



Co-operative  
Housekeeping

How not to do it

and

How to do it

by

Meluzina Fay Peirce



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CO-OPERATIVE HOUSEKEEPING

“Where is there any station higher than the ordering of the house?” — GOETHE.

“Civilization is co-operation. Union and Liberty are its factors.” — HENRY GEORGE.

# CO-OPERATIVE HOUSEKEEPING

*HOW NOT TO DO IT AND  
HOW TO DO IT*

A Study in Sociology

BY

MELUSINA FAY PEIRCE

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## PREFACE.

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The substance of the following Study in Sociology was read in Chicago as a paper on Co-operative Housekeeping at the annual meeting of the Illinois Social Science Association in the autumn of 1880. The writer commends it, not only to the earnest attention, but also to the *discussion* of the educated housekeepers of the country. If Co-operative Housekeeping be not the solution of the present aspect of the woman question, there must be some other. Why will not women address themselves strenuously to the task of studying and adapting themselves intelligently to their own era, instead of drifting along and letting the era do with them what it will?

That noble and sympathetic man, the late Pro-

fessor Benjamin Peirce, of Harvard University, once said in my hearing: "I don't believe in victims. There are no victims. We make or mar ourselves,"—and the thought certainly contains the profoundest truth. If not entirely just to the individual, it is perfectly so to the race—to the class. Too long have women—like the Irish!—posed and paraded as "victims." The fact is, their prestige, their privilege, their position, are largely in their own hands. They can 'make' themselves if they will, or they can allow men to continue to 'mar' them. But *men* cannot make them! That is as certain as that men cannot walk for them. They must use their own minds and their own energies to solve their own problems, just as they use their own limbs for their own locomotion. To expect men to think out and wisely shape the destinies of women is to expect too much. No matter how much stronger, intellectually, they may be than we, they are not strong enough for that. They can take care of their own side of the house, as the saying is, and that is all they *can* take care

of. Magnificently have they done, and are they doing this—and to the shame and disgrace of the contrasting feminine inertia. It is the highest time that women, too, were up and doing. But they can do *nothing* single-minded, single-handed. To accomplish an adequate womanly work in the world, they must employ the Method of Civilization. They must first *consult*, then *act* together. If the Co-operative Housekeeping which I advocate be not the best way, let them look until they find a better way. But let them look, and let them look in company, as when men seek in the forest a missing child.

It is true that women cannot act together without the permission, expressed or understood, of men. But would men withhold that permission ?

In my youth two proverbs of George Herbert's collection made upon me a profound impression.

The first was—"Nothing is to be despaired of or presumed on." The second—"There is a remedy for every evil could men find it." I hate, I scorn the phrase, "necessary evil." It is the

watch-word of the enemies of God and the depravers of man. I will not for a single instant admit that *any* evil is "necessary," and I will always ardently believe that God has indeed provided the "remedy" for every evil, but that for our development He has imposed upon ourselves the task of finding it.

I commend to the practical housekeepers of the country, and especially to its professional lady-cooks, if so I may call them,—Miss Corson, Miss Parloa, Mrs. Ewing, "Marion Harland," Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Henderson and others—the convening of an Annual Congress for the discussion of the HOUSEKEEPING PROBLEM alone.

MELUSINA FAY PEIRCE.

CHICAGO, January, 1884.

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*“Let the past alone: do not seek to renew it; press on to higher and better things,—at all events to other things; and be assured that the right way can never be that which leads you back to the identical shapes that you long ago left behind. Onward, onward, onward!”*

—HAWTHORNE.





# CO-OPERATIVE HOUSEKEEPING.

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## I.

### MEN AND WOMEN CONTRASTED.

THE infinite difference between a stone and an animal, between savagery and civilization, between life and death, and (taken collectively) between *men* and *women*, is comprehended in a single word—ORGANIZATION.

What is a nation? An organization of men in which women are only passive and disconnected units. What is a State—a county—a town—a village? The same. What is a church? Very nearly the same. What is a railroad or any other corporation in which women are stock-owners? The same. What is our public school system? An organization of men wherein women are only em-

ployés. What are business and manufacturing firms of every description? Organizations of two or more men with almost never an active woman partner among them. Look where we will, we find the great business of the world carried on by men working in organizations. Nearly every man in the community is locked into half a dozen of them. He is an organic part of his nation, of his State, of his county, of his town, of his ward, often of his church, and frequently of one or more business undertakings, besides which there may be his club memberships, political, or social, or athletic, his Free Masonry, his Odd Fellowship, his Temperance Association, and so on and on through the whole round of duties and interests that constitute the external sphere of civilized and christian manhood.

And what is the grand object of all this organized effort on the part of the stronger sex?

In the first place, of course, self-preservation. Every man's first object in life is to keep himself alive, and to do this he has to earn his own living

and to make and uphold laws that will protect his life and his property.

But if men had always had this duty to perform for themselves only, probably they never would have emerged from the supposed primitive state wherein every man kills his own prey and defends his own person with weapons formed by his own hands. The immense reserve force of individual self-control and self-discipline which renders a civilized society possible, might never have been developed if men had lacked the mighty incentive of the protection and support of defenceless women and children—in other words, of the FAMILY—to provide for as well as for their own. In the savage (as in the typical club-man) this protecting and sustaining love of family hardly exists. His wife is to him but a beast of burden. He is supremely absorbed in himself, and beyond hunting the game upon which his family lives, he gives himself no trouble about them. Excepting, perhaps, his weapons, his wives and daughters have to manufacture everything that he and they use

even down to the tent-coverings that shelter him, and in case of removal, it is they who dismantle his frail dwelling, who bear it on their shoulders to the next halting place and who set it up again in the new encampment. The savage does absolutely nothing in company with his fellow-men but hunt and fight and feast. Consequently the savage community never advances. It remains age after age the same.

Similarly, in our mining towns where multitudes of men are congregated together apart from family ties, they are said to become utterly reckless of the amenities of civilization. So far from caring about their property, their grand excitement after working-hours is to gamble it away, and so far from preserving their lives, they risk them in paltry quarrels upon the slightest provocation. But as soon as the wives and children begin to move in, they immediately join with each other to enforce the laws, and to make sacred those lives and those earnings upon which the wives and children must depend.

Now, if men have generally been the defenders and supporters of the family, what have women been? They, leaving out of view their trifling function of maternity, and in spite of the myriad physical disabilities and infirmities imposed upon them by it, have universally been the clothers and feeders of the family out of the resources that men have placed at their disposal. Women have prepared the food, have made the garments, have ordered the house, and—immense task that is too often lost sight of in the catalogue of feminine functions—have kept house and utensils and garments *clean*. When the writer was a girl, our nearest neighbor was the most perfect housekeeper in the place. One day my sister passed her gate, and seeing her busy within her open front door, said, “Good morning! What are you doing?” “*Fighting the dirt*, as usual,” answered the veteran—and in my own housekeeping experience the phrase has risen to my lips a thousand times as expressing in reality the largest and heaviest part of a housekeeper’s cares. Sweeping, dusting, scrub-

bing, dish and kettle washing, laundering—what is it all but “fighting the dirt” that from countless directions invades the household at every hour?

The executive functions of women to the family are, then, of precisely the same importance to it as those of men; for if men have given to society *shelter*, and *security*, and *subsistence*, women have given to it *comfort*, and *health*, and *beauty* in just the degree that cooked food and clothing and cleanliness are more wholesome and enjoyable than are raw food, nakedness and dirt.

But do women carry out their functions to society after the same manner that men do theirs?

On the contrary, every woman does what she has to do for her family either alone or with such assistance as the female relatives living within it, or as the female help hired or owned by her husband is able to afford her.

The extraordinary social fact remains in the face of all the progress and enlightenment of the nineteenth century, that women have not as yet gone outside the home and joined hands and

brains for the better discharge of their functions toward that home. As their fore-mothers did six thousand years ago, so are they doing to-day. In the midst of the most advanced and complicated civilization the world has ever seen, one half of the adult population does all its work on the simple and primitive basis of savages!

And yet, which is supposed to love the family most? Is it the man or the woman? Has it not been said and sung a thousand times that no love equals the mother's love—that the father's is calm and cold in comparison? But calm and cold as it is, we have just seen that it is the motive which impelled men to build up all this mighty civilization of which they are so justly proud.

How strange, that though loving and thinking for the family so much less than does the woman, the civilized husband and father has nevertheless been so much more sagacious in his methods of caring for it—of performing his part toward it—than the civilized wife and mother!

It is this tremendous social negation—nay, this

paradox of our superb century of organized effort in every direction, which should be most strenuously pressed upon the attention of all those who are interested in social problems, for there is no doubt whatever that this Unorganization of Women among Themselves for the best and most economical fulfilling of their housewifely duties toward the world in which they live, is the very greatest evil with which contemporary society has to contend.

Rather, as far as women are concerned, it is the ONE EVIL against the host of whose manifestations society is blindly struggling, and of which it never gets the better, for it is in vain to cut off one and another of the hundred heads of the hydra, so long as the giant neck upon which they all grow and flourish is not itself severed. For half a generation has this deadly, soundless struggle between the monster and society been visible to one person at least. Often have I pointed it out to my fellow-women, and now I am beginning to ask myself, almost in despair—"Will they *ever* see it, or, see-



ing, have the will to rise and slay this formless, chaotic 'Demon of the Threshold' that is keeping the whole world poor, hindering the advance of the Kingdom of Christ on earth, smothering in its murky, hateful folds all the brightest, most brilliant, most ethereal qualities of our sex, and plunging yearly thousands of ignorant, heedless, uncared-for girls into the unspeakable horrors and degradation of prostitution.

Let the house-mother who reads this, glance round the room in which she is sitting—let her look down upon the articles of her machine-spun, machine-woven and machine-sewed garments—let her remember all the surroundings and objects of beauty and use that belong to the home in which she lives and moves and has her being, and then let her ask herself why she is in the enjoyment of them all, instead of crouching on the ground in a smoky wigwam with unkempt hair and a tattered deer-skin for her only garment? Why, but that the *men* of her race have for generations used their brains and their sympathies and helped each other,

until by little and little they have lifted themselves and her up to where she and they are.

If, on the contrary, they had done as she has always done and still is doing, she would still be in a wigwam and a deer-skin tunic with her savage sisters, for, like them, she is taking care of her family with her own unaided mental and physical strength, or with such only as her sisters or her daughters or her servants can give her.

## II.

### THE HOUSEKEEPING ANARCHY.

It is a too-familiar story, but let us take a comprehensive glance at the practical situation of all educated American housekeepers to-day.

I. In the first place, they are all BUYERS. The first thing they do every morning of their lives after finishing breakfast, is to order on credit or buy for cash from the provision dealer and the grocer, the materials for the meals of the ensuing twenty-four hours. About three days out of six, after the household has been ordered and settled, the next thing is to go out and buy materials or trimmings to be put into the garments they are engaged in making—for woman's sewing, like woman's cooking and cleaning, is never done.

*Buyer*

But women are not buyers as men are. One man buys wheat, another cattle, another iron, an-

*Buyer*

other tea, another wool, and so on—each his own specialty for his own business. Women, on the contrary, are all buyers in larger or smaller quantities, and in better or worse qualities, of the *same things*.

Is it not wonderful that none of them have ever clubbed together in numbers sufficient to buy at wholesale and then divide the goods among themselves as they want them, and so save the profits which, from the retailer down to the producer, the middle-men make out of them, and which the co-operative stores of England have proved to be no less than from ten to fifteen dollars out of every hundred they spend—an appalling sum out of the aggregate expenditure of any family, whether its yearly outlay be large or small.

This retail buying of house-mistresses, then, we must put down as, on the present system, House-keeping Stupidity and Extravagance Number One.

II. In the second place, house-mistresses are not only all buying the same things—they are all *doing* precisely the same things, and they are doing them

all the time,—for all housekeepers are engaged every day either in cooking, sewing and laundry work themselves, or in directing servants who are doing them.

Is it not still more wonderful that it has never occurred to any neighborhood of housekeepers how much more easily, perfectly, and economically their housekeeping would be accomplished if they would all take hold and do it together?

What fearful waste for the whole country is involved by the conditions of its cookery alone—a separate cook and a separate fire for each family, whether that family consist of two or of twenty persons!

The entire house-work and dish-washing and table setting of the great Wellesley College of three hundred girls in Massachusetts, is done by those girls in just forty-five minutes out of the twenty-four hours.

Miss Corson, of the Cooper Institute Cooking School, in New York, has within a few years trained ten *children* between the ages of ten and

fifteen, to do all the cooking for an institution of a hundred and fifty persons.

Before spinning and weaving were carried on in mills by steam machinery, it took all the women in the world all the time they could spare from their other household duties to manufacture a scanty supply of home-spun linens and woollens for their families. From the duchess to the peasant, all women were at the distaff or the loom, and even so, large classes of men had to dress to a great extent in leather to make up for the deficiency of textile fabrics.

To-day, "it would require the labor of every man, woman, and child on the face of the earth—over a thousand million persons—to do with the spinning wheel and the loom what is now done by less than a million and a half of operatives in this and other countries in *cotton*" alone! \*

This is the way that men do women's work when they set about it, and if all women were to dis-

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\*Mr. C. C. Coffin, of Boston, before the Congressional Labor Committee, of which Mr. Abram S. Hewitt was chairman.

appear from the earth to-morrow, in case men thought it worth while to keep on with housekeeping at all, would they carry it on in the present woman-fashion? Would each begin cooking his own food, and making, washing, and mending his own clothes and that of his boys with the help of another hired man? The idea is laughable. We know that at once some men would take charge of all the cooking, others of all the sewing and mending, others of the washing and ironing, and still others of the scrubbing and cleaning. Houses would be built and labor-saving machinery would be contrived to meet the new order of things, and three men out of four—nay, nine men out of ten would keep on doing just what they are doing now.

Another painful reflection is that so much of the *pleasure* of housekeeping labor is lost by bearing all its burdens alone instead of in association. Fairs and festivals are very hard work, but why do women so continually get them up in addition to all their daily duties, if there be not a great deal of genuine enjoyment in bending their ener-

gies toward a common object? Why are people generally more cheerful and more contented in the city than in the country, unless it be from the closer contact of human beings with each other which city life involves?

A lady who went out in the first ship that carried wives to San Francisco after the gold-rush of 1849, told the writer that when they first landed everything was so in the rough—conveniences and utensils were so scarce and servants so impossible, that the handful of women who had happened to go out together, simply took hold and did all their housekeeping in common. Said she: "It was like one long frolic, and we have often said we never enjoyed anything so much in our lives. Cooking, washing, house-work, ironing—we did it all together, and were merry over it from morning until night."

What a pity that it did not occur to these pioneer housekeepers that the way they had begun housekeeping in that new and distant land would be the very best way to keep on!—for then might



the great problem of Christendom have been solved in that youngest and remotest of civilized communities forty years ago. American women would then betimes have serried themselves against the dreadful evils that corrupt and crafty Asia was waiting to let loose upon them, and instead of the ship-loads of miserable Chinese of both sexes who are brought like cattle over here to undermine the American family, the breezes that blew from the mighty young Republic across the Pacific could have whispered hope and redemption even to the trebly degraded women of those old pagan monarchies, for they would have told them that Co-operative Housekeeping--which means the highest elevation of Wifehood and the final apotheosis of Home--was born!

This carrying on of the three trades or industries which make up American housekeeping--viz., cooking, laundering and sewing--by each housekeeper, without the help and co-operation of other housekeepers, we must, then, in simple

common-sense, label "Housekeeping Stupidity and Extravagance Number Two."

III. But to me the crowning stupidity of all is to be found in the universal conviction that all housekeepers and all servants are *capable* of carrying on three trades at once with skill, despatch, and success.

The very commonest element of wonder in a man's mind is that he should ever find a badly cooked dish upon his table, or a badly ironed shirt or an unmended garment of any kind in his drawer.

In like manner the very commonest complaint of house-mistresses to each other, is that of the unaccountable inefficiency and *slowness* of their servants.

"I'm sure," have I often heard my friends remark, "if *I* were doing the same things over and over again as my servants are, I could learn to do them exactly right, and to get through my work in half the time that they do."

Ah, thoughtless women! if your servants could

bring to their work the quick and fine perceptions of a lady's educated brain, they would not have their own strong and enduring nerves and muscles with which to do it. The two elements are not found together. I never in my life met with anything more pathetic than the following letter to the editor of *Harper's Magazine* (July, 1867), from a farmer's wife of evident talent, culture and refinement. Nor is the case peculiar. The poor victim spoke then, and owing to the increased complications of the servant question all over the land, she speaks with still stronger emphasis now, for ten thousands of her delicate countrywomen:—

“Think of raising your head from your pillow on the dawn of a midsummer morning, startled by the sleepless consciousness that there is ever so much work to be done, and you must be up and about it. But your head aches; you have not slept and rested long enough; you are tired yet; for you were up till after ten o'clock mending your child's dress; your hands feel nerveless and very unfit to begin another round of toil. But you must stop thinking how good it would seem just to rest an hour longer. The work must be done, and you must do it alone; there is nobody to help. Why do

you linger? You will be sorry when the heat comes down, for every minute lost of this cool hour. Impelled by stern resolve the unwilling body moves. You are up and dressed and run first to skim the milk. Then the fire must be made. Where is the wood? There's none in the yard, and you have already picked up all the old pieces round the fences near by. True, a man with an ax would have plenty in three minutes, but it was forgotten. Breakfast is expected at half-past six; you must have some wood. Here is an old board which was 'shaky' in its prime; being now very much decayed it will break by stepping on it; draw it along, and here in the barnyard are some pieces which the cattle have broken, quite an armful in all. It has taken many minutes of precious time to get the wood, and now do you pause in going back to drink in the beauty of the morning? to look while your soul grows larger, on the blue sky dotted and ribboned with clouds? on the wide, dewy fields and the circling woods, robed in the glory of summer? You pause not. Your eyes are fixed on the kitchen door, toward which you move rapidly in a right line. You might almost as well be an engine running through a tunnel, as far as looking on the outer world is concerned.

