CARNIE, ETHEL

MILL GIRL POETESS.

MARRIAGE OF MISS ETHEL CARNIE.

Miss Ethel Carnie, the Great Harwood mill girl who has earned a wide reputation as a factory poetess and novelist, was married at Burnley Registry Office, on Saturday, to Mr. Alfred Holdsworth, son of Mr. Edwin Holdsworth, of Nelson. The time and place of the ceremony had been kept secret.

Miss Carnie entered the mill at Great Harwood as a half-timer when 11 years old, and it was whilst following her work that most of her poems

Miss Ethel Carnie.

were composed. At quite an early age—she is now 29—she showed literary talent, and her first published poem was written at the age of 19, and was entitled "The Bookworm." "I really composed 'The Bookworm' one morning whilst working at my frame," she said to a reporter. Her work has attracted the attention of literary critics far and near. She has published two volumes of verses and a novel, "Miss Nobody," which deals with industrial conditions. Her "Songs of a Factory Girl" are a volume on human, simple, homely matters, written in the

P.T.O.

simplest, clearest language. There are other verses about Nature, others about the wide world, but the best are the home poems. Some of the best of Miss Carnie's literary work consists of tales for children, some of which, as well as many of her poems, have appeared in "The Blackburn Times."

Miss Carnie met her future husband at a Nelson literary club. Mr. Holdsworth has himself done some literary work, and about 18 months ago he returned from a long tour abroad, made to gain knowledge and experience. The pair corresponded during that time, and became engaged on his return. The orthodox honeymoon was dispensed with, the newly-wedded pair after the marriage returning at once to Barrowford, where Miss Carnie and her mother have been living recently.

BLACKBURN TIMES
APL. 10, 1915

Carnie, Ethel (3) 1.

MISS ETHEL CARNIE (MRS. HOLDSWORTH)

LANCASHIRE'S MILL LASS NOVELIST

RUGGED and homely, rough yet tender, keen but ever ready with the helping hand and a cheery word, Lancashire people stand high in the country. Hard-working are the genuine Lancashire folk, taking their toil and their pleasures with a dash and vim that nothing can damp; they are foremost in business and sport. In the art of living the Lancashire lad or lass excels. With the homely virtues go hand in hand a hearty appreciation of culture in all its varied forms, of skill and worth in every shape, which make the native-born Lancastrian an authority upon cricket as well as commerce.

These are the people whom Ethel Carnie uses to furnish her mimic stage, to play the various parts in the big, virile, human drama she weaves. Ethel Carnie is a Lancashire woman herself, born and bred. Understanding of her own folk has not come by means of study, but has been fostered in her through sharing their lives, their labours, their joys and sorrows, standing at the loom in a factory, living with them in tiny houses in mean streets.

She is successful because she is certain of herself and her characters. She is simply describing her own people, and, as a consequence, her work possesses a richness and atmosphere, a boldness and truth, a directness and force extremely rare in these days of problem stories and unreal sensational thrillers.

Carnie, Ethel (3) 2.

When Ethel Carnie emerged from a cotton mill and greeted the world with her *Songs of a Factory Girl*, people who had "ears to hear" recognised in her a singer who had learnt her songs by heart in the hard school of life, among the everyday turmoil of the common people. Her songs were published in 1911 and 1917.

It was as "An Ex-Mill Girl" that Ethel Carnie published her first novel, *Helen of Four Gates*. Later followed *The Taming of Nan*, *The Marriage of Elizabeth*, and *The House that Jill Built*. Lately she has been publishing a serial story in a popular weekly newspaper, entitled "Down Poverty Street."

Born in 1880, the child of cotton weavers, at Oswaldtwistle, in Lancashire, Ethel Carnie lived for many years at Great Harwood, near Blackburn, where she attended the British School, the schoolmaster of which always selected poems to be memorised by his pupils. This was her chief scholastic education. At eleven years of age the child went to work in a cotton mill as a "half-timer," first as a "reacher," and later as a "beamer" and "winder." She remained at this work for nine years.

It was during her time as a "beamer" that Ethel Carnie became a member of the Blackburn Authors' Society, and owing to the encouragement given her by the president of the society, she published her little booklet, *Rhymes from the Factory*. The reviews of this book brought her to the notice of Mr. Robert Blatchford, who was then starting *The Woman Worker*, the staff of which he asked her to join.

So she left the factory, and published her *Songs of a Factory Girl*, which ran into four editions. But, alas! when *The Woman Worker* went down, she had to return to the cotton loom. Unlike Mr. Micawber, Ethel Carnie did not wait for "something to turn up." Like George Eliot, she believed that "if you want more roses you must plant more trees."

She has always considered that the work of the hands is just as noble as that of the brain. However, as she herself confesses, with a little more self-confidence going back into factory life might have been avoided. Writing after weary hours spent in the stuffy atmosphere of a cotton mill is not particularly conducive to good work.

This fact Ethel Carnie was not long in finding out by experience. So she determined to seek a change. Along with her mother she took a little shop, which enabled her to come into touch with University life at Owen's College, Manchester.

