her energy demands more than this, let her occupy herself with the ornamental work comprised in that bundle of inanities known as "society"—the real inspiring work of the world belongs to man. This is the way the jealous male has decreed it.—Prof. W. I. Thomas.

It was an intuitive grasp of the same truths and ideas that are quoted above, from some of the latest writings of Prof. W. I. Thomas of the chair of sociology in the Chicago university, that made Mrs. C. C. Whitney of Marshall, Minn., who has lately passed through Chicago, set forth on the strangest tramping expedition that has probably ever been undertaken.

"I don't like to think that I am dependent upon my good husband for every breath I draw, and every mouthful of food I eat," said Mrs. Whitney. "I want to breathe in the freedom of the soul and the freedom of the body, too, so I told my husband that I was going to make a three months' trip, see everything there was to be seen in the golden west, enjoy every minute of the three months, and start without a cent of money."

Mrs. Whitney not only accomplished that trip years ago, but she has made two journeys on the same plan since, and has covered the whole of the United States as an itinerant. She has made her journeys without money, without baggage, without taking thought of where she would eat, and without knowing through the day where at night she would lay her head. With it all she feels that she has fulfilled some of that "inspiring work of the world" that Prof. Thomas talks about, because, besides earning her way, she has found many chances to help others and to do good.

Revolt Seems Without Explanation.

When a typical young woman of the day leaves a good home to make her own way from choice, and even when a young mother leaves her babies to the care of others to work or write or go on the stage, it is generally put down to the inexplicable ways of the new woman; but Mrs. Whitney's revolt against domesticity was the revolt of an old fashioned wife and housekeeper and the long devoted mother of a family of eight. It was one of those "revolts of mother" at which everything else pales into insignificance and which never fails to make those who come in contact with it stop and ponder and wonder if the millennium is coming.

Mrs. Whitney is the typical mother of the old fashioned ideal, good to look upon, strong of physique, with enough of beauty and calm dignity to satisfy the sculptor who would make the woman mother with her children the model of Mother Earth.

When she started out to become a "tramp" she had brought up her sons and daughters to a place in life that would satisfy the strictest ideals of Mrs. Grundy—they were all settled in life, except one young son, who was well placed at a special school, and one young daughter, who undertook to oversee the home and look after things "while mamma was on the road," as she expressed it. She also left a devoted husband, who, as a prominent editor and for many years state printer of Minnesota, had a wide circle of acquaintances in many of the places through which his wife later worked her way as a wage earner.

Veritable Leader in Home Town.

At home she was society leader, club leader, and church worker of a proficiency to satisfy even the most exacting ideals of small town clubs, churches, and society. She had a beautiful home and a good working housekeeper in her kitchen.

But all this did not prevent her starting one morning for St. Paul without a grip, without a pocket-book, without a penny. But for the fact that she wore a stylish silk traveling dress and feather boa, and carried a small parcel with a change of underwear, toilet articles, and a clean wash wrist, she had no more or better worldly possessions than the typical Weary Willie himself. There was one exception which left Mrs. Whitney with less of a handicap than the ordinary tramp—she accepted a pass to St. Paul instead of trying either to steal rides or to walk in the ordinary way.

On arriving at St. Paul, however, she recalled the places she had heard of in that city which offered a chance of bread and butter and a night's lodging, just as the ordinary tramp might have done, except that in doing this she sought those places which she considered most likely to offer work—for Mrs. Whitney intended to be a working itinerant rather than a begging one. One of the things she had started out to prove was that a woman without home or money could earn her living on the road or anywhere she happened to be, and the only thing that she intended to beg for was work.

Following this idea in casting about as to what she was to do in St. Paul, the "Golden Rule fraternity" came to Mrs. Whitney's mind as an institution which she had heard of as philanthropic and consequently as being likely to offer work. She went there and immediately, without questioning, secured a position as nurse. With the \$24 earned there she bought a ticket to Denver, paying \$22.50 for it. Arriving at Denver with barely one fare left out of this amount, she answered an advertisement and got a position as nurse with Mrs. Caughtry, 1136 Race street.

Visit Interrupts the Plans.