“Your fire is made, breakfast is cooking, and very warm it grows around the stove, and very faint you grow bending over it. Your flat-irons are heating, your birds are up crying for bread-and-butter. You sink down on the door step, and slip their clothes on them swallowing the cool air; but there's

something burning on the stove; you must breathe the hot steam again, while the cry for bread-and-butter grows more fervent. Hurry now, move your hands fast; you may get the coarse ironing done before time to set the table.

“Well, it is done, and the family are down to breakfast, but you can not eat—indeed you don’t have time to eat. You know how things should be done, but you could not get everything on the table in time; there’s a spoon wanted, then water, and maybe something else. It is not a family reunion; it is to some a time to eat; to one a time to wonder if things will ever be any different; to you a time to think how they can be different; why there must be so much warm food in warm weather; and to try—vain attempt!—to simplify the day’s work. But there it is, a great fact; victuals to be cooked in variety, to be placed on the table; the inevitable dish-washing, knife-scouring, sweeping, and so much besides, that no one who has not gone through it can understand it. With all your dropping and transposing you can not change the relations of things. It is as hopeless as the trials you used to make to bring out values by forming three equations of two unknown quantities.

“You keep your mouth close shut and don’t mean to complain; but after the hired man goes out you say to your husband, from sheer hopelessness, perhaps, ‘If I only had somebody to help me to-day!’ Ah, you might better have kept still. He is in debt, is working hard, and he knows that

you are, and it irritates him, because he can not tell how to help it; but he doesn't know that your very life is being worked in to help along. He can not know, with his strength, how utterly hopeless you feel in your weakness; so he says, 'I don't know what to do; I might as well give up one time as another; you'll have to have help, but I can hardly keep my head above water now.' How much better if you had kept still! you have taken all heart out of him for the day. So you sit with your aching head in your hands, while he goes to his work, and the children are out bareheaded, shouting in the sunshine.

“‘I *must* try,’ you resolve, breaking away from your thoughts and going to work—‘I must try writing again, and not give up till I succeed.’ You have long been thinking of this, but could not get time. Now it is plain you must help yourself in some way; the time must be taken from the making and mending; there will be more rags, but let that pass. So through the hot summer days you hasten the day's work and the week's work; the washing, baking, ironing, and churning, to get space to carry out your resolve, and just the hope and the effort help to take off the savageness of toil. Sometimes pen and paper lie on the pantry shelf, and you drop down in a chair there to rest five minutes and write; and sometimes, as you sit for an hour in the afternoon in your muslin dress in ‘the other room,’ a habit of old days that you cannot get over, you write a little when no one is by. So, your piece is finished after a long time, and sent away, and you

try not to think of it, but a small bright hope will live, hidden away in your heart, till crushed out by the truth.

“Another and another is sent to share the same fate. Yes, more than I will tell you of; and now dear Easy Chair, would you keep trying or would you give up?

“A WEAK-MINDED WOMAN.”

Is that hapless one living still, I wonder? Can her irrepressible heart-cry—echoing perhaps across her grave—be heard without tears? I remember reading once the report of an Agricultural Meeting in Massachusetts, at which it was said by one of the speakers that “as a rule, farmers were far more careful of their horses than of their wives, so that these latter not unfrequently die before their time from sheer over-work.”

I say, let any educated house-mistress who thinks she has the physical strength, try “doing her own work” for six months, or if she will not try it, let her cease her unreasonable wonderings at the shortcomings of her servants. On the contrary, the wonder is that with their uneducated brains, servants contrive to keep the hundred details of their work so well in mind as they do.

What *man* dreams of carrying on two, three, or more trades alternately all day long? A man does one thing; he masters that one thing, and doesn't pretend or attempt the versatility that our barbaric system of individual housekeeping forces upon every woman and also upon every servant except those in hotels and rich houses.

But the whole absurd tale is not yet told. Throughout the world of masculine labor, wherever the class of men which corresponds to the class of women-servants is employed, there universally we find a head-man or "boss" either working with or over-seeing them, so that practically they are never unwatched. Though they have only one trade—nay, often but one process of one trade—to master, even that they carry on under ceaseless superintendence. The men who superintend them are either practical workmen themselves or they have a thorough theoretical knowledge of how the work in hand should be done and of the result that is demanded. The wages accorded them are in proportion to their skill, and terms are made



with them such that they can not without loss leave a situation without due notice beforehand to their employers.

But the employés of housekeepers may decamp at any moment and demand their wages up to that moment. Their wages are rated, not by their individual skill, but by the kind of work to be performed, so that though a servant may not understand even how to boil a potato or broil a steak, yet if it be cooking she is undertaking, she calls herself a "cook" and demands and receives the same wages that her mistress has just been paying a girl who has been in training with her for months. Installed in their kitchens, these ignorant servants get very little superintendence, but are left amid their manifold and delicate duties mostly to their own consciences, because their mistresses have generally to be in some other room at the endless tasks of the needle and the sewing-machine.

Finally, and as the top-most stone of this Edifice of Confusion, the women who employ servants have for the most part paid little attention to housekeep-

ing until they actually enter the houses they are to preside over. Too generally they find themselves in the mortifying and incompetent position of actually knowing less than the crude, ignorant creatures they are attempting to direct. For fear of making mistakes before them, they often refrain from even trying to make themselves practical cooks. Their husbands, poor men! know not where rightly to place the responsibility, as they continually hear the servants abused and depreciated, and so the housekeeping drags through its five, ten, fifteen or more years of dislocation, often to be ended as a relief by life in boarding-houses and hotels.

It seems to me that the utter irrationality of the American domestic system could not be more complete. Let women give up in future a phrase that conveys no adequate impression, and let them clearly define their positions to themselves and the world by carefully saying in future of the young bride whose husband has furnished a home for her to preside over—not, “They are going to housekeeping,”

but, “*She* is going to carry on three trades at once.” No matter what her taste or talent or training or health may be, she must do just this that all married women are doing—she must carry on three relentless trades at once, and yet, so great is the intrinsic difficulty of the task, such the physical strain and mental grasp that it requires, that only the inherited habit of ages enables women to do it at all, and only women of exceptional capacity can do it well. However little literary or other culture a woman may have, if she be a successful house-mistress, she is an *able woman*, and had she been a man, would probably with no greater expenditure of mental force have won for herself both money and position beyond the average.

At this point the would-be critic of the modern woman may very appositely object that even if the modern housewife have three trades to carry on at once, it is many less than her fore-mothers of only two hundred years ago energized and directed, since to her cooking, laundering and sewing they added spinning and weaving, the making of butter

*Li 20 Jan 19*

and cheese, of soaps, perfumes, candles, stockings and gloves, the salting and pickling of meats for winter's use, and the putting up of medicines and liniments for sickness. With such a remnant of ancestral industries left her, and with such infinitely greater conveniences for carrying them on, why does the modern woman so often prove herself averse, if not absolutely unequal, to what is demanded of her?

The answer is—Because there has been a transformation in two fundamental directions: First, in the house-mistress herself. Second, in her servants.

The historic housewife was devoted from babyhood to household avocations, and she had no other interests. The girl of the olden time never travelled, never studied, never read. She had scarce any education except her domestic education, and scarcely any intellectual horizon outside her home. The modern girl receives, on the contrary, if neither a profound or thorough, at least a wide-glancing culture that occupies and interests

at every point all the mind she has, and makes it difficult for her to concentrate her solicitude on the narrow area of her immediate family. She has a dozen tastes and accomplishments of which her great-grandmothers never dreamed, and which she is almost irresistibly impelled to spend both time and money in gratifying.

But these mental distractions of the house-mistress would be but a small disadvantage to her family if she had at her command the household service that existed everywhere, even so late as a hundred years ago. For the servants of all centuries except our own were either serfs, slaves, or the descendants of serfs and slaves, who were as much fixtures in the family as if they were owned there. Free household servants who come and go as they like, or who do as much or as little in return for their wages as they see fit, are as purely a modern development as are the delicate and untrained mistresses who employ them. One is the fitting pendant to the other. Both are the inevitable products of the conditions amid which they have developed, and they are so unsuitable and in-

adequate to their day and generation, because in an age of the combination of capital, the organization of labor, and the individual freedom of the working classes, women are attempting to carry on the domestic industries collectively called "housekeeping" on the isolated system developed in the by-gone milleniums of domestic servitude, though the comfort and economy of THAT system depended on the *absolute ownership of the employees by the employer!* All the expensiveness and dislocation of modern housekeeping—all the disabilities and shortcomings of housekeepers—all the superfluous women and a large portion of the degraded women of Christian nations to-day—are due to the huge wastefulness and idiocy of the fact that in a century of dazzling intellectual light, and amid the methods of Freedom and Civilization, women alone of the corporate and industrial body hug themselves in their old Cimmerian darkness, and cling stupidly and stubbornly to the customs of Barbarism and of Slavery!! \*

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\*Appendix A.

### III.

#### MR. CHARLES W. ELLIOTT'S INDICTMENT OF CIVILIZATION.

THE foregoing views are the basis of the series of five articles entitled "Co-operative Housekeeping" that appeared from the writer's pen in the *Atlantic Monthly* in the winter of 1868-9. Whether the theory is dead in the American mind, or whether it has merely been slumbering there all these years, I know not, but I am moved once again to attempt to call public attention to it on account of two noteworthy essays on the "woman question" that appeared last year in the *North-American Review*, viz.: Mr. Charles W. Elliott's "Woman's Work and Woman's Wages" in the August number (1882), and Mrs. Julia Ward Howe's rejoinder in the succeeding November one.

Mr. Elliott's recent study of the problem brings him to precisely the same conclusion that mine did me fifteen or more years ago. He holds, and I am entirely of the same mind, that the supreme—nay, indispensable—good for women is to have each her own home and to earn her living there by the household services and other satisfactions which she renders her husband. But he maintains now, as I showed then, that what the world calls “civilization” (but what I beg to define as only the Organization of Men among Themselves) by taking possession of the ancient feminine industries, and so making woman less needful to man, has made and is making her every year less and less financially valuable to him. The women of a gentleman's family are now largely burdens to him instead of helps. No matter how charming, how elevating, how indispensable as wives and daughters they are to men's best safety and happiness, all the same they have literally to be “supported.” They are expensive. Hence, as Mr. Elliott says, “Marriage is everywhere becoming more difficult for



women and less desirable for men," and the final result is that more and more of the virtuous and industrious among women are yearly forced into the ranks of underpaid and overworked employés, and more and more of the idle and self-indulgent are tempted down into the miserable host of the disgraced and the depraved.

The following sentences contain the substance of Mr. Elliott's views :

\* \* \* "In the past the wives and women of great kings like Solomon and Cæsar spun the wool and wove the cloth and made the garments of their husbands. Women then had plenty of work, and of as necessary and valuable a sort as that of men. Patriarch Abraham's wife made and baked the cakes for him and the visitors herself; she was a working-woman. To-day all this is changed. No queen works, no chieftain's wife works, no trader's wife works, no *lady* works, or wishes to work, or expects to work."

"The variety and perfection of our machines have totally destroyed woman's great occupations of spinning, weaving and making clothes for men, as well as nearly all fabrics for their own wear. There remains only the universal and never-ending demand for cooked food, which women in a good degree yet supply. But even that is in danger; for the public

baker is getting possession of the bread-making, and it is likely that central and co-operative cooking in towns will seize upon that last one of women's industries."

"It seems surprising, but it is a fact, that most women look upon this destruction of women's occupations with complacency, and consider that having nothing to do must be a blessing. The result is that to-day woman seems to be the least valuable of created beings."

"\* \* \* A German professor computes that, taking the whole world for an average, a woman is worth about one-eighth of a man, and that as a rule, out of Europe, horses are more valuable than members of the fair sex."

"\* \* \* In Chinese civilization woman is of so little value that often a wet rag is laid upon the mouth of the new-born female child, and so there is one woman less in the world. The same, or a like practice, in a quiet way, prevails in Russia, in Italy, and even in New York."

"\* \* \* Must woman compete with man in the hard work of the world; and can she?—Let us see what that has brought her to in some countries. The report of our consul at Wurtemberg says: 'In all parts of Wurtemberg may be seen women splitting and sawing wood, . . . carrying heavy burdens of fuel, stone, etc., . . . threshing with the flail all day, . . . mounting the ladder with bricks and mortar, . . . performing the duties of scavenger, etc.' This statement applies largely to women in all parts of Europe.

“\* \* \* The effect of this kind of work upon woman is to make her common, coarse, ugly, dirty—undesirable, except as a beast of burden. Do women in America want to rival men in those occupations? Another effect is, that such women, so worked, produce ugly, diseased and deformed children. An American observer in Berlin counted, as he walked the street, in half an hour, more than six such wretched beings upon whom the sins of those mothers had fallen.

“\* \* \* In some parts of Germany women work for fifty-seven cents a week, with which they house, clothe and feed themselves.”

\* \* \* Of the sixty thousand feminine workers of New York city, “the average earning is but four dollars to four and a half per week. . . . How the vast army of single women live is known only to themselves.”

“\* \* \* There are one hundred and fifty thousand poor women who, according to Professor Fawcett, exist in London without adequate bread and with very insufficient virtue.”

“\* \* \* Just so far as woman is forced, or forces herself, into the labor market in competition with man, does she drag down and cheapen man’s labor. She makes no more work, and only divides the existing work with man.”

“From the long, monotonous hours of toil to which women must submit in mills, printing-offices, sewing-rooms, etc., come many and various diseases—painful, exhausting, too often incapable of cure even under favorable conditions. . . .

It has been found in England that for every death there are two constantly sick. . . . In one year alone, in Massachusetts, there was among the workers a loss of time equal to over twenty-four thousand years from sickness and disability—or in wages at one dollar a day, a loss in money of over eight millions of dollars ! ”

“ \* \* \* Women do say and must say, ‘ If men will not marry us, we must work to live, even if it destroys us and the wages of men too.’ ”

“ \* \* \* Already there has grown up a very considerable and threatening rivalry between women and men. Woman often asserts and believes that man is and has been her oppressor ; that he is coarse, brutal, unjust, dishonest. The feeling of rivalry and hatred is growing too rapidly among women, and it is sure to be reciprocated by men. ‘ If they are to assert themselves against us, let them rough it as we do,’ is common talk. The keen criticism of women by men is on the increase ; the keen witsof women, sharpened by education, aggravated by her sense of implied inferiority and weakness and injustice are tending to make her a disagreeable companion and an undesirable partner for life. Marriage is becoming more and more dangerous.”

“ \* \* \* It is quite common for young women to fancy that they are to marry a man and be ‘ happy ;’ that they are to be the ‘ idol ’ of that man, and to receive everything and to do nothing. That they are not to be helpful, but are to be helped.”

“ \* \* \* The average man is often ignorant, rough, greedy, sensual. His coarser pleasures and wants consume his earnings. His tastes are thus vitiated, and the dull serenity of home life too often seems undesirable.”

“ \* \* \* So wide-spread has this neglect, indifference, or opposition to marriage (among men) now become, that in many countries the hatred of women themselves to illicit connections is becoming mitigated. We have reason to know that large numbers of well-bred women in England have given way to what they could not resist; larger numbers in France engage in the business of unwedded love coolly, understandingly, simply as a business; in due time they retire from their hard business, and seeking new quarters elsewhere, resume that life of respectability and virtue which for a time had been put away.”

Mrs. Julia Ward Howe in the November *North-American* seeks to palliate, to offset by other considerations, Mr. Elliott's terrible and unanswerable arraignment of the present status, but even she unguardedly admits that—

“ One of the signs of the times is the growing inclination on the part of young men to withdraw themselves from the most improving of influences—the companionship of intelligent and cultivated women. A wave of materialism sweeps

across the world to-day, which threatens to carry men and women in the direction of animal savagery from which all men spring, but in which no race should be content to abide. In fashionable life rude and boorish manners are cultivated."

This latter is an imitation of the manners in vogue in England, where for ten or fifteen years it has been the fashion in the highest circles for so-called "gentlemen" to be cavalier, neglectful, and discourteous toward ladies! English women patiently put up with it. And why? Because marriageable girls are such a drug in the market that they do not *dare* assert themselves, or their mothers for them, against their social lords and masters, for fear of losing the little of their companionship and attention, and the slight prospects of a betrothal that they have. Mrs. Lucas, a sister of John Bright, the statesman, told a friend of the writer that "*English mothers no longer look upon marriage as a probable destiny for their daughters!*" In the exclusive circles of the English aristocracy and gentry alone there are many thousands of educated girls and ladies who are mere

pensioners on their relations, and who have no more possibility of love and homes of their own than so many nuns in a convent, while so conscious is the opposite sex of how "valueless" are the women of their families, that even the boys at school are said carefully to conceal from each other as far as possible the existence of their sisters!

As for France, a quarter of a century ago Michelet opened his much talked-of book, "La Femme," as follows:

There is no one who does not see the capital fact of the time. *The man lives separated from the woman.* And that more and more. They are not only on different but parallel roads. They are like two travelers who set out from the same station, the one slowly, the other at full speed, and on diverging tracks. The man, no matter how feeble he may be morally, is none the less on a road of ideas, of inventions, and of discoveries, so rapid that the sparks fly from the burning rails. The woman, left fatally behind, remains on the threshold of a past which she hardly knows herself. She is distanced, for our misfortune, but she will not, or she can not, go faster. . . . If our laws of succession did not make our women rich, *men would no longer marry*, at least in our large cities."

At the upper end of the French social scale, then, the women *do* marry, because with their dowries they can buy themselves husbands. But how is it at the lower? A recent editorial in the *New York Sun* says in substance—

“It has become an axiom of the Parisian proletariat that *a single woman can not make an honest living*. . . . Mme. de Barran, who has made a special study of the subject, is convinced that the average daily wages paid for feminine labor in the French metropolis do not exceed forty cents, and a M. d’Haussonville, who has recently collected facts relating to the wages of women for the *Revue der deux Mondes*, arrives at the same conclusion. As, according to these writers, the Parisian working-woman can not possibly subsist on less than fifty cents a day, the inference is unavoidable that the mass of Paris working girls are inexorably compelled to seek assistance from the other sex by their sheer inability to support themselves. . . . Toil as persistently as they will, the majority, (think of that, the MAJORITY!) of unmarried working-women in Paris can hardly earn enough to keep body and soul together,” and “it is undeniable that much of the sexual immorality which prevails in that city is directly traceable to the frequent failure of the most conscientious effort on the part of working-women to earn an honest livelihood.”



