



al-raida

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Post-war Thoughts

Before the Lebanese war, when we women came across another woman whom we knew or did not know, we automatically started discussing her appearance: was she pretty or not? Had the years left their mark on her face and figure? Was she elegant and well-dressed?

To-day, the question which imposes itself on us is: what does she do? what kind of work or profession does she practice?

Times have changed. The responsibility of women in national development is no less important than that of men. Not only because ruined Lebanon needs a larger number of working hands to rebuild it, but also because all the countries of the world, developing or developed, which are represented by the United Nations Organization, are demanding the participation of women in developmental activities. They are even imposing it on them in all fields and at all levels, hoping that they will become messengers of international peace and agents of general security and welfare.

In this context, Kay Camp, in the "Sixtieth Anniversary Publication" of the "Women's International League for Peace and Freedom," says:

"Optimists... see women as potentially the largest and most dynamic pressure group which by united action, could turn the tide. Either guided by natural attributes (whether biologically or sociologically determined), or simply as enlightened observers of the man-made horrors of the present scene, women have the numbers, the capabilities, and the emerging power to change the course of history."

This statement, which comes from a militant woman, brings to mind a story about a militant man: Kagawa, the Japanese social reformer who, passing through Beirut on his way to Japan, was welcomed by a group of friends and admirers who had prepared for him an impressive reception. Kagawa excused himself by saying that he had no time to lose on receptions. He meant to profit from his short stay in Lebanon to inquire about the industry of Lebanese woollen garments (abas), which are woven from the hair of camels or goats; he hoped that he would be able to implement in his social work projects the knowledge he expected to acquire about this craft.

Kagawa was a man of action. He refused to waste time in idle talk. He knew that life is short and that every minute of it should be spent in fruitful action.

Fruitful action means one concentrated on a useful task, performed in a quiet atmosphere, free from noise and artificiality.

We are like the post-war generation of the 19th century in Europe, the generation that suffered the horrors of the French Revolution and of the Napoleonic wars, and revolted against the deceitful slogans upheld by their leaders. Rejecting a fictitious life of ease, they sought refuge in nature and quiet places, where they practiced rough living, creative thinking, and productive work.

People absorbed in work, intent on thoroughness and creativity, find no time to ruminate on harts and to contrive intrigues.

Intensive work can wash the hearts and rebuild Lebanon.

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