After four weeks' work at Mrs. Caughtry's she had earned enough to buy a ticket to San Francisco and then a visit to friends interrupted the nomadic part of her trip at Pomona, Cal. Here was living a man of her family, and Mrs. Whitney appeared at her home one morning at breakfast time as unexpectedly unannounced as the ordinary tramp might be. She was warmly welcomed by every member of the family, including her brother, who, with a thought, immediately demanded her trunk.

"I don't know," declared Mrs. Whitney, to the con-

sternation of the family. "I am working my way over the country and I cannot be bothered with baggage."

In spite of the protests of her brother's wife and daughters, Mrs. Whitney insisted on keeping up her self-supporting policy even when she was their guest. No sooner had she finished her breakfast than she began asking if they knew of anybody who could give her work. It happened that right next door was a newly engaged girl who was even then looking for somebody to make her wedding trousseau. Mrs. Whitney took hold of the work, planned all the details, and not only did the best part of the making but instructed the young woman so that she could become her helper.

From that, other young women wanted to learn, so that it was not long until, after sewing a certain part of every day, Mrs. Whitney spent her evenings in teaching needle work to a class of up to date and pretty Frisellias. "With all my work I found time to enjoy Pomona, which is a little paradise on earth," said Mrs. Whitney in talking of her stay there.

Pacific Coast Toured.

From there I went to Pasadena and Los Angeles," she said, "and had money earned from what I had earned to take all the different trips in that part of the state. Then I went to San Francisco, saw that city thoroughly, and started to Portland, Ore., where I was to meet my son. Here a delay occurred. I was to meet him on the 20th of the month and he was detained till the 28th, and I again had a chance to prove what I had partly started out to prove, that a woman's work, such as she does in being a mother and housekeeper, is worth money to her any time she wants to turn it into cash. I got work easily, as I had everywhere, and was busy every minute and found all the sewing I could do."

Prof. Thomas, elsewhere in the same article in which he has explained the unrest of the mothers of today, declares that in whatever form of activity she undertakes the gentler sex cannot escape directing it toward philanthropy. "Mercy is a sex quality peculiarly feminine," he declares, and here again it seems that Mrs. Whitney has unconsciously carried out the principles which the learned scientist has been formulating.

Work Sought for Friendless.

She had no sooner made the acquaintance of her hobnob friends than she was busy getting jobs for them. One tramp boy particularly attracted her attention, and she asked a friend to whose home she drifted accidentally to let her have an old suit belonging to her son. While the guest was following out her custom of earning her board by washing the dishes for the housewife, who was "dead tired" of the monotony of dishwashing, the hostess herself gathered together a good and complete outfit of her son's clothing and made it up into a package. Armed with this, Mrs. Whitney sought out her young friend the next day and made him go and get a bath and array himself. When he was transformed she took him down to a big downtown hotel and asked for a job for him. "Well, who is he, madam? Can you vouch for his reliability?" asked the hotel clerk.

"Why, I don't know anything about him; but look at him—doesn't he look honest and bright?" replied Mrs. Whitney. The clerk decided that he did, and the boy now is considered one of the prize "bellhops."

It is not only outside the home, but inside of them that Mrs. Whitney has been able to act the part of a philanthropist. In one Chicago home she engaged as second girl and soon showed the cook how to make biscuit. It was quickly found that she had all cookery lore at her fingers' ends, and when beautifully broiled steaks and other viands were served better than they had been for years, the master of the house said it was "too good to last." Sure enough, it didn't last.

Chicago Seen from All Sides.

Mrs. Whitney wanted to see life downtown, so she worked a while in downtown restaurants. This was not all the side of Chicago life she saw, however. While she was entertained by her tramp friends one day she would run into some old friend of her husband the next, and be invited home to stay as long as she wanted to. Under this espionage she was treated to theaters, concerts, lectures, and little suppers at the gayest hotels.

At the home of one of these friends she turned in and made up a bunch of silk waists for the hostess. With this money she was \$30 to the good, and the money was put into the fund which is now carrying her on her eastern route. For however much she may differ in other ways from the real hobos of the road, Mrs. Whitney finds that she has acquired one trait in common with them—for the three months after she had once yielded to the wanderlust and started out on the road she finds that she has it in deadly earnest. She cannot stay long in a place and finds the call soon urging her to be up and moving.