Though in her answer to Mr. Elliott, Mrs. Howe tries in the main to look on the bright side, it seems to me that even the sentimentalism of a woman-suffragist should yield to the savagery of facts like these. Like causes must produce like results. The absolute inorganization of women in the midst of the highly complicated organization of men, must bring about in the new world the same state of things that it has brought about in the old, only, since with us society moves with the accelerated speed of the steam and the electricity that men have harnessed into its service, the end is coming upon American women far more quickly in proportion than it did upon the women of the older countries. Nay, before our very eyes the transformation is taking place. On every side our young men are rapidly segregating into clubs whose selfish and sensuous pleasures indispose them, and whose expenses debar them, from marriage. Their morals degenerate, their manners follow after, the companionship of unmarried young ladies becomes distasteful and is deserted, and the number of lovable

girls unchosen is growing palpably larger every year. American matrons of middle age in our "best society" have reason to congratulate themselves that their youth was over before these formidable rivals to married love and happiness, the club and its sister institution, the demi-monde, had been evolved.

Alas! nor need we go to France for those darkest features of a disordered civilization which invariably accompany a large and well-defined class of wives, daughters and courtesans who are "supported" merely—viz: white women working in the fields, and *immorality among working-girls enforced by want*. Already in all our large cities it is said that shops exist in multitudes where if a girl complain that she can not board and clothe herself upon her wages, she is told plainly by her employer that she must find a "friend!"

Of course the old stereotyped answer to this is that the demand for domestic servants in this country is greater than the supply, and that *every* girl can be comfortably and honorably maintained who will go

out to service. So she can, but as we have just seen, it is contrary to the Spirit of the Age to carry on from two to three trades at once, as most girls in service have to do. Working-men do not do it—*would* not do it—and neither will working-women. We *must* take men and women as we find them, and shape our institutions to fit human nature—not mutilate human nature to fit institutions.

As for women's working in the fields, the division line between the employments of the sexes, should be drawn at just one limit, viz., that between out-door and in-door labor. Except a little for health or pleasure, women should never work out of doors, because contact with the soil and exposure to the elements deprives them of precisely their special and most attractive external characteristics—their personal daintiness and the superior refinement and delicacy of their appearance. Up to twenty-five years ago no white women toiled in the fields of this republic, but now the degrading custom exists in many localities.

Mr. Elliott's argument is summed up in ques-

tions which it is the object of the present study in Sociology to answer :

“Is that progress,” he asks, “is that civilization--which forces woman to unsex herself (in the fields, etc.); to enter into a race in competition with man in which she is sure to go down ; which brings her to starvation wages ; which involves a ruin of health and temper ; which forbids all enjoyment of life; which makes merchandise of human virtue ;—is that a civilization which woman ought to admire, defend and preserve ?” —“How to secure for woman, or restore her to her normal position and value, is one of the foremost questions of the time, and is second to none. What can she herself do to become again valuable? What can she do to secure health, wealth and happiness for herself and for mankind ?”

I answer—There is one thing, and only one, that women can do to accomplish this vast yet imperative result; and that is, to bring their great special work—their universal function—*their housekeeping*—into harmony with the spirit of their own generation. In other words, ORGANIZE IT!—their household buying on the basis of the Co-operative Store—their three household trades on the basis of Co-operative Manufacturing.

#### IV.

##### THE PIONEER IN CO-OPERATIVE HOUSEKEEPING.

THIS possible organization of the chaotic modern housekeeping is no theory, no Utopian vision merely. Its parallel exists in the world—a great, joyous, triumphant, almost miraculous FACT, which women have first simply to copy in the spirit and almost in the letter, and afterward to go a little farther along the same road, and the riddle is read—the problem solved—the uselessness and expensiveness of educated women to society and the consequent neglect and contempt of them by men, vanished. ✓

Housekeepers have not the capital wherewith to start large co-operative stores, kitchens, laundries, and sewing-rooms, and if they had, they have not, as Miss Kate Field's "Co-operative Dressmaking Association" has lately demonstrated, the business

experience successfully to utilize it. On the other hand, all the money that men earn, or a large proportion of it, passes through their hands. They daily carry on three productive trades for the immediate benefit of the families over which they preside, and the capital with which they do this is the daily or weekly or monthly allowance made them by husbands and fathers for the purchase of their raw materials and for the wages of their servants. What, then, they must do is to imitate the Rochdale Pioneers, and with small, very small, savings from their housekeeping capital (not more than five dollars each would be required), they must stock and open small Co-operative Stores, re-investing their profits as they come in as so much added capital to these stores, until each one is a thoroughly stocked and perfectly appointed establishment for the supply of all household needs. "Co-operative union," says Mr. Thomas Hughes, "carried on upon the Rochdale system, places in the hands of the poorer classes," (and would equally place in the hands of housekeepers) "without any burdensome effort on their part, this indispensable

condition of their effective action for mutual help,  
—Collective Income.”

The Rochdale Pioneers began forty years ago with a capital of \$175.00, and twenty-eight shareholders. At first their only objects were to buy, and to sell at the usual retail prices, groceries of good quality, strictly for cash, and with just weights and measures, and to divide the profits. At this writing they number over eleven thousand members, their capital is over two and a half millions of dollars, and a yearly profit of over ten per cent is divided among the members in proportion to their purchases. But what is especially to the point in discussing the possibilities of Co-operative Housekeeping is the fact that “over twenty flour-mills, besides bread and biscuit bakeries and the manufacture of confectionery, soap, shoes and a few other articles, are now being carried on in Rochdale more or less under the direction and for the benefit of the members of her co-operative stores.”\*

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\* Miss Edith Simcox in *Fraser's Magazine*, reprinted in the *Eclectic Magazine* for October, 1882.

It seems to me that the obvious—nay, the momentous question for housekeepers to ask themselves is: “If partial table and household supplies like these can be manufactured from the stock-in-trade of a co-operative store, why can not nearly all household supplies be so manufactured?”

For my own part, I am so sure that they could be, that it has long been my earnest conviction that the ultimate mission of the Co-operative Store Societies of England, which now number more than thirteen hundred in successful operation, is to show to American women the true and only road to CO-OPERATIVE HOUSEKEEPING; and if the ladies who in 1870 tried the experiment in Cambridge, Massachusetts, had only taken that road, their attempt would probably have been a success, and their Association the mother of many similar societies to-day.

Shrewd and practical men, however, object to the Rochdale Co-operative Store System, because they say it only substitutes one set of distributing men for another. “At first,” they argue, “the new set,



the co-operators, will be willing to do the work somewhat more cheaply than those who were primarily engaged in it. But in the end they will demand nearly equal reward for their services, in order comfortably to support their families and *to get on*, and thus things will practically return to where they are now, the attempt being contrary to the fundamental principle of civilization, viz: the division of labor."

Co-operation in *housekeeping*, however, rests, as it seems to me, upon a far larger basis.

Men are the natural *earners* and *accumulators* ✓ of the world. This is their universal function. Every man has to support his family, and if his abilities and opportunities be equal to it, he also tries, by earning more than a bare support, to better its condition, or even to enrich it. A man who can buy and sell for a co-operative store so as to accumulate profits for its members, could do so also for himself and his family in a retail store of his own. It is no object to him, therefore, to manage a co-operative store on the mere pay of a

subordinate; while on the other hand the members, wishing to have their dividends as large as possible, try to keep him on the lowest salary they can. A struggle then arises from the very nature of things. By the very pressure which forces him for the sake of others to rise in life if possible, every man is the natural competitor of every other. Conflict is the natural status of them all.

✓  
✓  
But with women it is far otherwise. They are not the earners, but the spenders—not the accumulators, but the distributors of society. Thus they are removed from the arena of strife and competition, and since the function of every modern woman is that of buyer for her family, her chief anxiety is, or should be, how to make the funds entrusted to her go the farthest. Now, Co-operative Storekeeping has shown her the way, and the only way, to do this, for it is but another expression for the *most economical distribution* possible. Women are always full of thought and care about buying for themselves and their households. It would *take but a little more* thought and care

of the same kind of which they are already expending so much, to enable them to combine together and buy co-operatively. Women are organizing successful sales and fairs for churches and charities the whole time. It would require no *more* business talent and *less* ingenuity to organize a co-operative store than it does a fair, since the goods to be sold are already manufactured.

My belief, therefore, is, that if, as Mr. Thomas Hughes, one of the oldest and strongest advocates of the Rochdale system in England, himself admitted a few years ago, "there exists in the co-operative movement an amount of selfishness and greed which is perfectly disgraceful," it is simply because it was undertaken by the sex to whom in every respect it is unsuited. In the order of our modern world, production and accumulation are the functions of the house-master; distribution and economy are the functions of the house-mistress. If the former undertake to supply his family a little cheaper by adding to his own trade or vocation that of keeping a co-operative store, inevitably

he will be distracted more or less from his old business, and will wish to make money by the new, and society will be no better off than it was before.

But let the house-mistress attempt the same function, and she is only carrying on in a little wider sphere that which is already a daily duty, and which has become with many a daily success.

Constantly do we meet in women—to quote the admirable words of Goethe—

“\* \* \* The qualities, which, when developed, make such women as we find in history, whose excellence appears to us far preferable to that of men; this clearness of view, this expertness in all emergencies, this sureness in details, which brings the whole so accurately out, although they never seem to think of it. . . . Where is there any station higher than the ordering of the house? While the husband has to vex himself with outside matters; while he has wealth to gather and secure; while perhaps he takes part in the administration of the State, and everywhere depends on circumstances, ruling nothing, I may say, while he conceives that he is ruling much—a reasonable housewife is actually governing in the interior of her family; has the comfort and satisfaction of every person in it to provide for. . . . What unvarying activity is needed to conduct this constantly

recurring series in unbroken living order! . . . It is when a woman has attained this inward mastery that she truly makes the husband whom she loves a master; her attention will acquire all sorts of knowledge; her activity will turn them all to profit. Thus she is dependent upon no one, and she procures her husband genuine independence, that which is interior and domestic. Whatever he possesses, he beholds secured; what he earns, well employed."

If we so often see the above picture fully realized by the house-mistress, even with the disadvantage of buying at retail, what would it be could "good managers," as we term them, combine to buy at wholesale? Like Goethe's heroine —

"It would be an easy task for them to acquire a knowledge of the province—nay of all the empire; it would be but repeating on the great scale what they know so accurately on the small."

Successful co-operative storekeeping may best be described as "the business of supply conducted by the few for the good of all." Men are not accustomed to this kind of self-sacrifice, and in fact their duty to their families forbids it. But with women

it is precisely the reverse. They spend their lives in services for which there is no fixed remuneration, and in return for which they get all the luxuries or only the necessaries of life, as the case may be. They are thinking and planning constantly for the well-being of others, and are content if they see that well-being accomplished without having gained anything material by it themselves. Therefore they are particularly fitted to organize co-operative stores, for by so doing they would not only do the greatest possible sum of good to their own families, but also to the families of those women who are too poor, or too busy, or too shiftless, to organize co-operative or wholesale buying for themselves.

As things are now, retailers sell the goods and housekeepers manufacture them. Co-operative Housekeeping, erected on the basis of the Co-operative Store, would enable women to purchase directly from the wholesalers and producers, thus saving to every family the retail profit its housekeeper has now to pay on the provisions she manufactures for it. The women who must organize

and officer co-operative housekeeping, if this be ever done, *being already supported by their husbands and fathers in their own homes*, would not require such large salaries and emoluments as do the heads of retail establishments, while their employés of the working classes would be as well paid and probably far better cared for, than they can be under the competitions of business men as at present carried on. The celebrated Bon Marché, of Paris, might then be copied by benevolent women in every city—and all in the *direct line of their own housekeeping!* \*

The ultimate commercial results of co-operative housekeeping in towns and villages, would, it seems to me, be notably two :

I. The large retail houses now managed by men would be changed into wholesale houses, and the smaller ones would gradually disappear—their owners and clerks, with their ignorance, meanness, daily lying and dishonesty—in fine, with every attribute of manhood wanting, being com-

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\*Appendix B.

pelled, greatly to the benefit of the species, into more manly occupations. The enormous areas of virgin soil on the earth's surface to be put under cultivation, and of exhausted soil to be reclaimed, indicate where the energies of the stronger sex, both physical and mental, are needed, and therefore where they had better be bestowed.

II. The profits of the household trade would be distributed among households in proportion to their consumption, and thus many of the gigantic fortunes which now tower over society so menacingly, would not be building up, as they daily are, out of the retail profits wrung from the family and the sewing-girl. Co-operative housekeeping, in fact, and without any governmental interference whatever, would equalize the wealth of the community as no other agency by any possibility can. As no family would be allowed to pay anything but cash, each family would receive back a surplus of saving, no matter how lavish the expenditure.

In the country, co-operative housekeeping would avail, I can not but hope, to relieve the farmers'



wives of what one of themselves has just shown us to be their present absolute slavery to the "savageneess of toil."

I have said that "in a century of dazzling intellectual light and amid the methods of Freedom and Civilization, women alone, of the corporate and industrial body, hug themselves in their old Cimmerian darkness, and cling stupidly and stubbornly to the customs of Barbarism and of Slavery."—But this is not altogether true, for strange and indeed incredible as it may seem, the most important of all masculine industries—Agriculture—is carried on by men in similar defiance of the great laws of the combination of capital and the division and organization of labor.

Each farmer farms by himself with the assistance of one or more "hired men," as each house-mistress keeps house by herself with the assistance of one or more hired women, and this, though farming, like housekeeping, involves varied knowledge and many different processes, and though to carry it to the point of production and perfection of which it

is capable, a like union of decided intellectual attainment and energy with simple brute force is necessary—a union as unlikely to be combined in one man merely because he is a farmer, as in one woman merely because she is a housekeeper.

Farming, of course, like all other scientific production, should be undertaken by stock companies with adequate capital and with all the resources of chemistry, machinery, and trained and specialized labor. That hitherto it has not been so carried on to any extent, is simply due to that passion for the absolute owning of land which is as inherent in the masculine breast as is its impulse for the absolute owning of women. But as Mr. Henry George has recently shown in a remarkable book (“Progress and Poverty”), and as the Mosaic Law enjoined thirty-five hundred years ago (Lev. 25, v. 8 to 34) men *have no business* to “own” absolutely that land which God made equally for all the successive generations of his children!

In order, therefore, to bring agriculture up to the highest standard of civilization and of philan-

thropy, and at the same time to keep the land in the hands of the masses of our people, the farms of the United States should be thrown into great estates of convenient size and owned in hundred dollar shares by the farmers in proportion to the lands each one contributes. Each share should command a vote, and no farmer should be allowed a vote on less than one or more than a hundred (?) shares—interest and dividends, but no vote, being allowed him on his surplus shares. By the rules of these companies, every laborer who would connect himself with an estate for a term of years, should be obliged to inhabit a cottage upon it and to pay a portion of his rent toward the purchase of as many shares as represented the value of his cottage. In this way, the men living by and on the soil would have a direct ownership and interest in it, and the accumulation of overgrown landed properties in a few hands would be prevented.

Could co-operative housekeeping, therefore, be organized in cities and villages, I believe that some such mighty and beneficent agricultural revolution

as the foregoing might result; for when the wives and daughters of farmers saw the comparative ease and perfection of the combined housekeeping in towns, such would be their revolt and protest against the separate housekeeping of farms, that farmers would find it for their own interest and happiness to throw the lands of each half or quarter township into a common stock, and in the centre of the thus united properties, to build co-operative store-houses, kitchens and laundries wherein their wives and daughters could work in company, while their separate residences were arranged conveniently as rural cottages about them.

Men do their work—they undergo their toil and drudgery—in the outside world of men, away from the women and the house, and they come back to the house and to the society of women for rest, quiet and comfort. “Home” is for them the place of ease, refreshing and happiness. Hardly so for the woman. It may be her place of happiness, but it is also that of her labor, care, disappointment, and fatigue. How often we observe husbands re-

luctant to go out in the evening, and wondering why their wives like to do so! It is because they have had so much variety and interest during business hours among their own sex, that when these hours are over, they prefer repose and privacy with their families. But the wife has been shut up for days and perhaps weeks with all her little worries, and it is no wonder if she is glad to go to an entertainment or to a neighbor's house to forget them.

Now since in our century girls are educated on the same general plan as boys, why should not women live on the same general plan as men—carry on the hard and perplexing part of their feminine vocation of housekeeping, *together*, outside the house, and keep the home, the family circle, as the delightful place of order and beauty, of rest and seclusion for the wife as for the husband—for the daughters as for the sons ?

For then, if women labored together at their housekeeping during the "burden and heat of the day," the toil would be not only lightened and sweetened by companionship, but also every woman

could select that department of housewifery the most suited to her talent, and having that alone to attend to, she could have strength and time to bring it to the highest possible perfection; and further, the husband would be saved the intimate and harrassing knowledge of his wife's housekeeping difficulties which is too often the fatal friction—*the sand between the wheels*—of married life that more than any other element destroys its fond ideal and its charm!

In short—from whatever stand-point we look at CO-OPERATIVE HOUSEKEEPING, its potentialities as a great ameliorating agent of our disordered and suffering civilization seem to be so infinite, that the causes of the failure of the Cambridge Co-operative Housekeeping Association have, as it seems to me, an interest not less for the philanthropists who are alarmed at the accelerating speed with which the rich are growing richer, and the poor poorer in this country, than for the women who are willing to believe that there may be a “more excellent way” of household organization than that which the sex has hitherto employed.

## V.

### “HOW NOT TO DO IT.”

THE Cambridge Co-operative Housekeeping Association of 1870-71, which numbered about forty shareholders, failed principally because the housekeepers who organized it did not strongly and clearly perceive the fundamental fact which I attempted to make plain in the beginning of the second chapter, namely, that primarily all modern housekeepers are *buyers*.—From the moment they enter the four bare walls of a house to make and keep there a home, until they close their eyes in their last long sleep, they must buy and buy as the basis of whatever they try to do. *Co-operative buying*, therefore, *must* logically be the beginning—the basis—the indispensable foundation—of co-operative housekeeping, and the Cambridge Association should first have opened a STORE and learned

how to BUY, and then, when the store was on a thoroughly sound financial basis, the Association could have gone on to develop from the buying department of housekeeping, one manufacturing department of housekeeping after another, until it became able to supply any family within its membership circle with any ordinary article of domestic consumption it might need.

