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Ambition.

Aspire not too high.
Although the lark soars to the sky,
To utter forth its most melodious sound,
Still, 't is confessed,
It comes to earth to build its nest
Low on the ground.

One of Many.

BY SARAH E. GANNETT.

The hot sun pours remorselessly through a seventh story window in the Census office in Washington. At one of the long rows of tables a woman sits, young still, and bearing traces of lost beauty and vivacity, but tired and old before her time, and disheartened by many things.

Her pen flies rapidly over the paper, for she is obliged to accomplish a certain amount every day or lose her place; and home, food and clothes for five little children depend on her unaided efforts. Her thoughts fly backward along the past to her careless girlhood; to her early married life, when she was the idolized pet of a wealthy, successful man; to her later years, when children came fast, and with them came the dread awakening to the fact that her husband was a roue, a drunkard and a gambler; to the gradual loss of all the comforts, and even the necessities, of life—even the love of her husband gone; to her long journey from her home in New Mexico to Washington, the five little children in her care alone, her husband left behind to work out his own weal or woe; to the daily toil and struggle both in office and at home to care for and support her family on sixty dollars a month, with the fear of dismissal continually hanging, like the sword of Damocles, over her head. She thinks of the letter received that morning from her husband—a letter filled with remorse for the past and promises for the future—ending in a determination to join her in Washington in a few days and lead a better life.

She wonders vaguely as she writes whether she is glad to hear that. Will his coming be a joy and a relief, or will it be an added burden? Too often, alas! had she listened to his promises of reform to trust

them now. So her head droops lower over her work, and she writes drearily on, not even heeding the little stir caused by the entrance of a messenger with a telegram for one of the clerks. The name is a common one—Harris. Several women in this one room have that name, and the messenger carries it to one and another, and at last lays it under her eyes.

"Is this your name, madam?"

With a cry she snatches it, and tears it open with shaking hands. A brutal message, but telling all:

St. Louis, Mo.

"Charles Harris dead. Suicide after killing another man in a drunken brawl. What shall be done with body?"

Then she faints—an ordinary occurrence. Women frequently do that in the Census office. Heart-aches and troubled minds are common there.

They carry her out and send her home, and the work of the day goes on.

A week passes by and she comes back, paler, sadder and more hollow-eyed than ever, for now she is the widow of a murderer and a suicide. She shrinks from the sight of all. How people must despise her! But work she must for the sake of her little ones.

At noon she cannot eat, but sits alone among the throng of merry clerks, white, still and silent. Her very heart seems dead within her. A kindly woman brings her a cup of tea, but she shakes her head with dumb, beseeching eyes. Oh, if she could only crawl away by herself to cry! The woman understands; she needs no words to tell her of her friend's suffering. She gently presses her hand, and turns away as the signal is given to resume work. The hour of closing comes at last. Pens are wiped and put away; work is collected by the messenger to be stored for the night; tables are cleared, and clerks sit quietly waiting for the signal for dismissal from their day's work, when another messenger appears, bearing a package of long white envelopes.

Ominous sight! All know its meaning, and in an instant the

room has the silence of death. Faces pale and hands tremble nervously as the messenger goes around, dropping his white missives here and there among the clerks. Each clerk who receives one knows that the hour has come, that this paper is Uncle Sam's official notification that their services are no longer required by the government. Some receive them in stolid silence, some laugh hysterically, many cry or even scream, and the lately silent room is moved to grief and sorrow—if not for oneself, for a neighbor. At length the messenger reaches our suffering friend. He is behind her chair. He passes by, and her firmly compressed lips part in a sigh of relief. He stops, hesitates, turns back, and the fateful envelope lies before her:

"MRS. HELEN HARRIS."

As in a dream she picks it up, and staggers to her feet as the electric bell jangles out the hour of dismissal. Silently she puts on her hat and joins the throng at the elevator. Friends speak to her in love and pity, but she cannot answer. In her stunned heart she dully wonders if God still lives, or if he has forgotten her.

And so she wanders home and sits down among her helpless babes.—Cosmopolitan.

At the annual meeting of the Lake Carriers' association, to be held in Detroit on Jan. 11, the International association of Longshoremen will endeavor to bring about the adoption of their co-operative contract plan and the abolition of the stevedore system in the loading and unloading of vessels. The officers of the union will wait upon the lake carriers with facts and arguments of a change in the method of awarding this labor by which it will go direct to the unions at the several ports. The Longshoremen's unions of Superior will send delegates to the meeting who will urge in every possible way the carrying out of the contract plan direct with the longshoremen.