

her, but for the domestic woman—the woman who is the mainstay of the world, who is back of every great enterprise, and who makes possible the achievements of men—the woman behind the broom, who is the hardest-worked and worst-paid labourer on the face of the earth.

Not every woman has a call to preach the Gospel; not every woman has a talent for law, or medicine, or writing; not every woman has a gift for finance, or desires to go out into the world to earn her living. For the vast majority of women the profession of wifehood and motherhood and house-keeping is the occupation to which they are called by destiny and inclination, and in which they find their greatest and most congenial employment, and best serve their day and generation. These women form an enormous army of toilers who have no settled status in the world of labour and

No Fixed Wage.

Their hours of labour are twenty-five hours out of the day, and yet they are debarred from the privilege of throwing down their tools and going out on strike. Even the census report, that consoling source of information, takes no account of their work, and among all the hundreds of gainful occupations that are enumerated in which women are engaged, the woman who is raising a family and doing her housework is not mentioned.

It is one of life's little ironies that we speak of the woman who is engaged in business or a profession as a working woman, thereby implying that the home-keeping woman is leading a life of inglorious ease and sybaritic luxury. Nothing could be a greater error; and what makes the mistake all the more piquant is the fact that women themselves have come to share in the delusion. It is a singular commentary on the esteem in which they have been taught to hold their own occupation that women who toil like slaves from morning to night so often express a wish that they could "do something."

No one seems to think that the work of keeping house amounts to anything. Women are supposed to dash that off in a white heat of inspiration, as amateur poets do their effusions. We are not broad enough to realise that house-keeping is the most exacting and never-ending work in the world.

A few years ago a famous poet roused the compassion of the world by painting the tragedy of hopeless toil in

the "Man with the Hoe." He might have stayed a little nearer home and found a better illustration of the work that is never done, that has no inspiration to lighten it, and looks for no appreciation to glorify it, in the woman with the broom. However wearing and monotonous the work of the man that of the woman is infinitely more so. The hardest row must come to an end, the longest summer day close at last, and at set of sun the man goes home to rest; but long after he, fed and satisfied, is taking his ease with his pipe, his wife is still cleaning up the dishes he used and sweeping out the dust he brought in with him. If the man with the hoe, "bowed by centuries of toil," is "brother to the ox," the woman is understudy to a perpetual motion machine.

Whatever grievances the man with the hoe has against society, the woman with the broom has the banner injustice of the world. When one thinks that it is woman who herself does, or has done, all the cooking and cleaning, mending, nursing, making, purchasing, and saving and baby-spanking of a family, and who is besides expected to be counsellor, comforter, companion, consoler, inspirer and ornament to a household, and that for these services she has no salary, but is expected to be satisfied with her board and clothes, the wonder is that she has not long ago brought the business end of her broomstick into play and made a stand for her rights. As it is, she has not even the poor consolation of independence, of being called a working-woman and earning her board and keep. Everything she has is

Considered as Given to Her,

and she is expected to be properly grateful to the man who takes her labour and feeds and dresses her in return for it.

There is no other piece of sarcasm equal to that which makes us speak of the average man "supporting" his wife. If the woman who makes a man a comfortable home on a limited income, and that is what most domestic women are trying to do, isn't earning her living, in heaven's name who is? She is giving services so great, and so unpurchasable for money, that it becomes an absolute financial necessity for a widower to remarry. If he tried to pay any other woman but a wife what her work was worth she would have a mortgage on his very eyelids in two years' time.

Every injustice is the prolific mother of wrongs, and the fact that the woman with the broom is neither sufficiently appreciated nor decently paid brings its own train of evils. It is at the bottom of the distaste girls have for domestic pursuits, and the frantic mania women have for seeking some career. Political economists argue themselves into a comatose state trying to find out why the girls in poor families would rather go into stores and factories, where the hours are long and the pay is scant, than go to work in their fathers' kitchens. It is because there are few of us so overwhelmingly industrious that we yearn to work for the mere sake of working. When we labour we want to see cold, hard cash in our hands as a result of our efforts. A girl knows that she may do all the cooking, and save not only the price of the cook, but the waste and stealage as well, but her father won't think she is earning anything. He will give her her board and clothes, but he will think that he is supporting her, and she will have none of the freedom of the wage earner to spend her money as she pleases. It is simply because the woman with the broom never gets paid that every girl is determined to get another tool if she can.

There is hardly a day when some woman, the wife or daughter of a rich man, does not say to me that she wishes she could do something. "Why?" I ask. "Surely you have occupation enough in your home to absorb your strength and energies!" "Oh, yes, but I want to do something that will bring in money—money that will be my own and that I may

Spend as I Please."

Sometimes there is a touch of pathos, as in the case of one woman who took in sewing, while her servants wasted and stole from her. I asked her once if she thought it paid,—if she didn't see, as I did, that it would be better economy to look after her own house than to try to make a few dollars at work that was plainly ruining her health.

"I know it," she replied, "but my husband never gives me a dollar of my own. My mother is old and poor, and the money I make with my needle I can give to her. I earn it. It is my own. I can make money that way, but my husband would never think of giving me a dollar for doing the cooking."

Always—always it is the frantic cry