But instead of this, these inexperienced navigators on unknown business seas thought they would do just as women do when they go to housekeeping—start all their “three trades” at once! They took a house and fitted up in it a bakery, a kitchen, a laundry and a store, and though, with instinctive common sense, they planned to put these various departments into the hands of separate committees,—by the over-ruling advice of their husbands, who met and amended the constitution they had drawn up, they made their second grand mistake, and gave the whole in charge of a board of seven directors, of which one, the treasurer, was to be a paid officer and the manager of the whole concern!



The directors meant to have opened the departments almost simultaneously, but for convenience, and because the shareholders cared more for it than for any other, they began with the laundry. It was supposed that it would be the easiest to manage—in fact, that it would almost run itself. Scarcely one of the shareholders thought much about the store, which, as I have just shown, should have been the foundation of the whole undertaking. They did not believe in, or very much care for, the ten to fifteen per cent of profit or saving that the system, if faithfully carried out, offered them. They were all people of means and position, and they only looked upon co-operative housekeeping, even if successful, as a *convenience*. Its economical side did not attract them in the least. Still less did they look upon it as a DUTY to do all they could to make the attempt succeed. Most of them subscribed their money as to a charity, and there, for them, the matter ended.

No sooner, however, had the Association got to work, than the directors found that they had in

dire earnest three separate businesses on their hands at once. They were all house-mistresses themselves, and had their 'three trades' at home to carry on for their families at the same time, one of which, as we all know, demands that most of its processes be freshly repeated three times a day. Thus these unfortunate ladies could not spend enough time at the co-operative rooms,—or thought they could not—to smooth out the housekeeping tangle they had got themselves into.

The opening of the laundry had been followed in quick succession by that of the bakery and the store. But the former was proving such an unexpected problem that the treasurer, who alone of the Association gave her time to its interests, was entirely absorbed in making both ends meet every week in that single department. The bakery was closed almost as soon as it was opened for the lack of some one to perform a like office for it also, and the store was confided to a paid lady clerk who was honest and faithful, but also as ignorant of business as the directors or shareholders

themselves. Of the latter it soon appeared that only about twelve out of the whole forty, had any intention of giving the Association any custom whatever. The treasurer was by the constitution a paid officer, but the patronage was so small that there never was any surplus toward her salary. Her services were entirely gratuitous, and the only result of her being theoretically paid was that the other directors assisted her much less, and felt far less responsibility than they otherwise would have done. After the first few weeks they became terribly discouraged and mortified, and rarely went near the co-operative rooms, business meetings being called by the treasurer in vain.

Thus there was no practical co-operation whatever on the part either of the subscribing housekeepers to sustain their Association by their patronage, or of the executive ones to carry it on by their labor. As some one wittily remarked; "If the housekeepers of Cambridge will not co-operate, how can 'Cambridge Co-operative Housekeeping' succeed?" The treasurer spent her entire time in the laundry

for half a year, excepting the two afternoons a week in which she did the buying for the little store. At the end of that time she was obliged to leave Cambridge for some months. Before going, she told the directors that if they would each spend one day in the week to oversee the laundry-women, the laundry would continue to pay expenses, but not otherwise, as the business was too small to support a paid superintendent. As the work of the laundry had been highly satisfactory to the twelve or fourteen shareholders who had patronized it, both as to price and quality, the directors were unwilling to close the department. But they could not believe their treasurer. They thought that some working-class woman who had to support herself, instead of a lady supported by her husband as was the treasurer, would make more out of the laundry from mere self-interest than the latter had done, and after her departure they tried one paid superintendent after another, only to lose money by all of them.

Just as the first year of the experiment was up,

(April, 1871), the treasurer returned. She had been in England, and had had some opportunity to investigate co-operation in its native home. She was full of hope and courage and urged the Association in the light of her new information and of their own past mistakes, to re-organize and begin all over again on the true basis of the *co-operative store*. But they were too thoroughly disheartened and dejected to wish to have anything more to do with 'Co-operative Housekeeping.' They voted to disband, gave up the house, sold off the fixtures and remaining groceries, divided the proceeds among themselves in proportion to their subscriptions—and there the problem remains until this day!

For her part, the treasurer has never since been an advocate of, or taken active part in, any so-called "charitable" associations, for she says that the co-operative laundry taught her that the only way for women to do the poor any real good is to employ them—give them *work*, and teach them to do it well. As an instance, one poor, old, half-starved woman, who was not skillful enough to work

in families, earned a weekly pittance there at rough washing that made her exclaim regretfully, after the association was given up, "While that laundry was goin, I was in heaven!" And, in truth, an industrial organization is like a paper-mill. It can work in the rags and tags of humanity that must otherwise become outcasts and paupers, because their feeble brains and wills can only feebly do one thing. Co-operative Housekeeping Associations, among whose officers would be found many a pitying Christian woman, would solve, and they alone *can* solve, a problem at once one of the most imperative and most hopeless of contemporary philanthropy.—"A civilization is possible," says Henry George, in a late number of *Frank Leslie's* illustrated paper, "in which the poorest could have all the comforts and conveniences now enjoyed by the rich, in which prisons and almshouses would be needless, and *charitable societies unthought of.*" Yes, such a civilization is possible, but not unless one-half the human race—the

feminine half—comes under the *law* of civilization, viz.—ORGANIZATION!

So much for “how NOT to do” Co-operative Housekeeping!—But let us not too loftily despise this Cambridge failure. Rarely, indeed almost never, is it given to mortals to do rightly any untried thing the first time. Every one must have noticed this in himself in the simplest attempts. During a period of twenty years, co-operative or “union” stores, as they were at first called, were tried again and again by artisans in England, and tried only to fail, until, in 1842, the Rochdale artisans grasped intellectually all the conditions of the problem, and at last made a success. Inventors almost never go to work at first in the right way to achieve their desired results, nor did our Cambridge housekeepers. They made perhaps every mistake, great and small, that could have been made in such an undertaking. But for that very reason their experience is invaluable, and, taken in connection with the success of the Rochdale pioneers and their numerous imitators, will

prove, as I believe, a safe and perfect chart into the haven of Co-operative Housekeeping whenever the brilliant Housekeeper of the Future shall make up her mind to weigh her mediæval anchor and spread her now unused canvas to the cheerful breezes of Progress and of Hope!



## VI.

### HOW TO DO IT.

LET us suppose that from her deep and serious conviction on the subject, the Housekeeper of the Future *does* some day make up her mind conscientiously to attempt Co-operative Housekeeping. How shall she proceed?

Let a preliminary committee of not fewer than thirteen intelligent and resolute women or young ladies—it matters not which, but the latter, for reasons to be hereafter stated, would be preferable—first pledge themselves to stand by each other and their cause through everything, and then issue a capital stock of not less than two hundred and fifty shares at \$5.00 a share, in what had better be called simply a “Housekeeping Association”—each member to own not less than one, or more than five shares, and each share to command one vote.

When the shares are all subscribed for, the shareholders should draw up and print their rules and elect the usual officers, together with an executive committee of not less than twelve directors, the officers, of course, to be *ex officio* members of this committee. The shares should then be paid up, and when this is completely done, and not before, the directors may rent a room in a convenient, but not expensive locality, putting in the very cheapest possible fittings, such as unpainted shelves, and a long unpainted pine table for a counter. Reserving one quarter's rent, with the balance of the \$1,250.00, let them start a Co-operative Grocery, beginning with a complete stock of goods if they have money enough, and if not, leaving out ~~at~~ first the four articles which are expensive to buy, inconvenient to handle, and on which, though the consumption is large, the profit is small—viz.: flour, sugar, molasses, and kerosene.

Poor women who wish to become members, but who can not afford to purchase a share, should be permitted to be customers of this store until the

proportion of their profits equals the price of a share, after which they must be enrolled precisely on the basis of all the other members. Artisans in Rochdale are living now in their old age upon the savings the "Store" has made for them, without their ever having paid in an original penny toward its capital. They began buying there, and that was all!—How can a greater blessing to the poor than such a store be imagined or expressed?

Employés of the Association for *one or more years* must in all cases agree to be customers of the Association and to become shareholders to the full number of five shares, a small per cent of their wages being reserved for the purchase of their shares until they are all paid for.—The ultimate working of this rule in assisting the poor to become capitalists in a small way, and therefore in bridging the now ever-widening chasm between the moneyed and the working-classes can not be over-estimated.

Members who desire to leave the Association

must find a responsible purchaser for their shares before their resignation can be accepted.

If sales are restricted to members, the store need be open but two mornings of each week.\* The directors must purchase none but one grade, i. e., the *best*, of everything. They must buy and sell strictly and only *for cash*. They must sell at the *current retail rates*, and divide the profits among the members *in proportion to their purchases*. They must pay their book-keeper, (the book-keeper *must* be paid!) and also their porter, but at first, no one else, for the buying for and the clerkage of the store must all be voluntary labor on the part of the directors and shareholders until the enterprise is on a sound paying basis. If they send for orders and deliver goods, they must make separate charges for these items. The co-operative stores in England *never* furnish either free.

No officer or director must purchase the smallest thing or make any contract for the store whatever

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\* At first the Rochdale Pioneers kept theirs open but two *evenings* in each week. See Appendix C for Rules, etc.

upon her own responsibility. Far less must the directors appoint a "manager" to do the buying and conduct the store. The buying must be done *after consultation in executive committee*, by a member or members of that committee, and the executive committee as a WHOLE must be responsible to the shareholders for all expenditures. The reverse policy has resulted disastrously in hundreds of co-operative stores. All the original "union" stores were conducted by paid "managers," and they all failed. To conduct co-operative stores by executive committees of which the members are all equally responsible, was one of the great discoveries of the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers. It was overlooked by the Cambridge co-operative housekeepers, for their sole responsible officer was their treasurer.—Miss Kate Field's Co-operative Dressmaking Association overlooked it, for that was managed by Miss Field herself and one or two highly-paid assistants.

The despatch announcing the suspension of this concern, said that "Miss Field overshadowed her

associates." That accounted for everything. "Co-operation" means not only co-operation in money; it insists on co-operation in labour and in suggestion as well. "In the multitude of counsellors is strength" is one of its prime principles. If Miss Field, instead of being the responsible salaried manager of her association, had been one of an *unpaid managing committee* of twelve New York ladies, with their characteristic executive faculty and American "know-how," as Hawthorne calls it, the attempt would probably have been a brilliant success.

It can not therefore be too strongly impressed upon the reader that if an executive committee of matrons or girls, all pledged to be earnest, active, and self-sacrificing in promoting the success of the undertaking, can not be secured for any proposed Co-operative Housekeeping Association, *it would be hopeless to make the attempt at all!*

The store must not keep account of the sales to members, as that involves as much book-keeping and therefore expense, as the credit system; but at

each purchase a *metal or other ticket, with a face value corresponding to the amount of the purchase money, must be given to the purchaser, and these tickets she must herself keep, and at stated intervals return to the store as evidence to be then and there recorded on her own page of the amount of her purchases.\** At the end of every quarter the accountant must add up the whole amount of these tickets, and in case the store has made anything over expenses and the interest on its shares, a dividend must be paid or credited to her *in proportion to her purchases.*

Finally, monthly meetings of the whole Association must be held, before which the directors must lay the exact state of the business, and ask for instructions on important decisions.

When the profits begin to come in, the members should not draw them out, but should lend them to

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\* The Rochdale and most other co-operative stores in England have each their own tin and brass currency of the same denominational value as the silver and gold coin in common use, and with these the members keep their own accounts as above.

the Association without interest until the store is thoroughly stocked, and until there is also a sufficient surplus to rent some adjoining room and fit it up as a Bakery. This bakery must have its own committee of management, and its committee must be *ex officio* a part of, and report to, and consult with the original executive committee, and through it with the Association itself. Nor should the Association attempt any other housekeeping department until the bakery is a success, both financially, and as regards the bread, pastry, deserts and preserves that it turns out.

After the bakery has been mastered, the Association should empower the bakery committee to proceed in the same way from the profits of the two departments now established, to open a meat, soup, and vegetable Kitchen. With the splendid lady cooks now before the public as teachers and lecturers on cookery, it would be so easy a matter for the bakery and kitchen committee to consult with and learn from such experts, how to organize their departments for the supply of meals, or parts of



meals, to the families composing the Association, that space need not here be devoted to suggestions on the subject.

The most important department of co-operative housekeeping, the gastronomical, being now organized and in smooth working order—and the Association should at the outset allow itself not less than *three years* for the accomplishment of this division of its work,—the same process could be repeated for the sewing needs and interests of the housekeeping circle, by first stocking a small Dry-Goods Store with the staples in textile fabrics and in sewing materials that are in constant demand in every family, and from this gradually developing the underclothing and dressmaking, the cloak and millinery rooms, of which dry-goods are the necessary foundation. Last of all, the members may organize a Co-operative Laundry, and then the whole housekeeping enterprise would be complete.

I place the laundry the last on the list, because as laundering is now, in independent housekeeping, the bugbear of the week, and the most unmanage-

able element of household work, so it will be found in the beginning the most difficult, because the hardest and *most repulsive* industry of co-operative housekeeping, though, once mastered and systematized, it will prove the easiest, because the least varied, to keep perfectly running.

A steam laundry should not at first be thought of, as steam-machinery costs so much, and women are so little used to managing things on a scale requiring machinery. A very large "wash" can be done with the ordinary conveniences, and after the laundry committee have *learned the business of laundering*, it will be time enough to go into "labor-saving" appliances. From the receiving and marking room,\* the washing, boiling, and starching room, the hanging and drying room, the sprinkling and folding room, the ironing rooms, up to the final sorting room, *rigid superintendence* in every one is absolutely necessary in order to

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\*Every piece that comes into a laundry has to be marked "where it will not show," with the number of the family or person sending it, before it goes to the tubs.

keep the laundresses from *wasting their time!* This superintendence, or oversight, or “bossing” —call it what you will—must at first be done in turn, without compensation, by the members of the laundry committee and their substitutes, just as in charitable associations ladies take turns by the week or the month, in being the “visitōr” of the hospital or the asylum which they sustain. If this unpaid superintendence can not be secured beforehand—to open a co-operative laundry will only result in a failure like those of the co-operative laundries attempted in 1870, not only by ladies in Cambridge, Massachusetts, but also in Winchester and Springfield of the same State.\* Women of the laundress class *will not* earn their day’s wages without oversight when they are working together in numbers, as in a laundry, and it is the wages item that counts up in laundry expenses. The treasurer of the Cambridge co-operative laundry made both

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\*The two latter, by the way, began with steam machinery, and their collapse was far more speedy and ruinous than that of the Cambridge laundry.

ends meet for six months solely by her unremitting superintendence during that period, and if she could have been in *every room at once* instead of chiefly in one or two, the work could have been done for one-fourth less, *i. e.* for thirty-eight instead of fifty cents a dozen, where everything was sent. As soon as her superintendence was withdrawn, the department lost money every week, until it was obliged to close.\*

A last but indispensable element of co-operative success remains to be touched upon, though it is implied in the very word itself. Without leaves a tree can not live, though its roots and stem may be perfect. And so in a co-operative society. Its rules may be wisdom itself; its executive committee the most competent and devoted of men or women; but if the members do not give it their custom with precisely the fidelity with which housekeepers patronize each her favorite grocer or provisioner or dry-goods merchant, the association *can not live*. If the quality or quantity of an article be unsatisfactory, let the dissatisfied member complain to the

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\* Appendix D.

executive committee, and if redress be not granted, let her complain at the monthly meeting of the whole Association; but let her not give *her own store*—the store in which she is a shareholder, and which self-sacrificing women are trying so hard to make a success—the go-by. This was the sad, unmerited fate of the Cambridge Co-operative Housekeeping Association. The members knew that it had a laundry and a store in active operation, yet three-fourths of them quietly went on patronizing the regular dealers, some of them even being so childish as to say that they did not like to “hurt the feelings” of the two leading candidates for their favor, by setting up an “opposition!” — Their ex-treasurer smiled a grim smile when, a year or two later, she counted, within a radius of a quarter of a mile of these petted firms, *four more* groceries (making six instead of two retail drains upon the Cambridge public), — which could not have begun business had the Cambridge housekeepers had the intelligence and self-respect to uphold their own undertaking. Nay,

one of the new stores was created by the bitter quarrel and separation of the oldest of the favorite firms into two, and another was started by a seceding clerk of its rival! Meantime, Cambridge continues to be noted for its "expensiveness."

In the foregoing *resumé* is believed to be comprised all the fundamental co-operative principles and methods which ensured the success of the Rochdale Pioneers and of the thirteen hundred or more Co-operative Associations that are successfully imitating them—Let me for the last time insist, from the disastrous Cambridge experience, upon the regulation requiring each department of any Housekeeping Association to have its own directors (who, however, are of course also *ex officio* members of the general executive committee)—and also, that in any such attempt, all the labor in the store, except that of the book-keeper and the porter, must in the beginning be voluntary. The latter is, in fact, a cardinal point in the success of co-operative undertakings; the reason being, that in the starting of the enterprise every device must

be employed to keep down expenses and to increase profits until the business is *learned*. Officers will inevitably make mistakes and bad bargains at first, from inexperience. Such an Association will have, of course, unforeseen difficulties to struggle against, and the only safety is to give in the beginning as much voluntary labor as possible. The book-keeper only *must* be paid, because, as the Rochdale pioneers found to their cost, book-keeping is at once too exacting and too important a function to be trusted to any but paid labor. The salaries of the *officers* must be the reward of their SUCCESS!

To all this the objection is always made;—"Then all the care and responsibility will fall upon the few. The many will profit, and two or three devoted ones will bear the brunt."

But not necessarily unrewarded,—because if the members of a successfully organized Co-operative Housekeeping Association have any ordinary sense of gratitude, their first care, when the enterprise is found to be self-sustaining, and before they draw out any of their own profits, will be to vote an

adequate pecuniary recognition to the devoted women whose gratuitous services from the time of its inception made the experiment possible. .

