

venture to assert that many—even *most* women—had rather be fought for than fight, and do not at all care about proving the excellence of their intellect, having never realised that they belonged to an oppressed race. Among twenty women, whose ideas on the subject I tried to ascertain, seventeen scoffed at the honour of possible votes and seats in Parliament. One, who was young and conscientious, sighed a little, and then said: "It will be a dreadful bore; but if it is right, I suppose one ought to do it."

The consumptive little tailor, toiling wearily and ceaselessly for his ill-fed family, is not a less pathetic spectacle than the hard-working shirt-maker in her attic. The anxious workman, forced unwillingly into a strike by his companions, is as much to be pitied as the hardy charwoman who fights want single-handed, tidies up her children every Sunday for the Baptist Chapel, and sobs over her scrubbing-brush for the sickly baby who kept her awake at nights, and whom a kind Providence has saved from the evil to come.

Where the struggle for £ s. d. is a struggle of self-defence, a fight resulting from the innate instincts of self-preservation, there the pathos of *suffering*, the everlasting "Why?" that makes us shudder and cling to a "sure and certain hope," like frightened children, is apt to hide the roses and choke the buds in an overgrowth of brambles.

How many women we have met whose daily martyrdom was the fear of being crowded out of the work that earned their bread and cheese, are doomed to battle with their *bête noir* till they fall! Who has not met with them, all lonely and unfit for toil—trying, trying, trying, only to be jostled aside at last, and who has not longed at some time or other to help them by teaching them or helping them to help themselves? Will the day never dawn that shines upon a system of co-operation and mutual aid *in every profession*, that wakes individuals to work, that will be happy and strong, because it is not isolated but necessary to the harmony of a whole?

Every suggestion that promises a reduction of the martyrdom of "worry" and lonely failure is generally welcome. Not long ago a lady gave us a sketch of her practical experience of profitable gardening. Apart from its literary merit, the publication is valuable for its cheery common-sense, and for the really encouraging account of success in a field of effort, as yet almost unexplored for lucrative purposes, by edu-

cated women. The writer told how, by co-operation, attention, and activity, a few ladies, with very small capital, succeeded in gaining their livelihood from the produce of Mother Earth, how they all improved in health; and, to judge from the tone of the writer's article, enjoyed their occupation in spite of its drawbacks.

During many years' residence on the Continent I had an opportunity to observe a branch of female industry, that, once commonly practised in England, has of late years almost ranked with lost arts among women—the collection and drying of herbs as drugs.

Many English ladies are interested in botany, but their interest begins and ends in a portfolio of dried specimens, interesting only as such. In France and Germany the portfolio is comparatively rare as a treasury of mementoes; but many sheaves of starry camomile, arnica, foxglove, and other flower herbs have I joined in gathering on the hill sides, among sunny meadows, that were inexhaustible drug stores for my practical lady friends. Forests, river banks, and the stately avenue of old chestnut trees were called upon to contribute, and hours of careful sorting, picking, drying, labelling, and packing formed the finale of our rambles, all of which my experienced friends organised very systematically, and the results of which had a fair market value.

I do not propose to discuss the medicinal value of wayside weeds, nor the relative merits of dandelion roots, chicory, orchids, buttercups, wild pansies, violets, and linden blossoms. I have tasted and tested none of them, except the last-named, which made as nasty a tea as it did a sweet flower, and deprived me of any curiosity with regard to the rest of our harvestings. Happily neither druggists nor herbalists are bound to sample their wares, after the manner of tea merchants, or their profession would be deservedly unpopular. The chief thing for them to know is how to prepare and preserve their goods in the best possible manner, what markets demand certain articles and reject others, and *vice versa*. For such an employment to be profitable it would have to be co-operative, and distribute its followers and agents, not only over limited districts of one or two counties, but over continents. Its leader would have to be a shrewd business woman, with a keen capacity for overlooking her resources and choosing her staff, and, I need scarcely say, a thorough knowledge of botany and of the demands of her trade.

(To be continued.)

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