Carnie, Ethel (3) 3.

But the girl was quite unable to enter into the work or the spirit of the University, and after life in the grey, dull neighbourhood of Ancoats, and resentment against the hopelessness of its sordid misery, she turned to her writing again. Next she spent a period at Bebel House, London, but was again obliged to return to Lancashire to eke out a living by selling ribbons and laces in Blackburn market.

Such, then, is the chequered career of one of Lancashire's notable women, who, true to her ideals and principles, and with a fine beautiful spirit of hopefulness, has come through a hard life and won a most invaluable experience. No wonder critics and public alike were surprised at her novel *Helen of Four Gates*, written five years ago, which has now run into its twenty-fifth thousand, and has been filmed. The story is a tragic one of hate and revenge, revealing human actions at their best and worst. In a lonely farm-house, cut off from the rest of the world, the characters work out their appointed destinies. Reviewers have classed this book with the best novels of the Brontë sisters.

The Taming of Nan was published two years ago. This book was deferred because the author could not write calmly during the War. Then appeared in book form, after running as serials in various periodicals, *The Marriage of Elizabeth* and *The House that Jill Built*, the story of an eighteen-year-old girl who, jilted, decides to build a house for tired mothers, and thereby gains great adventures.

This is the record of Lancashire's working woman novelist up to date. To-day, Ethel Carnie is married, and the mother of two bonny children. Ethel Carnie is a true product of Lancashire "grit, grace, and gumption."

World's Work May 1922.

MISS ETHEL CARNIE.

Miss Ethel Carnie, a Great Harwood mill operative, who has just published her second volume of poems. Miss Carnie entered the mill when eleven years of age, and she is still employed there, and she admits having received most of her inspiration whilst following her employment in the factory. Her character is revealed in the preface to her book "Rhymes from the Factory." "From a child," she states, "I found myself expressing my thoughts in rhythmic forms and deriving great pleasure from so doing. It was just as a tune that one has once heard and liked. It seems to haunt the mind, and will not be dismissed until entirely mastered. I think it is no exaggeration to say that all my poems came into my head at the mill. . . I trust my critics will be kind and charitable, and will bear in mind the circumstances of my education, which hardly favour the writing of polished verse."

22.4.11. B.T.

"THE MARRIAGE OF ELIZABETH."

The writer is not familiar with everything that Mrs. Holdsworth (Miss Ethel Carnie) has written, but nothing that he has seen of hers equals her new story, "The Marriage of Elizabeth" (published at 7s. by Messrs. Herbert Jenkins, Ltd.). The Elizabeth in question is a spinster of 30 when the story opens, and she is induced to marry John Stone, a widower, by a mixture of motives. She likes him as a man, she is very fond of Stone's only child, a baby girl, and she has promised the child's mother on her death-bed that she will marry the husband if he asks her. She is not aware when she makes the promise that John has also been persuaded by his wife to ask Elizabeth (whom she knows will look well after her child) to marry him. John is fond of his first wife, but Elizabeth does not attract him, though he recognises that she is a woman of unusual capacity. He carries out his promise, however, and Elizabeth accepts him and marries him, despite the fact that her pride is outraged before the marriage takes place by overhearing John, while under the influence of drink, bemoaning his fate at the prospect. Elizabeth, after the wedding, makes it clear to the husband that she knows that he did not want her, and she insists upon being nothing more than John's housekeeper and receiving a weekly wage for her services as a domestic. This surprising announcement begins to open John's eyes to the kind of woman he has married, and the story shows how his education proceeds. Gradually it begins to dawn upon him that his heart was not buried with his first wife, until in the end he discovers that Elizabeth is an infinitely finer woman and far more worthy of a strong man's love. The second wife's attitude towards her husband is also strongly influenced by her knowledge that the first wife loved another man than the one she married. When the husband arrives at the knowledge of his real feelings for his second wife and of the barriers between them, which he, in the main, is responsible for setting up, he recognises also that he is up against a stiff proposition if he is to win to the full the love of which he now sees she is capable. The narrative showing how he accomplishes this difficult feat makes an entrancing story, which the reader cannot fail to follow with breathless interest. Incidentally, the author gives many a rare, refreshing and vivid description of life in Lancashire working-class homes. "The Marriage of Elizabeth" is indeed one of the best stories we have read for a long time, and it is sure to greatly increase Mrs. Holdsworth's rapidly rising reputation as a novelist.

26.6.20 B.T.

East Lancashire readers will be interested in the fact that Ethel Carnie Houldsworth is bringing out a new novel in the course of a few weeks. Her story, "Helen of Four Gates," had a very kindly reception, and is being filmed for the cinema. The new work has appeared partly as a serial, but is being amplified. Its title is "The House That Jill Built." In contrast to the dramatic thrills of "Helen," it is in a humorous vein, and deals with the struggles of a girl who, by way of serving her day and generation, builds a house for tired mothers. The fact that the heroine is "nineteen parts English and one part Irish" opens out the path for the authoress's humour.

9.10.20 B.T.

Filming of Mrs. Holdsworth's Novel.