Even, however, if these officers received nothing but a bare "vote of thanks" for their long strain of anxiety and labor, such would be the vast and incalculable result of the success of a single Co-operative Housekeeping Association, that the hope of that success alone should be a sufficient stimulus and reward to any women attempting it. Women should remember that all the greatest and most beneficent revolutions and discoveries of this world have been free gifts to mankind from the noble and devoted natures who advocated them. Jesus Christ and His Apostles had no money for preaching the gospel amid every privation and dying in tortures. Martin Luther got a simple clergyman's living out of the most gigantic struggle that a mere mortal ever entered into against the powers of evil that were trampling down humanity. George Washington had no salary beyond his actual expenses for first carrying his country through the



revolutionary war and afterward placing her in fore-front of civilized nations; and the Rochdale Pioneers, whom I am so anxious that American housekeepers should imitate—poor, underpaid, overworked artisans as they were, gave their services, and some of them sacrificed health and life in their strenuous efforts to ensure the success of the experiment which has opened such boundless vistas of comfort, prosperity and elevation not only to their own class, but, if women would only do their duty in imitating them, to their whole race.

Can not educated and intelligent women in the generous enjoyment of all the comforts and many of the luxuries of life, go and do likewise?—for this is for them by far the most serious question of the time. Is it possible that they can *help* doing likewise when once they comprehend how relentlessly the ponderous wheels of the mighty modern civilization amid which they are but superfluous though charming spectators, are grinding feminine honor and happiness to powder, simply because

they do *not*?—It has long been the theory that women are incapable of organizing and working among themselves, and this alleged incapacity has been given as the reason why throughout the history of the other sex they have appeared as unorganized units or life-cells merely.

“*The man,*” says Michelet, “*no matter how feeble he may be morally, is none the less on a road of ideas, of inventions and of discoveries so rapid that the sparks fly from the burning rails. The woman, left fatally behind, remains on the threshold of a past which she hardly knows herself. She is distanced, for our misfortune, but she will not, or she cannot go faster.*”—Will she not? Can she not? In truth, nothing is so astonishing to the student of the woman-question of to-day as the sudden out-burst of organizing and combining impulse that is thrilling through the feminine hosts of this land!

To show what this impulse has done and is doing on the grand scale, it is sufficient to remind the reader of the intensely in-earnest and actively

influential Women's Temperance Associations of the country, of the Women's Anti-Slavery Societies before, and of their Sanitary and Relief Commissions during the Civil War, of the Woman Suffrage movement which now numbers its more than thirty years, of the Association for the Advancement of Women, which is in its tenth year, and of the Women's Centennial Association of 1876—all of which have, or did have, workers and representatives and adherents, more or less, in every State and community in the Union, and the last of which has proved the parent of so many vigorous "Decorative" offspring. Indeed, the number of lesser women's associations, societies and clubs of every description that are springing up in every direction—from cooking and walking clubs up to scientific and artistic ones, and from simple sewing-circles for the poor up to organic action in concert with State and city authorities, is bewildering, while—older and more universal than them all, are the parish sewing circles and Sunday schools, and the Women's

National Home and Foreign Missionary Associations of every Protestant denomination, through which the Christian Church, attacked and ridiculed, bombarded and undermined as she is by *savans* and would-be-originals from every quarter, is still serenely and triumphantly sustained and builded aloft ever higher and higher by the loving, unfaltering women's hands which are never weary of working to enlarge her and her borders !

I say that the spectacle of the organizing fever which has seized so powerfully hold of women, and principally within the last ten years, shows that the combining and co-operating faculty has been theirs all along, and that circumstances only have kept it dormant. In truth, it is but the natural result of the common-school system as extended by American men to girls, and *entrusted mostly to women teachers*, which is causing this wonderful flowering-out of the feminine energies and aspirations, and which was inaugurated in Boston for the whole country less than three generations ago.\*

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\*Appendix E.

Never in the history of the race until this century have the mothers of a nation been generally enlightened by education, and I think we need seek no other cause for that brilliancy, invention and energy of American men which are astonishing the world, and for these beginnings of effort in every field of thought and action on the part of women which are almost alarming it.

Yes—it was the want of that intelligence which comes alone from the liberal education that querulous mediævalists like Mr. Elliott and Dr. Dix would fain deny to women, that has so long kept them from the discovery that their strength, like that of men, lies in UNION, and that their weakness and consequently, any wrongs that as a class they may suffer, result simply from this state of disintegration, of absolute practical separation from each other in which they have been living ever since not they, but their “lords and masters” began to have a history.

## VII.

### THE OBSTACLE TO CO-OPERATIVE HOUSEKEEPING.

THE strong but strictly true old-fashioned phrase in the last two lines of the last chapter, brings me to the final consideration and suggestion that I have to offer upon my subject, viz. : Now that the discovery is made that the Lack of Union and Organization among Themselves is the one and only source of all the remediable difficulties of women, is there no practical obstacle but their own wills and inclinations in the way of this most important and indeed fundamental union of all to which I would urge them—the Union of House-keeping Interests ?

I regret to believe that there *is* a “lion in the path,” and a very real one—and he is nothing less than that HUSBAND-POWER which is very apt to shut down like an invisible bell-glass over every woman

so soon as she is married, and affectionately say to her, "My dear, thus far shalt thou go and no farther."

In proof of this difficulty, I will simply illustrate from the Cambridge Co-operative Housekeeping experience.

A Co-operative Housekeeping Association is not like a charitable, or a literary, or a musical, or a suffrage association, where the attendance on the part of members and officers is almost voluntary and often not especially necessary. It is simply and purely a business partnership, and its demands upon the part of those who are carrying it on and patronizing it are as imperative as are those of any business of supply and demand in the world.—On the other hand, married women have their housekeeping, they have their friends, they have their husbands and they have their children to attend to, and to be at the co-operative rooms at just such a day and hour of every week and stay there just so long, regardless of *everything* at home, is with many married women an impossibility.

For in return for her support a man expects his wife to keep his house. That is, for his comfort and well-being there are three trades to be carried on there, and he naturally wants this done without imperfections or interruptions. Moreover, many husbands wish their wives to be at their beck and call at any moment.—The wife of a very distinguished Cambridge abolitionist indeed, who raised himself to fame and national honor by his brilliant poetical satires and invectives against southern slavery and slave-owners, but who was also very particular about his dinner, was asked to join the Cambridge Co-operative Housekeeping Association.

“What!” exclaimed this apostle of freedom for negroes, “*my* wife ‘co-operate’ to make other men comfortable? No indeed!”—Now was not that the crack of the slave-driver’s whip, though the master this time was not a southern planter, nor the slave a colored brother?

After the Association had been at work for a few weeks, the president had to resign because the lady directors called at her house for conference



oftener than suited her husband, and once kept him waiting for a button to be sewed on. Another husband would not let his wife be president because he said if the Association failed it might "injure his position." A third allowed his wife to join the undertaking and pay her subscription on condition that she should never go to any of the meetings. One young man convinced his widowed mother that everything was being mismanaged, and made her a continual "thorn in the side" of the directors of the Association from the beginning to the end of its existence. It is true that a few men sustained the attempt most loyally, but most of the husbands laughed good-naturedly at the whole thing, prophesied its failure, and put their wives out of heart and out of conceit with it from the beginning, while the husband of the chief promoter and responsible officer of the whole undertaking, the treasurer, kept writing to her so continually from Europe to come over and join him, that at last she felt forced to go and leave the Association to get on without her as best it might! When she returned, and a

final meeting of the co-operative housekeepers and their husbands was held to decide whether the experiment should be continued another year, a gentleman whose wife was not an active member, nor even a patron of the Association, but merely a subscriber, went to that meeting, as he afterward told the writer with evident satisfaction, determined that the attempt should end then and there—and it did.

Now what *men* could keep up hope and courage in a new and difficult enterprise, if their wives were continually laughing or scolding at or interrupting it, particularly if these same wives were the money-power of their families, and could give or withhold capital to it as they chose?—Yet such were the intimate adverse influences against which the poor little Cambridge Co-operative Housekeeping Association had to struggle!

Since, then, to keep house on the present system and organize housekeeping on the new system *simultaneously* (as of course would have to be the case until the transition from the old to the new

were completed—) would seem to be more than most married women are able to undertake—our last inquiry is, whether there is indeed nothing for it but to let the tremendous forces of American civilization continue to empty us all into its iron hopper, there to be slowly transformed in multitudes from the domestic uses of womanhood, and to come out at the other end—as Mr. Elliott shows that whole classes of women have done in the old-world civilizations—not women, but ministrants to vice, but field hands, mill hands, mining hands, nail-makers, railroad diggers, street cleaners—in fine, whatever is most repulsive and degrading; or is there not, after all, some element in the family itself that we can use for its best and highest interests, without disturbing or distressing its present comfort?

For myself, and it is the final conclusion I expect to come to on a subject to which I have given the best and most anxious thought of which I am capable, I could find this element in the unmarried women and girls of our every educated circle be-

tween the ages of sixteen and twenty-five alone.

Consider the army of servant girls, shop girls, seamstress and milliner girls, of girl teachers and girl book-keepers of this land,—brave and industrious and skilful young creatures who earn their honest living with their earnest toil,—and let us ask why the young ladies in what we call “society,” should not make corresponding efforts to be self-supporting, and to give back an equivalent for all that is done for them and for all that they enjoy ?

If extremely ignorant and overworked English artisans who toiled *twelve hours a day* could open a store and make a success of it for the benefit of their families, can we suppose that twenty-five or fifty bright American girls between eighteen and twenty-five, and with their whole time at their disposal, can not do as much ? Nay, I believe that the teachers of any good-sized Sunday school in the country, could organize a co-operative store which should be a success from the first month of its existence, and certainly, the members of the young ladies’ “cooking clubs,” which are becoming the fashion, could do it beyond a peradventure !

## VIII.

### THE WASTE OF THE "GIRL OF THE PERIOD," AND HOW TO UTILIZE HER.

Of all the reckless wastes of society, the one that for years has appealed to me the most, is the waste it makes of its educated young girls. They have health, they have strength, they have hope, they have spirit, they have vigor and elasticity and freshness of mind, they have *freedom*—they have everything, in fine, which the faded and disappointed matron of forty too generally lacks, and they have it from four to six and even eight and ten untrammelled years. And what do we encourage them to do with these sparkling gifts—these priceless years? Principally, to sit at home and partly make (for the *professional* girls cut and make all the hard part of their wardrobes) their own clothes!—a disposition

of them not more irrational than would it be to send their brothers through college and then set *them* down to help their tailors!

Even when young ladies try to do a little good, their efforts are as ludicrous in their inadequacy as they are pathetic in their limitations.—A friend of the writer belongs to a rich congregation which recently made a successful effort to pay off a debt of thirty-five thousand dollars that had long hampered its energies. The “swell girls” of the parish, full of sympathy with the cause, made cake, and the richest of them all drove round in her pony phaeton to sell it. They realized about a hundred and seventy-five dollars, and felt very virtuous and very successful! That is to say—after an education costing thousands of dollars, and amid surroundings worth tens of thousands, a dozen clever girls could only earn the above paltry sum for an object that was dear to them, though their men friends, married and single, were giving from twenty-five to a thousand dollars each to it!

The Bishop of Manchester in an address at a

public meeting read the following letter from a young lady which shows how the young women of the upper classes in England literally "kill" their time—nor are American girls of the same classes much better:—

"We breakfast about ten. Breakfast occupies the best part of an hour, during which we read our letters and pick up the latest news in the papers. After that we have to go and answer our letters, and my mother expects me to write her notes of invitation or to reply to such. Then I have to go into the conservatory and feed the canaries and parrots, and cut off the dead leaves and faded flowers from the plants. Then it is time to dress for lunch, and at two o'clock we lunch. At three my mother likes me to go with her when she makes her calls, and we then come home to a five o'clock tea, when some friends drop in. After that we get ready to take our drive in the park, and then we go home to dinner, and after dinner we go to the theatre or the opera, and then when we get home I am so dreadfully tired that I don't know what to do."

Now what is a life like this but the most absolute loafing—and is it not a shame and a scandal that while as a rule the sons of an American gentleman spend their days in their stores and offices at their

respective employments from eight until six o'clock, his daughters dawdle about at home or in the streets in such aimless, valueless occupations as the above? Such idle human beings would be obstructive barnacles on our eager civilization even if they were penniless paupers—but when they demand and receive besides, all the luxuries of life, they become positive parasites,—active consumers of its vitality—*a deadly disease in its blood!* In asking one of these girls to marry him, let her be as lovely as she may, in case she have no fortune, a young man must feel perfectly sure beforehand that he is hanging round his neck a weight nearly as heavy as he is himself, which he will have to carry for the rest of his life, and it is no wonder if the weak and the selfish among unmarried men think—“Rather than such a life-long burden I will have my club for comfort and a mistress for passion and put marriage out of my thoughts entirely.”

Now though I protest against the unworthy and pusillanimous manhood that suffers itself for any



cause to be thus treacherous to womanhood and the family, I protest equally against the waste talent and energy and youth of American girlhood that give such manhood its only excuse for being. I rebel against making this richly endowed girlhood play only the part of a "missing link." Educated girls, or "young ladies" as they are called *par excellence*, should go every morning to their business of earning their daily bread as regularly as do the educated young gentlemen, their brothers, and I know that nine out of ten of these girls, on leaving school and college, *would* gladly go thus to their daily work if there were any work provided appropriate for them to do.

Sewing excepted, every domestic occupation that a lady or a young girl can turn to in her own house is practically "dirty work," and every one must be done *standing* nearly all the while. In cooking the hands have to be washed incessantly, as every stage of every process soils them. Cooking and ironing have to be done over a hot fire, winter and summer. Bed-making, sweeping and dusting, dish

and kettle, window and floor and clothes washing, and silver and brass cleaning, are all occupations which make the skin and clothes dusty or greasy, and which soil, enlarge, redden and roughen the hands, —and yet, these are all the processes of housekeeping there are!

Mr. Elliott reproaches women by saying that to-day “no queen works, no chieftain’s wife works, no trader’s wife works, no *lady* works, or wishes to work, or expects to work,” and that most women look upon the destruction of women’s household occupations “with complacency” and consider that “having nothing to do must be a blessing.”

If by “work” Mr. Elliott only means menial labor such as the above, the reproach is just; but in that case it applies as much, nay, far more, to his sex than it does to ours. No king works, no chieftain works, no trader works, no *gentleman* works, “or wishes to work or expects to work” *i. e.* like a workman, *with his hands*, as Mr. Elliott desires ladies to be glad and grateful to do! Not only so, gentlemen do not wish to see

the hands of their lady-wives hard and red and rough with manual labor, or to find them when they come home at night as tired and indifferent to their appearance as servant girls, because they have been on their feet and lifting dishes and kettles, flat-irons and stove-lids all day. Educated woman is essentially a fastidious and dainty creature, and the more culture she has, the more these qualities, as a rule, are intensified. Her father, brother and husband do no soiling manual labor. As their companion, what appropriateness then is there in her doing it? And since that is the only "work" the domestic circle offers her, is it any wonder that it is not only not attractive, but so positively repellant to her, that she avoids it as much as possible, and considers not having it to do a "blessing?" \*

But if in his definition of "work" Mr. Elliott includes the brain-work that organizes manufactures and commerce, that carries on the learned professions, and that develops science and the arts, then his remark about Women vs. Work is a pure slander

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\*Appendix F.

of the largest dimensions, for work of this kind the modern "lady" would only too thankfully participate in, if there were only any feminine way in which she could do so. Co-operative Housekeeping I believe to be such a way, and the *only* such way, and if housekeeping were organized on co-operative principles, not only every working girl, but every educated girl, every "lady" would find therein her own niche which she would enjoy to fill daily and effectively, just as surely as all the educated young men who make an effort to do so, find sooner or later their places in the great worlds of commerce, of agriculture, or of the professions.

Since, then, a great housekeeping revolution is necessitated by the Spirit of the Age in which the housekeepers of the present live, which yet their family complications almost forbid them to attempt, I say that they ought to devolve it upon the buoyant young shoulders of the Housekeepers of the Future!—If mothers cannot devise a better way for themselves, let them at least find one for their daughters. Let any circle of them call together

one hundred girls and give them from five to twenty-five dollars each wherewith to start a co-operative store. Let them also give these American "Equitable Pioneers" all the rules and experience of the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers, and let them constitute themselves an Advisory Committee of Matrons that may be consulted in any difficulty. Let the girls then elect their executive committee and adopt their rules, and when their store is opened, let them buy there for their own families and for those of the poor women whose children they teach in Sunday school, making such women members of the store as soon as the proportion of profits on their purchases equals the price of a share. When the store is on a paying basis, let them open in connection with it either a co-operative kitchen or a cooking-school which may not only train themselves and their mothers' servants, but may supply any meal or any dish for which any family of their membership circle makes timely application.

If any circle of mothers would encourage their daughters to establish such a co-operative store and

cooking department, not a single requirement of which is at all more difficult than the getting up of the fairs and festivals at which women and girls are everywhere so apt—the remaining housekeeping departments of sewing and laundering would easily follow, and the whole housekeeping revolution, so far as *that* set of mothers is concerned, would be a question of only a very few years. An organization is a living germ. Plant it, and you can have no more conception of what it will dare and accomplish before its mission is ended, than by looking at a small unknown seed can be guessed what wonder of flower and fruit it will bring forth.

The historian of Rochdale Co-operation, George Holyoake, states that in the artisan class, the young women who are members of a co-operative store are decidedly more sought in marriage than those who are not. Not only has such a girl a little something of her own in the ever-accumulating profits on her purchases; the fact that she has had the sense and self-control to save her money for

such an investment, goes to show that she will prove a thrifty and prudent wife.—And on similar principles, if contemporary mothers would encourage their daughters to become co-operative housekeepers, and give them as their own all the profits on the family purchases that now go to the retailers,—how much more easily would those daughters marry! What different married comfort and happiness would these mothers prepare for their sons!

To ignore the all-controlling importance of MONEY in marriage is simple fatuity. It is safe to say that girls by thousands remain unmarried, and by ten thousands marry, not where they would but where they must, simply from want of money.

Men like to feel that they support their wives, but in reality nothing is so satisfactory to even a manly man as that his wife should have money of her own. Nothing attracts men to girls in society like the possession of money. There is nothing they will so readily offer themselves to as money. There is nothing they defer to in a woman like money.

