

trious. They were more tractable than men and less inclined to be nomadic. They learned quickly and in every way became satisfactory employes. Thus it came about that the success of the pioneers induced a steadily increasing army of girls to enter the ranks of labor, and the novelty of the thing having disappeared it became in a way fashionable for women to accept every form of work which they were capable of performing. The desire for independence, once the way was opened, has very naturally actuated a vast majority of women to take occupations—particularly those occupations in which they could wear neat clothes and enjoy some measure of variety.

But this desire for independence must be considered in the light of a startling fact, which is capable of the clearest proof—the fact that young men are not marrying now as young men did twenty and thirty years ago. Let anyone who cares to do so take a census of his immediate circle of acquaintances, and he will be surprised to find how many young men there are who, at twenty-eight or thirty years of age are unmarried and perhaps unengaged. The marriage rate by ages, as I could demonstrate by official tables, shows a surprising decline since 1870. That is to say, the number of marriages in which the male contractor in particular is between twenty-three and thirty years of age exhibits a remarkable decrease within the period indicated. I cannot enlarge upon this fact, although I have data at hand, but present it as one of the potent reasons why girls have leaned so readily to the notion of being independent. In a sense, young men have forced them to do so.

Let us glance hastily at the social and economic results of this modern movement. In the first place it is quite clear that the extent to which women have entered the fields of

labor has caused the displacement in many instances of men. In all branches of clerical employment young men find great difficulty in getting places, simply because girls can do the work as well and will do it for lower wages. Very soon young men will have to forsake the clerical field altogether, and in this fact I see one of the causes which has created a lamentable exodus year by year. This process of displacement will become more striking in another five or ten years. At the present time I know of a large department in the Government service here in Ottawa into which, during the past year, two girls have been admitted to one young man; and it is perhaps true that taking all the departments together the admissions of young women have considerably exceeded the admissions of young men during the past two years. As I said a moment or two ago, there were less than ten women all told in the civil service twelve years ago; while now there are hundreds.

Soon there will be crowding and competition for places, and sentimental considerations which now weigh in favor of young women may be expected to disappear. The conditions which obtain at present will certainly intensify, and it would seem to be only a question of a few years until offices and counting-rooms and stores and public departments will be wholly equipped by female clerks. More than that, the professions are being seized on by women of ambition and talent, and ere long a displacement will begin in those walks of like. It appears to be inevitable. Commerce having welcomed the deft hands and clear heads of women a wider place is sure to be found for them in other avenues of human effort. How will all this, however, effect the home life of our nation. Already as a result of the failure of young men to marry, an important decline is apparent in the