Preparations are being made for filming the novel "Helen of the Four Gates," by Mrs. Holdsworth (nee Ethel Carnie), who formerly resided at Great Harwood. Mrs. Holdsworth has for some time been residing at Colden, a small village on the hills overlooking Hebden Bridge, and it is in that neighbourhood that the play is being staged. Included in the company is the well-known film artiste, Miss Alma Taylor.

31.7.20 B.T.

The poetry of Miss Ethel Carnie is attracting a good deal of attention in the country, and the strong note of social sympathy in some of her writings has brought her name to the front in circles where social problems are prominently considered. Anxious to materialise her sentiments, she has been induced to join the Blackburn I.L.P. Some credit for this "capture" is due to Mrs Townley, an enthusiastic member of the branch.

10.10.08 W.T.

MISS ETHEL CARNIE'S NEW BOOK.

Miss Ethel Carnie, of Great Harwood, an occasional contributor to "The Blackburn Times," has issued a new volume of poems, "Songs of a Factory Girl," dedicated to her mother, and published at a shilling by Messrs. Headley Bros., of London. It contains many charming products of her gifted pen—poems which demonstrate that their talented author has grown in experience, in felicity of expression, in depth of feeling, and in imagination. This is not an ambitious work, and the only criticism we have to offer is that at times the verse is a trifle too sweet and that the volume as a whole would have gained if it had shown evidences of a little more vigour. The quality of the poetry is singularly even, but it lacks variety in subject and treatment. The book, however, under the circumstances is a wonderful production. Here is a quiet, humble "factory lass," who, at 25, has produced two volumes of poetry, much of it sufficiently good to win the admiration of excellent judges and to spread the author's name and fame far and near. Miss Carnie is also a good writer of prose, especially of stories for children.

She still follows her calling as a warper at the mill. She first entered the factory as a reacher at the age of 11. Subsequently she devoted her time to winding, and afterwards followed the occupation of a warper. She has always been passionately fond of reading, and began writing very early. Her first published poem was written at the age of 19, and was entitled "The Book-Worm." When she reached the age of 22, Miss Carnie followed the advice of Mr. Robert Blatchford—who had been greatly impressed by her talent—and devoted her whole time to writing, and accepted a position on the staff of the "Woman Worker." When that periodical ceased publication in 1910 she returned to her old occupation at the mill where she is now engaged.

A Pressman visited Miss Carnie on Wednesday, and gleaned a few details of her interesting life. A great many of her productions have been inspired while following her daily toil. She rises early in the morning, in accordance with factory regulations, and devotes the greater part of her leisure to writing. No sooner is her day's work at an end than she commences to give expression to the thoughts which have occupied her mind throughout the day. Rarely, indeed, does she retire to her rest before midnight, despite the fact that she is such an early riser. Her character is revealed in the preface to "Rhymes from the Factory." "From a child," she states, "I found myself expressing my thoughts in rhythmic forms and deriving great pleasure from so doing, accompanied though it was with a sense of restraint that I must do so. It was just as a tune that one has once heard and liked. It seems to haunt the mind, and will not be dismissed until entirely mastered. I think it is no exaggeration to say that all my poems came into my head at the mill. It might be, as Miss Marianne Farningham said of me, that my occupation had something to do with the rhythmic forms into which my thoughts shaped themselves. . . . I trust my critics will be kind and charitable, and will bear in mind the circumstances of my education, which hardly favour the writing of polished verse."

"That letter I gave you this morning—did you post it?" asked a wife of her husband on his return from town. "No, dear, I did not!" said the man boldly. "Of course you didn't! And I told you it was important that it should go to-day." "Yes, dear." "And of course you forgot to post it! If that's not just like a man!" "But, dear——" "Don't 'but' me! I'm angry!" "But dear, look here at the letter! You forgot to address it!"

15.4.11 B.T.

MRS. E. CARNIE HOLDSWORTH'S NEW NOVEL.

Sir,—I must protest against your misrepresentation of my book, "This Slavery." In that book, using certain types existent in this society, I have symbolised a struggle going on all over the civilised world. Any ordinary newspaper of ordinary events to-day can answer whether I have exaggerated that struggle and such incidents. Such types exist; such struggle exists. Must Carlyle be anathematised because he portrayed the French Revolution? If every unfortunate author is going to have to stand sponsor for the types he portrays, and the utterances he records, poor old Shakespeare would, by your standard, have had a rough time, for he gave us Hamlet, Lady Macbeth, Othello, Julius Cæsar, and Brutus! Why not blame Bernard Shaw for the lickspittles in the world? Why not hang Defoe for "His Journal of the Plagues"? Would you try Tolstoi because "Anna Karénina" jumped under a train and committed suicide? Above all, would you dishonour Winward Reade for his story of the "Martyrdom of Man"?