Nor is this so discreditable to men as to the romantic feminine mind at first statement it appears, for it is but the involuntary expression of how anxious and hazardous an undertaking, amid the relentless competitions of civilization, men feel to be the attempt single-handed to support a family, with the chances of mistakes, mismanagement, ill-success, ill-health and even death, as so many possible breakers upon which domestic happiness may founder.

Few young men, on the contrary, would fear to marry a girl who was a co-operative housekeeper, because, first, if a husband should die, and leave his wife nothing, she would be sure to find employment, and therefore a support, in her House-keeping Association; second, co-operators have found that from five to ten per cent is saved to the family in the superior quality and accurate weight and measure which are among the fundamental business principles of co-operative stores; third, his wife would get back a continual cash dividend of ten per



cent on everything that his family consumed; and fourth, all the processes of housekeeping would appear in the domestic firmament as perfect and without friction as are the motions of the heavenly bodies.

Which rolls and bread are the surest to be good of their kind—those left daily at the door by a first-class baker, or those made at home by a succession of cooks each with different standards and different methods? And as with bread, so with every other article that could be prepared in the co-operative rooms, whether in food, in clothing, or in laundering. The three household trades being at last reduced to a system, their products would be characterized by the perfection that only training and system can develop.

Then no more spoiled dishes, no more wasted materials! No longer the insolent, half-kempt cook, the cockroaches and the rats, the greasy pots and kettles for the poor tyro in housekeeping to contend with on the other side of the dining-room wall! A single neat-handed Phyllis could suffice

to do up the dainty rooms, to lay and wait upon the table, make the tea and toast and serve the delicate little meals "for two" that would arrive twice daily as punctually as the clock pointed the prescribed hour. After breakfast the young husband would go down to his business of earning the family money, and the young wife would go to the co-operative rooms to hers of saving it, for three or four hours in the morning, where, even if her post were in the co-operative kitchen—with paid "hands" to do the dish and kettle washing, she would find superintending or even preparing the most difficult recipes in its airy, spotless precincts a pleasure.

If later, more imperious cares should assert themselves for her, her place could be filled by some unmarried girl who was all ready to step into it, and she herself could stay quietly at home for as many years as her little children demanded her attention. Afterward she would again be free to assume active duties in the co-operative circle.

In Co-operative Housekeeping, the unmarried

girls, widows, deserted wives, maiden ladies and mothers with children nearly grown, would be found quite sufficient to keep all its offices full. The "nursing mothers," who are only about one in three or four of all women, would be completely exonerated from executive work away from home if they desired it, and what a difference would it make in the health and strength, the beauty and morale of the race, if, before the birth of their little ones, mothers could be cared for and quiescent, and could have the family meals and the family washing sent home to them, instead of being tired and fretted with incessant household drudgery as the immense majority of them are now!

In the city of New York there are only about thirty thousand servants to its more than two hundred and seventy thousand families. That tells the tale!—Even in the richest of our cities, the wives of nine families in ten must "do all their own work" as unremittingly as do the farmers' wives in the country! In truth house-keeping now covers the surface of society like a

universal iron grating, and is upheld from crushing it, not by stone caryatids, but by living women, each standing apart until she sinks in her place. But if housekeepers, or even the daughters of housekeepers, were united among themselves—housekeeping would rise on the two great forces of combined capital and organized labour as on two mighty wings, and bear up all women with it!

## IX.

### WOMEN IN THE STATE.

A CRITIC in the New York *Nation* for March 16, 1882, said that:—"Women have never made any important original contribution to science even in psychology or sociology," and that "Mr. Buckle does not support his theory of the fertility of the female imagination by a single instance of a valuable hypothesis conceived by a woman."

The theory of "Co-operative Housekeeping" was given by me to the public fifteen years ago, but because it was a theory *by a woman about women*, the lofty masculine intelligence of the country has never yet condescended to notice it.—I therefore frankly ask of the writer in the *Nation* whether, to have perceived that all the difficulties of the woman question arise from the fact that in an organic society of most complicated structure, the woman

element which constitutes just one half its available force, is wholly unorganized and therefore a continual obstruction and pull-back—was not an “original contribution” to scientific sociology quite as “important” as any of the generalizations from compared phenomena that have given reputation to certain English thinkers?—And I should further like to ask the same critic, whether the hypothesis that this needed organization of the woman element should begin, not on the political basis of voting, (as the *Nation*, rather to its present mortification, once advocated) but on the industrial basis of their own housekeeping, is not a venture of the “female imagination” in constructive sociology quite as “valuable” as any that has emanated from the *male* imagination since the immortal formula of Thomas Jefferson in 1776?

For if public faith in the hypothesis that “all men are created free and equal, and have equal rights to the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness,” be, as Americans believe, at the bottom of the great development of the American republic, what might

we not expect from the public belief that it is not only the right—it is the DUTY of women to *organize among themselves* in order to secure to the world a higher and more perfect type of housekeeping than has ever been attempted or even imagined? There is absolutely nothing excepting human inertia in the way of making Co-operative Housekeeping a reality, and, if carried out, it would transform one-half the human race from helpless financial children into self-supporting, self-directing adults, and would therefore *affect all existing social conditions and adjustments not less than did the growth upward of the middle classes from serfdom into freedom throughout the Middle Ages.*

Aside from the economic necessity of this feminine industrial organization, however, the complete justification of Co-operative Housekeeping lies in one long-fixed principle, viz: THE PROFITS OF MANUFACTURING BELONG BY RIGHT TO THE MANUFACTURER.

Housekeeping is manufacturing, and the profits of the goods used by women in their cooking, in

their sewing, in their washing and ironing for the human family, ought to belong to them, instead of, as now, to the retail trader, or to the co-operating husband and father who in England has largely stepped in to supersede him.—Lord Holland, when he was Mr. Fox, said “he had served up to the Treasury and *would* have it!”—And so, in the last six thousand years, have women served up to the profits of their housekeeping, and they *should have them!*

And they *can* yet have them if they will take them, though not for long. Already an immense portion—that “spinning and weaving,” in which only a hundred years ago all bore a part—has slipped away from them. They could not get it back if they tried, and now, instead of returning through co-operation in beneficent rills for the refreshing of every household, the profits of these world-old feminine industries roll in solid pactolean streams past the pale crowds of the factory operatives into the already overflowing coffers of a few capitalists. A like process of organization by capitalists of all



the remaining household industries is inevitable, and is even now knocking loudly at the door of the trembling American home. Within the twenty-one years of the writer's married life alone, the making of women's and children's dresses and underwear, the laundering of shirts, collars and cuffs, the canning of fruits and vegetables, the preparing of soups and pressed meats, together with twenty such trifles as the roasting and grinding of coffee, the mixing of indigo with water for the blueing purposes of the laundry, etc., etc., have largely passed out of housekeeping hands, and of course, the expenses of living have increased by just so much as the profits of all these now extensive manufactures amount to. *There is just as much money to be made out of the household cooking, washing and sewing of to-day as there was out of the household spinning, weaving and knitting of past centuries, and American men, with their restless, acquisitive energy, have already found it out. If American women do not within ten years begin to organize their housekeeping for the family benefit,*

men will surely organize it for their personal benefit, and the grand-daughters of the matrons who now in their own houses talk complacently about home being the "natural sphere of woman," will, if single, herd in cheap lodging-houses as the underpaid and underfed employés of great cooking, laundering and sewing firms, or as wives and kept mistresses will live in hotels, boarding-houses and flats—practical toys who have difficulty to kill the time that is hanging on their hands.

I most solemnly believe that this question of Independent vs. Co-operative Housekeeping involves the destruction or salvation of the home life that as her most sacred possession America inherited from her Anglo-Saxon forefathers and fore-mothers.—A westerner once defined a wife most exquisitely as "something to come home to."—But there are no "homes," such as we understand them, in Italy. There are none in Spain. France has no word, even, for "home," and in comparatively domestic Germany itself, so bare and cheerless are the flats in which families generally live, that for a glimpse

of happiness the whole population must stream forth every night to beer-gardens!—When American wives no longer create their own homes, but are puppets whose every want is supplied by organic forces utterly outside of and beyond them, will American men care any longer to “come home” to them?

In discussing “Woman’s queenly office with respect to the State,” Ruskin remarks—

“ \* \* \* That people are generally under the impression that a man’s duties are public and a woman’s private. But that is not altogether so. A man has a personal work or duty relating to his own home, and a public work or duty which is the expansion of the other, relating to the state. So a woman has a personal work or duty, relating to her own home, and a public work and duty which is also the expansion of that. Man’s duty as a member of a commonwealth is to assist in the maintenance, in the advance, in the defence of the state. Woman’s duty as a member of the commonwealth, is to assist in the ordering, in the comforting, in the beautiful adornment of the state. What the man is at his own gate, defending it if need be, against insult and spoil, that also, not in a less, but in a more devoted measure, he is to be at the gate of his country, leaving his home if need be, even to the spoiler, to do his

more incumbent work there. In like manner what the woman is to be within her gates, as the centre of order, the balm of distress and the mirror of beauty, that she is also to be without her gates, where order is more difficult, distress more imminent, loveliness more rare."

How shall the more fortunate women of society perform this needed and noble function for the less fortunate?

"By the Ballot—by Manhood Suffrage," insists a large and intelligent and influential class of women.

"By Co-operation in Housekeeping" maintain I,—for among men, civil liberty for the masses sprang out of their first co-operating in various industries, and then banding together in leagues to protect them; and to be solid and secure, liberty among women should evolve itself in the same natural order and sequence.

What, in Heaven's name, can the ballot do for the housekeeping problem? What can it do for the expenses-of-living problem? What can it do for the wages-to-operatives problem? What can it do

for the fallen-woman problem? \* Nothing—absolutely nothing! and when such tremendous interests as these are at stake for American womanhood, it is to me a spectacle almost to ‘make angels weep’ to see the only class of women we have who are actively consulting and working together for, as they think, the “advancement of women,” contenting themselves with demanding from men the irrational concession of the “ballot!”

I have always steadily opposed the extension of “manhood” suffrage to women. A woman is not a man, and should not make her appearance in politics as a man. Though all the elements of her nature are the same as his, her functions are different, and therefore the proportion of her powers is different. He is the protecting paternal strength, she the protected maternal weakness of society. Thus her vote can never represent the same thing that his does, and to extend to her the manhood suffrage would be to perpetrate a gigantic political lie of which the consequences might be incalculably

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\*Appendix G.

evil.\* Men are wise, therefore, to deny it to women, and women are wise to deprecate it, as the overwhelming majority of them do.

On the other hand, † “the old fiction that women are already represented by men, is now exploded with every thinking person. It is true that all the interests of men and women, rightly considered, are identical ; but the sexes attach such very different degrees of importance to different interests, that each is inclined to overlook entirely considerations which to the other are of the highest moment. The classification usually made is, that men must look after the public affairs of the nation ; women, after its private ones,—that is, after the comfort and happiness of its households considered separately.

“Now, the truth is, that wherever a class of persons is engaged in doing the same thing, in

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\* Appendix H.

† The following three or four pages are reprinted from a pamphlet on the Democratic Party published by the author in 1875.

just so far do they have *common interests* which can only be regulated by mutual consultation and agreement; and "public affairs" are nothing but such class interests on the largest scale. And so when one-half the adult world is engaged in the same functions, there must of necessity be an immensely important circle of these "common interests" that can not be wisely regulated by any but the members of the class itself, and which can not be overlooked or neglected without the greatest detriment to society, to the individual, and, finally, to the nation. A steady stream of criticism and ridicule is poured out upon women by the press, for their dress, their mismanagement of their children, their incompetency with their servants, their aimless and thoughtless charity-giving, their superficial education and make-believe accomplishments; and yet, when we look at individuals, we must confess that most women are trying faithfully to do the best they know how; only, in this formidable and complicated machine, half-social, half-political, in which they and their families are intricately, each one

separately is too weak to accomplish anything alone. Try how she may, she cannot reverse its smallest wheel; and so she is forced to take things as she finds them, and get on as well as her numerous disabilities will let her.

“The sober truth, then, is that so long as there are over two millions of women in this country who, by various industries, earn their own living, and over seven millions who have to buy and prepare food and clothing for their families, to manage servants, to bear and bring up children, to look after the poor, and to reclaim the criminal,—just so long will women need common consultation and agreement on all these duties, relations, and interests. But, of course, nine or ten millions of women cannot consult and agree together, any more than can nine or ten millions of men. Then they must adopt the same device that men have done, and accomplish their object by a system of representation not confounded with, but parallel to, that of men.—In short, the true solution of the present agitation among women for their “rights” is to



give them what, if in this free land they did not crave, they would be more degraded, proportionally, than the harem concubines of the East,—and that is, *a corporate life and organization of their own* similar to that among men, and placed in constitutional relations with the public bodies now controlling the destinies of the community.”

For years, therefore, I have advocated that women should elect delegates of their own sex to the State and National Legislatures, and to the town and city councils, and that these delegates should constitute a “Woman’s Committee” or “Woman’s House” which should have the privilege of introducing bills into the other Houses, and of sending back for reconsideration any measure of which a majority of its members disapproved. In this way women would make their appearance in politics solely *as* women. Their influence would be a purely womanly influence, their methods would be purely womanly methods. They would, in short, instead of confusing masculine politics with votes that had no physical equivalent behind them, take

their place for nothing more and nothing less than they *are*, i. e. the Advisory, not the Compulsory Force of the world, and their effect upon city, State and national councils could not but be for good.

So few women, comparatively, are in business, or own any taxable property, or attempt any serious action together, that as a class they do not much feel the need of class representation, and therefore this idea has not hitherto seemed to have much weight or value. But if women should ever, through Co-operative Housekeeping, control large business interests and accumulate in their own hands the profits that now enrich the middle-men, the necessity of looking after the taxation of their interests and savings, if nothing else, would eventually compel them to send representatives to the Legislatures as a matter of course.

At first these might constitute a Third House, as above suggested, or merely a Woman's Committee; but after a time it would occur to men that three Houses were superfluous, and that the Senate, through all these generations, had in fact been only

provisional against the era when man's constant companion and adviser in private affairs, the woman, should become sufficiently developed to take her rightful place as his best counsellor also in public ones.

That this organic feminine development is not only the natural, but the inevitable advance that the present civilization must take, unless, like the civilizations of Greece, of Rome, of China and of India, it is to stop, stagnate and *decay*, it needs neither a prophetic nor a "scientific" eye to see. It needs only the homely common-sense conveyed in the vice-versa of the homeliest of proverbs, viz., that *what is sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose!!*—All civilizations have been only Organizations of Men among Themselves. The women have invariably been left unorganized, and as invariably those civilizations, no matter how remarkable, have remained abortive attempts to fully expand the flower of human possibility.

Instead of looking at women, though on account of their different functions they are weaker in some

things and stronger in others than men, as of *essentially the same nature*—beings “of like passions with themselves,” woven in the same web—moulded from the same clay, and to be treated accordingly—men from the very beginning have persisted in regarding and treating them as *fundamentally different*. The “long results of time” of course prove this disastrous for both sides in every case without exception, and then, like Mr. Elliott in the *North American*, like the writer in the *Nation*, and like the Rev. Dr. Dix in the pulpit, they complain and feel injured, indignant, disapproving, or contemptuous because women, passive, obedient creatures, have not wrested themselves out of the complications in which men, and men alone, have involved them.

Never had the old fable of the Wolf and the Lamb better illustrations than these unmanly, irrational criticisms of women by men which appear year after year in the leading journals, and are echoed by discontented husbands and fathers and brothers in the family ! It is really time they should be

given over. The iron has entered into women's souls in this way long enough!

Men are too all-powerful with women, their dominion over the feminine soul and body has hitherto been too absolute for *them* not to be solely responsible for whatever social conditions are abroad in the world. They have had their own way in everything. What the ancient woman was, the ancient man made her. What the modern woman is the modern man has made *her*.\* He has done it all, and "yet he is not happy." He wishes to own and carry "his womankind" (as the half-scornful English phrase has it), as absolutely as the patriarchs did theirs, and yet he wishes them to walk lightly on their own feet besides!—But such a human paradox cannot be consummated. Woman must be either man's burden or his help. She must be either his blight or his stimulus; and if he prefer the latter alternative he must set her down as speedily as may be, and give her "right of way"

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\* Appendix I.

on the self-same road that he has hitherto monopolized for himself.—*He must give her the absolute right of free and untrammelled consultation and action among her fellows for housekeeping or any other legitimate purpose.*

Did public opinion—did the press, the pulpit and the fireside will it, the whole vast feminine revolution which has been a dream so long, could be realized for the United States as well within the next five and twenty years as within the next five centuries. For American women have not painfully to hew out from the wilderness of the Unknown, as since the days of Abraham men have been doing, the paths and processes of civilization. These are all ready and waiting for their use. They have but to desert the savage custom of working alone, for the civilized method of working in harmonious association—have but to join their household buying, and combine their household manufacturing, to show the world of what indeed true womanhood is made—what free and therefore joyous wifehood may be.

Mr. Elliott quotes from some one who said that—

“No great step can be made until woman is snatched from unremitting toil and made what nature meant her to be—the centre of a system of social delights. Domestic avocations are those of her peculiar lot.”

Most true, and through Co-operative House-keeping only can woman become such a centre, because only through a system that will make civilized womanhood an organic whole, as civilized manhood is, can the dignity and happiness of every woman be the care and the duty of all other women, instead of, as now, the sport of the caprice or the fortune of individual men.

For years a protest has been going up because the wages of working-women are so much less in proportion than those of working-men. Only very recently, the Viscountess Harbeton published an article in *La Nouvelle Revue*, in which she endeavors to prove that the destitute condition of seamstresses in London and Paris is due to their exclusion from the polls!! The lady says that

there are in London sixty thousand seamstresses who earn from one to two shillings a day as shirt and ulster manufacturers, while in Paris female tailors earn less than two francs a day.

But what is the real reason of this "destitute condition" of seamstresses or any other working-women? It is that while the rich and the educated men everywhere organize and stimulate and pay the industry of working-men, the rich and the educated women nowhere do anything of the kind for working-women, but allow their husbands and fathers and brothers to support them in comfort or luxury, and to pay all the working-women also!

