

thought lavished on female dress? Why, that women walk about hideous spectacles of contortion and outrages to all the laws of beauty and proportion. Their bonnets so constructed as to denude them of all covering to the face and head, giving them the appearance of the brazen audacity of the lowest members of their sex; whilst the rest of their dress seems to be moulded after two separate designs—one to assimilate it in every thing, save convenience and comfort, to the apparel of men—the other to make them look like extinguishers. Such slavery to the atrocious follies of fashion is also in itself a proof of the need of education in the proper sense of the term. If women were moderately endowed with an educated judgment, they would resist the rapacious dictation of milliners, and refuse to be made mountebanks of, in order to fill the pockets of those who perpetually devise new absurdities, in order to compel new purchases. If women were employed this would not be so. With any kind of useful work to do, a stronger sense would infallibly grow up. There are instances of sensible, well educated women who do oppose this tide of folly, and having matured judgments and rational tastes formed by the practical discipline of their minds and hands, without some kind of useful work, no woman is doing her duty; and if she be a young woman, she is being reared in fatal idleness, alike disastrous to her soul and mind, and to the welfare of all who have to do with her.

Again let us use the words of Barbara Smith:—

"It is a good thing to ask ourselves daily the question, 'Have I eaten my head off to-day?' Women must, as children of God, be trained to do some work in the world. Women may not take a man as a god: they must not hold their first duty to be towards any human being.

"Never, since the world began, have women stood face to face with God. Individual women have done so, but not women in general. They are beginning to do it now; the principle that Jesus-Christ laid down is beginning to be admitted. Young women begin to ask at the age of sixteen or seventeen, 'What am I created for? Of what use am I to be in the world?' According to the answer is often the destiny of the creature.

"Mothers, the responsibility lies with you: what do you say in answer? I fear it is almost always some thing to this purport: 'You must marry some day. Women are made for men. Your use is to bear children; to keep your home comfortable for your husband. In marriage is the only respectable life for woman.'

"If a girl has a religious or an inquiring mind, she will be much dissatisfied with this answer, and say, 'But if no one ask me to marry whom I can love? or suppose I do not want to marry? Suppose my husband dies? or what am I to do all the years I have to wait for a husband? Is there nothing I can do for any body?'

"The newness of the world and the vigour of young life will prevent some years from being absolutely miserable. Among the rich, music, languages, drawing—'accomplishments,' in fact, fill up much of life, and stop the questionings and discontent of heart. In so far as they do this, they are pernicious. In so far as they are amusements only, they are killing to the soul. It is better far to hear the voice of the hungry soul loud and crying. It is better to have the bare fact of idleness, than to be busy always doing nothing. Accomplishments, which are amusements only, do more harm than good. Do not misunderstand: 'accomplishments' may be works, serious studies; and may, by helping others to bear life better and giving pleasure to those who have none, be made worthy work for woman; but for this end they must be studied and with self-devotion."

They must also be kept in subjection to more directly useful pursuits. Every woman, be her rank in life what it may, should be made practically acquainted with every branch of housekeeping. She should know all the duties of every kind of household and domestic service. The more servants her husband is likely to keep, the more is this requisite. She should also be educated in the arithmetic of housekeeping and learn to be a fair accountant. If to this she adds some knowledge of the common trades and how to guard against imposition, the economy resulting therefrom may be incalculable. Only yesterday the writer of this article was conversing with the land agent in a remote country town on the approaching sale of the last remnants of a family estate, owned by a man who inherited them with a princely fortune. "Ah Sir," said our informant, "it was his wife who ruined him, she had never learned the worth of money, and it was not only her ignorance of all business that brought them to this; he troubled himself about nothing, and she was cheated right and left. How different it is with Lady—she looks into everything and understands everything. The other day they wanted new cupboards and book shelves at—and as it was to be done by contract it was all measured and the estimate sent in. Her ladyship was not contented with it

and went through it herself and convinced the man that he had made several mistakes and could very well afford to do the work, which was considerable, at two thirds the amount he asked, and which was accordingly done. Now the first of these ladies was the wife of a lucky inheritor of a fortune in the middle class of life, and the latter the wife of a nobleman of large fortune, is herself of one of the noblest and oldest families in the kingdom. Remarkably silly and low born people imagine that there is a degradation in business habits and useful labour. The wife of a tailor (an honest hard working man) was heard the other day to thank God that she was not obliged to work for her living; and a lady of no very illustrious origin was intensely disgusted with a friend who recommended her Theodosia Arabella to get a thorough knowledge of cooking. The German woman of all ranks do this. In no country in Europe is it half as necessary that we should follow their example, for doctors well know how lucrative to themselves and ruinous to our health is the dyspeptic effect of the abominable cookery which prevails here.

As says the poetess, Elizabeth Barrett Browning,—

"The honest earnest man must stand and work;
The woman also; or otherwise she drops
At once below the dignity of man,
Accepting serfdom."

We do not exactly see how she accepts serfdom; but she certainly sinks in the social scale. If a woman is not reputed for something useful, she can only hope for credit for something incomparably less worthy and more perishable.

Women cannot all be Frys, Bosanquets, Chisholms, Carpenters, or Nightingales; but every individual woman, without a single exception, has it in her power to learn and to do something useful. If it be the tending the sick, teaching or learning the after duties of married life, she is walking in the right road, and falls not within the scope of our criticism. This criticism is not unkindly meant even towards those who are simply learning the routine accomplishments and following the frivolous pursuits of young lady life. We heartily long for their improvement, and if every other periodical publication professing to influence education were to devote a few pages monthly to this subject, so as to develop its details, great good might be done and many a woman rescued from the flock of butterflies who flutter uselessly in their sunny youth, utterly unprepared for the future work of life. Hence more than half of the discomforts, squabbles, and miseries of married life and the countless injuries to the children of a new generation therefrom arising.

We repeat it, we are no enemies to a rational cultivation of female accomplishments provided that the recipients have a natural capacity for them. But this ought not and need not prevent the thorough teaching of all useful things for the future mistresses of households and mothers of families.

We cannot better conclude this paper—this most unpopular and unpalatable paper—than by borrowing a little scrap of countenance from our excellent contemporary "Chambers." He is speaking of working class women, but the "intelligent reader" will discern a fitness in what he says for all sorts and classes of females—*mutatis mutandis*:—

"I would like to see working women—hand-labourers—take up their pride, and wield it with sense and courage; I would like to see them educating themselves, for education is the grand motive-power in the advancement of all classes. I do not mean mere book-learning, but that combination of mental, moral, and manual attainments, the mere longing for and appreciation of which, gives a higher tone to the whole being. And there are few conditions of life, whether it be passed at the counter, or over the needle—in the work room, or at home—where an intelligent young woman has not some opportunity of gaining instruction; little enough it may be—from a book snatched up at rare intervals, a print shop window glanced at, as she passes along the street—a silent observation and imitation of whatever seems most charming and refined in those, undoubtedly her superiors, with whom she may be thrown into contact; and though the advances to be thus made by her be small, yet, if she has a genuine desire for mental improvement, the true thirst after that which is good and beautiful—the good being always the beautiful—for its own sake, there is little fear but that it will gradually attain its end.

"There is one class, which, from its household familiarity with that above it, has perhaps more opportunities than any for this gradual self-cultivation—I mean the class of domestic servants; but these, though belonging to the ranks of women who live by hand-labour, form a body in many points so distinct, that I shall not dwell upon them here.

"All that I can ask is—something different from the usual cry of elevating the working classes—whether it be not possible to