It is remarkable that whilst I was not anathematised for the "madness" of old Mason in "Helen of Four Gates"—whilst I have not had the unpleasantness of other characters tacked on to me—I must now, in the first attempt to portray a horrible social struggle, have to stand responsible for the brutality, the hatred, the waste, the degradation of all that is finest and largest and best in humanity. Surely, the honest thing would be to accuse the conditions which breed such characters as I have essayed to portray—and not one who has been so unfortunate as to be born in an age when the very terms "master" and "man" are contradictory of all true peace, all true progress, and all true brotherhood, of which, let me re-assure you, none is more desirous than is, Yours sincerely,

ETHEL CARNIE HOLDSWORTH.

P.S.—"This Slavery" is a protest through the holding up of a mirror, revealing the "damaged goods" man makes of man to-day. As such it can only be read and its full challenge appreciated.

Our reviewer, "G. H.," writes: "I have been guilty of no misrepresentation, and I am content to abide by the decision of the readers of the novel as to whether or not the story is a fair representation of Lancashire factory life, and whether Mrs. Holdsworth's bitter language in her book is likely to promote that peace, progress and brotherhood which I now understand her to suggest was her principal object in writing the novel."

27.6.25. B.T.

Miss Ethel Carnie, of Great Harwood, author of "Songs of a Factory Girl," has contributed four charming fairy stories to No. 189 of Mr. Stead's famous "Books for the Bairns," published under the title given to the first, "The Basket of Violets." Miss Carnie is delightful as a poet; she is more delightful still as a writer of fairy tales for children. The wealth of a glowing imagination and of a loving tenderness for, and understanding of, child nature has been lavished upon these interesting stories, which are among the very best of their kind. They afford irrefutable evidence that it is in this direction, even more than in her poetry, that Miss Carnie will best develope her undoubted genius. To the great newspaper, now defunct, "The Tribune," she contributed a series of fairy stories which had begun to attract attention, and we are glad to find that she has now found another promising field for the exercise of her gifts. The little booklet before us, published at a penny, is illustrated by Brinsley le Faun and Constance Foxley, and ought to have a good sale and be not the least successful of a very successful series of publications for children.

16.9.11. B.T.

Do ply their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls some holy strains repeat.

We give the verse as we remember it. It may not be word-perfect, but, as Charles Lamb remarked when caught in the strait of unliterality, "the sense is there, and the deuce take the mere words." Our workers may not pretend to emulate the mediæval craftsman in his conceptions of his art—machinery forbids that—but that our modern methods of industry wholly preclude the entertaining of high ideals in connection with our common tasks and callings is not true. So long as we can point to a blacksmith artist like Sharples, and an artisan poet and singer like Edwin Waugh, we may boast of "a pedigree of labour" and the nobility even of modern toil. If we do not take exalted views of art, surely it is not foolish to urge that in the ranks of labour or in any other ranks to discover a new poet is a greater thing than to unearth a new orchid, though to find one we may have to traverse the two hemispheres, whilst the other is close on hand at home. How seldom new singers are to be found; how unlikely it seems to be able to find them in atmosphere such as ours. One looks for them in places that boast of clear and lucid skies, where the great spaces of the earth are, as the Methodist hymn says, "living green," where the waters glint and run clear in the sunlight, where life is pastoral, and Nature retains all her founts of freshness, where, as Ruskin would phrase it, "the air, the waters, the landscapes are undefiled." But Nature does not always favour our imaginings, and good things do come out of our decried Nazareths far oftener than our conventional thinkings permit us to admit, for, as Milton has urged, "the mind is its own place."

We think we have found a new singer, and we are prepared to put our judgment to the test, and the reader shall be the judge. Our first specimen song shall be "The Bookworm." Space will not permit us to give it entire, but in cases in which we omit a verse or verses, we will continue the narrative of the composition in prose. It opens thus:

I own no grand baronial hall,
No pastures rich in waving corn;
Leave unto me my love of books,
And wealth and rank I laugh to scorn.

I envy not the richest king
That ever steeped his lips in wine;
With Count of Monte Cristo, I
Can truly say, "The world is mine!"

After this spirited beginning there follows a panegyric on books, and then we have this domestic picture:

On wintry nights, when howls the wind,
And earth is 'neath a shroud of snow,
I draw the blind and light the lamp,
And in the world of books I go.

I read of glorious Italy—
Around her name what mem'ries throng,
The land of beauty and of art,
The home of laughter, love, and song—

Until methinks I hear the oars
Cleaving the bright Venetian tide,
Inhale the scent of southern flowers,
And see the gay gondolas glide.

MISS ETHEL CARNIE.

Or through Verona's ancient streets
On fancy's silken wings I go—
Those streets where in the dim, dark past
Walked Juliet and Romeo.

The poet, after an allusion in a single verse to Greece and its ancient grandeur, goes on:

I read of old historic France,
Where raged the Revolution wild;
The fountains, streets, and boulevards
Of Paris, her vivacious child.

Surely here we have an apt and felicitous choice of epithets, and an easy power of compelling rhyme. Pegasus does not limp or even amble, but musically canters on. Other two verses are given dealing with England and Scotland in succession, and then we have the second verse of the poem, "I envy not," &c., repeated as a refrain, and a very forceful one it is, if we regard the poem from the strictly dramatic standpoint. Two more verses finish what we venture to call a remarkable poem, if we consider the circumstances of its origin, which we shall disclose later on. Here is the wind up:

For I am heir to an estate
That Fortune cannot take from me;
The treasure rooms of intellect,
With gates ajar eternally.