Now how, I ask, can the capitalists of the world, large or small, support the vast army of "ladies," and pay the far vaster army of working-women full wages besides? Simply, *they can not do it*, and the salaries and wages of the weaker sex will never rise to an equality with those of the stronger, until educated women are permitted to undertake for ignorant women the same function that educated



men so splendidly fulfil for ignorant men. The railroad and steam navigation magnates are nothing but common carriers for the public, but how many of the industrial classes could they employ compared with the millions who do find their daily bread in their service, did they each content themselves with driving one express wagon, or rowing a single ferry-boat? Yet in independent housekeeping, this is just what the social leaders among women are doing. Each one "directs" her own petty establishment, and limits her power of organizing labor to the two or more servants whom she employs within it. Well may the working-women outside this restricted sphere be "destitute,"—but the heavy hand that crushes them is not the greed of the opposite sex. It is the moral slavery and consequent mental laziness of their own! In short, the whole question is purely a question of brain-work. When upper-class women are encouraged to cease hiding their organizing talent in a napkin, and to exert the brain-power they abundantly possess for carrying on great housekeeping

corporations, lower-class women will have justice in their wages, and until then they never *can* have justice. Not through communism, as Mr. Elliott wildly imagines, but solely through UNITED HOUSEKEEPING, can women reach what he calls “the only cure—which is—that the strong must care for and help the weak, the wise the foolish, the old the young, and the young the old.”

But for this, adult women, like adult men, must be Free Agents!

A thinker far more powerful and profound than Mr. Elliott—Henry George—finds the cause of the alarming humanitarian complications of to-day, in the individual ownership of land. Strange that so acute a mind should not perceive that the *individual ownership of women*, by which free action on the part of every wife and daughter in existence is in all cases hampered and in most cases suppressed, is—*must* be,—one-half the difficulty at least! And yet Mr. George himself says in golden words:—“CIVILIZATION IS CO-OPERATION. UNION AND LIBERTY ARE ITS FACTORS.”—When men bestow,

not the counterfeit liberty of "the ballot," but the real liberty of absolute freedom of household action on women, and when women utilize that liberty by Union among Themselves, then, and not till then, will Mr. Elliott's millenium for them begin to dawn.

## X.

### CONCLUSION.

NEARLY nineteen hundred years ago, the Lord Jesus Christ—blessed be His Name!—by one, to those that listened, incredible command,\* not only declared woman a monogamic wife, but fixed her in the family circle from which hitherto she had at will been continually shifted, and gave her a chance to show there what feminine influence might in time accomplish. The single sentence which forbade men to divorce their wives save for one cause, was the beginning of the regeneration of woman—the first article of her Magna Charta. For the first time in history she was granted in the world a firm foothold, and from that she went slowly but surely on to climb to whatever heights men have since permitted her to attain. Still far below them, she is nevertheless at the

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\* Appendix J.

point where if they were wise they would now reach down to her a helping hand.

For as in the physical world, the male can beget, but not bring forth, so in the moral and intellectual realms man has originated, but he has never yet perfected. Then the Creator of the human pair must have confided the latter function to the intenser love of order and beauty, and to the deeper patience and self-denial in attaining them, with which He endowed the woman, though with each woman confined within the circle of her own family, the real scope and breadth of the feminine energy has hitherto been lost to the successive societies which yet have needed it so much!

Did I say that the mothers of this generation should inaugurate Co-operative Housekeeping for their daughters?

Nay, if the YOUNG MEN of the generation—the future “lords and masters” of its now free and innocent girlhood, had the first conception either of their own best happiness or of their awful responsibility toward that half of the community

to which they *owe their lives*, and of which they are soon to be the absolute arbiters—instead of building costly club-houses principally for the purposes of eating and drinking, of smoking and gambling, of gossiping much and reading a very little—they would use the same money in erecting noble and cheerful work-rooms for housekeeping functions, and would if necessary employ all their arts of fascination to persuade their girl-friends there to inaugurate the new Civilized Housekeeping for the American household. So doing, they would complete the work begun eighteen centuries past also by a Young Man—even by the ‘Sun of Righteousness’—their Divine Brother. Like Him, they would be the Saviours, the Redeemers of the feminine world.

Alas, it is they who more and more every year are its destroyers !

For see how they continually crowd women closer to the wall !—The New York papers have lately devoted much space to describing a number of magnificent flats erected in that city and designed

for the use of bachelors alone. This, of course, is in the direct line of those imitations of France and England to which Americans have long been so prone, and in which one treachery to their own nobler social customs has inevitably followed close upon another.

Do the fair and virtuous mothers and daughters of New York, as perchance they sigh over these descriptions of bachelor palaces, carry the thought one step farther and ask themselves who and what are the women that will supply the feminine element of these luxurious celibate ménages—for surely they are not naïve enough to suppose that *no women* will enter there? No indeed! If the false equilibriums of a one-sided civilization force women to forego that fireside association with the other sex “without which,” says Hawthorne, “existence is a blank”—on their part men have no conception of doing without the feminine companionship which is equally, or even more, an indispensable necessity to themselves.—Simply, for the wife they substitute the deadly enemy of the wife.

And why is this? It is because she demands less and costs less than does that "other self" to whom a man must give his name and all the privileges and emoluments of his position, though as far as earning or saving money is concerned, the latter has become as minus a quantity as is her unprincipled rival. Courtesans never are, never have been, in any age of the world, workers. Until our own age, wives always have been workers. It is by their work, by their *money value* alone to their husbands and consequently to the community, that they have held their own against the beautiful, lawless, idle "professionals" who, once ruined, are from necessity forever trying to undermine them. Consciously or unconsciously, everything in this world is rated at a money value. What it will bring in its own market is the measure of its desirableness, and consequently, of the respect that it commands. In the matrimonial market, nearly all the women of the working classes marry. There are few or no single women among them, because unmarried they take care of themselves, and mar-



ried they are the domestic servants of their husbands, and often supplement the latter's earnings by their own.

“My son,” said an American father, “how could you marry an Irish girl?” “Why, father, I'm not able to keep two women. If I married a Yankee girl I'd have to hire an Irish girl to take care of her!”

There is more truth than jest in this light shaft from one of the newspaper wits of the hour.—It is not only as cheap—it is actually cheaper for a working-man to marry than it is to board! In the same way, all the gentlemen, all the educated men of the revolutionary period were married men. George Washington's mother and wife, and all the ladies of their circle, were incessantly industrious, and through the spinning and weaving, the sewing and knitting, the salting and pickling that went on in their households under their supervision, were producers of actual values. Such women were not “supported” by their husbands. In fact, it is an entire misapprehension and falsehood in political

economy to speak of womanhood through any past generation of history as having been "supported" by manhood, or of any woman of to-day who "does her own work" as being "supported" by her husband. Her husband pays for the roof over her head and for the raw materials with which she works, but for him and his offspring she turns cloth into clothes, raw food into cooked food, a *house* into a *home*, and so earns her living within those four walls just as surely as he earns his out of them.

I say it is by virtue of these domestic services, and by *these alone* since the world began, that the lawful wife has hitherto maintained herself against the courtesan. There is *no* real chivalry in manhood toward womanhood on the grand scale. There never has been—never will be. Man has always expected woman to give him an industrial equivalent for all he vouchsafes her, and if young Englishmen, and even, of late, young Americans, as Mrs. Howe asserts, are cultivating rude, selfish and neglectful manners toward young ladies, it is

but the involuntary expression of man's involuntary contempt for an article in womanhood at once costly and unserviceable.

“The word ‘wife,’” says Ruskin, “means ‘weaver,’ and women must either be house-wives or house-moths. In the deep sense, they must either weave men's fortunes and embroider them, or feed upon and bring them to decay.”

Such products of civilization as the correspondent of the Bishop of Manchester are dear at any price. Excepting those so beautiful, fascinating or rich that men cannot help marrying them, the world has no use for them. In no single particular are they necessary factors either in its success or in its joy, and it is not surprising that young men are electing bachelorhood and its crimes, rather than by married fatherhood to add any more such helpless—nay, destructive—beings to an already over-burdened society.

“Indolence, vice, prodigality and immorality in every form,” says the *New York Sun* (June 10, 1883) “seem to mark the daily life of the gilded

youth of New York. Not a week passes that some violation of law and decency is not brought conspicuously before the public, and the recent case of petty larceny of the most contemptible kind which has been exposed on Staten Island, shows of how little avail in the preservation of honor and morality are birth, name, or breeding."

When the "gilded" girlhood of New York—gifted, high-spirited and fascinating, as it seems to me, above every other—reads such comment as this upon the manhood that it meets in society, must it not blush and burn with shame for that degenerate manhood, utterly unfit as it is declaring itself for all the demands of responsible existence?—"I would have you know," said the Apostle Paul—nor is there anything so important to know—"that the head of every MAN is CHRIST, and the head of the WOMAN is the MAN, and the head of CHRIST is GOD." In their "vast vortex of revolutionary rage against all that restrains the license of mankind" men of the highest social position (and therefore of the most far-reaching

influence) are actually abrogating the Order of the Universe!—Rather than take Christ for their Head, they abdicate their own headship over women, and are leaving them everywhere without a home and without a guide.

Can it principally be because the women, also, of the highest social position, have in large measure abandoned housewifery to housekeepers and servants, and because other women on every hand are imitating them, that society has at last become so wholly disordered? Beyond and above all their other functions, the highest function of women is to Uphold the Ideals of Life. The foremost of these is the ideal of *duty*. As a brilliant young husband once said to a friend of the writer, “A man’s wife represents to him his DUTY!”—but surely not unless he sees her doing *her* duty. Consequently, when self-sacrifice ceases to be the law of women, as in all opulent communities it now is ceasing, self-indulgence immediately becomes the gospel of men. “Is it because WE are *house-*

*moths* and not *house-wives*," should the brilliant New York girls ask of each other, ' that INDOLENCE, VICE, PRODIGALITY and IMMORALITY in every form !!' have come to ' mark the daily life ' of the men we ought to marry? "

Oh, if from the dread knowledge and experience of middle life one could appeal effectively to the pure and generous maidens of the time, I would say to them that if they could for one instant realize the degradation down to which their own increasing domestic uselessness and consequent expensiveness indirectly tempts men to drag their young sisters of a lower class—if they could understand *what it is* that so inscrutably keeps their men-friends from the married state that only half a century ago was the natural heritage of all Americans,—they would not lose one day or one hour in addressing themselves to the mastery of this Housekeeping Problem in which is bound up not only all their own fondest hopes of love and home, but also the honor and purity of thousands of hapless girls less carefully guarded, but, up to some fatal point of

yielding, as innocent, as beautiful, often as refined as themselves!

Can American womanhood be warned? *Will* it be warned?

If it will, then the CONCLUSION of the whole matter is this:—

As the highest women of a civilization stand or fall relatively to men, so in the long run stand or fall all the rest. Our civilization has reached a point where through the unbalanced working of mighty forces from which she has hitherto unthinkingly held herself aloof, the educated woman—the “lady”—has sunk below the original level of womanly helpfulness, and to-day finds herself the burden, the great unsolved problem, the reproach, the sphinx of her own era. The philanthropist laments over her. The editor gibes at her. The divine fulminates against her. The men of her own circle depreciate and desert her. She is not yet reduced to the disgrace of invariably buying her husband with a dowry, as French women have long been,

but why should she wait for what will as surely follow the inauguration of clubs and flats for men alone, as the darkness follows the setting of the sun?—Why, by the abyssmal fall to which she is even now toppling, should she drag down all other American women with her?

Nay. Rather let her speedily gather up her feminine energies and ambitions, and as easily as in society she organizes one brilliant episode after another—ball, carnival, “Kirmess,” theatricals, tableaux, what not—or as in philanthropy and religion she creates still some new beneficent institution as soon as one is founded—so let her in similar combined effort, quickly place her housekeeping on the same associate plane with the innumerable industries of the strong, unregarding companion who has now left her so far behind. Then, astonished, shall he turn back to her in passion, pride and joy, and a true union shall be consummated between the once more equal pair whose bliss and whose glorious results will be something which the



Evangelist of Love may have foreseen, but of which the poor, bewildered, yearning world has not yet dreamed.

For then shall appear that promised Woman, 'clothed with the sun' of her own achievements, 'crowned with the stars' of her own fascinations, and with the descrescent 'moon' of her old humiliations 'under her feet,' of whom refulgent Man, while still remaining the eternal Lord, shall also be the eternal Worshipper !



APPENDIX.



## APPENDIX.

“A” p. 42.

The following cutting from the *Springfield (Mass.) Republican* gives a very good idea of how all house-mistresses and their servants worked in this country up to fifty years ago:—

“An elderly lady was relating the other day in our hearing her experience in going out to do house-work in her younger days. She engaged with a lady in Columbia to do general house-work, no price being engaged upon, and entered upon her duties at once. About the first thing to be done outside the regular house-work was to make soap; having assistance in putting up the leach, the rest of the work in making a barrel of soap she performed herself. Killing hogs came next in order, she trying the lard, taking care of the skins and helping to make sausages. Then came the butchering of beef, the tripe of which of course must be saved, and this she was required to dress alone. She spun the warp for thirty yards of all-wool carpet, and in the meantime the lady was sick, and she officiated as nurse and did the washing, ironing and cooking for the family. At the end of four weeks she was to return home, and her bill was called for. Now, gentle reader, what do you think she charged for doing the amount of work as narrated above?

The first week 75 cts., the second 83 cts., and the last weeks \$1.00 each, making \$3.58 for four weeks' service. The lady thought the price decidedly too high, and she threw off 25 cts.!"

Contemplate the contrast now! From the very extremes of society—from the complicated domestic hierarchies of aristocratic London, to the almost primitive simplicity of our Southern households, comes the same wail about the unmanageableness of servants under this unhappy "survival" of the unorganized housekeeping of our ancestors into the organized modern era in which we live. "M. de S." in the *New York Sun* for March 25 (1883), thus writes concerning the servant question in England :—

"When some trustful, ingenuous American matron rapturously extols our splendid domestic arrangements and envies us our well-drilled attendants and our facilities for house-keeping, we are not always candid enough to repudiate the implied compliment. \* \* \* Here in London there is a deep-rooted malignant antagonism between the two classes; no amount of cringing servility on the part of the inferiors can gloss over their instinctive hatred for their superiors; no amount of good treatment or indulgence avails to win from them confidence or honest allegiance. Here kindness breeds contempt; consideration creates carelessness; truth begets dishonesty; reprimand, however justly administered, calls forth insolence. A system of cold stand-offishness, of short and peremptory command, of instant dismissal for the slightest offense, foreign as it may be to one's feelings, is, as experience proves it, the only successful one. Club ser-

vants are avowedly the best, because most despotically treated. They obey at a word, and are cashiered for a word. \* \* \* In the wake of the foibles and failings of the servants of the great, with their brutal tyranny over their own inferiors, and their utter recklessness and improvidence, follow the wretched annoyances of small households—excessive and systematic waste, fearful cooking, obstinate adherence to obsolete and inconvenient habits, and the constant striking for higher wages which falls heavily on fixed incomes, since the annual rise in the price of all necessaries affects only the employers. In the yet unsolved problem of reconciling the two antagonistic elements, lies the reason of the increased emigration of whole families to the Continent, the breaking up of homes, the living in lodgings, and the visible drifting toward hotel life, albeit the severe strictures on a similar course when practised in America.”

In the same month, March, 1883, the *Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle* thus sketches “The Servant Girl of the South:”

“Said a noted housewife and housekeeper: ‘Oh, dear, what shall I do about servants? Bad servants are the bane of keeping house. The colored servant grows steadily worse. She is uncleanly, wasteful, pilfering, careless and story-telling. She robs me unsparingly to feed her children, or her sisters, or her friends, or to give away. If I give her the keys she helps herself. If I give her out the food, she is too sharp for me. She makes her dough too soft, and comes for the keys to get more flour to thicken it. Her tricks are endless. Talk about sharpness. One stupid cook will outwit a dozen ladies. My hairpins and pins all go every morning. My best napkins are used to dust or wipe dishes with. My finest dishes are broken or disappear mys-

teriously. They broke themselves or walked off upon their own feet. The old-time, well-trying servants of slavery days are disappearing, and soon will be entirely gone. The present generation of servants is almost worthless and getting worse. Think of changing servants monthly or oftener! There is no system of recommendation for protection. Why, the best cook I have had in years I had to turn off because I found out she had been in the chain gang for theft." And the perplexed and gentle lady wrung her hands in despair over the colossal and unsolved and unsolvable problem.

Let the reader take note that in London the "club servants," who "obey at a word and are cashiered at a word," are "avowedly the best," "though most despotically treated." Why is this? For the same reason that neither hotels, restaurants, nor the great shops, nor mills of any kind find any difficulty in procuring all the laborers they require. Simply, it is *human nature* to prefer to work under the clock-work regularity of an organization rather than under the immediate control of an individual will. Let housekeepers organize their housekeeping, and servants will become as docile, as honest, as skillful and as plentiful as are the "hands" in every other kind of manufacturing. When the writer kept house for three or four persons with two servants, she had the same vicissitudes that befell her fellow housekeepers. Now that she is keeping house for twenty-four people with seven servants, she finds housekeep-



ing a comparatively easy and organized affair. Each servant has her own department and does one thing all day long. They become far more skillful, the work is better done, and they are contented and tranquil in their respective places from one month's end to another, the changes being *far less frequent in proportion* than in a private family.

As for Southern housekeeping, it is simply *self-evident* that nothing short of the solid organization of housekeepers among themselves in Co-operative Housekeeping can possibly bring again the untruthful, dishonest, sensual, half-civilized negroes with whom Southern house-mistresses have to deal, within anything like the bounds of domestic law and order. For the slavery of a master the slavery of an organization must be substituted before such low-grade moral natures as those of the African can possibly be trained, disciplined, or controlled. Experience is proving every day that there was far more *raison d'être* for the absolute subjection of the colored masses to the white masses of the South than we of the North for years were willing to admit.—Most of what were supposed the peculiar "native" virtues of the negro are actually turning out to have been the result of his much-decried slavery!

