

the grievous error of this pretence of fulfilling duties for which they are wholly unprepared and unfit, and a tide is setting in for the study of household work. A parallel fear is awakening as to the continuation of an adequate supply of household servants. I have lately heard of a discussion in a society of highly educated ladies as to the best means of counteracting this deficiency, arising, as alleged, from the dislike of many young women to the conditions of life in household service and their marked preference for factory labour.

If this dislike cannot be wisely overcome, as I personally think it may, and we shrink from employing alien household labour such as is supplied in other countries by negroes, coolies, etc., the women of England may be forced to share at least in the work of their households, and thus be forced to be the means of raising such work again in social estimation.

Let a girl be sure at least that she can sweep and dust and scrub as well as the best housemaid, that she understands the processes of cleaning and their reason, that she employs her mind as well as her hands in the laying and lighting of a fire, that she can make a bed with exactitude, can lay a table, and knows by actual experience what time should be devoted to the several parts of work in a house.

Then, in another department of household work, I would counsel the girl to master the principles which underlie good cooking, and their application to the preparation of food, with the management of a kitchen. I would advise her to learn the art of washing clothes, the cutting out and making up of materials. A girl accustomed to learn should soon be able to turn her intelligence to the mastery of these matters, and once equipped with this knowledge, theoretical and practical, she is ready to assume the leadership in a home when

the need comes. She need not necessarily continue this part of her self-education, but she is at all events ready to rule a house with an ability rarely to be met with now.

Perhaps no set of workers is so thoroughly unfitted for the actual duties of their position as the ordinary mistresses of households. They have hammered out for themselves the sort of routine in order and organization usual in households of a certain standing; they can give orders as to their wishes; but if a break comes in their human household machinery, if a cook falls ill, or a housemaid is called to a dying mother, dire is the confusion! They are generally unfit to train a servant in her actual work. Indeed, is it not reasonable to suppose that a great deal of the alleged badness of servants is due to the unfitness of women to act as mistresses?

It would be difficult, I think, to say how much improvement would result in the kind, and work, of servants if mistresses were really prepared and fitted for their position, if they were capable of making their servants do good work and love it, if they could make them see that "even drudgery may be divine."

I may seem, perhaps, to be laying undue stress upon this department of women's work. It is true I do lay great — I will not admit undue — stress upon it, for various reasons; (1) because it is a greatly neglected part of women's self-education; (2) because it is neither just nor right that any of us should lay ourselves out to fulfil duties for which we are unfit; (3) because the mastering of household work by women would have, I believe, a very important influence, not only on the well-being and happiness of homes, but upon a large class of women workers. And this last reason brings us upon the thought of that work for others which springs out