The world of books, where trusty souls
Drink deep from learning's crystal rills,
Where glad perpetual summer pipes
Upon the verdant, wind-swept hills.

Match that who may in clearness, exalta- realisation of a true and pure ideal, or e-running lucid thought, as of one writ-

Ethel Carnie as a Poetess.

By W. H. BURNETT.

LONGFELLOW'S genius dealt mainly in reminiscence. He pictured the legends of the past, the things he had himself seen, or the results of his experiences. His lute was of a cloying sweetness. His pages abound in tendernesses, compassionatenesses, sweetnesses. How we delight in his visions of past times, his pictures of life in mediæval cities! There is Nuremberg to wit, in which he arraigns the arts and industries, and those who practised them, in a kind of felicitous procession. The weavers' art he signally illumines. He tells us, in verse that cannot be gnawed by the tooth of time, that

As the weaver plied his shuttle, wove he, too, the mystic rhyme,
And the smith his iron measures hammered to the anvil's chime;
Thanking God, whose boundless wisdom makes the flowers of poesy bloom,
In the forge's dust and cinders, in the tissues of the loom.

The "plain man" of the twentieth century thinks the picture to be unreal, but if he be thoughtful as well as plain he will endorse the feeling of the poet, and will wish that we had a greater infusion of sentiment than we now know in the mechanic operations of our daily life. What says Keble:

There are in this loud stunning tide of human care and crime,
In whom the melodies abide of the eternal chime,
Who, making music in their heart
Through dusky lane and crowded mart,

Pinfold Channel.

seems writing so incredibly good that judges to whom it has been submitted at first were inclined to think, considering its source of origin, it was impossible it could be original, but original it most certainly is. It is written by a Lancashire factory girl, who at the time of its penning was not more than nineteen years of age, and is now certainly not over her majority. Ethel Carnie, for that is our subject's name, has written a score of poems and more of the same texture as this, and in which even greater inventiveness is shown. Do we desire sweetness in our verse-maker? Here it is. The verses are from a short poem headed "When Night Lights up Her Palace Lamps":

The sun sinks down behind the hills
Like some great blood-stained shield,
A veil of darkness gently falls
O'er woodland, moor, and field.

The moon climbs up the dusky sky,
Radiant, and white, and clear;
And by and by the silver stars
Like palace lamps appear.

The wind plays in the leafy grove,
The whispering shadows dance;
The air is full of melody,
Of beauty and romance.

And every care and every grief
Is banished from my breast,
When night lights up her palace lamps
And sings her songs of rest.

To take another view. Miss Carnie's poems are greatly didactic, though they exhibit an entire freedom from theologic tincture, or stereotyped forms of thought. She has a vein of great earnestness and sincerity which is the real thing in all great literature. She sees at once both the glamours and shadows of life, and sees them with acute and single vision. As an example take the poem "The Sculptors," which throughout is instinct with high ethical teaching:

How like a block of marble is our life,
One we must carve amid the din and strife;
Which if we carved aright would surely be
A God-like form of strength and purity.

The unclean thought, the low and base desire,
The angry word that wakes another's ire;
The vulgar jest which passing taints the lip,
Are all false strokes which mar life's workmanship.

Think not, oh, youth, the action of to-day
To-morrow's grieving tears will wash away;
Remorse is sacred, but it lacks the power
To restore unto thee one ill-spent hour.

There is no vice but leaves its tell-tale stain
Upon the heart, the conscience, and the brain;
There is no action of the better kind
But bears its fruit and elevates the mind.

Oh, let thy life be grandly, truly wrought
By noble actions and exalted thought,
Then it shall tower beauteous and sublime
Triumphant over fate and death and time.

The scanning here is not perfect, but the moral sought to be enforced is obvious. He who runs may read. As an example of word-painting in the description of natural scenes, take a little poem, "Hopes":

How sweet 'tis to roam at the close of the day,
When mothers are calling their children from play;
To stand on some hill with the friends one loves best,
And gaze on the golden-barr'd gates of the west;
To watch the rich colours steal into the sky,
And gleam for a moment, then darken and die;
The deepest of purple, the palest of green,
The delicate pink of the sea-shell is seen;
But they fade and grow dim in the gate of the west,
As the brightest of hopes must grow dim in the breast;
But who that has known them will say when they're gone
"If they shone but to leave us, I wish they'd ne'er shone."

Another quotation, and then we must close our hasty review. This is only part of a poem on "Genius." Asking the question "What is Genius?" we are told it is—

A crystal stream, that surging flows,
With something heavenly in its sprays,
Upon whose bank there richly grows
Flowers that the world may scorn or praise.

A spark of fire which doth illume
This mortal frame till death reclaim
It for the shadows of the tomb;
But, ah, not there can it remain.