When we turn to the North and inspect the country towns of which the vicinity is accessible to the city "summer boarder," from Maine to Minnesota, across the whole belt of the Northern States, it would seem that Co-operation in some

form must soon be forced upon village households in order to enable them to compete with the summer boarding-houses. To these establishments the daughters of the small Irish or French or German or Scandinavian farmers, as the case may be, who once supplied "help" of the very best quality to the surrounding American households, now flock for the season. In them they have but one kind of work each to do. Their wages are high. They enjoy each other's companionship, and when the season is over they either go home with their gains for the winter or follow the summer-boarders to the cities. In either case the unfortunate house-mistresses of the neighborhood find themselves bereft, and their situation grows really terrible. No matter how large their families, how heavy their cares, how inadequate their health and strength, they are forced to get on alone, or to put up with make-shifts who ought to be in a reformatory school rather than in a respectable family.—Of course the servants are entirely in the right of it. Why should they slave alone at "three trades at once" when they can do one thing all day at better wages in company with half a dozen or a dozen of their friends? Some ladies in Vermont are now bestirring themselves to import more families into that State from Ireland. But of course it will be but the merest temporary palliation. If they would set up in each village a Co-operative Kitchen and a Co-operative Laundry, and superintend and work in it themselves even half as much as they now do at home, they would have no more trouble about "help!"

“B.” p. 67.

THE BON MARCHÉ.

Almost every one knows this wonderful dry-goods store of Paris, but I think not many know that it is a benevolent work as well as a successful business undertaking. Mr. Boucicault, the founder, began life as a poor boy, and when able to have a little store of his own, his attention was directed to the welfare of his clerks, and he gave them, as soon as he was able, a home in his own house. From this small beginning the work has grown wonderfully. Mr. Boucicault died a few years ago, worth millions of dollars, and to-day the “Bon Marché,” carried on by his widow, employs three thousand people.

Two thousand of these people live in the building, and all the rest take their meals there. The first thing to be noticed by a party making a tour of inspection of this great concern is a large hall filled with desks, where a great many boys and young men are studying book-keeping. They review all the books of the store, and are paid a small amount for every mistake they find. In the evening, lessons are given gratuitously to the employés in English, German, instrumental and vocal music, and fencing. Concerts are given by the store in summer in the square by the side of the building; in winter, on the ground floor, which can be cleared by the porters in twenty minutes of counters and goods, when it is needed for that purpose or for balls. There are four dining rooms, one for the men clerks, one for the girls, one for the workwomen, and one for the porters, messengers and drivers. The menu for dinner of one day consisted of soup, one kind of meat, one kind of vegetables, and dessert, and for each person a

half pint bottle of wine. Coffee is extra; it costs two cents for a small cup and three cents for the large ones. Three hundred people are employed in the kitchen and as waiters in the dining rooms. For the clerks there is a room for amusements, where there are billiard tables, chess, checkers, dominoes, etc., but no card playing.

The lady clerks have a pleasant little parlor, where there is a piano, and where they can spend their evenings when they choose. Each girl has a room entirely to herself, which is plainly but very comfortably furnished. There are rules to be observed by all, but they are not burdensome or oppressive; the doors are not closed on week days until 11, and on Sundays until 12.30 at night, but the occupations and entertainments make it more enticing to remain at home than to go out. Every one in the service of the "Bon Marché" receives a certain commission on everything sold or delivered, and after a certain number of years' service *each acquires an interest in the store that increases yearly*. It is one of the most complete works of benevolence known. It would be almost impossible to think of any details that are not attended to. There is a barber's shop in the building for the use of the employés; a physician is employed by the store, and his services are free to all; moreover, there is an infirmary in another part of the city where those who are sick are cared for; a pair of boots is blacked for every member of the establishment every day. When asked if any board was paid, the answer was "No," but I suppose at least some difference is made in the salary.—*The Fashion Courier, May, 1883.*

"C." p. 88.

The following Prospectus and Rules for a Co-operative Store, drawn from English and the Cambridge experiences, will be

sure to conquer a success if attempted in the spirit of faith, self-sacrifice, mutual concession and *mutual upholding* on the part of the members and officers of the association.

1. Raise a capital of \$1,250, in two hundred and fifty shares at \$5 each.
2. Allow no member to own less than one or more than five shares.
3. Do not start the store until all the two hundred and fifty shares are paid up, and until at least thirty members have pledged it their family custom for one year.
4. All transactions to be strictly for cash.
5. Sales to the members to be at the usual retail prices, and metal checks to be returned them for all sums spent at the store; the checks to be added up at the end of the quarter and a margin of profit credited to the member in proportion to the amount expended.
6. Premises and fixtures to be as cheap and rent as low as possible until success is secured.
7. All services to be voluntary except book keeping and portorage until success is secured.
8. The store *not* to send for orders or to deliver goods without extra charge.
9. The store to be open only twice a week at first.
10. The business to be managed by an Executive Committee of not less than nine or more than thirteen, elected by the members.
11. The young girls of the association to be interested in helping the lady managers to do up supplies in convenient parcels for customers, as 2½, 5 and 10 pound packages of tea, sugar, etc., etc.
12. The members to hold monthly, and the managers weekly business meetings, at which the treasurer shall always exhibit the state of the finances.
13. No expenditure to be made by any officer of the Association without a majority vote of the executive committee authorizing the same.
14. The monthly financial statement to be always copied and hung in the store

for the inspection of members. 15. Each share to command one vote. 16. No profits to be paid to members who own less than five shares in the store. 17. Women too poor to pay for one share to be allowed to buy at the store until their profits equal the value of one share; after which, they to be members on the same terms as the other members. 18. All the officers of the store, except the auditors, to be women.

Women who find themselves disposed to organize Co-operative Housekeeping, will please note well that the only kind of co-operative store I advocate as the basis for it is the *Rochdale* Store—that, namely, which sells at the current retail rates and accumulates profits for its members. The celebrated aristocratic co-operative stores of London which *sell at cost*, could not possibly serve as the foundation of Co-operative Housekeeping, because at the end of one or of five years, no savings would have been made for the members, and consequently no collective capital accumulated with which they could go on to develop the different housekeeping departments of Bakery, Kitchen, Sewing-Rooms and Laundry.

The Rochdale Co-operators deprecate these aristocratic co-operative stores which sell at cost, because they say that they compete unfairly with the regular dealers. Besides, everybody is used to the scale of retail prices as they are. Why then disturb it, when it is so much better to let it stand and let whatever margin of profit there may be of the retail over the wholesale price accumulate for the benefit of the buyer and his or her family, and come back to the household in the

shape of a tangible saving at the end of the quarter, which it is worth while to lay up—instead of merely buying things a little cheaper all along the twelve-month? These London stores, however, are as wonderful a success in their way as the Rochdale type of stores in theirs, and for the same reason. Instead of being given over to one man to manage at a fixed salary, as was the case in all the old “union” stores which failed, they are managed by a committee elected by the members, and which does the work of buying and superintendence, and assumes all the burden and responsibility of the undertaking as a voluntary service for the general good.—The first grand demand of every kind of successful co-operation is SELF-SACRIFICE. To co-operate successfully we must be actuated by that love for others which can “smite the chord of self” and make it “pass in music out of sight.” Thus it is one of the truest expressions of Christianity which the world has ever seen, and some of the noblest Christian gentlemen of our times, as Mr. T. Hughes and the Rev. Frederick Maurice were among the earliest to recognize its power, and cheer on its struggles for existence.

“D.” p. 96.

In fitting up a Co-operative Laundry care must be taken not to make one omission which proved a serious drawback in the Cambridge experiment. Without fail, the sorting-room must have one wall filled with rows of shelves divided

into compartments, each large enough to hold a clean family washing. At a quarter to six every night, the ironers should bring in their work to be counted and credited to them by the piece, and then it should be sorted into each subscriber's box; otherwise the sorting all comes on Saturday, at the end of the week, and to get each list correctly made out, the clothes put up in bundles, and sent home during that single day, is almost impossible.

“E.” p. 104.

In Boston, a hundred years ago, public schools were provided only for boys. They were kept open all the year, but as during the summer months many of the boys were employed in gardening, somewhere near 1790 it was decided that rather than have the seats empty, it would be better to put girls into them. It was some time before provision was made for teaching girls throughout the school year, and women teachers were not introduced into the public schools before 1830.

“F.” p. 134.

Let me not be understood to say that any woman is justified in avoiding housework, no matter how repulsive. “Do the duty nearest you” are Goethe's words of immortal wisdom. “Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might,” teaches the Apostle. A married woman's first and nearest duty is to realize the *home ideal*. If she can not give her family



exquisitely neat rooms, or an exquisitely accurate table, except by the work of her own hands, then she herself must unhesitatingly contribute the work. That is what, by the very act of her marriage, she has undertaken to do—to make a “home” for the man who gives her the prestige, the position, and the support of a married woman. A comfortless or unattractive house is not a home, and if such a house be all her husband gets in return for what he gives, she is not honestly carrying out her side of the bargain. She is a failure and a fraud.

All the best hours of the writer's best years were sacrificed conscientiously to this same “dusty drudgery” of house-ordering; but it was a sacrifice so costly and unnatural that it set her to devising how such waste of intellect and energy could be prevented for other women. The theory of “Co-operative Housekeeping” was the result.

“G.” p. 137.

Nothing can be done for this last otherwise hopeless problem, until all young girls are secured sufficient industrial or intellectual training to enable them to earn a living adequate to their needs, and then situations provided for them accordingly. This training should be undertaken by the State, and should be compulsory. The situations should be supplied by Co-operative Housekeeping Associations, which, beginning at first on the limited basis of groceries and dry-goods, would end by meeting all the demands of family life—from daily

bread up to houses decorations and pictures,—and would therefore employ every variety of talent and qualification.

“H.” p. 128.

The United States have on their hands the working out of a sufficient number of political lies analogous to that of extending *manhood* suffrage to *women*, to render them very cautious how they inscribe any more of them on their statute books. Our whole political system was framed by and for the homogeneous people which, at the close of the Revolution, constituted a Republic unique in the history of the world. The bold and generous, but reckless and inexperienced theory of Jefferson and his school apparently was, that men of any period and of any race and clime were sufficiently alike in their common manhood to warrant their admission as genuine Americans into all our elective franchises. The Irishman, the German, the Italian, the Swede, all should have equal rights of citizenship on American soil with the Anglo-Americans who had stamped upon the country its language, its religion, its customs, and its laws. Upon all of these, accordingly, equal rights were conferred, and following out the unfortunate principle, at the close of the civil war, the same rights were given to the newly-emancipated negroes. What are the consequences? We suffer from them to-day in the almost absolute abandonment of politics by all leading and unimpeachable Americans, and in the ruling of

nearly all American cities, with their vast moral, commercial, hygienic and artistic interests, by ignorant, unscrupulous and grasping *aliens*! To give women the vote we *know* would double this ruinous foreign voté instantly!—a consideration which, aside from those mentioned in the text, should alone keep every American man and woman from bestowing ear or sympathy upon it.

Let me hasten to add, however, that the extension of the American franchise to aliens was the only serious mistake in politics that the marvellous Jefferson made. He was the greatest theoretical, as Washington was the greatest practical statesman the world has seen, and the immortal principles of the great Party of which he was the founder—free-trade, hard money, local self-government and strict interpretation of the constitution, must be the foundation stones not only of this republic, but of all republics which are in reality such unto all time.—And even Jefferson's one mistake could be easily and completely remedied by abolishing our ward and district systems of town and State representation, which have now long "out-lived their usefulness," and giving to natives and aliens alike, *Proportional Representation*. Let the Irish, the Germans, the Scandinavians, the Africans—let any men (except the men who reject monogamic marriage, like the Mormons or the Chinese)—have as many representatives in the municipal councils and in the State and national legislatures, as their numbers entitle them to, and *no more*. The government of the country

would then soon revert to the keeping of the American element which alone can wield, because it alone created it, and yet all the alien elements would have their full and fair representation besides.

“I.” p. 145.

No despotism of man over man that was ever recorded, was at once so absolute as the despotism—the dominion of men over women. It covers not only the whole political area. It owns not only the bodies of its subjects. Its hand lies heavily on their innermost personality, and its power is so tremendous that whatever they are, is because these absolute lords have willed it.

Savages need women to be their beasts of burden, and their women are so. In China men choose them to be cripples, and they are so. In India they decreed that widows should burn themselves alive on the death of their husbands and they did so. Mohammedans consider women soulless harem slaves, and they live so. In Italy and Spain men have long preferred that women should do nothing and be nothing, and long have they done nothing and been nothing. In modern Germany they are afraid to have them anything but “haus-frauen,” and housekeeping is the German woman’s only aspiration. In France they desire them to be mistresses, and French women have as yet made no stand for virtue. Englishmen and Americans like a women to be a cross or compromise between an equal companion and a

slave, and English and American women achieve the moral paradox very cleverly. Some Americans, however, want "plural wives," and plural wives they possess. The Shakers decline any wives at all, and the Shaker women are celibates. Still a third variety, the Oneida communists, like the Syrians and Egyptians of old, erected licentiousness into a religion, and American women willingly lent themselves to the unspeakable degradation.

In fine, just as with a steel cutter a cook stamps vegetables into shapes to suit her fancy, so throughout history have men made women whatever they chose.—"The history of no people," said the German historian, Meiners, "of no other class of society, presents a spectacle so revolting, a spectacle that so powerfully excites the sentiments of horror and compassion, as the history of the condition of the female sex among most of the nations of the globe. The lot of slaves themselves was formerly enviable when compared with that of women. \* \* \* Among more than one-half of the human race the life of women was an uninterrupted series of hardships and humiliations, the patient endurance of which could hardly be expected of human nature, and the condition of the maid, the wife and the widow was a state of progressively aggravated subjection and misery, in which all the mortifications and evils of life were accumulated, and from which, on the other hand, almost all its pleasures and enjoyments were excluded."

Women have never taken but one revenge for their mistaken treatment by men—involuntary, it is true, but invariable and complete. It is, that *what husbands make their wives, they, in a generation or two, make their sons.* Where, like the Gothic tribes of old, men not only permit but demand that wives shall be absolutely loyal and faithful, and that they shall be free and responsible agents and helpmeets in their own sphere, there the women bring forth free men—strong men—audacious, heroic, fierce, unconquerable men. To this day the blessing is upon the descendants of the free-spirited, blue-eyed and devoted wives of ancient Germany. Whether known as “Germans,” as “English,” or as “Americans,” they are the governors in every quarter of the globe, and if they chose they could take it all! But when, as in most races and countries, men limit women throughout the whole range of thought and action, and expect them to be virtuous only while they are watched, the sons that issue from such enslaved mothers are robbed beforehand of moral courage and self-respect. They are born political slaves—natural, unemancipable slaves, like the French for instance, who, as one of themselves has said, “however often they go to the temple of Liberty, always find the goddess absent.”

Shall we say that the dwarfing and distortion of womanhood by men from its best ideals which is the general chronicle of history, has been something willful, or even conscious, on the part of that sex which gives to ours all its safety and

all its joy, and without which life would be simple blackness? Nay. It has happened only through woman's being so wholly absorbed in men, while men are wholly absorbed in themselves, and at the same time are *united into masses*, while women are disintegrated into units—that from the mere momentum of things the odds have been so entirely against the weaker sex, and their whole story from the beginning until now, such a tragic illustration of the fable of the Iron and the Earthen Pots which sailed down stream together.

I confess that to me the absolute obliviousness of women by men is the most extraordinary, as in view of all its incalculable consequences, it is the most colossal fact in history. We note it not only in the ignorant and brutish. It mortifies us in the most humane, the most tender, the most illuminated of men—as witness the late gentle and brilliant John Green, who in his “History of the English People”—mark the expression!—hardly alludes to the existence of one-half that people, its women, from one end of his work to the other. And yet he was a devotedly loved and loving husband!

In view alone of the fact that of the two sexes, one is the Father and the other the Mother of the Race, would it not be better for men to begin very soon to look the greatest reality of society in the face, and seriously to ask themselves upon what terms, in very truth, the sexes should live? And when, quite aside from the children, we recall all the other aspects of the relation;—when we count up all that woman is and may be to man—all that man may be and is to woman—then indeed

even the tranquil and temperate mind must stand aghast at the egotism that for thousands of recorded years has been so densely blind to its own most exquisite possibilities—nay, one would think, to its own most obvious satisfactions.

“J.” p. 152.

JESUS. “I say unto you—Whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her that is put away doth commit adultery.” His disciples say unto him, “If the case of a man be so with his wife (i. e. that he can not change her at will according to the Jewish, Greek and Roman custom) it is *not good to marry*,”—(Matt. 19. v 9-10.)—and for fifteen hundred years after, all the moral and intellectual leaders of Christendom scorned marriage rather than attempt it with Christ’s condition of fidelity to one! Martin Luther was the first strong man who unreservedly accepted it, and he, therefore, must be considered, after Jesus Christ, the creator of the marriage relation as the last three hundred years have developed it, and consequently of the modern Christian family.

And by the way, it should interest women to know that Luther’s wife, Katharine von Bora, like the wife of our own Washington, was a famous housekeeper. “She managed everything; she attended to the farm; she kept many pigs, and doubtless poultry also; she had a fish pond; she brewed beer. She had a strong, ruling, administering talent.



She was as great in her way as her husband was in his," and that great husband was so appreciative as to declare that—  
‘ Next to God’s word, the world has no more precious treasure than holy matrimony. God’s best gift is a pious, cheerful, God-fearing, home-keeping wife to whom you can trust your goods and body and life.’ Thanks to that good wife, Luther’s table was “always amply furnished. Great people, great lords, great ladies, learned men came from all parts of Europe, and his Wittenberg co-laborers were constant guests. He received them freely at dinner, and being one of the most copious of talkers, he enabled his friends to preserve a most extraordinary monument of his acquirements and intellectual vigor. Scarce a subject could be spoken of on which he had not something remarkable to say, and on reading the Table Talk of Luther, one ceases to wonder how this single man could change the whole face of Europe.”

But would he have talked so well if his dinners had been less satisfactory? Who indeed can say whether either Luther or Washington, the two greatest men in their opportunity and in their success since the Apostles, would have accomplished the vast work they did, had not their hearts been so wholly stayed on able and devoted wives whom they could “trust” with their “goods, and body and life.”—Of Mrs. Washington it is recorded that, notable as she was in all housekeeping ways, she spent two hours every morning in her room in prayer and devotional reading, her face when she came out being often illuminated as with some divine light!













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