

either way by argument or by public opinion. That there are a hundred and twelve women to every one hundred men is an unalterable condition of the present; and as sentiment and custom now trend, there is likely to be less and less of ignoble striving and petty intriguing to win an establishment (which includes a husband of some sort), and a more earnest and enthusiastic preparation on the part of women to earn a satisfactory support and, perhaps, to win distinction, which happy realization places them in a position to marry for higher reasons than simply to gain food and shelter and to prefix another title to their names. Well stocked minds, and hands trained to skilled and compensating work make their possessors far more attractive to manly men, who fail to discover wisdom in choosing as their wives kittenish and "flirtatious" young women with undeveloped and uncared-for possibilities running to waste in their indefinite expectation of marriage.

Somewhere in the world, silly girls believe, there are men who will gladly marry them because they have pink cheeks, pretty, useless hands and a flippant but somewhat cunning style of chatter—it would be untruthful to call their talk conversation; and some of them treat candidates for their favor as if they were making a wondrous condescension in bending so far from their lofty pedestals as to say "Yes." After marriage, this sort of woman is not likely to bind her husband to their hearthstone with silken cords, and he is not likely to remain beside it unless in the hope of doing more for his children, intellectually and otherwise, than their mother can or will do; but the man who can feel and act thus wisely toward his offspring is not the one most in danger of entrapment by wily girls who have only dainty complexions and pretty clothes to commend them to masculine attention.

Returning to a more direct consideration of our theme, we would again urge young unmarried women, as well as those who are no longer young but have sufficient health and vigor, to accept not even the most urgent and hearty generosity from others, provided they can by any possibility supply their needs themselves. Occupations that are remunerative, whether pursued at home or elsewhere, renew the youth and maintain hopeful interest. They cause one to be earnest in new directions, and they heighten our enjoyment by giving us a consciousness of personal power; and besides, there is a happiness in contributing to the family comfort or pleasure that too few young women feel outside the daily routine of being agreeable.

There is a modern phase of woman's life that has been created, not by the innovator, the radical reformer, the upturner of established things, but, as was said, by the preponderance of women. Faurier asserted that a certain small proportion of women were manly and a certain due proportion of men were womanly; but admitting this, we must remember that Nature knows what she is about. If she has created women who are so strong that they must find an outlet for their energies as a means of self-preservation or, at least, of becoming satisfied with life, why should those women not be honored for their talent and be applauded for loyalty to their endowments? These are they who become pioneers in reforms and in money-getting, preparing a way in which their timid but needy sisters may comfortably follow.

Girls inherit their fathers' talents or aptitudes for business and for mechanical work fully as often as they receive the traits or gifts of their mothers; but unless these endowments happen to be within such lines as have received the seal of approval through established custom, their possessors are warned off by an unconsidered and inconsiderate public opinion. Thoughtful persons who recognize a mental necessity for work in preserving the grandeur of an inherited character even where there is no financial need of wage-earning, perceive but one possible evil result that can follow woman's inclination to do a man's work; and that is, a belief in gifts that will serve without training. Aptitude is not skill in any desired employment, and that woman makes a fundamental error who thinks to make her natural ability answer the purpose of

properly directed instruction and practice in the methods of doing the very best work. Too many women say in effect, "I am only a woman and may not be able to perform this work quite as well as a man; but I will do it as conscientiously as I am able, and I will demand less compensation for it." It is by this hurtful bargain, made first with her conscience and afterward with her employer, that she degrades woman's labor. Although she allows her work to be unskilled, she yet performs it, thus displacing a man, who is obliged to seek another and, generally speaking, a less lucrative situation. The man becomes discouraged. He sees no advantage in attempting to do his work well, for a woman can take his place to his employer's satisfaction. He earns less than in former times, and he has probably missed those promotions which he might reasonably have expected in the course of time; so his own little girls, whom he had planned to keep longer at school, must go out early and earn money by means of some unskilled work. Thus, one woman's unfairness to herself causes a long train of evils to follow. If there were only a general stamp of approbation upon the efforts of the self-supporting woman when she has assumed no voluntary domestic obligations and has none through family ties or affiliations, there would be little blundering and imperfect work, and compensations would be more proportionate to the time and skill bestowed on finished labor.

If a girl be gifted with her father's business talent, why should she not take that gift as an unmistakable sign from Heaven that she should equip herself by training or culturing that inheritance? If she should need its actual application, either through a mental or a financial necessity, it is always in readiness; and she has the satisfaction of knowing that she has the means at hand for driving the wolf of want from her door and the canker of discontent from her brain. When a woman makes an uncommon artistic, business or industrial success, she is applauded; it is only when she works imperfectly that she fails of approval. A cook who is unmistakably excellent is called a *chef*, a *cordon bleu*, and is respected accordingly; but she who prepares messes, spoiling good material by her careless or ignorant methods, can rightly expect neither verbal nor financial recognition of her services; and the same results follow good or bad work in every line of occupation through which women earn money. The honor or dishonor lies, not in what sort of respectable work a woman does, but in how she does it. Of course, the spirit in which it is performed influences, and very naturally, those with whom she has near affiliations. To select a fitting occupation or enterprise and then make herself thoroughly acquainted with all its details—in fact, to do what it is unjustly said women usually fail to do, because they cannot see all round a subject at once—is to wellnigh guarantee success. Women are conservative in their choice of undertakings, also in their manner of carrying them out, and for this discretion they are praised by just persons, while the cavilling claim that it is want of courage and not the possession of judgment that restrains them from more rapid methods.

In considering the women who work and succeed, whether in mental or mechanical occupations, those who least approve of volunteers among self-supporting women are compelled to admit that such are among the healthiest, handsomest and most interesting of their sex, maintaining a perpetual youth in their spirits and manners, because they have no leisure in which to worry over belittling, wrinkle-bringing, complexion-destroying small matters. Nothing so soon ruins a handsome face as querulousness, pettiness, and silent or spoken bickerings with fate.

The time is coming, indeed is now here, when the woman who allows herself to be maintained by those upon whom she is a recognized burden and an object of charity, is despised unless she is aged or an invalid; while those whose animating desire is to eat bread of their own earning are frankly admired. Wise men of to-day seek women as wives for the intellectuality of their conversation and for their shrewd, practical common sense. Such a wife will neither bore her husband with fashionable twaddle and silly gossip nor make his life a misery by idle money-spending.

RAMBLES AMONG BOOKS.

Charles Augustus Stoddard has made a truly valuable addition to the literature of modern travel in his recent work, *Across Russia, From the Baltic to the Danube*, which comes to us from the press of Charles Scribner's Sons. The author was not making his first visit to the northern lands of Europe when he collected the material for this book. His previous journey was made by way of the Gotha canal instead of across the turbulent North Sea to Sweden, and this double experience has enriched his mind and adds to the reader's

pleasure and information. Of the sturdy, clean-hearted, industrious people of Sweden he gives us clearly-drawn silhouettes; and he presents vivid and beautiful descriptions of many interesting objects in Stockholm, "the Venice of the North," which has, he says, a "brilliant look which does not pertain to the languid, lustreless 'Queen of the Adriatic.'" This is a statement which observant travellers will appreciate. From Sweden we are carried to Finland, the flower of whose sagas is the *Karlo-alla*, of which *Ilmawatha* is