For, poring o'er the book, some hand
Long crumbled in the earth hath wrote,
We feel its hopes, and understand
The beautiful expressive thought
From the warm heart and busy brain
Now dropped to senseless earth again.

There is halting, we grant, here, but there is keen penetration of vision. Sometimes Miss Carnie does not stop to polish, and she has undoubtedly been guilty of sending one or two of her writings into the world with all their imperfections on their head. But was ever poet wholly discreet? If she persevere the critics will teach her a better way. She tells us in other verses how she condemns the poetry that has merely the merit of apparent perfection of rhyme, of lines that start with "kiss" and end with "bliss," for she is wholly unconventional, and would rather sacrifice sound to sense than sense to sound, or even to the formal conceits of smooth grammar. Indeed, as to grammar, sometimes her lines get a little mixed, and she stumbles between the nominative and the accusative. But this is the Lancashire way, for the true Lancashire native has never yet learnt to discriminate between the singular and the plural verb. We may add that Miss Carnie has tried her hand at prose, and has written more than one short story, which has seen print and been favourably commented upon. In her stories she deals considerably in allegory, and the personification of things inanimate after the Dickens' vein

Unlearned in the schools, Miss Carnie had a hard childhood and next to no education; she has the wisdom furnished by Nature, and would not wish for such fame as her powers did not warrant. Humility, sincerity, repose are as much marks of her verse as shrewd insight and naturalness of view. She has studied Nature in the open, and human nature in the mills. She is employed as a warper in St. Lawrence's Mill at Great Harwood, and has for her employers Messrs Birtwistle and Fielding. Her library of books is small, and it has been mainly contributed by friends who have seen her perseverance and been enlightened by the results of it. Her fellow-workers, too, have had not a little pride in thinking that one of their number has furnished examples of successful study under circumstances not generally favourable to culture, even in cases in which Nature has been generous in the essential matter of original endowment. What might such a singer accomplish if she had more leisure than hard factory work affords?

MARRIAGE OF ELIZABETH.*

NEW NOVEL BY ETHEL HOLDSWORTH.

"The Marriage of Elizabeth" is a new novel by Ethel Holdsworth (née Carnie), author of "Helen of Four Gates," now in its twenty-fifth thousand. The author is well known to "Blackburn Weekly Telegraph" readers from the poems and short prose sketches which appeared in its columns when she was still a girl going to the mill at Great Harwood. She wooed the Muse before she wrote stories, and soon attracted attention by her verse, as she has now won recognition in the wider field by her novels. "The Marriage of Elizabeth" is a story of great power, showing originality of conception, and a remarkable gift of characterisation. It is a novel on unorthodox lines, with a strict limitation of principal characters. With villainy and mystery to give it spice, and death-bed promises which make it hard to break down barriers, it is really a battle of pride and will between two persons of strong character, who persist in misunderstanding each other while their mutual affection is growing into a passion, almost to the end. Elizabeth Peel, the heroine, is a young woman of 28 when the story opens. When the wife of John Stone, the other principal in the domestic drama, dies the neighbours decree that it is Elizabeth's duty to become the second Mrs Stone. The first Mrs Stone had on her deathbed exacted from her husband a promise that he would "ask Elizabeth." Believing that he asked her only to comply with his wife's desire, she consents to marry him, but objecting to a loveless union, she stipulates after the ceremony that she will only be his housekeeper, and look after the infant by Stone's first marriage, for which she demands wages. This was John's first jar, and there are many jars as the story unfolds until finally misunderstanding is cleared away. The scene of the story is laid in a working-class district. It deals with conditions as they are found in all Lancashire manufacturing towns, and there is no attempt to make dukes and duchesses out of the material at hand. The homely life of the people is depicted as only one who has lived it can do it. There is often a freedom of speech for which its truth and naturalness are its defence. The book is punctuated all through with the terse sayings and the native wisdom of Lancashire folk, and many of the county's superstitions are deftly woven into the texture of the novel. Elizabeth Peel is a dominating personality, tender towards the sorrow and suffering of others, but adamant in regard to anything which touches her pride, and late in the day, too late, as the reader may feel, Stone realises the magnificence of her character, and finds that before she gives up her rôle of housekeeper, which she has played with flawless fidelity, and exchanges it for that of wife, she must first be won by true affection. Through tribulation and conflict the happy end is reached, and all is well. In "The World of the Cinema" columns on another page reference is made to the fact that Mr Cecil Hepworth is making a screen version of "Helen of Four Gates," and some interesting details in regard to the author are there given.

* "The Marriage of Elizabeth." Publishers: Herbert Jenkins, Limited. Price 7s.

26.6.20. W.T.

"RHYMES FROM THE FACTORY."

MISS ETHEL CARNIE'S FIRST BOOK.

Miss Ethel Carnie, of Great Harwood, has collected a few of her poems, many of which have appeared in "The Blackburn Times," and published them with characteristic modesty in a little paper-backed volume of 52 pages, at 6d., with the title "Rhymes From the Factory by a Factory Girl." She dedicates the volume to Mr. Burnett, and opens with the following charming prelude: -

Hazel-nuts ripen but to fall;
The flowerets ope their petals sweet
But to decay, and leaves turn gold
To rustle under careless feet.

