

hold difficulties, it seems to me it is always at the wrong moment, and [more harm is done than good." "I have had a great deal of that kind of thing to contend with," chimed in a third lady; "but I think I have pretty well cured my husband of it by trying the experiment of giving up the housekeeping to him entirely for a fortnight, without helping him by any suggestions or interfering at all. And the result was that he was glad enough to surrender the reins to me again! He would have it that one general order in the morning was enough for the whole establishment, and that everything would work properly, and fall into its natural place, if only matters were only left alone. So he followed out his own plan, and found, as you may suppose, that the weekly bills ran up to double their usual amount, the servants got dreadfully careless, and all his little pet comforts and indulgences were overlooked and neglected. I felt very triumphant, I can tell you, when at last he was obliged to own that I was the best manager, after all!"

"If they could only *all* be brought to own that," said the lady who had opened the discussion, "what a good thing it would be for us! If our work, which is more important to them than they know, were given its full value, and its little homely details, which seem so trivial and are really so necessary, were recognised as part of the household machinery, and not sneered at as "useless fussing," it would give us a much higher interest and pleasure in fulfilling our appointed tasks. We must "potter" more or less over them; and we cannot help it. Just look at the time it takes (setting aside ordering dinner and marketing, to sort the household linen and keep it in order every week, to put down the accounts accurately, and to superintend the nursery or the school room, or perhaps both, while keeping a watchful eye over the kitchen. Unless we are rich enough to keep a large staff of competent servants, we must do all this ourselves; and even arranging flowers, tidying a room, and writing a *ménu* takes time. Our husbands' wardrobes are under our charge, too, and their thousand little wants and crotchets must be our constant study. And yet these men take it all for granted, and say we have nothing to do, and might lie on the sofa all day and read novels if we liked. It would serve them right if we did, I think. But we "are too conscientious." And thereupon there was a laugh, and the discussion ended. But it left a permanent impression on my mind to the effect that a more full and perfect recognition of women's work *per se*—domestic, not professional—would be a far greater step towards advancing the social position of women in general than the attempt to confer upon them masculine privileges, which few really desire, and fewer still rightly understand.

—*The Queen.*

BUTTERFLY WOMEN.

It was a palefaced, careworn, prematurely old woman who said, complainingly—"Half the women in the world do their duty and that of the other half as well," and looking at the speaker, one was convinced upon the spot, whatever her part in it, it was decidedly too much for her, but whilst a thrill of sympathetic pity went forth for the sufferer, there came unbidden the question, Why need there be this unlawful division of labour in the feminine portion of humanity? for it is true that, whilst some are the mere butterflies of life the labour of the hive not being to their taste, the flowers and sunshine wooing them to the sweets, the warmth and brightness, this is all they crave, all they will have whether it be a small or large return for their search; the "will" is the same to enjoy. The determination is to overcome every hindrance to the accomplishment of it.

This state of feeling is not by any means confined to the wealthy or the noble whose position and means to the humbler classes of society, have but one appearance, and that is how to spend their money, how use their position for the getting of the greatest gratification; that such have any duties, any higher demand upon their time and talents, does not seem to be expected. To dress, eat, dance, attend parties, balls, theatres, is the sum of their existence, and if the newspapers show good reports of these, with minute details appertaining to such doings, why these favoured ones have acted out their little life, and deserve the glowing descriptions upon the marble above them when they lie forgotten beneath. But neither high nor low have a *chance* position, and to each are duties allotted, the "nature," no matter how enshrined, is the same,—a title may stand before the name or the plainer designation, yet if either choose the butterfly existence it is precisely the same as to the searching after flowers, the only difference is in the flowers; and the working classes have women amongst them just as eager to sit in the pit of a theatre, to wear cheap jewellery, to be foremost at the hop, and in the attainment of these their duties are delegated to others, or if this be not possible, left undone. But it is not with the high or low, but the middle class. There is a more fatal mischief: those women who have to exercise economy upon every side—the wives of men who are flourishing in their pursuits to-day are crippled, harassed on the morrow. In these days wives are more subject to revolutions in position and means than at any former period, and it is this that makes so many prematurely aged—that causes the furrowed brow before the years of life would produce the tell-tale lines. To live "seemingly" as in the affluent past, what does it mean? Weary brains, aching limbs, *irritable tempers*. Those are no butterflies, but the busy