Asked if her husband was in sympathy with her wanderings, Mrs. Whitney said that he was, and that, moreover, he always stood ready to help her with his pocketbook.

"I never have taken a cent from him," she says, "since I first started, and I have perfect confidence that I could go anywhere in the world without doing so."

daytimes, spoke evenings, and made dozens of friends." Having many old friends of her own and friends of her husband whom she would stumble on in different places and to whom she would introduce herself from time to time, naturally made "earning her way" less arduous for Mrs. Whitney than it would have been for the ordinary tramp, but even finding friends did not deter her from her purpose. After leaving her son she started on her return trip in the same way, working and sightseeing in Oakland, Berkeley, Alameda, Sutter Heights, Salt Lake City, Colorado Springs, and Mount Shasta and Shasta Springs. In Shasta Springs she staid a week as chambermaid, and says in telling about her experience: "My work was done at noon, and each afternoon and evening were mine to wander over the trails and do as I pleased. The guests were paying big prices and finding fault, and I was paid for my work with room and board and went away with \$8 to the good."

Denver Last Stop Before Home.

"Back to Colorado Springs I went, where I had no trouble at all in finding plenty of work, so that I could take all the drives to Manitou and through the Garden of the Gods. I arrived in Denver just \$9.30 ahead and worked there long enough to make my way home."

Since that time Mrs. Whitney has spent three months of each year in seeing the United States in the same fashion, and now "her tramps" are an accepted fact to her husband, children, and neighbors, all of whom considered her a nine days' wonder when she returned from her first outing. This year she started again, by way of St. Paul and Minneapolis, and went through Chicago on her way to Washington, Philadelphia, Norfolk, New York City, Buffalo, Boston, and the New England states. She got into Chicago the first day of January not knowing, as she seldom does now, where she was to eat or sleep.

Among the other aims of her nomadic life, one is to see for herself the strange people and places of which she has read. "Emma Goldman" had always been a newspaper name that had unusual interest for her, and the first thing she saw when she looked into the paper on arriving at Chicago that morning was that Miss Goldman was to lecture in the evening at a hall on the west side. Finding her way there, she met and fell into conversation with a young woman writer and lecturer. Mrs. Whitney told her new acquaintance what she had been doing and of all the strange and interesting people she had met upon her travels.

Evidently Good Subject for Copy.

Naturally the interest of the young woman writer was aroused and she invited her new acquaintance to go home with her to her flat. There Mrs. Whitney "paid her way," as she calls it, by getting together a sewing kit and by putting buttons, facings, fresh ruchings, and ribbons on her hostess's wardrobe, which needed it as only the clothes of a woman who earns her own living can. Having proved the most desirable of guests, she again took her way downtown. The account of the tramps' convention attracted her and soon she was over at the tramp headquarters, handing out sandwiches and coffee to the hungry men who were lined up there.

"While here I had a funny experience," said Mrs. Whitney. "One of my tramp friends—this was not one of the most impetuous ones, as you will see, but one who had been impetuous often, probably—came and asked if I didn't want to be 'put next' to a good place."

"I asked him what he meant by a good place." "So that you'll know where to go when you get almost broke and have to have a meal, ma'am," he said, looking at me with earnest eyes and eager to help. "It's right around here," he explained, and so I put on my hat and went."

Thanks Due to Informant.

"Although the name of the restaurant was one that wouldn't exactly sound well in a drawing room, the bill of fare, considering the money that we paid for it, was as wonderful as anything I have ever heard of. Chicken, two vegetables, bread, coffee, tea, and milk, and any kind of pie we chose to order were all served for 10 cents, and I was truly thankful to my tramp friend for 'letting me in,' as he called it, on his valuable secret."

It was after her experience with the tramp convention that Mrs. Whitney was asked to speak in Hull house and at many meetings that were held during January by Socialists, sociologists, labor unionists, and organizations that were trying to help the unemployed. Once in these places, she became the friend of the friendless.

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