There are some poets, in their dreams,
Will sigh for immortality,
And for a name that, like a lamp,
Should light the vast eternity.

If these, my simple lays, have power
To help one pilgrim on his way,
I'll be content, I will not ask
To sing to those beyond my day.

For other flowers will deck the mead,
And other birds their carols bring,
In place of flowers that bloom to-day,
In place of birds that now may sing.

She tells us in the preface that the verses constituting the volume were put together originally with no intention of publication, and she adds:—"From a child I found myself expressing my thoughts in rythmic forms, and deriving great pleasure from so doing, accompanied though it was with a sense of restraint—that I must do so. It was just as a tune that one has once heard and liked seems to haunt the mind and will not be dismissed until entirely mastered. Some pieces I wrote when I was about ten years of age are not included here. I went on 'half-time' at eleven as a reacher in the Delph-road Mill, at Great Harwood, after which I became a winder at the St. Lawrence Mill in the same town. I was a winder for some six years. 'Twas in this period that I wrote 'The Bookworm,' which seems to have attracted the most attention of any of my writings. It was really composed one morning whilst working at my frame. I think it is no exaggeration to say that all my poems came into my head at the mill. It might be as Marianne Farningham said of me in an article in the 'Christian World,' that my occupation had something to do with the rythmic forms into which my thoughts shaped themselves. . . . This little volume is sent into the world merely as affording some specimens of what I have written, and because a number of my friends seem to wish to have some of my compositions in a permanent form. I trust my critics will be kindly charitable, and will bear in mind the circumstances of my education, which hardly favour the writing of polished verse. Perhaps the prelude best explains by motives in publishing this little book."

We are very glad indeed that Miss Carnie's friends were successful in persuading her to give us this selection, and we sincerely hope that it is only the beginning of more of the kind, for the author, though the youngest, is already one of the most distinguished of our local writers. Her verse is fresh and original, it is inspired by a love of nature and warm sympathy with the sorrow and suffering of the poor, the joy and gladness of the innocent and unspoiled. She has imagination, a playful fancy, humour, and a pretty wit when she chooses to exercise it, which is but seldom. She has thought much, and possesses a force, a variety and a grace of expression truly astonishing in one so young, so limited in her opportunities, so hampered by her surroundings. Under happier auspices Miss Carnie might have been already well known, and it will be a thousand pities if her great gifts are dwarfed within the four walls of a Lancashire cotton mill and never get the chance of attaining their full development in a purer, a wider, and a more congenial atmosphere. We heartily commend Miss Carnie's "Rhymes" to our readers, many of whom have already seen some of them and will doubtless be glad to have them in this form and to treasure them as the sweet singings of our own factory-bred poet, known as yet but little outside our own district, but destined some day, with fortune, to have a far larger circle of admiring and appreciative friends. The book is published by Messrs. R. Denham and Co., and can doubtless be had at all the local booksellers.

23.2.09 B.T.

CHAT WITH MISS CARNIE.

THE MILL AS A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION.

In a chat with a "Weekly Telegraph" representative, at her home in Windsor-road, Great Harwood, Miss Ethel Carnie, whose second volume of verse (referred to in Table Talk and M.A.P.) has just been issued, said that her return to the mill was not necessarily "for all time," and she might again leave it for work with the pen instead of at the winding machine. "And as for my poetry," she went on, "there is plenty of inspiration in a room full of girls at a mill—all of different character and temperament and experience." And this led her to speak of woman's life in a mill, which she regards, particularly in the case of women with families, as a lamentable obstacle to the development of true womanly character. "This is no matter of sentiment," she declared. "It is unnatural; but unhappily in many cases it is necessary, because the husband's wage is not sufficient to keep the home together. They have 'grit' and cheeriness, and this quality keeps them superior to their conditions, but it is none the less true that the life of many a woman with a family, who has to work in the mill, is the life of a slave." Incidentally, Miss Carnie said that women were doing their part in the trade union movement, and expressed the opinion that in matters of principle affecting labour conditions women were more tenacious than men in conflicts between labour and capital.

15.4.11. W.T.

MISS ETHEL CARNIE.

After 11 years' experience of factory life, Miss Ethel Carnie, the clever Great Harwood writer and poetess, has, as intimated last week, decided to desert the mill for literary work. Miss Carnie, who is only 22 years of age, has been largely influenced in her decision by Mr. Robert Blatchford ("Nunquam"), and she will devote a good deal of her time to "The Clarion" and "The Woman Worker."