of the busiest bees; these women ought to have monuments higher than any yet raised for great achievements, if the "will" were taken instead of the deeds; for there is no mistaking their earnest unselfishness, their long days of denial of self. Contrasting their rigid adherence to duty, the fulfilling of home demands with those who shirk these, or put the doing on to others, there does seem an inequality as to the division of this world's good things—some get all the honey, some all the gall. The workers in the hive tell you that the idlers, beside adroitly avoiding the work, just as adroitly secure the smiles and care of the husband—that they seem in fact more cared for than the helpmates who are such in deed as well as name. This also is a fact, and it is because of this fact that it becomes necessary for the workers to leave the work and sit quietly, calmly to think, not with their knitting, but for once to sit absolutely idle, their hands still, their brain alone working, and the cessation of hand labour may bring them to a knowledge why their butterfly sisters secure all they crave, but fail to get.

First then the busy woman, whose home is her world, is as a rule "too busy." She lacks the strength of body to carry out the intentions of the will, the nervous system is taxed beyond endurance in her efforts to accomplish the wonderful admixture of combining a slender knowledge of two or three trades into actual workmanship, so the household machinery is ever and anon getting out of order through over-working. Is it possible for one pair of hands to take up the various trades one knows is being carried out in numberless homes? To begin with the kitchen, to be confectioner and baker is a great achievement; a painfully smiling because thoroughly weary, woman will sit at her table and see you consume in a few moments what has kept her over a hot stove for hours to prepare, accepting gratefully as a medal of honour your encomiums on her skill in this department. From the kitchen she hurries to the nursery, here, she requires to exercise more faith than knowledge about the business of the tailor, then, as there is generally a mixture of the sexes in a family she has to compete with the dressmaker and milliner, and so her busy round of life goes on, too busy to do more than look at the book she bears her butterfly sister so enthusiastic over, envying the enjoyment she dare not take, often rebellious at the long continued denial of self, wondering how the one, neglectful of duties she is hastening on her sands of life to accomplish, can preserve her good natured indifference and fling back the merry repartee of her husband, who shuts his eyes to the disorder, so long as he secures exemption from the irritability his neighbour or friend more favoured in order has to put up with. For as a rule the easy-going people, as they are called, are the better tempered, from the fact the nervous system is not interfered with, and here comes the true solution of why so many excellent wives find themselves by degrees dwindling into the mere housekeeper. The physical structure of the mother cannot bear the pressure of the housekeeper's cares, when to these are so universally added numberless others; and it is this multiplicity that makes so many silent, so many unhappy homes—the overtaxed nature can no more control irritable outbursts of temper than the command of the Dane to stop the tide, and man prefers comfort before anything else, and after all is but a sensible animal in his preference. When the weary wife exhibits the little coat and unmentionables as proofs of her skill and saving of his purse strings, he is as likely as not to remark some deficiency in the fit, and forgetful what has been the cost in the doing, remembers pretty keenly the irritable words his untimely criticism called forth, indulging in some far from loverlike thoughts of the gloomy silent wife stitching away as if for dear life.

The husband in a sense appreciates his careful saving wife, but as a rule would sooner pay the tailor if by doing he secured immunity from the endless changes of the household barometer: sunshine as only summer can bring, is not "within" many homes, "there" it is too often breezy, with fitful clouds threatening storms, and so it will ever be until the heads of households perform their part in the management of these by firmly "kindly" seeing the wives are not using up their dear life's blood in their attempts of combining too many callings for one to do without injury to health, comfort and temper. There are some women requiring a word of caution,—the "needs" of a family are so many, these tax every mother who should not burden herself with the "wants," it is often these that are the last straws upon the camel's back. How many stitches are wearily stitched to make simply a competition with other children, not that such changes are needed, but because fashion appears in it, and to be behind the god, horrors, stitch to the bone! stitch till the chimes warn you the hours of another day are running off—you have so many stitches to put in these fanciful garments, you have not time to *show* your love for the little wearers—the good-night kiss is given with flushed cheeks, a hurried, absent, often impatient manner, whilst you are in agonies of fear you will not get through with the allotted task. Let simpler garments clothe the young forms—you are but dropping seeds of a future large crop of vanity in the young hearts, if the little ones see your eager anxiety for the mere outside—will they not enlarge upon your example; far better for your health, for their future, that you let the god of fashion pass heedlessly by—it is not enough to love your children, to bind them to you; *show* your love, never be too busy to fondle and caress them; kisses will live in the memory when your stitches will never be thought of, with these lessened, your irritable words will blossom into smiles and as the wise men of old said: "Your children shall rise up and call you blessed, your husband also shall praise you, and to add to the promise 'continue' to love you."