

ter whatsoever the state. It is good to be thus reminded; every truth wants the balance of some others. Still we would suggest that in one family there are often the most opposite natures; that different natures imperatively demand different spheres; that the recklessness and dissatisfaction one sister feels with the way of life that satisfies another is no necessary proof of want of resignation to God's will; is often proof that God's will concerning her is that she should enter upon a wider field, a more active service. Pain of body, weariness of spirit are sent to warn of something wrong. There is indeed no panacea for all the sorrows of any class. There will always be daughters at home neither fitted to enjoy nor to do greatly. We do not suppose that every young woman who feels her life dreary is consequently qualified or inclined to devote it to the service of the poor and the afflicted. But where the spirit is finely touched to fine issues, it will be a happy thing for the parents and daughter if this inward vocation be willingly recognised; if, instead of thwarting, they encourage and assist her to seek out some more satisfying career than home life affords, even though it take her away from home for many hours of every day; nay, even though it take her away from home altogether. The Catholic mother gives her daughter cheerfully to the convent; will not the Protestant mother consent to one of hers devoting herself *unreservedly* to some of those good works, those labours of love, that are the glory of the Christianity of our time?

But we pass from the daughters at home to the class of unmarried women who have lost their parents; who are—as the chill phrase runs—alone in the world, and who do not own to themselves the very slightest expectation of changing their lot by marriage.

It is pleasant and encouraging to our belief in progress to contrast the tone in which this portion of the community is thought, spoken, and written of in our day, with that which prevailed in the society and the literature of a hundred, or even fifty years ago. The sour and spiteful old maid we so often meet with there, punished for the coquetry and heartlessness of her youth by ridicule and unloved isolation in her age, is almost an obsolete character. We have come to discern that amongst our single women are many of the noblest and purest spirits of the time. It is not them that society mainly looks for reformatory efforts and civilizing influence among the poor and the ignorant. The peculiar trials of their life are no longer overlooked; on the contrary, it is because they are so feelingly recognised that we expect to find in our unmarried women such tender beneficence and such sublime self-sacrifice. Perhaps, indeed, there has even been of late a slight tendency to exaggerate these trials. Perhaps sympathy has been rather unduly concentrated on the darker feelings of the unmarried life. Some of the books written with the professed purpose of enumerating its compensations, leave on the mind a disguised impression of its grief. We shrink a little from their minute analysis; and although their wide circulation shows that they do supply a present want, we think their tone will change in a few years, and that, *as a class*, unmarried women will no more continue to excite commiseration, than they have continued to excite ridicule. More and more varied scope for labour paid and unpaid; more and more freedom of action and recognition of equality (not identity) of influence and pursuit, will place them much in the same category as unmarried men, for whose especial benefit no books