Born at Oswaldtwistle, Miss Carnie came to Great Harwood with her parents when quite young and at the age of 11 she was introduced to factory life. "From a child," she writes in the preface to her volume of "Rhymes from the Factory," "I found myself expressing my thoughts in rythmic forms and deriving great pleasure from so doing, accompanied though it was with a sense of constraint,—that I must do so. It was just as a tune that one has once heard and liked seems to haunt the mind and will not be dismissed until entirely mastered. Some pieces I wrote when I was about 10 years of age." In their childhood days Mrs. Carnie took a delight in repeating popular nursery rhymes to her children, and she did all in her power to encourage her daughter, Ethel, whose custom was to compose simple rhymes and submit them for her approval. Miss Carnie's first production was "The Book-worm," when

MISS ETHEL CARNIE.

she was about 10 years of age, and five years later one of her pieces made its first appearance in public print. Referring to her career in the mill in the preface of her book, Miss Carnie states:—"I went 'half-time' at 11 as a reacher in the Delph-road mill at Great Harwood, after which I became a winder at St. Lawrence mill in the same town. I was a winder for some six years. 'Twas in this period that I wrote 'The Book-worm,' which seems to have attracted the most attention of any of my writings. It was really composed one morning whilst working at my frame. I think it is no exaggeration to say that all my poems came into my head at the mill. It might be, as Miss Marianne Farningham said of me in 'The Christian World,' that my occupation had something to do with the rythmic forms into which my thoughts shaped themselves." Thus factory life had a certain amount of attraction for the young lady writer, and she is not deserting it without a pang of regret. "It has its advantages and its disadvantages," she explained to one of our representatives this week. She hopes, however, that her new duties will not compel her to forsake the town with which she has been so long associated.

20.6.08 B.T.

POETS' CORNER.

[ORIGINAL]

A REJOINDER.

(In response to Miss Ling's criticism of the last stanza in my poem "Inconstancy.")

No gift is wasted that expresses thought,
However strange, fantastic, it may be,
If 'tis within the range of Reason' lens,
And is arrayed with truth and chastity.

The moral of my poem was but this:
That Nature wrought inconstancy in man.
You seized the last few threads and twisted them
Into another, and a different plan.

But were it as you say? Is thought not free,
Free as the winds that stray through summer bowers,—
Free as the avalanche that takes its course
O'er Alpine heights, o'erhung by gentian flowers?

'Twere vain to think that everyone should look
Through one small port-hole in this world so wide,
And vainer still to blame because one see
Another light upon Life's heaving tide.

The roses, nodding on the latticed wall—
Do they all turn their dainty heads one way?
The wavelets bright, that lap the shingly beach,
Together roll, but singly toss their spray.

Like the two knights who lived in olden days,
And viewed the shield of silver and of gold,
'Twere vain to quarrel o'er so light a thing
Whilst neither knows until the whole be told.

Life is a strange, weird tale—the sequel one
Which none can truly say they rightly guess;
A riddle which the greatest minds have left
Unsolved, and Time doth never make it less.

Hope, with bright eyes, peers vainly through the veil
Which screens the living from the vanished dead;
Love vainly waiteth for some sign which shows
The bridge that spans the gulf 'twixt friends once fled.

Reason is Queen within the realm of mind;
Love with fair blossoms fills each tiny rift;
And gentle Peace extends her olive-branch,
Leaving the rest for Death's cold hand to sift.

Great Harwood. ETHEL CARNIE.

A COMEDY OF TO-DAY.

MRS ETHEL HOLDSWORTH'S LATEST BOOK.

It cannot be charged against Mrs Ethel Holdsworth (née Carnie) that she has carried the ca' canny spirit into her novel writing. "The House That Jill Built" from her pen is the fourth novel she has published, and the second within six months. "The Marriage of Elizabeth" made its advent during the holiday season, and "Jill" is well timed to catch the favourable breeze of Christmas, the most notable of the series being "Helen of Four Gates," which captured the fancy of the critics, and has also been filmed. Jill Bennet, the heroine, has a drop of Irish blood in her veins, and to this fact is to be ascribed much of the vivacity of the story and all the movement, which makes it an engrossing work of fiction.

"Jill," indeed, is a complex character. She wins by her whimsical naturalness and her impulsive ways. She is only eighteen when the story opens, and she is found working in a city office in London. She makes the acquaintance of Harry Thorn, by whom she is jilted, finds herself an heiress to the extent of £10,000, and conceives the idea, in a spirit of philanthropy, of a house in the country for "Tired Mothers," where they may recuperate from the cares and worries of domestic life.

This home for "Tired Mothers" is the pivot on which the story largely turns, and her love affairs with Thorn and Will Mason are the asides which create a series of highly-diverting situations. Her pride is so wounded through being jilted that she tells a lie, which haunts her through the book, that she has buried her lover. Thorn comes in the story again later on when he makes a renewed declaration of love, but refused, finds consolation in another quarter, and leaves the field where Jill is concerned open to Mason, who, through a series of misunderstandings, only wins her in the closing chapters of the book. Beyond the £10,000 left the heroine by her uncle, he stipulated that £50,000, the remainder of his estate, should go to Jill in the event of her marrying a relative of the testator's, who proved to be Mason. The idea of appearing to sell her affections for a fortune when long ago she had given her heart to Mason forms a moving chapter of the book. "The House that Jill Built" is likely to attract many readers. It is bright and sparkling from beginning to end, and well characterised "A Comedy of To-day." Herbert Jenkins, Ltd., are the publishers, and the price is 7s 6d.

11.12.20. W.T.