

declinature. They have seen so many women marry imbeciles, or ruffians, or incipient sots, or life-time incapables, or magnificent nothings, or men who before marriage were angelic and afterward diabolic, that they have been alarmed and stood back. They saw so many boats go into the maelstrom that they steered into other waters. Better for a woman to live alone, though she live a thousand years, than to be annexed to one of these masculine failures with which society is surfeited. The patron saint of almost every family circle is some such unmarried woman, and among all the families of cousins she moves around, and her coming in each house is the morning, and her going away is the night.

#### A BENEFICENT SPINSTERHOOD.

In my large circle of kindred, perhaps twenty families in all, it was an Aunt Phœbe. Paul gave a letter of introduction to one whom he calls "Phœbe, our sister," as she went up from Cenchrea to Rome, commending her for her kindness and Christian service, and imploring for her all courtesies. I think Aunt Phœbe was named after her. Was there a sickness in any of the households, she was there ready to sit up and count out the drops of medicine. Was there a marriage, she helped deck the bride for the altar. Was there a new soul incarnated, she was there to rejoice at the nativity. Was there a sore bereavement, she was there to console. The children rushed out at her first appearance, crying,